Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad

The Upaniṣads inform us that we should move from mortality to immortality. However, Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad takes us further still, from immortality to the nectar of immortality. It speaks to us of an experience of immortality that is both positive and progressive. Rather than an experience of immortality that involves only the cessation of mortality, retiring the soul in eternal passivity, the passages of Gopāla-tāpanī underscore the potential of the soul to experience divine play in a realm where reason finds dignity not merely in suppressing sensual passions but, more so, in the service of divine passion. It stresses the discipline of freedom—the mantra—and its fruit, the music that sets God in motion. As Nietzsche would have it, so too does Gopāla-tāpanī: freedom is disciplined in that it is a product of a very long period of constraining oneself. Where Gopāla-tāpanī differs, of course, is that its eternity is not a euphemism for death. It is the doorway to a land beyond time through which one enters to participate in God’s play, where God, believes it or not, has become a dancer. Apply yourself in the discipline of Gopāla-tāpanī, the yoga of devotion that sheds light (tāpanī) on the cowherd Kṛṣṇa (Gopāla), and learn to love like you could never have imagined or reasoned was possible. This eternal text of revelation descends from a land of love far beyond the reach of the mind—where words cannot reach—and thus about which we cannot say enough.

Swāmī B.V. Tripurāri

Audarya Press

Gopāla-tāpani Upaniṣad
गोपालतापनीयोपनिषद्
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To my gurus, Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda
and Pujiyapada Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdbara Deva Gosvāmi.
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Preface

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

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

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

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

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

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

Swāmi B.V. Tripurāri
Rādhāśṭami 2003
Introduction

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

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

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

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

Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī’s commentary was clearly influenced by the preceding commentary of Viśveśvara Ṭhārtha, although his doctrine, a mix of monism and theism, is not that of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas. Viśveśvara Ṭhārtha’s lineage is unknown, but it is possible that he followed a lineage
much like that of the famed Śrīdhara Svāmī, whose Bhāgavata commentary was greatly revered by Śrī Caitanya.

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

—The Publishers
पूर्वतापनी
Pūrva-tāpani
I. Sadvipadan-drstapay krshnayakrit-kari
Namo vedanta-vedyaya gurave buddhi-sakshi

sac-cid-ananda-rupaya krsnayakliita-karine
namo vedanta-vedyaya gurave buddhi-sakshi

sac-cid-ananda-rupaya — to the form of eternity, knowledge, and bliss; krsnaya — to Krsna; akliita-karine — to him whose every act is wonderful/untroubled; nama — obeisances; vedanta-vedyaya — to him who is to be known by the Vedanta; gurave — to the spiritual master; buddhi-sakshi — to the witness present in the intelligence.

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

Hail to the goddess as we begin this sacred commentary on Gopala-tapani! May the wise, as well as those without wisdom, heed her call to devotion. Blessed are the devotees! May they take pleasure in this effort despite its faults, and may those devotees senior to me in knowledge and devotion, and the pure-hearted commentators Sri Jiva, Visvanatha Cakravarti, and Sri Prabodhananda Sarasvati in particular, be merciful to me. Above all, I offer my pranamas to Sri Guru, Gauranga, Govinda, and Gandharvik.

Just as it is standard in modern times to preface a book with a statement that introduces the text and explains its scope and intention, similarly ancient Hindu texts were customarily prefaced with an introductory statement known as a maiginalacara that accomplishes the same purpose and more. A maiginalacara invokes auspiciousness and, by so doing, creates a sacred atmosphere. When applied to sacred texts, an auspicious invocation technically consists of four elements: the subject of the text (visaya), the relationship between the text and its subject (sambandha), the goal to be attained by its study (prayojana), and the person who is qualified to enter into
its mysteries (*adhikārin*).¹ The first verse of *Gopāla-tāpani* contains all of these elements in the form of a prayer that offers obeisances to Kṛṣṇa.

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

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

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

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¹ A *maṅgalacarana* often consists of more than one verse and may also involve offering of obeisances (*nāmaskāra*), stating in essence what the text concerns (*vastu-nirdeśa*), and offering a blessing (*āśīrvāda*).
Stunned by the truth about the Lord, the goddess, well known as a lady of distinction and discrimination, words and wisdom, is left nearly speechless. Nonetheless, she manages to solemnly declare something inconceivable: Kṛṣṇa is the form of eternity, knowledge, and bliss. He has given shape to these much sought-after ideals—not one, but all three of them—through both example and precept as portrayed and preached in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa and Bhagavad-gītā, respectively. Moreover, Kṛṣṇa’s nature defies and thus belittles logic. We are to think about this truth as much as we can, until the mind stops and we arrive at knowing beyond thinking.

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

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

². Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī cites SB 10.3.26, 10.9.13, and 10.14.32 in support of this point, showing that Kṛṣṇa’s lilā practically demonstrates that he is the form of eternality, knowledge, and bliss.
of which is his becoming the intimate friend of his devotees. Despite his exalted position, he is subordinated by love. Such is the influence of his primary sakti. When she touches one’s soul, the finite conquers the infinite.

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

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

2. ॐ मुनयो ह वै ब्राह्मणमूचः। कः परमो देवः कुलो मुन्युविभेति।
    कस्य विज्ञानेनाविक्षेपितं विज्ञातं भावति। केनेदं विद्यं संसर्तनिति॥२॥

.InputStreamed Block:

ॐ | munayo ha vai brāhmaṇam ūcuḥ | kah paramo devah |
kuto mṛtyur bibeti | kasya vijnānenaśkham vijnātāṁ bhavati |
kenedam viśvam sanśaratīti ||

OutputStreamed Block:

ॐ — Oṁ; munayaḥ — the sages; ha vai — indeed; brāhmaṇam — the brāhmaṇa (Brahmā); ūcuḥ — said; kah — who; paramah devah — Supreme
Deity; kutaḥ — of what; mṛtyuḥ — death; bibbetti — fears; kasya — whose; vijñānena — by realization; akbilaṁ — unlimited; vijñātan — known; bha-vati — becomes; kena — by whom; idam viśvaṁ — this universe; sanisvarati — turns; iti — thus.

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

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

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

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

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

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3. Gauḍīya ācārya Śrila Rūpa Gosvāmi has mentioned the Kumāras in Śrī-Śrī-Rādha-kāstava, a hymn glorifying Śrī Rādhā. By referring to the Kumāras, he implies that the youthful village girl of Gokulā is more than she appears to be at first glance. She represents the end of all knowledge, and thus sober sages like the Kumāras offer praise to her.
tered by material desire. They are persons of wisdom (jñānins) about to tread the path of spiritual love. It is the jñānin that Śrī Kṛṣṇa singles out in his sermon to Arjuna, describing him as most dear among the four types of pious persons who approach him.² When Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.1.2) states that those who study its contents make rapid spiritual advancement, it refers to the jñānin who takes to bhakti.⁵ Its principal speaker, the learned and pure-hearted Śukadeva, serves as a prime example. Brahmā too is no fool. He represents the embodiment of all Vedic knowledge. In this text he speaks from the vantage point of the love of Kṛṣṇa he has attained by meditating on the Gopāla mantra. Thus Śruti-devi refers us to a conversation between highly positioned persons in the spiritual hierarchy to further substantiate her solemn declaration about the supremacy of Kṛṣṇa. The Kumāras’ questions elicit a particular response from Brahmā, which highlights her chosen Deity’s extraordinary characteristics.

3. तदु ह्यवाच ब्राह्मणः। कृष्णो वै परमः दैवतम्।
 गोविन्दामयो मर्युर भीवति। गोपीजनवल्लभज्ञेन्त तज्ज्ञानं भवति।
 स्वाहयदं संसरतीति॥३॥

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Translation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>tad u</td>
<td>then;</td>
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<tr>
<td>uvāca</td>
<td>certainly;</td>
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<tr>
<td>brāhmaṇaḥ</td>
<td>the brāhmaṇa</td>
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<td>(Brahmā);</td>
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<tr>
<td>kṛṣṇaḥ</td>
<td>Kṛṣṇa;</td>
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<td>vai</td>
<td>verily;</td>
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<td>paramam</td>
<td>supreme;</td>
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<td>daivatam</td>
<td>Deity;</td>
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<tr>
<td>govindāt</td>
<td>from Govinda;</td>
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<tr>
<td>mṛtyuh</td>
<td>death;</td>
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<tr>
<td>bibbetti</td>
<td>fears;</td>
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<tr>
<td>gopijanavallabha-ṝṇāṇena</td>
<td>by knowledge of Gopi-jana-vallabha;</td>
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<tr>
<td>taj jñānam</td>
<td>that knowledge, knowledge of that;</td>
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<tr>
<td>bhavati</td>
<td>becomes;</td>
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<tr>
<td>svāhayā</td>
<td>by svāhā;</td>
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<tr>
<td>idam</td>
<td>this;</td>
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<tr>
<td>saṁsaratitā</td>
<td>revolves;</td>
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<td>iti</td>
<td>thus.</td>
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4. Bg. 7.17.
5. See the commentary of Jiva Gosvāmi.
Brahmā answered: Verily, Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Deity. Death is afraid of Govinda and by knowing Gopi-jana-vallabha one knows all things. This world turns through svābā.

The process of spiritual initiation (dikṣā) involves the preceptor’s imparting a dikṣā mantra to the disciple. The principal dikṣā mantra of the Gauḍiya Vaiṣṇava lineage is the eighteen-syllable (aṣṭādaśaśvara) Gopāla mantra, which consists of five distinct sections and is prefaced by the kāma-bīja. While the five sections of the Gopāla mantra are mentioned in this verse (kṛṣṇāya, govindāya, gopi-jana, vallabhāya, and svābā), the kāma-bīja, which is also the eighteenth syllable of the mantra, is not. This bīja—the seed of the mantra—will be explained later in this text, as will the mantra in considerable detail.

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

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

6. Śrī Brahma-saṁhitā (5.3) considers this mantra to be sixfold, dividing svābā into two syllables.
7. A bīja (seed) is a single-syllable element essential to all mantras. Each Deity has its own bīja—Kṛṣṇa’s being kliṁ.
he is saying that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Brahman. “How is that so?” Śrī Prabodhānanda asks, then answers his own question: “Because worship of Kṛṣṇa corresponds with the form of all varieties of divine joy (brahmānanda) combined. There is no difference between what is known as brahmānanda (the bliss of Brahman) and camatkāra (sacred aesthetic rapture, rasa).” Furthermore, he goes on to say, Brahmā’s being a knower of Brahman in the full sense of the term makes him “helplessly driven to contemplate the question, ‘How can a special taste in devotional practice be attained?’”

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

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

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

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

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

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

8. The demon Pūtanā is the best example of a recipient of Kṛṣṇa’s mercy.
of this aspect of his līlā, which is a privilege not even granted to all his Vraja devotees, leaves nothing remaining to be known about the Absolute. Thus, as Brahmā confirms here in his answer to the Kumāras’ third question, by knowing Gopi-jana-vallabha, the lover of the gopīs, one knows everything.

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

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

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

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

4. 

Tadu hocu | kaha kṛṣṇah | govindaś ca ko 'sāv iti |
gopijana-vallabbaḥ kaha | kā svāhāti ||

| tat u — then; ha — certainly; ācuḥ — they said; kaha — who is; Kṛṣṇa — Kṛṣṇa; govindaḥ — Govinda; ca — and; kaha — who; asau — that; iti — thus; gopī-jana-vallabbaḥ — Gopī-jana-vallabha; kaha — who; kā — who; svāhā — svāhā; iti — thus.

The sages then asked: Who is Kṛṣṇa? Who is Govinda? Who is Gopi-jana-vallabha? And who is svāhā?

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

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

It appears from this Upaniṣad that the Kumāras, who are usually portrayed by the Gauḍīyas as jñāni-bhaktas, have a less well-known connection
with the Vraja *līlā* and Gopāla *mantra*. Rūpa Gosvāmi has also mentioned them in relation to Śrī Rādhā in his Śrī-Śrī-RādBikā-śtava. At the very least, such keen interest in Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa *līlā* on the part of these four sober sages serves to underscore the *līlā*’s deeply spiritual nature despite its superficial similarity of a material love affair.

5. तान उवाच ब्रह्मणः: पपा-कर्षणो गो-ब्रह्ममिव-विदिता गोपीजनविद्याकलाप्रेरकस्तमाय चैति सकर्ते परं ब्रह्मव तत्॥१॥

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

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

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9. The Kumāras are also portrayed as *rāga-mārga* devotees by the *svākiya-vāda* lineage of Dvaitādvaita. Known today as the Nimbārka *sampradāya*, the Dvaitādvaita lineage was originally founded by the Kumāras themselves.
destroys sins, implying that because he is constituted of knowledge, eternity, and bliss, he easily destroys sinful karmic reactions. Kṛṣṇa’s capacity to destroy sin knows no limit; it includes in its scope the sins of the demoniac (asurāparādha), which are perpetrated directly against him, the Supreme Deity. Not only is Kṛṣṇa capable of destroying their offenses, he sometimes does so to such an extent that the demoniac are forever freed from the capacity to commit sin again and, moreover, become his devotees. Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa adds that the name Kṛṣṇa indicates “he whose transcendental pastimes attract the minds of even the sinful.”

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

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

With the words tan-māyā, Brahmā explains that svābā is the māyā of Gopī-jana-vallabha; it is that potency under whose influence his līlā is conducted, yogamāyā. It is his transcendental energy and also his mercy, for māyā also means mercy. As explained earlier, svābā (sacrifice) is the heart
of actual life, which animates the world. Under its influence the illusory representation of real life dissipates. Gautamiya-tantra explains: “Svā refers to the knower of the field; bā is the higher, spiritual nature. From the combination of these two arises the sacred word svāhā appearing on the lips. Therefore, the dissolution of the universe takes place in the ocean of svāhā.”

6. यो ध्यायति रसति भवति सोम्यते भवति सोम्यते भवतीति

\[\text{yo dhyāyati rasati bhajati so ’mṛto bhavati so ’mṛto bhavatītī}\]

\[\text{yaho dhyāyati rasati bhajati so ’mṛto bhavati so ’mṛto bhavatītī}\]

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

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

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

10. See Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.1.12.
The sages asked: What is his form? How does one relish him? And how does one engage in his worship? Please explain all these things to us, for we are eager to learn.

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

Krṣna’s complexion is dark like a rain cloud and is called  Śyāma, the color that corresponds to the mood of conjugal love (Śrīgāra-rasa) in Indian aesthetic theory. Krṣna’s youthfulness refers to his eternal adolescent form in Vṛndāvana, where he has the disposition and dress of a cowherd (gopa-veṣa).
The words kalpa-drumåśritam refer to the legendary wish-fulfilling tree of Vṛndāvana, under which Kṛṣṇa often stands. This tree is also symbolic of the Vedas, from which one can acquire all knowledge and thus whatever one desires, as knowledge enables one to perform action properly and thus realize its fruit. In describing itself, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam extends the metaphor of a desire tree, saying that the Vedas represent the tree itself and Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam the tree’s ripened fruit. The principal subject of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is Rādhā’s love for Kṛṣṇa, and this is the fruit of the desire tree of the Vedas, which Kṛṣṇa has taken shelter of and can be attained through.

9–11. 

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*tad iba ślokā bhavanti*

* sat-puṇḍarika-nayanāṁ meghābham vaidyutāmbram ||
* dvi-bhujaṁ jñāna-mudrādhyāṁ vana-mālinam īśvaram ||
* gopa-gopi-gavāvitāṁ sura-drūma-talāśrayam ||
* divyālankaranaṇopetaṁ ratna-paṅkaja-madhyā-gam ||
* kālindi-jalā-kallola-saṅgi-māruta-sevitam ||
* cintayan cetasa kṛṣṇam mukto bhavati samsyeṣ || iti ||

*tad — then; iba — here; ślokāḥ — verses; bhavanti — are; sat — perfect; puṇḍarika — lotus; nayanāṁ — eyes; meghābham — the color of a cloud; vaidyuta — lightning-like; ambram — clothes; dvi-bhujaṁ — two arms; jñāna-mudrādhyām — hands held in the sign of knowledge; vana-mālinam — wearing a garland of forest flowers; īśvaram — the Lord; gopa-gopi-gavāvitāṁ — surrounded by cowherds, milkmaids, and cows; sura-drūma-
talāśrayam — standing at the foot of a heavenly tree; divyālaṅkaraṇopetam — covered in divine ornaments; ratna-paṅkaja-madhya-gam — in the middle of jewels and lotuses; kālindī-jala — the water of the Yamunā; kallola-saṅgi — the spray coming from the waves; māruta-sevitam — fanned by the breezes; cintayan — meditating upon; cetasā — with the mind; kṛṣṇaṁ — Kṛṣṇa; muktah — liberated; bhavati — becomes; saṁsāteḥ — from the cycle of birth and rebirth; iti — thus.

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

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

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

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

This meditation represents how Kṛṣṇa appeared to Brahmā. Prabodhānanda Sarasvati comments, “The clothes Kṛṣṇa wears seem to have been made out of lightning. The jñāna-mudrā refers to his silence, for as śruti says, ‘He spoke without words’ (avacanenaiva provāca). All Kṛṣṇa’s behavior is based on knowledge, yet he is completely absorbed in the delights of playing his flute, surrounded by the cowherds headed by Śrīdāma, the cowherd girls headed by Rādhā, and the cows like Kapilā.”
Furthermore, with regard to relishing Kṛṣṇa in mantra dhyāna, the kāma-bīja is the combination of water, earth, the vowel ī, and the moon. The first section consists of kṛṣṇāya preceded by this kāma-bīja. The second consists of govindāya; the third, gopi-jana; the fourth, vallabhāya; and the fifth, svābā. By chanting this five-sectioned incantation, one attains the five-limbed Brahman, which is made up of heaven, earth, sun, moon, and fire.

In text 7, after the sages ask Brahmā about Kṛṣṇa’s form, they inquire how one relishes this form. Here Brahmā begins his answer to this second
question. Briefly, the answer is that one can relish the form of Kṛṣṇa by meditating on the fivefold mantra, kṛṣṇāya govindāya gopī-jana-vallabhāya svāhā, preceded by the seed of the mantra (kāma-bija, or kliṅ) introduced in this verse.

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

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

One aspect is that it tends to make the pure soul run after the all-attractive Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Lord of Gokula and of the divine milkmaids. This is the acme of the spiritual tendency of the jīva. When the devotee is free from all sorts of mundane
desires and is willing to serve the Lord, he attains the fruition of his heart’s desire, viz., the Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. But in the case of the devotee who is not of unmixed motive, this superexcellent mantra fulfills his heart’s desire also. The transcendental kāma-bīja is inherent in the divine Logos located in Goloka; and the kāma-bīja pervertedly reflected in worldly affairs satisfies all sorts of desires of this mundane world.

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

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

The Rāsollāsa-tantra states that the kāma-bīja is Kṛṣṇa himself, the transcendental Cupid, Kāmadeva. Brhad Gautamiya-tantra informs us that the letter ka indicates Kṛṣṇa, the supreme puruṣa and embodiment of eternity, knowledge, and bliss. In the same text, the letter i in klīṁ is said to indicate the supreme prakṛti, Śrī Rādhā. Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa’s mutual ecstatic exchange of transcendental love is implied by la, and the anusvara and bindu indicate the ecstatic sweetness of their most blissful kiss.
The \textit{Sanat-kumāra-saṁhitā} explains further: “O Nārada, this \textit{kāma-bīja} is not simply a combination of sounds; it is the body of the Lord himself. The \textit{ka} contains Kṛṣṇa’s scalp, forehead, eyebrows, nose, eyes, and ears. \textit{La} is his cheeks, chin, jaws, neck, throat, and back. \textit{Ī} is his shoulders, arms, elbows, hands, fingers, and fingernails. The half-moon is his chest, belly, sides, navel, and waist. The \textit{bindu} is his thighs, knees, hips, calves, ankles, feet, soles, toes, and toenails.”

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

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

23
The fifth section of the mantra, *svābā*, is appropriately identified with fire because it implies surrender—the fire of sacrifice—by which our eternal relationship with the Deity is revealed.

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

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

13.  

The verse 13:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tad esa ślokaḥ</th>
<th>klim ity etad ādau ādāya kṛṣṇāya</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>govindāya gopijana-vallabhāyeta</td>
<td>brbhad-bhānavyāsakṛd uccared yo ’sau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gatis tasyāsti maṅkṣu nānyā gatiḥ syāt</td>
<td>iti</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*tat* — then; *eṣaḥ* — this; *ślokaḥ* — verse; *klim* — the seed syllable *klim; iti* — thus; *etat* — this; *ādau* — at first; *ādāya* — taking; *kṛṣṇāya* — to Kṛṣṇa; *govindāya* — to Govinda; *gopī-jana-vallabhāya* — to Gopi-jana-vallabha; *iti* — thus; *brbhad-bhānavyā* — great daughter of the sun (*svābā; asakṛt* — frequently; *uccaret* — would utter; *yah* — whoever; *asau* — that; *gatiḥ* — destination; *tasya* — his; *asti* — is; *maṅkṣu* — quickly; *na* — no; *anyā* — other; *gatiḥ* — destination; *syāt* — is possible; *iti* — so it is said.
In this connection, the following verse is given:
One first utters the seed klini, following it with krśṇāya, govindāya,
and then gopijana-vallabhāya. One who utters this mantra even once,
concluding with the “great daughter of the sun” (i.e., svāhā), will at-
tain the supreme destination; he will know no other destination.

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

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

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

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12. The words brhad-bhānāvi are unusual as they have no dictionary meaning, only this eso-
teric meaning, which has not been recorded anywhere else.
Yamunā-devi is identified microcosmically and macrocosmically with the *suṣumṇā nādi*, the mystic pathway to liberation. Microcosmically, the *suṣumṇā nādi* appears in the subtle body as the channel from the heart to the top of the head through which successful *yogīs* travel when leaving their bodies in the course of attaining liberation. Macrocosmically, the *suṣumṇā* is the path of light passing through the sun that represents the yogic pathway to liberation on leaving the material body. Yamunā-devi thus illumines the yogic path to liberation.

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

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

\[
\text{cid-ānanda-bbānoḥ sadā nanda-sūnoḥ} \\
\text{para-prema-pātri drava-brhma-gātri} \\
\text{aghanaµ lavitrî jagat-kßema-dhåtrî} \\
\text{pavitrî-kriyån no vapur mitra-putrî}
\]

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

---

the spiritual sun. You dispel the sins of all sinners. Please pu-
"rify this mortal body (Cc. 2.3.28).

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

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

Because Rādhā was born at the rising of the constellation known as
Rādhā, she was also appropriately named after it. Rādhā appeared in Vra-
jabhūmi in the year that followed Kṛṣṇa’s birth and under the stellar influ-
ence that marks the happiest day in his astrological chart. The name Rā-
dhā also indicates worship (ārādbanā). She is the best worshiper of Kṛṣṇa.
While she is the Supreme Goddess, she is at the same time the supreme
element of devotion to God. She personifies the highest expression of
self-sacrifice, which is synonymous with svāhā. Rādhā also personifies
the blādini-śakti, the potency of Kṛṣṇa that gives joy. Similarly, true self-
sacrifice is joy. Thus Rādhā is further identified with svāhā. Understanding
svāhā in this way while chanting the Gopāla mantra deepens the devotee’s
identification with Rādhārāṇī and the blādini-śakti.

14. Caitanya-candrodaya-nāṭaka 5.35.
15. SB 10.30.28.
bhaktiḥ — devotion; asya — his; bhajanam — worship; tat — that; iha — here in this world; amutra — in the next world; upādhi — desires; nairāsyena — by the eradication; amuśmin — in him; manah-kalpanam — absorbing the mental faculties; etat — this; eva — emphatically; ca — and; naiskarmyam — salvation, freedom from the bondage of actions.

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

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

16. Unfettered by karma also means not thinking that one’s bhakti will be hampered if one forgoes mandatory (nitya) and occasional (naimittika) acts enjoined in dharma-śāstra. It also means not thinking that performing such acts will enhance one’s bhakti.
Rūpa Gosvāmi says further, ānukūlyena krṣṇānuśilanam: “The primary symptom of pure devotion is the ongoing culture of Kṛṣṇa consciousness (krṣṇānuśilanam) that is exercised in a manner favorable (ānukūlyena) to him.” Brahmā speaks of bhakti’s primary symptom when he says that it involves absorbing one’s mind in Kṛṣṇa. Absorbing one’s mind in Kṛṣṇa implies that one must identify with his will and act in accordance with it. Both action and emotion are involved. Sanskrit verbal roots imply both of these as well, and thus the word anuśilanam indicates the culture of external practices (sādhu-bhakti) and the spiritual emotions they awaken (bhāva-bhakti). Practice leads to spiritual emotion—the flowering stage of love—which in turn matures into the full fruit of love of God (prema-bhakti), the final stage of sūddha-bhakti.

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

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

Prabodhānanda Sarasvāti comments that Brahmā’s conclusion that worship of Kṛṣṇa is devotion is clearly indicated by the use of the dative
case in the principal Kṛṣṇa mantra (kṛṣṇāya, govindāya, gopi-jana-valla-bhāya) as well as through the word svāhā. The word svāhā will be further defined as self-surrender in the following verse. A word in the dative case tells to or for whom something is done. Thus the mantra is saying, “I offer myself in surrender to Kṛṣṇa, to Govinda, to Gopi-jana-vallabha.”

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

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

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

15. कुष्णं तं विष्रा बहुधा वजन्ति
गोकिन्दं सतं बहुधाङ्गराधयन्ति ।

17. Whereas in vaidī-bhakti devotional liberation is aspired for, in rāgānugā-bhakti such an aspiration is considered an impediment to attaining prīti, intimate spiritual love of Kṛṣṇa.
The brāhmaṇas have copiously sacrificed to that Kṛṣṇa. They have worshiped him as Govinda. He is Gopi-jana-vallabha, who has taken hold of the planets. Taking shelter of svabhā, he became the virile semen that quickened the universe.

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

In contrast to the names Govinda and Gopi-jana-vallabha, the name Kṛṣṇa in the mantra corresponds more with love of Kṛṣṇa experienced in vaidbi-bbakti, a spiritual practice in which ritualistic worship (arcana) is
more prominent, leading to love of God tinged with reverence. Devotees who aspire to serve Kṛṣṇa in his līlās in Dvārakā—where a stronger sense of his majesty prevails—worship him through the sādhanā of vaidī-bhakti. They experience the mantra to be speaking primarily of Kṛṣṇa, who is also known for his Vraja līlā, in which he is a cowherder (Govinda) and the lover of the gopīs (Gopi-jana-vallabha).

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

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

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

18. Other than the priya-narma-sakhās, Govinda’s friends do not directly participate in his pastimes as the lover of the gopīs.
Krṣṇa and Gopi-jana-vallabha in the Gopāla mantra as aspects of their Govinda.¹⁹

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

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

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

¹⁹. The fact that Krṣṇa is the lover of the gopī is known to those in parental love and secretly approved by them. However, they do not acknowledge it openly in order to facilitate the highest sentiment of unwedded love (parakiya).
own nature, his svarūpa-ākāri. Kṛṣṇa places himself in his devotee through his svarūpa-ākāri and is thereby purchased by him. The guru is such a devotee, the embodiment of self-surrender. Through his agent in whom he has taken shelter, Kṛṣṇa becomes the “virile semen that quickens the universe.” Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī says this means that “by the intensity of his love he causes all the universes to be helplessly overcome by trembling and other ecstatic symptoms.” Such symptoms were exhibited by Śrī Caitanya in his ācārya-līlā, his pastime of teaching the path of rāga-bhakti by his own example.

16. वायुर्यथायेको भूवनं प्रविष्टो
जने जने पञ्चरूपो बभुव।
कृष्णस्तथायेको जगदद्वितिया
शब्देनासौ पञ्चपदे विभातिति।।१६।।

वायु — the air; yathā — as; ekaḥ — one; bhuvanam — the world; praviṣṭaḥ — entered; janye janye — in each body or manifestation of the creation; pāṇca-rūpaḥ — five-formed; babhūva — becomes; kṛṣṇaḥ — Kṛṣṇa; tathā — so too; ekaḥ — one; api — even though; jagat — [of] the universe; bitārtham — for the welfare; śabdena — by the sound; asau — that; pāṇca-padaḥ — five-sectioned; vibbāti — illumines; iti — so it is said.

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

Brahmā further stresses that the mantra, although fivefold, represents one entity, Parabrahman. Thus he gives an example: air is essentially one sub-
stance but expresses itself in five forms within the material body to facilitate bodily functions.\textsuperscript{20} Similarly, Parabrahman is essentially one entity, yet for the welfare of the world manifests in a fivefold way to give spiritual life to the world’s inhabitants.

17.  ते होचुः। उपासनेत्स्य परमात्मनो
गोविन्दस्याक्षिलाधृतिः हृदीति ॥१७॥

te hocuḥ | upāsanam etasya paramātmano
govindasyākṣilādhūrīno brūhi ti ॥

te ba — they; āccha — said; upāsanam — worship; etasya — his; paramātmano
— of the Supreme Soul; govindasya — of Govinda; akhila-ādhūrīṇah — of he who contains all; brūbi — tell; iti — end of question.

The sages said: Tell us the means of worshiping (upāsanā) the Supreme Soul, Govinda, who contains everything.

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

18.  तानुं उचाः। यज्ञस्य पीठं हृरण्याङ्गप्रक्ष्यवमभिः
तदन्तरास्त्रकन्यङ्गयमिव तदन्तरास्त्राणिक्षिप्तोजं
कृष्णाय नम इति भीतार्थं साम्भवणामाथाय
अनुजगायर्थि यथावद्ववाप्यवस्थ्य भूमिण्डते शून्यवेर्दिति
कृष्णाय वामुदेतरविम्यायिनानाथान्निन्दादि
समुदेतरादिप्राधिदिन्यक्रियात्मेनं येजेन ॥
सन्त्यास्य प्रतिपन्निग्रुप्तचारित्स्तनास्यान्तिः
भवत्यखिलं भवतीति ॥१८॥

20. According to the yogic worldview, the life air is one substance, but within the body it appears fivefold as prāṇa, apāṇa, vyāna, udāna, and samāna. See Gopala-tāpanī 2.79.
Brahmā replied: One should sacrifice (yajet) to the seat (piṭham) [of the mantra] (i.e., the yantra), which should be made according to the following specifications: It should have the shape of a golden lotus flower with eight petals, within which should be a six-pointed star made of two inverted triangles. At the center of this star, the mantra kṛṣṇāya namaḥ should be written, preceded by the foremost of all seeds (i.e. klim). One should also write the mantra that gives the root meaning of the seed (i.e., the eighteen-syllable mantra) and then in the proper place the kāma-gāyatrī. One should then surround the en-
tire field on which the yantra has been drawn with protective tridents, and so on. In the spaces between the petals, the various other expansions, deities, and energies are to be worshiped in the āvaraṇa-pūjā, starting with the bodily limbs, then followed by Vāsudeva, Rukmini, the energies of the sky, Indra, his parents, Vasudeva, his friends like Arjuna, and so on. By making appropriate offerings signifying surrender [to this yantra] at the three junctures of the day, the mantra will bestow upon the worshiper boundless rewards; it will bestow boundless rewards.

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

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

A yantra corresponding with a particular sacred sound, such as the Gopāla mantra, is thus a geometric diagram somewhat analogous to a blueprint that forms the basis of a plane of spiritual experience, in this case
the realm of Gopāla Kṛṣṇa. This sacred realm has sometimes been described as a hexagonal figure. For example, in Śrī Brahma-saṁhitā 5.3 we find the following verse:

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

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

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

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

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

19. tad iha slokå bhavanti
eko vaśi sarvagå krśna īdyå
eko ’pi san babudhå yo vibhåti ||
tam piṭhagåm ye ’nuyajanti dbirås
tesāṁ sukham sāśvatam netaresåm ||

tat — so; iba — in this connection; slokåḥ — verses; bhavanti — are; ekåḥ — one; vaśi — controller; sarvagåḥ — all-pervading; krśnåḥ — Krśna; īdyåḥ — worshipable; ekåḥ — one; api — though; san — being; babudhåḥ — in many forms; yah — who; vibhåti — appears; tam — him; piṭhagåm — upon his throne; ye — those who; amuyayantå — worship constantly; dbiråḥ — sages; tesāṁ — their; sukham — happiness; sāśvatam — permanent; na — not; itaresåm — of others.
In this connection, there are a number of verses:
The one, all-pervading controller is the worshipable Kṛṣṇa. Although
one, he appears in multiple forms. Those sages who constantly wor-
ship him seated upon his throne attain permanent happiness, and not
others.

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

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

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

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22. Variants of the mantra cited here in verse 19 can be found in Kaṭha Upaniṣad (2.2.12) and
Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad (6.12).
23. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.2.11) describes the absolute truth as nondual consciousness (advaya-jñāna-tattva). Much of the Gauḍīya understanding of the tattva of the Bhāgavatam is based on
this verse.
mâyâ and the individual souls, both of whom are dependent on him. In the sense that there is no difference between the energetic and the energy it generates, there is no difference between Kṛṣṇa and his sākti.

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

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

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

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

24. Svayam = original = God. One who is svayam is the singular source of many expressions of God.
the Bhāgavad Gītā that Śukadeva mentions who accept Kṛṣṇa as their iṣṭa-devatā (worshipful Deity). This list includes all the principal inquirers and those who answer their inquiries.25 Because Kṛṣṇa is their iṣṭa-devatā, they experience a joy unknown even to those great devotees who worship Nārāyaṇa. This is the implication of the words sukham āśvataṁ netareśāṁ in this verse. Use of the word sukha as opposed to ānanda refers to transcendental humanlike happiness, which is possible only in relation to Kṛṣṇa, not Nārāyaṇa.

20. नित्यो नित्यानां चेतनश्चेतनानां
    मेको बहूं यो विद्यधि कामान्।
    तं पीठां चेतनभवति धीरा
    स्तेषा सिद्धि: शाश्वती नेतृरेषाम्॥२०॥

nityo nityānāṁ cetanaś cetanānāṁ
eko babūnāṁ yo vidadhāti kāmān ।
tam piṭha-gaṁ ye 'nubbavanti dbirās
teṣām siddhiḥ śāśvati netareśām ॥

nityaḥ — eternal being; nityānāṁ — of eternal beings; cetanaḥ — conscious being; cetanānāṁ — of conscious beings; ekaḥ — one; babūnāṁ — of many; yab — who; vidadhāti — fulfills; kāmān — desires; tam — him; piṭhagāṁ — upon his throne; ye — those who; anubbavanti — worship; dbirāḥ — sages; teṣām — their; siddhiḥ — success; śāśvati — permanent; na — not; itareśāṁ — of others.

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

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

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

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

21. एततथि विष्णोऽपरम पदं ये
नित्योदुःक्ता: संयजने न कामान्
लेखामसेहोपरुप: प्रवजनात्
प्रकाशयेवदातमपदं तदेव॥२१॥
To those who are constantly engaged in worshiping this supreme abode of Viṣṇu rather than their material desires, he immediately appears in the form of a cowherd boy and carefully reveals his own abode (ātma-padam) at that very time.

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

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

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

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

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

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

27. Nārada Muni is an example of this in vaidhi-mārga. See ŚB 1.6.16–18.
29. Śneha, prāṇaya, māna, rāga, anurāga, bbāva, mahābbāva.
22. यो वै ब्रह्माण विद्याति पूर्वः
यो विद्यास्तप्ते गोपायति स्म कृष्णः।
तं ह दैवमात्मबुद्धिप्रकाशं
मुमुक्षुं शरणमनुव्रजेत॥२२॥

yo vai brahmāṇam vidadbāti pūrvam
yo vidyās tasmai gopāyati sma kṛṣṇah ||
tam ba devam ātma-buddhi-prakāśam
mumukṣur vai śaraṇam anuvrajeta ||

yah vai— he who; brahmāṇam — Brahmā; vidadbāti — ordained, created;
pūrvam — previously; yah — who; vidyās — knowledge; tasmai — to him;
gopāyati sma — entrusted; kṛṣṇah — Kṛṣṇa; tam — him; ba — certainly; de-
vam — divine being; ātma-buddhi-prakāśam — the revealer of self-under-
standing; mumukṣub — the seeker of liberation; vai — definitely; śaraṇam — refuge; anuvrajeta — should take.

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

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

30. This verse is based on Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 6.18.
To those who chant this five-sectioned Govinda mantra preceded and followed by *omkāra* he shows his personal form. Therefore, anyone who seeks liberation should constantly repeat this mantra to gain eternal peace.

Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī comments that by prefacing the chanting of the Gopāla mantra with praṇava *omkāra*, one achieves the same result as that of performing the elaborate ritual of establishing the Gopāla yantra. He also points out that this verse makes it clear that one need not attain the qualifications of a Brahmā to derive benefit from this mantra. Its efficacy is open to anyone who chants or meditates upon it after having received it from an appropriate spiritual lineage.
etasmād anye pañca-padād abhūvan
govindasya manavo mānavānām 1
dāśārṇādyās te ’pi saṅkrandanādyaiḥ
yabhasyante bhūti-kāmaṁ yathāvart 11

etasmāt — from this; anye — others; pañca-padāt — five-part mantra; abhūvan — have come into being; govindasya — of Govinda; manavo — mantras; mānavānām — of human beings; daśārṇādyāḥ — such as the one containing ten syllables; te — they; api — also; saṅkrandanādyaiḥ — by Indra and others; yabhasyante — are practiced; bhūti-kāmaṁ — desiring worldly power and opulence; yathāvart — just as.

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

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

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

Gopa Kumāra, however, realized fraternal love of Kṛṣṇa. There are two possible explanations for this, the first being the simplest: while the name
Gopî-jana-vallabha primarily represents romantic love of Kṛṣṇa, one can derive from it any of the four primary spiritual sentiments found in Vraja, Kṛṣṇa’s world of spiritual emotion. This is so because romantic love is objectively the most complete and includes all the excellences of the other varieties of love within it.

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

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

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

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{rādhā-sandesā-vṛndānī katbayati subalāḥ paśya kṛṣṇasya karṇe} \\
\text{syāmā-kandarpā-lekham nibhṛtam} \\
\text{upabaraty ujjvalāḥ pāñi-padmé} \\
\text{pāli-tāmbūlam āsyे vitarati caturāḥ kokilo mūrdbni dbatte} \\
\text{tārā-dāmeteri narma-praṇayi-sabacarās} \\
\text{tanvi tanvanti sevām}
\end{align*}
\]

Just look at Subala whispering all of Rādhārāṇi’s messages in Kṛṣṇa’s ear. And Ujjvala brings Śyāmā-devi’s love letters and
secretly places them in his lotus hand. Catura places Pālī-devī’s tambūla in Kṛṣṇa’s mouth, and Kokila places the garlands made by Tārā-devī on his head. O thin-waisted one, this is how the priya-narma sakhā render service to Kṛṣṇa (Bṛ. 3.2.44).

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

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

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

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31. Although Gopa Kumāra (known as Svarūpa in his spiritual body) is identified with the family of Śrīdāmā, a priya-sakha, this does not preclude his being a priya-narma-sakha. Vidagdha, another priya-narma-sakha, is a member of Sudāmā’s family, and Sudāmā is a priya-sakha. Moreover, Svarūpa is closely associated with Rādhārāṇī, taking her orders with great delight. See Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.7.9–11.
O Śrī Kṛśṇa, Gopāla, Hari, Mukunda! Govinda! O Nanda-kīśora! Kṛśṇa! O darling son of Śrī Yaśodā, please show me your favor! O life of the divine cowherd girls! O Lord of Rādhikā!

The names Śrī-ballavi-jīvana and Rādhikeśā speak of Kṛśṇa’s romantic life and thus indicate Gopa Kumāra’s acquaintance with and affection for it. Furthermore, throughout Brhad-bhāgavatāmṛta Gopa Kumara’s Deity, the Deity of his mantra, is identified not just as Gopāla, but Madana Gopā-la, “romantic Gopāla.”

25. yad etasya svarūpārtham vācā vedayeti te papraccbh |
tad u bocāca \ brabhma-savanan carato me dhyātaḥ stutah |
paramaḥ parārdhānte so ‘budhyata |
gopa-veçō me puruṣaḥ purastād āvirbabhāva ||

yad — because; etasya — his; svarūpa-artham — the essential form; vācā — with words; vedaya — please reveal; iti — thus; te — they; papraccbh — asked; tat u bocāca — he then said; brabhma-savanan — the Brahma sacrifice; carataḥ — performing; me — me; dhyātaḥ — meditated; stutah — praised; paramaḥ — supreme; parārdhānte — at the end of my long night; saḥ — he; abudhyata — awoke; gopa-veśaḥ — dressed as a cowherd; me — me; puruṣaḥ — person; purastāt — before; āvirbabhāva — appeared.
The sages then said: Please reveal in words the essential meaning of this mantra.

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

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

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

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

32. Brhma-savanam is interpreted by most commentators as brhma-samaya, “the time of Brahmā,” or the first half of Brahmā’s life (Cf. ŚB 3.11.34–39). Savanam as samaya (time) is also found in ŚB 8.16.48.
In the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam’s narration of the brahma-savāna, it is not obvious that Kṛṣṇa himself appeared before Brahmā. Therein it is described that the four-headed Brahmā searched in all directions for his source and while earnestly searching heard the Sanskrit syllables ta and pa. He understood this sound to be a divine instruction in answer to his searching, and thus he engaged himself in tapa, penance. After some time, God appeared before him in a four-handed form and revealed his abode. The description of the abode of God (tasmai sva-lokaṁ bhagavān sabbājitah) and his form (kiriṭināṁ kuṇḍalināṁ catur-bhujāṁ pitāṁśukāṁ vakṣāṁ lakṣitaṁ īśīyā) indicates that it was Nārāyaṇa who appeared before Brahmā. However, following this incident Brahmā asks, “Please inform me how, in spite of your transcendental form, you assume an ordinary form, although you have no such form at all” (ŚB 2.9.30). While Nārāyaṇa’s four-handed form is overtly transcendental, Kṛṣṇa’s two-handed form appears humanlike. It seems from Brahmā’s question that Kṛṣṇa had already appeared to Brahmā in his humanlike form dressed as a cowherd and at this point he shook hands with Brahmā (prita-manāḥ kare sprāṁ). It is not customary for Nārāyaṇa, who is worshiped in reverential love, to shake hands with his devotees as one would with a friend, which is how Brahmā described this incident, yāvat sakḥā sakhyur īveṣā te kṛtab: “You have shaken hands with me just as a friend does with a friend.” Following this, Kṛṣṇa also told Brahmā, “All of me—my eternal form, nature, color, qualities, and activities—let everything be awakened within you out of my causeless mercy.” Thus nothing about the form of God remains to be realized by Brahmā. Therefore, it should be understood that in this conversation two-handed Gopāla Kṛṣṇa adorned with the dress of a cow-

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

34. ŚB 2.9.9–15.

35. ŚB 2.9.16–17.

36. ŚB 2.9.19.

37. ŚB 2.9.30. In his commentary on this verse, Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda stresses that this exchange involved the intimacy of fraternal love (sakbya-rasa), which is not expressed between Nārāyaṇa and his devotees, but rather between Kṛṣṇa and his devotees.
herd appeared before Brahmā and that it is this supreme form of God who further instructed Brahmā in the confidential secrets of his own worship, which constitute the essence of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, jñānām parama-guhyaṁ me yad vijñāna-samanvitam sa-rhasyam.38

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

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

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

38. ŚB 2.9.31. This verse indicating rāga-bbakti prefaces the famous catuḥ-sloki of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. Thus it is clear that in the catuḥ-sloki Kṛṣṇa himself and not Nārāyaṇa is speaking about the supreme secret of rāga-bbakti (parama-guhyaṁ/sa-rasasvam), the underlying metaphysic of which is acintya-bhedābheda.
39. ŚB 1.1.1.
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26. तत: प्रणातो मयासमुल्लेन हदा
मधमाधादशां चरूप मुखवे दृष्यान्तरकितः।
पुनः सिसुक्तातो मे प्रादुरभूतः।
तेव्वरे भविष्यजगद्ध प्रकाशाय
निद्र झक्कादातो लक्कारात्मुखिवी।
ईंतोग्रिबिन्दुरदुस्मात्मात्तदग्रृहि, िति क्रमः काराद्वयम्।
कृष्णायपदाकाशं खाद्यसुल्त्युनात्सुरमिबं िवििा प्रादुरकार्यम्।
तदनाशास्त्रीपुणादि च चैं सकलमिदं सकलमििदिः।॥२६॥

tatab praṇātaḥ mayānukūlena byṛā mabhyaṁ aṣṭādaśāṁnaṁ svārūpāṁ
śṛṣṭaye dattvāntarītabhāḥ | punah sīrykṣatō me prādurabhūtāḥ |
tēṣāt akṣāreṣu bbavisyaḥ-jagad-rūpāṁ prakāśayant
	
tad iba ka-kārād āpo la-kārāt prthivī ātō ḍgaṇir bindor indus
tat-sampātāt tad-arka iti klinī-kārād asṛjam | kṛṣṇāya-padād

ākāśāṁ khaḍ vauḥ ātō uttarāt surabhinī vidyāṁ prādurakāraśaṁ |
tad-uttarāt strī-puṁśaṁ cedam sakalam idam sakalam idam iti ||


tataḥ — then; praṇataḥ — bowed down to; mayā — by me; anukūlena —
with a favorable; byṛā — heart; mabhyaṁ — to me; aṣṭādaśāṁnaṁ — eight-
teen-syllable mantra; svārūpāṁ — identity; śṛṣṭaye — to create; dattvā —
giving; antarītabhāḥ — disappeared; punah — again; sīrykṣataḥ — desiring to
create; me — me; prādurabhūtāḥ — appeared; tēṣā — in these; akṣāreṣu — let-
ters; bbavisyaḥ — the future; jagad-rūpāṁ — form of the universe; prakāśayan
— causing to appear; tat — that; iba — here; ka-kārāt — from the letter
k; āpaḥ — water; la-kārāt — from the letter l; prthivī — earth; ī-taḥ — from
the letter i; agniḥ — from fire; bindoḥ — from the bindu; induḥ — the moon;
tat-sampātāt — from the combination; tat — that; arkaḥ — the sun; iti —
thus; klinī-kārāt — from the syllable klinī; asṛjam — I created; kṛṣṇāya-
padāt — from the word kṛṣṇāya; ākāśāṁ — the sky; khaḍ — from the sky;
vauḥ — the air; iti — thus; uttarāt — from the next word; surabhinī —
sweet (adj.) or the heavenly Surabhī cow (noun); vidyāṁ — wisdom; prādu-
ra-kaśaṁ — I caused to appear; tad-uttarāt — after that; strī-puṁśaṁ —
male and female manifestation; ca — and; idam — this; sakalam — all.
Then, as I offered him my obeisances, he became favorable to me and, after giving me the eighteen-syllable form of himself for the sake of engaging in the creation, he disappeared. When I wished to engage in the activity of creation, he reappeared to me and revealed that the form of the future universe was present in the very letters of the eighteen-syllable mantra. That is, water arises from the letter $k$, the earth from the letter $l$, fire from $i$, and the moon from the bindu. From the combination of all these letters, the sun arises. So I created all these things out of the sacred syllable $kli$m. Then, from the word $kṛṣṇāya$, I manifested the sky, followed by the air. From the next word, I produced the numerous wish-fulfilling cows and various types of knowledge. After that came this entire creation of male and female forms.

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

The Hindu, scripturally based notion of the world expanding and contracting in perpetual cycles with no beginning or end in time is not contradictory to modern scientific thinking. The same observations that support the big bang theory also support the theory that the so-called bang has no beginning in time and results in an expansion of the universe over trillions of years until it reaches a point of return and contracts, only to be expanded again ad infinitum. The astrophysicist Paul Stein-
hardt has recently put forth such a scientifically credible explanation called the cyclical universe theory, which seeks to explain recently uncovered flaws in the current theory of the origin and evolution of all known things.

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

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

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

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

> **27.** एतस्यैव यजनेन चन्द्रध्वजो गतोहमात्मानां वेदेत्योक्तारात्मार्थकं मनुमार्त्थकसुहर्षितोऽभ्यायव। ||२७||

> *etasya eva yajanena candra-dhvajo gata-mobam ātmānam vedety omkārāntarālikā manum āvartayet saṅga-rabito 'bhyānayat ||

> *etasya — of him; eva — verily; yajanena — by sacrificing; candra-dhvajah — Śiva, whose insignia is the moon; gata-mobam — free of illusion; ātmānam — self; veda — knew; iti — thus; omkāra — Oṁ; antarālikā — both before and after it; manum — mantra; āvartayet — repeats; saṅga-rabito — free from attachment; abhyānayat — attained realization of the Supreme Deity.*

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

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

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

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

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

28.  तद्विन्द्रणोऽपि परमं पदं सदा पश्यति सूरयः। दिवीवचं चक्रुरतत्तम।
तस्मादेन नित्यमः सत्त्विनित्यमः सैदिति॥२८॥

tad viśnoḥ paramaṁ padaṁ sadā paśyanti sūrayah
divīc ca ṭatuṁ ātatam

tasmād enaṁ nityam abhyasan nityam abhyased iti

tat — that; viśnoḥ — of Viṣṇu; paramaṁ — supreme; padaṁ — station; sadā — always; paśyanti — see; sūrayah — the gods; divi — in the heavens; iva — like; cakṣuḥ — an eye; ātatam — expanding; tasmāt — therefore; enam — it; nityam — always; abhyaset — repeat.

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

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

42. The first two sentences of this verse are found in Ṛg Veda 1.22.20.
This supreme abode is also known as Goloka. Those who “always see it” are the godly, whose every action is performed under the vigilant yet loving eye of God. Prabodhānanda Sarasvati comments that the word cakṣus (eye) is a synonym for the sun, for it is said in the prayers to Sūrya Nārāyaṇa that are to accompany the chanting of the gāyatri mantra, namah savitre jagad-eka-cakṣuse: “Homage to the sun, the one eye of the universe.”

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

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

29. 

trandahurenke yasya prathama-padaṃ bhūmir dvitiya-padaṃ jalaṃ tṛtiya-padaṃ 

tetraś caturtha-padaṃ vāyus carama-padaṃ vyoma iti vaiṣṇava-paṇca-vyābyti-mayanī mantraṃ kṛṣṇabhāṣakaṁ kaivalya-sṛtyai 
satatam āvartayet satatam āvartayed iti ||29||

tad ābur eke yasya prathama-padāḥ bhūmirm dvitiya-padāḥ jalaṁ tṛtiya-padāḥ 

tetraḥ caturtha-padāḥ vāyuḥ carama-padāḥ vyoma iti vaiṣṇava-paṇca-vyābyti-mayanī mantraṃ kṛṣṇabhāṣakaṁ kaivalya-sṛtyai 
satatam āvartayet satatam āvartayed iti ||11

tat — it; ābuh — say; eke — some people; yasya — whose; prathama-padaḥ — from the first element; bhūmiḥ — the earth; dvitiya-padaḥ — from the second element; jalaṁ — water; tṛtiya-padaḥ — from the third; tejab — fire; caturtha-padaḥ — from the fourth; vāyuḥ — the air; carama-padaḥ — from the last; vyoma — the ether; iti — thus; vaiṣṇava-paṇca-vyābyti-mayanī — made up of five utterances related to Viṣṇu; mantraṁ — mantra;
Some say that earth arose from the mantra’s first element, water from the second, fire from the third, air from the fourth, and ether from the final element. One who wishes to attain the kaivalya state of liberation should constantly repeat this Vaiṣṇava mantra, which is uttered in five portions and reveals Kṛṣṇa.

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

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

43. Caitanya-candrāmṛta 5.
God. In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (4.20.23), Prthu Mahārāja also expresses his distaste for this kind of liberation, tān iśa kaivalya-pate vṛte na ca.

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

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

It is noteworthy, however, that the conclusion of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (12.13.12) uses the same word, kaivalya, to describe its ultimate goal: kaivalyaika-prayojana. Jiva Gosvāmi argues in Bhakti-sandarbha (1) that true knowledge means to know that one has no existence separate from Kṛṣṇa.

44. Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.1.11.
It is ignorance of this relationship that is the source of our bondage in the world. Thus kaivalya does have a devotional application. Indeed, it speaks of oneness in love the likes of which can only be found in rāga-bhakti.

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


 tad atra gāthāḥ 
 yasya pūrva-padād bhūmir dvitiyāt salilodbhavaḥ 
 tṛtiyāt teja udbbūtan caturthād gandha-vābanaḥ 
 pañcamād ambarotpattis tam evaikām samabhyaset 
 candradhvaja ’gamad visnoḥ paramam padam ayayam

tat — that; atra — here; gāthāḥ — verses; yasya — whose; pūrva-padāt — from the first word; bhūmir — earth; dvitiyāt — from the second; salilodbhavaḥ — the production of water; tṛtiyāt — from the third; tejaḥ — fire; udbbūtaṁ — arose; caturthāt — from the fourth; gandha-vābanaḥ — the air, which carries fragrances; pañcamād — from the fifth; ambaru-utpatthāḥ — the creation of the sky; tam — that; eva — certainly; evaikām — alone; samabhyaset — one should cultivate; candradhvajāḥ — Śiva; agamat — went; visnoḥ — of Viṣṇu; paramam — supreme; padam — station; ayayam — the imperishable abode of Viṣṇu.
The following verses give confirmation of the preceding statements:

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

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

32. tato viśuddham vimalam viśokam
    aṣeṣa-lobbādi-nirasta-saṅgam
    yat tat-padam paṇca-padam tad eva
    sa vāsudevo na yato nyad asti

\[
\text{tato viśuddham vimalam viśokam} \\
\text{aṣeṣa-lobbādi-nirasta-saṅgam} \\
\text{yat tat-padam paṇca-padam tad eva} \\
\text{sa vāsudevo na yato nyad asti} ||32||
\]

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

The five-part mantra is the abode of the completely pure and untainted Supreme, where there is no grief and in which contact with greed
and desire have been absolutely defeated. Verily, it is Vāsudeva, other than whom there is nothing.

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

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

33.  

tam ekaṁ govindaṁ sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaṁ  
pañca-padaṁ vṛndāvana-sura-bhūruba-talāsīnāṁ  
satataṁ samarud-gaṇo 'ham paramayaḥ stutiya toṣayāmi ||33||

tam — him; ekaṁ — alone; govindaṁ — Govinda; sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaṁ — body of eternity, knowledge, and bliss; pañca-padaṁ — fivefold; vṛndāvana-sura-bhūruba-talāsīnāṁ — seated beneath a wish-fulfilling tree in Vṛndāvana; satataṁ — constantly; sa-marud-gaṇah — with the Maruts;

45. ŚB 4.3.23.
I, along with the Maruts, constantly endeavor to please with glorious hymns that one supreme Lord, Govinda, whose fivefold form is transcendental existence, consciousness, and bliss, and who is seated at the base of a wish-fulfilling tree in Vṛndāvana.

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

Gauḍīya Vedāntins experience ultimate reality as nondual consciousness, which on account of its being joy itself⁴⁶ is experienced in three realizations through three paths to transcendence. These realizations of the Absolute are experienced as Bhagavān, Paramātmā, and Brahman to devotees, *yogīs*, and *jñāṇīs*, respectively. The Absolute is joyful by nature. In order to be so, it must also exist and be cognizant of its existence. While there can be an existence that is not cognizant of itself, as well as a cognizant existence that is not joyful, there cannot be a joyful reality that either does not exist or is not cognizant of its existence. When existence becomes cognizant of the extent to which it exists—of its purpose—it has reason for celebration.

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

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

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

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

From this angle of vision, Paramātmā is a more developed manifestation of Godhead primarily representing cit and Brahman is the lowest of the three manifestations primarily representing sat. As mentioned, Brahman, Paramātmā, and Bhagavān can be further understood in terms of
their being manifestations of Godhead corresponding with three approaches to him. Again, the Godhead appears as Brahman to the jñāni, as Paramātmā to the yogī, and as Bhagavān to his devotee.

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

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

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

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47.  atra pūrve ye ca sādhyā viśvadevāḥ sanātanāḥ  
  te ha nākaṁ mahimānaṁ sacanto yatra pūrve sādhyāḥ santi devāḥ
Brahmā’s own words in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam also lend support to the understanding of marud-gaṇāḥ as eternal associates of Govinda. After experiencing Kṛṣṇa’s supremacy in Vṛndāvana, Brahmā aspired to become a resident of Kṛṣṇa’s abode even in the most insignificant role as a stone or blade of grass. Such desire is akāma (desirelessness). The Sanskrit letter a represents Kṛṣṇa, who says in Bhagavad-gītā, “Of letters I am a.” Thus a-kaṁa means both no desire and the desire for Kṛṣṇa, who is attained by loving service. Great souls and gods of this world desire this service and demonstrate that any position in Kṛṣṇa’s abode, however insignificant, is far superior to even the highest position attainable in the material world. Brahmā says that attaining any position in Vṛndāvana constitutes the highest fortune (tad bhūri-bhāgyam).\(^\text{48}\) Gods of this world who have realized this truth attain that supreme abode.

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

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

\(^{48}\) SB 10.14.34.
Vṛndāvana. Attaching ourselves in service to one of his eternal associates, we experience the full sense of love of Kṛṣṇa through the medium of such an associate (tad-bhāva). This point is appropriately emphasized here, as Brahmā concludes his instructions on rāgānugā-bhakti to the sages.

34. ॐ नमः विश्वरूपाय विश्रस्तित्वन्तिहैव | विश्वरूपाय गोकृदाय नमः नमः ||३४||

oṁ namo viśvā-rūpāya viśvā-sthity-anta-hetave |
viśveśvarāya viśvāya govindāya namo namah ||

oṁ — Oṁ; namah — salutations; viśvā-rūpāya — to the form of the universe; viśvā-sthity-anta-hetave — to the cause of universal preservation and dissolution; viśveśvarāya — to the Lord of the universe; viśvāya — to the universe; govindāya — to Govinda; namo namah — repeated salutations.

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

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

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

49. See SB 10.12–14.
his young friends and calves, Brahmā witnessed Kṛṣṇa’s power to expand himself into replicate forms of all the stolen boys and calves so precisely that their mothers could not detect that their actual sons and calves were not present. Such is the nature of Kṛṣṇa’s love for his devotees: he knows their hearts and thus everything about them. Seeing this, Brahmā was astonished, and all the more so when Kṛṣṇa caused all the replicated calves and boys to appear before Brahmā in innumerable four-armed forms of Nārāyaṇa, whose lotus navel was his birthplace. Thus Kṛṣṇa revealed not only that the universe was contained within himself, but that innumerable universes were within him as well as innumerable forms of Nārāyaṇa from whom the universes originally emanated. Brahmā’s use here of the word viśva-rūpa indicates that he is remembering this particular pastime, which had served to underscore his realization of Kṛṣṇa’s supreme position.

Chapters 11–14 of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam’s tenth canto, in which the brahma-vimohana-līlā is related, are the most important chapters of the text in terms of establishing the Gauḍīya tattva of Kṛṣṇa’s supremacy (kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svāyam).

35. 

नमो विज्ञानरूपाय फर्मानन्दरूपिणे ।
कृष्णाय गोपीनाथाय गोकिन्दाय नमो नमः ॥३५॥

namo viśiṣṭa-rūpāya paramānandarūpiṇe ।
kṛṣṇāya gopināthāya govindāya namo namah ।

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

50. It is also noteworthy that these replicas of the cowherds and calves were not capable of satisfying Kṛṣṇa to the extent that the actual calves and cowherds were. The former appeared before Brahmā as Viṣṇu tattva, whereas the latter were sākti-tattva (śakti-rūpa-śakti).
I offer salutations to Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of the gopīs, the master of the cows and cowherds. He is the embodiment of realized knowledge and possesses a form of supreme bliss.

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

36. नमः कमलनेत्राय नमः कमलमालीने।
नमः कमलनाभाय कमलपतये नमः।

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

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

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

37. बर्हपीप्राभिरामाय रामायकुण्ठमेधसे।
रामामानसहसाय गोविन्दाय नमो नमः।

barbāpiḍābbirāmāya rāmāyākuṇṭha-medbase
ramā-mānasa-baṁśāya govindāya namo namaḥ

barbāpiḍa-abbirāmāya — to one who is beautified by a crown of peacock feathers; rāmāya — to Rāma; akuṇṭha-medbase — whose intelligence is unrestricted; ramā — Lakṣmī; mānasa-baṁśāya — the swan of the mind; govindāya — to Govinda; namo namaḥ — salutations again and again.
I bow down repeatedly to Govinda, [who is also known as] Rāma. He is adorned with a crown of peacock feathers; his intelligence is unrestricted. He is like a swan in the pool of the Goddess of Fortune's, Ramā's, mind.

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

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

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

73
Wearing a peacock-feather ornament upon his head, blue *karnikāra* flowers on his ears, a yellow garment as brilliant as gold, and the Vaijayanti garland, Lord Kṛṣṇa exhibited his transcendental form as the greatest of dancers as he entered the forest of Vṛndāvana, beautifying it with the marks of his footprints. He filled the holes of his flute with the nectar of his lips, and the cowherd boys sang his glories (SB 10.21.5).

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

\[
\text{akṣaṇvatuṁ phalam idam na paraṁ vidāmaḥ} \\
\text{sakhyah paśūṁ anaviveśayator vayasyaiḥ} \\
\text{vaktraṁ vrajeśa-sutañor anavenu-juśtañū} \\
\text{yair vā nipitam anurakta-kaṭākṣa-mokṣam}
\]

O friends, those eyes that see the beautiful faces of the sons of Mahārāja Nanda are certainly fortunate. As these two sons enter the forest, surrounded by their friends, driving the cows before them, they hold their flutes to their mouths and glance lovingly on the residents of Vṛndāvana. For those who possess eyes, we think there is no greater object of vision than this (SB 10.21.7).

In these verses the *gopīs* ostensibly glorify the love of the cowherds for Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, describing the supreme object of vision as the sight of Rāma and Kṛṣṇa entering the forest with their friends and cows. How much better is it, then, to be in that picture and enter the forest along with them? This is the *gopas*’ great fortune, and this wistful statement by the *gopīs* indicates a certain jealousy toward Kṛṣṇa’s friends, for whom there are no obstacles to spending the entire day with Kṛṣṇa. These verses thus support the cowherds’ subjective reality, in which they consider fraternal love to be most desirable.
However, Rāma and Kṛṣṇa together are not the object of love for the gopīs headed by Rādhā. They mention Rāma in this verse only to veil their love for Kṛṣṇa, which they cannot express as openly as the cowherds can. By mentioning Balarāma and the cowherds along with Kṛṣṇa, they dissimulate their conjugal paramour love for Kṛṣṇa. Furthermore, if a practitioner’s heart follows the love of the gopīs, these verses will speak to him accordingly and he will have no difficulty making Balarāma disappear from the poetry of this Bhāgavatam verse altogether.51 Those in gopī-bhāva will hear the gopīs in these verses speaking of only Kṛṣṇa.

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

38. कंसवंशविनाशाय केशिचाण्नरपधातिने ।
वुष्मध्यजवन्धाय पार्थसारथये नमः ॥३८॥

kaṁśa-vamśa-vināśīya keśi-cāṇūra-ghātine |
vṛṣabha-dhvaja-vandyāya pārtha-sārath拜e namah ॥

kaṁśa-vamśa-vināśīya — to him who destroyed Kaṁsa and his retinue;
keśi-cāṇūra-ghātine — who killed the demons Keśi and Cāṇūra;
vṛṣabha-dhvaja-vandyāya — who is the object of Lord Śiva’s prayers;
pārtha-sārath拜e — the charioteer of Arjuna; namah — salutations.

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

51. See the commentary of Viśvanātha Cakravarti Ṭhākura in particular.
52. Bg. 10.10. See Swāmī Tripurārī, Bhagavat-gītā, 335–37.
Kaṁsa-vanāsa-vinaśīya refers to Kṛṣṇa’s destruction of Kaṁsa and his associates, such as the wrestlers Cāṇūra and Muṣṭika. Remembering Kṛṣṇa today in relation to these demon-slaying pastimes will destroy one’s own evil tendencies. To achieve this result, the sādhaka must think deeply and introspectively on the significance of these lilās and make a conscious effort to remove from his heart whatever is unfavorable for spiritual culture.

After Kṛṣṇa defeated Śiva’s devotee Bāṇāsura, Lord Śiva recognized Kṛṣṇa’s supremacy and prayed to him. This lilā is referred to here with the words vṛṣabha-dhvaja-vandyāya. As Pārtha-sārathi, Arjuna’s charioteer, Kṛṣṇa demonstrates his most endearing quality of loving submission to his own devotees, bhakta-vātsalya.

39.  

venu-vādana-silāya gopālayābi-mardine 
kālindī-kūla-lolāya lola-kuṇḍala-dbārīne

venu-vādana-silāya — attached to playing his flute; gopālaya — the cowherd; abī-mardine — chastiser of the snake; kālindī-kūla-lolāya — who enjoys playing on the banks of the Yamunā; lola-kuṇḍala-dbārīne — who wears swinging earrings.

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

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

53. Śiva’s prayers are found in ŚB 10.69.
54. Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī cites the alternative reading, valgave for dbārīne, which emphasizes the added charm brought by Kṛṣṇa’s earrings rather than their simple presence.
gopīs and Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī in particular to join him in the forest by sounding the fifth note of his flute. Each gopī heard her own name called when this sound entered her heart through the right ear. This sweet sound awakened such identification with Kṛṣṇa that all the gopīs were able to abandon all their household duties—even the nursing of their infant children—without a second thought. The fifth note of Kṛṣṇa’s flute is identified with the *kāma-gāyatrī mantra*, which is to be chanted in connection with the Gopāla mantra. Thus there is a connection between Kṛṣṇa’s flute and spiritual initiation (*mantra-dīkṣā*), both of which exercise a fascinating and attractive power on all living entities.

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

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40. vallavī-nayanāmbhoja-māline nṛtya-śāline
   namaha praṇata-pālāya śrī-kṛṣṇāya namo namah
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*vallavī-nayana* — the eyes of the gopīs; *āmbhoja-māline* — who is garlanded by lotuses; *nṛtya-śāline* — who likes to dance; *namab* — salutations; *praṇata-pālāya* — who protects those who surrender to him; *śrī-kṛṣṇāya* — to Kṛṣṇa; *namo namah* — I make repeated salutations.

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

55. *Namāṣṭakam* 5.
57. *Bhakti-rasāmrta-sindhu* 3.3.50.
According to Śrī Prabodhānanda, the lotus eyes of the gopīs are compared
to Kṛṣṇa’s perpetual garland because they are always fixed on him.

41.  

नमः पापप्रणाणाय गोवर्धनन्दराय च ।
पूताजीवितानाय तृणवार्तसुहारिणे ॥४१॥

\[ \text{name} \quad \text{— salutations; } \text{pāpa-praṇāśāya } \quad \text{— the destroyer of sin; } \text{goverdhana-}
\text{dharāya } \quad \text{— the lifter of Govardhana; } \text{ca } \quad \text{— and; } \text{pūtanā-jīvitāntāya } \quad \text{— who puts an end to the life of Pūtanā; } \text{tṛṇāvārtasu-bāriṇe } \quad \text{— the killer of Tṛṇāvarta.} \]

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

42.  

निष्कलाय विमोहाय सुद्धायासुद्धा-वैरिणे ।
अद्वितीयाय महते श्रीकृष्णाय नमो नमः ॥४२॥

\[ \text{nīṣkalāya } \quad \text{— who cannot be divided; } \text{vimobāya } \quad \text{— in whom there is no illusion; } \text{suddhāya } \quad \text{— to the pure; } \text{asuddha-vaireṇe } \quad \text{— the enemy of the impure; } \text{advitiyāya } \quad \text{— to the one without a second; } \text{mabate } \quad \text{— to the great; } \text{śri-kṛṣṇāya } \quad \text{— to Kṛṣṇa; } \text{namo namah } \quad \text{— I make repeated salutations.} \]

I offer repeated salutations to the incomparably great Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who
cannot be divided, in whom there is no illusion, who cannot be
equaled, who is pure, and who is the enemy of all impurity.
Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī explains that the word *niśkala* means “free from māyā.” It literally means “without parts.” Thus he implies that freedom from illusion involves transcending material designations (*upādbis*) and understanding all parts in relation to the whole (*advaya-jñāna-tattva*). Śrī Prabodhānanda comments that *niśkala* can also mean one who causes others to take up the path of religion. *Kalayati* means “to enchant,” and the prefix *niś* means “completely.” Kṛṣṇa is he who completely enchants all living beings. Such is the force of charm and affection by which he draws others to *dharma*. He is enchanting because of his adeptness in the art (*kalā*) of love. Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī offers yet a third meaning for *niśkala*: “One around whose neck hangs (*lāti*) a golden ornament (*niśka*).” Kṛṣṇa wears such an ornament in the form of a locket holding a picture of Śrī Rādhā, just as Rādhā wears one containing a picture of Kṛṣṇa.

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

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

43.  

58.  

58. See SB 1.1.1.
Be merciful to me, O supreme joy! Be merciful to me. Deliver me, O Lord, for I have been bitten by the snake of disease and distress.

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

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

śrī-kṛṣṇa rukmini-kānta gopi-jana-manohara |
samsāra-sāgare magnāṁ māṁ uddhara jagad-guro ||

śrī-kṛṣṇa — O Kṛṣṇa; rukmini-kānta — O husband of Rukmini; gopi-jana-manohara — O stealer of the gopis’ minds; samsāra-sāgare — in the ocean of
material existence; *mān* — immersed; *mām* — me; *uddbara* — lift up; *jagad-guro* — O spiritual master of the universe.

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

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

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

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

*keśava kleśa-barana nārāyaṇa janārdana ।
govinda paramānanda māṁ samuddbara mādhava ॥४५॥*

*keśava* — O Keśava; *kleśa-barana* — deliverer from distress; *nārāyaṇa* — O Nārāyaṇa; *janārdana* — Janārdana; *govinda* — Govinda; *paramānanda* — O
supreme form of bliss; mām — me; samuddhāra — deliver; mādhava — O Mādhava.

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

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

46. atha hāvam stutibhir ārādhayāmi yathā yūyam tathā pañca-pādam
   japantah śrī-krṣṇam dhyāyantah sāmsṛtim tariṣyatheti bovāca hairanyah

atha ba — so then; evam — in this way; stutibhiḥ — with these hymns; ārād-bhayāmi — I worship; yathā — just as; yūyam — you all; tathā — in the same way; pañca-pādam — the five-part mantra; japantah — chanting; śrī-krṣṇam — Kṛṣṇa; dhyāyantah — meditating on; sāmsṛtim — the material world; tariṣyathā — you will cross over; iti — thus; ha uvāca — spoke; hairanyah — Brahmā.

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

According to Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī, after chanting the hymns in salutation to Kṛṣṇa, Brahmā became immersed in love for Kṛṣṇa as the import of his praise penetrated his heart. As a result, the knowledge of how to please Kṛṣṇa became fully manifest in his heart. Brahmā then chanted more hymns not found in the text of Gopāla-tāpanī, which were not only more joyful and filled with wonder, but which revealed his desire to serve
Kṛṣṇa in a particular sentiment.59 This is the implication of the word ārādhyāmi (I worship) in this verse.

47. अमु पञ्चपदं मन्त्रावत्वेषां: 
   स यात्यनायासतः केवलं दत्तं तत्।
   अनेजदेवं मनसो जीवियो दे 
   नैन्द्रेवा आप्नुवं पूर्वमाणिदित्॥४७॥

amun pañca-padaṁ mantram āvartayed yah sa yāty
anāyāsataḥ kevalāṁ padam tat ā
anejad ekaṁ manaso javiyō
naitad devā āpnuvan pūrvam arśad iti ||

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

60. See Gopāla-campū 2.29.80, Bhakti-rasāmyta-sindhu 3.4.76, Ujjvala-nilamāṇi 15.3.19, and Brabma-sambhītā 5.5 as examples.
banks of the Yamunā and at the foot of Mount Govardhana, surrounded by lush forest. Such is the mystery of Kṛṣṇa’s abode. Intimate involvement with the infinite requires that the infinite take on a finite appearance.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

48. तस्मातः कृष्णे एव परो देवस्तः ध्यायेयं सर्वेष्वं
वजेत भजेदिति अं तत्संविदि ||४८||

tasmāt kṛṣṇa eva paro devas tāṁ dhyāyeta tāṁ rasyet
tāṁ yajeta tāṁ bhajeta iti oṁ tat sad iti ||

tasmāt — therefore; kṛṣṇah — Kṛṣṇa; eva — most certainly; parah — the supreme; devah — Deity; tāṁ — him; dhyāyet — should meditate upon; tāṁ — him; rasyet — should chant his mantra; tāṁ — him; yajet — should sacrifice to him; tāṁ — him; bhajet — should worship; iti — thus; oṁ tat sat — oṁ tat sat; iti — thus.

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

This Upaniṣad began with the question, “Who is the Supreme Deity?” In consideration of all that has been discussed thus far, Śruti-devī makes the learned conclusion: Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Deity. What follows logically from this conclusion is that one should meditate on him and thereby relish him in aesthetic rapture (rasa), the foundation of which is the service ego.
The words *om tat sat* designate the supreme reality and serve here as a solemn declaration in his name that everything stated in this *Upaniṣad* is the absolute truth.\(^{62}\)

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

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

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

In these opening sentences, the scene for this narrative is set. It is the morning after one of Kṛṣṇa’s nightlong trysts with the gopīs in the forests of Vṛndāvana. The word uṣitvā indicates not only that the gopīs had spent
the entire night in Kṛṣṇa’s company but that they desired these lilās with him to be constant and uninterrupted. Just as young girls are spontaneously attracted to young boys and any impediment put in the way of their union serves only to intensify their desire to be together, the gopis were similarly endowed with the spontaneous desire to be united with Kṛṣṇa. Although such desire on their part superficially appears to be the antithesis of desirelessness, it is in fact completely devoid of self-interest. The gopis approached Kṛṣṇa with the intensity of young girls who have fallen deeply in love, and no one so passionate about God can remain attached to the ephemeral.

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

2. 

anu kasmai brāhmaṇāya bhakṣyaṁ dātavyam bhavati

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

The gopis appear to be uneducated village girls. On the surface they are religious, superstitious, and above all, human. Here they ask a religious question of their young lover, the cowherd Kṛṣṇa. They want to know which brāhmaṇa, or saintly person, in their village is most worthy of re-
ceiving an offering of rice boiled in milk and sugar. Their objective is not overtly spiritual. They want a benediction. They want Krṣṇa as their husband, even though this is not acceptable in religious society. They are, after all, already married—or so it seems.

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

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

The gopīs represent the pinnacle of spiritual culture. Their selfless love takes center stage in the love life of the Absolute. Yet in appearance they seem to be nothing more than religious girls who are not even all that good at following the religious injunctions. Appearances aside, the philosophical truth underlying their question is that they want nothing other than to be united in love with Krṣṇa, the Supreme Brahman, at every moment. To that end they engage in various religious acts. Thus while they worship others (brāhmaṇas, gods, and goddesses) within the līlā, their reli-
gious ideal transcends anything that can ordinarily be attained by such worship, and they themselves have already attained that ideal. Experiencing God as Kṛṣṇa, the young cowherd, they are fully immersed in apparently ordinary religious life with human shortcomings, when in reality they have attained the zenith of spiritual experience.

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

3. 

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

Not all commentators agree on who the Durvāsā of Gopāla-tāpani is. While some feel that he is not the Durvāsā of Mahābhārata and Bhāgav-
ata Purāṇa fame, who is a partial incarnation of Śiva, others disagree, despite Durvāsā’s well-known enmity toward Kṛṣṇa’s devotees, such as the Pāṇḍavas and Mahārāja Ambariṣa. This opinion seems to be confirmed in text 7, where Durvāsā is identified as “the fiery-tempered son of Rudra.”

4. कथं यास्यामोऽत्यत्त्वं जरं यमुनायं यतं: श्रेयो भवति \॥

**kathām yāsyāmo ’tṛtvā jalam yamunāyā yataḥ śreyaḥ bhavati \|**

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

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

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

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

It is also implied in this verse that the *gopīs* believed that Kṛṣṇa could do the impossible—that he was wonderful in every respect. They were aware that at Kṛṣṇa’s childhood name-giving ceremony Gargamuni had indicat-
ed that Nārāyaṇa (God) would do wonderful things through him. They had also heard of Kṛṣṇa’s miracles from his cowherd friends.

5. कुष्णेनि ब्रह्मचारीत्युक्ता मार्गं वो दास्यति IIśII

kṛṣṇeti brahmacārīty uktvā mārganī vo dāsyati

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

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

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

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

1. The bhāva of the cowherd community is that Kṛṣṇa is one of them. The cowherds feel that Nārāyaṇa has chosen to perform miracles through Kṛṣṇa because of the piety of his parents. However, the tattva, or philosophical truth, that this bhāva hides is that Kṛṣṇa is transcendently superior to Nārāyaṇa, and thus it is Nārāyaṇa who derives all of his power from Kṛṣṇa.
By remembering me, one can find the bottom of the unfathomable. By remembering me, an impure person is purified. By remembering me, one who is unregulated adopts a regulated life. By remembering me, one who is filled with desire becomes desireless. By remembering me, one unlearned in the Vedas becomes learned.

Śrī Prabodhānanda comments that some manuscripts of Gopāla-tāpani offer an alternate reading of this text: nīśkāmaḥ sakāmo bhavati, which means that someone who is an ātmārāma, a spiritually self-satisfied soul, becomes filled with desire to see Kṛṣṇa upon remembering him. He also offers a novel understanding of the word aśrotriya, which in its conventional use
refers to one who is not learned in the scriptures, or one who has not heard sufficiently from the Vedas. He says that here aśrotriya refers to one who is devoid of the sense of hearing and by extension devoid of all sense powers. He cites as examples the ātmārāma, whose senses are controlled and not in touch with sense objects, and the lower nonmoving forms of life, such as trees. Such souls gain a sense of hearing by the influence of Kṛṣṇa’s flute or the spiritually potent recitation of his lilā.

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

Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī’s explanation of the two kinds of aśrotriya represents the two ends of the spectrum of living beings: those that are liberated and those that are bound. The former, out of spiritual knowledge, do not move in relation to ephemeral objects, whereas the latter, out of ignorance, do move in relation to ephemeral objects. Neither, however, is acquainted with the postliberated movement of spiritual love at the heart of reality. Thus all living beings truly come to life only after coming in contact with Kṛṣṇa. Such contact involves making a connection with his devotees, who give the Gopāla mantra and kāma gāyatrī—the fifth note of Gopāla Kṛṣṇa’s flute—and explain its significance through discourses on the narrative of Kṛṣṇa lilā.
As soon as they heard these words, the gopis remembered the fiery-tempered son of Rudra (Durvåså) and, doing as K®ß√a had told them, crossed over the Yamunå. Upon their arrival at that great sage’s most sanctified hermitage, they offered him their obeisances.

Although the gopis had not fully understood the import of K®ß√a’s contention that he was celibate, being inspired by the affirmation of his prowess, they nonetheless uttered the words “K®ß√a is a brabmacårî” as he had told them to. The Yamunå then immediately gave them passage.

Their initial hesitation to follow K®ß√a’s instruction arose partially from K®ß√a’s claim to celibacy and partially from their knowledge of Durvåså’s reputation for having a fiery temper. K®ß√a’s description of his extraordinary prowess enabled them to overcome their fear of Durvåså, who, being extremely religious and filled with mystic insight, might have cursed them for their trysts with K®ß√a. Thus they went to him and offered him respect, food, and service without any reservation. In actuality, the gopis’ spiritual standing surpassed that of Durvåså, but the lîlå of K®ß√a dictated that they serve and learn from him.
They gave the brāhmaṇa a most desirable sweet rice pudding with clarified butter. Durvāsā happily ate the sweet rice, then gave the girls his remnants and blessed them before giving them permission to return.

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

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

9. कथं यास्यामोऽत्र तृतीयेऽ सौर्याम् ||१९||

kathamū yasyāmo 'tir tvā sauryām
**kathaµ** — how; **yāsyāmah** — will we go; **atīrtvā** — without crossing; **saur-ryām** — the Yamunā.

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

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

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

sa hovāca muniḥ | dūrvāśiṇam māṁ smṛtvā mārgam vo dāsyatīti ||

sah — he; hovāca — said; muniḥ — the sage; dūrvāśiṇam — one who has eaten nothing but grass (who has fasted); māṁ — me; smṛtvā — thinking; mārgam — way; vah — you; dāsyati — will give you; iti — end of quotation.

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

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

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

In this verse the best among the gopis, Gândharvî, is introduced. As will be mentioned in verse 13, all the gopîs accepted the leadership of Gândharvî. The Gauḍîyas consider these verses to be śruti-pramāṇa—scriptural evidence from the Upaniṣads (as opposed to that found in the smṛti literature such as the Purāṇas)—for the primacy of Rādhā over all the other gopis.

The idea that Rādhā is the best of the gopîs is clearly mentioned in the Padma Purāṇa and other smṛti texts. It is also mentioned covertly in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa (10.30.28). Drawing on this text of Gopāla-tāpanī, Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmi refers to Rādhā by the names Gândharvā and Gândharvikā in his Ujjvala-nilamani (7.51, 11.96). In Ujjvala-nilamani 4.4 he cites this Gopāla-tāpanī text as evidence from the Upaniṣads that one of the gopîs is considered preeminent. Gauḍiya ācārya Śrila Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura was fond of this epithet for Rādhā, as it underscores the sober Upaniṣadic basis of the Gauḍiya doctrine, in which the divine service of Rādhā constitutes the zenith of spiritual attainment.
kathām — how is; krṣṇaḥ — Kṛṣṇa; brāhmaṇī — chaste; kathām — how is; dūrvāśīnaḥ — fasting; muniḥ — the sage.

[Gāndharvi asked:] How can Kṛṣṇa be called a brāhmaṇī? And how can you be said to be a fasting sage?

13. 

tām hi mukhyāṁ vidhāya pūrvaṁ anu kṛtvā tūṣṇīṁ āsuh

14–15. śabdavān ākāśah | śabdākāśābhīyāṁ bhinnaṁ |

Having made Gāndharvi their spokeswoman, the other gopīs simply stood behind her and remained silent.
sparśavān vāyuḥ | sparśa-vāyubhyām bhinnah | 
tsamin vāyau tiṣṭbati | vāyur na veda tamī bi 
  | sa by ātmāham katham bhoktā bhavāmi |

rūpavad idam bi tejāḥ | rūpāgniḥbhyām bhinnah | 
tsamin agnis tiṣṭbati | agnīr na veda tamī bi 
  | sa by ātmāham katham bhoktā bhavāmi |

rasavatya āpaḥ | rasābbhyo bhinnah | 
tsamin āpas tiṣṭhanti | āpas tamī na viduḥ 
  | sa by ātmāham katham bhoktā bhavāmi |

gandhavatīyaṁ bhūmib | gandha-bhūmibhyām bhinnah | 
tsamin bhūmis tiṣṭbati | bhūmau tiṣṭbāti | bhūmis tamī na veda 
  | sa by ātmāham katham bhoktā bhavāmi |

śabdavān — possessing sound; ākāśaḥ — space; śabdākāśābhyām — from sound and space; bhinnah — distinct; tasmin — in him; ākāśaḥ — space; tiṣṭbati — is situated; ākāśe — in the sky; tiṣṭbati — is situated; saḥ — that; bi — very; ākāśaḥ — sky; tamī — him; na veda — does not know; saḥ — that; bi — very; ātmā — soul, self; abamī — I; katham — how; bhoktā — the enjoyer; bhavāmi — be; sparśavān — possessing touch; vāyuḥ — the air; sparśa-vāyubhyām bhinnah — distinct from both the sense of touch and the air; tasmin vāyau tiṣṭbati — situated in that air; vāyuḥ — the air; tamī — him; na veda — does not know; saḥ — that; bi — very; ātmā — soul, self; abamī — I; katham — how; bhoktā — the enjoyer; bhavāmi — be; rūpavad — possessing form; idamī — this; bi — very; tejāḥ — fire; rūpāgniḥbhyām — from form and fire; bhinnah — distinct; tasmin — in him; agnīḥ — fire; tiṣṭbati — is situated; agnīḥ — fire; tamī — him; na veda — does not know; saḥ — that; bi — very; ātmā — soul, self; abamī — I; katham — how; bhoktā — the enjoyer; bhavāmi — be; rasavatya — possessing taste; āpaḥ — water; rasābbhyāḥ — from water; bhinnah — distinct; tasmin — from him; āpaḥ — water; tiṣṭanti — is situated; āpsu — water; tiṣṭbāti — is situated; āpaḥ — water; tamī — that; na
[Durvāsā answered:] Sound is the quality present in space. The ātmā is distinct from both sound and space. Space is situated in that ātmā, and the ātmā is in space. That very same space, however, does not know the ātmā. Since I am verily that ātmā, how can I be considered an enjoyer?

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

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

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

Scent is the attribute of the earth. The ātmā is distinct from both scent and earth. The earth is situated in that ātmā, and the ātmā is in the earth. The earth, however, does not know the ātmā. Since I am verily that ātmā, how can I be considered an enjoyer?
Durvāsā answers Gāndharvi’s questions with Upaniṣadic wisdom, and thus from deep within the esoteric lilā of Kṛṣṇa, Gopāla-tāpanī speaks to us about a fundamental spiritual principle: there is a categorical difference between the soul and the body, consciousness and matter. It is also noteworthy that the charm of Kṛṣṇa lilā is grounded in spiritual knowledge and thus has the power to bring about disenchantment with material life and extricate the soul from its worldly entanglement.

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

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

Thus material nature in the form of the body becomes the container of the soul. However, while the soul can become aware of matter and its own conditioning under the influence of matter, matter cannot know the soul. In this example, the container cannot know the contained, but the con-
tained can know the container. The ātma is therefore categorically different from matter. This being the case, how can the soul enjoy or suffer in relation to sense objects when the sense objects and the entire material experience are but a virtual reality? When the soul dons the material body, it thinks that it is suffering or enjoying in relation to sense objects. In truth, however, it is aloof from the sense objects and only witnesses the material phenomena.

16. ॥ ॥

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

Durvāsā has anticipated Gāndharvi’s question, “If the self is not the enjoyer of sense objects, who is? And why does the soul think that it is the enjoyer?”

The mind is matter, yet it is more subtle matter than the senses and their objects. It is more closely related to consciousness and thereby has the capacity to grasp sense objects through its functions of thinking and conceiving. The mind presides over the five senses and is thus commonly referred to as the sixth sense. Its capacity for perception is greater than the capacity of the other five senses. The mind is the link between consciousness—the soul—and the senses and their objects. It is the subjective connection to the objective world. Its influence over the materially conditioned soul causes the soul to think itself the enjoyer of sense objects and the doer of acts in relation to them, when in reality the soul is merely the witness to the movements of material nature.
In the realization that everything has become the self alone, how can the self think itself the enjoyer, and of what? Where indeed will the self go? In consideration of this, how could I, being that self, be the enjoyer of the sense objects?

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

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

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

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

18. अयं हि कृष्णो यो वो हि देशः जौरिस्ट्रुक्करणं भवति ||१५||

*aṇ bhī kṛṣṇo yo vo bhī pṛṣṭhaḥ sarīra-dvaya-karaṇām bhavati* ।

*aṇ* — this; *bhī* — very; *kṛṣṇaḥ* — Kṛṣṇa; *yaḥ* — who; *vah* — you; *bhī* — certainly; *pṛṣṭhaḥ* — dearmost; *sarīra-dvaya-karaṇām* — the cause of both the gross and subtle bodies; *bhavati* — become.

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

19. 

dvā suparṇau bhavato brahmaṇaḥ 'ṁśa-bhūtas tathetaro bhoktā bhavati | 
anyo hi sākṣī bhavati | vṛkṣa-dharme tau tiṣṭhataḥ | 
ato bhoktr-abhoktārau | pūrvo hi bhoktā bhavati

tathetaro 'bhoktā kṛṣṇo bhavatiti | 

dvā — two; suparṇau — beautifully plumed birds; bhavataḥ — are; brahmaṇaḥ — of Brahman; anśa-bhūtaḥ — fragmentary portion; tathā — similarly; itarāḥ — the other; bhoktā — the enjoyer; bhavati — is; anyaḥ — the other; bi — definitely; sākṣī — witness; bhavati — is; iti — thus; vṛkṣa-dharme — in the body, which is meant to be felled like a tree; tau — they; tiṣṭhataḥ — are situated; atah — therefore; bhoktr-abhoktārau — the enjoyer and nonenjoyer; pūrvaḥ — the former; bi — certainly; bhoktā — enjoyer; bhavati — is; tatāḥ — similarly; itarāḥ — the other; abhoktā — the nonenjoyer; bhavati — is; kṛṣṇaḥ — Kṛṣṇa; bhavati — is; iti — thus.

There are two beautifully plumed birds making their home in this body, which, like a tree, is meant to be felled. The lesser of the two is
the fragmentary portion of Brahman who enjoys and suffers; the other is merely an observer. They are thus enjoyer and nonenjoyer. The former is the enjoyer; the latter, the nonenjoyer, is Kṛṣṇa.

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

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

20.  यत्र विद्याविध्ये न विद्यामो विद्याविध्याभ्यां भिन्नः ||
विद्यामो हि यः स कथं विषयी भवतीति ||२०||

yatra vidyāvidyē na vidiśmo vidiśāvidyābhyāṁ bhinnah ||
vidyāmayo hi yaḥ sa katham viṣayī bhavatīti ||20||
Whereas we understand neither knowledge nor ignorance, he is distinct from both knowledge and ignorance. How can one who is knowledge in essence be a sensualist?

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

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

In the present passage of Gopāla-tāpanī, Durvāsā explains how Kṛṣṇa is transcendental to knowledge and ignorance: “He is knowledge in essence.” Śrī Kṛṣṇa himself says it thus to Uddhava, vidyāvidye mama tanū: “Both knowledge and ignorance are my potencies” (ŚB 11.11.3). Thus Kṛṣṇa is transcendental to the knowledge arising from sattva-guṇa, and he never becomes bewildered by the ignorance of material identification. Therefore, he cannot fall prey to the illusory notion of being the enjoyer of what is actually misery. He is the essence of knowledge—love.
A sensualist is one who desires sense gratification with a yearning to enjoy. A nonsensualist is one who desires sense objects without any such motivation.

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

The word kāma appears in different forms in this sentence: a kāmi means a sensualist, or viṣayi; the object kāmān refers to the objects of sense gratification; and the instrumental kāmena means “with a desire to enjoy.” In contrast, akāmena means “without a desire to enjoy,” by which we should understand a love that is exclusively dedicated to the pleasure of the other (kevalenānikūlya-mayena premṇā). There are several statements in the Bhāgavata that indicate that this attitude is true of Kṛṣṇa, such as ātmārāma ’py arīramat: “Though completely self-fulfilled, he enjoyed [with the gopīs]” (ŚB 10.29.42).

A person who takes pleasure in the self (ātmārāma) finds actual pleasure. Should he act in relation to others, he does so not to find pleasure in them but to give of himself spiritually. In this connection, sage Śukadeva de-
scribes Kṛṣṇa’s interaction with the gopīs thus, prāmrjat karuṇaḥ premnā santamenāṅga pāṇinā: “With his gentle hand, the compassionate one lovingly wiped the gopīs’ perspiring foreheads” (SB 10.33.20).

He is beyond birth and old age, immovable, and unseverable. He is situated in the effulgence of the sun. He resides among the cows, herds the cows, and associates with the cowherds. He is found in and glorified by all the Vedas. He enters into all living beings and brings them life. That person is Kṛṣṇa, your husband.
Having explained that Kṛṣṇa is not the enjoyer or sufferer of karma, Durvāsā further explains Kṛṣṇa’s transcendental position to the gopīs: “Although appearing as your husband, he is not subject to the six kinds of transformations that affect ordinary living beings.” This means (1) he is not subject to birth; (2) being immovable, he is not subject to growth; (3) he is not subject to maturation; (4) he is not subject to reproduction; (5) being beyond old age, he is not subject to decline; and (6) since he cannot be cut into pieces, he is not subject to destruction. The gopīs’ relationship with Kṛṣṇa is thus not an ordinary love affair. They are wedded to God. What must their position be? Prabhodhānanda Sarasvatī comments that Durvāsā is saying to the gopīs, “Because you are Kṛṣṇa’s svarūpa-saktis and your worship of Kṛṣṇa is without material desire, it is incorrect to say that you are unfaithful wives or lusty girls.” Indeed, the gopīs are wedded to the supreme object of love.

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

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

2. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmi cites SB 10.14.23 in this regard. See Śrīdhara Svāmī’s commentary.
Regarding the epithet gopi-jana-vallabha, Śrī Prabhodhānanda comments that in saying that Kṛṣṇa is the husband of the gopīs Durvāsā indicates that their apparent marriage to other men is simply an illusory appearance created by the influence of yogamāyā. The truth is that they are eternally wedded to Kṛṣṇa but appear otherwise for the sake of the līlā.

23. Sā hy uvāca gāndharvi kathāṁ vāsmāsū jāto 'sau gopālaḥ | kathāṁ vā jñāto 'sau tvāyā mune kṛṣṇah | ko ṣāya mantrah | kiṁ vāṣya sthānam |
kathāṁ vā devakyāṁ jātaḥ | ko vāṣya jyāyāṁ rāmo bhavati | kidṛśī pūjāsyā gopāласya bhavati |
sākṣāt-prakṛti-paro yo 'yam ātmā gopālaḥ kathāṁ tv avatirṇo bhūmyāṁ bi vai ||

sā — she; bi — verily; uvāca — spoke; gāndharvi — Gāndharvi; kathāṁ vā — how then; asmāsū — among us; jātaḥ — born; asau — that; gopālaḥ — cowherd Kṛṣṇa; kathāṁ vā — and how; jñātaḥ — become known; asau — he; tvāyā — by you; mune — O sage; kṛṣṇah — Kṛṣṇa; kah — what; vā — furthermore; asya — his; mantrah — mantra; kiṁ vā — and what; asya — his; sthānam — place; kathāṁ vā — and how; devakyāṁ — to Devaki; jātaḥ — born; ko vā — and who; asya — his; jyāyāṁ — older brother; rāmaḥ — Balarāma; bhavati — is; kidṛśī — what type; pūjā — worship; asya gopālassya — of this cowherd Kṛṣṇa; bhavati — is; sākṣāt — directly; prakṛti-parah — beyond material nature; yah — he who; ayaṁ — this; ātmā — self; gopālaḥ — Gopāla; kathāṁ — why, how; tu — furthermore; avatirṇah — descended; bhūmyāṁ — to earth; bi vai — verily.
Gândharvî then asked: How did Gopâla come to take birth among us cowherds? And how did you, O sage, come to recognize him for who he is? What is his mantra? What is his place, and how did he take birth as the son of Devaki? Who is his older brother, Râma? By which rituals should this Gopâla be worshiped? And how could this cowherd, who is the soul of all and is beyond material nature, have descended onto this earth?

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

24. sa hovâca tâµ ha vai | eko h vai pûrvam nârâyano devah | yasmin lokâ otâš ca
protâš ca | tasya h®t-padmåj jåto ’bjayonis tapitvå tasmai bi varami dadau | sa
kâma-pråśnam eva vavre | tam bâsmai dadau |
sab — he; bovâca — said; tâµ — her; ha vai — verily; ekah — alone; ha vai — verily; pûrvam — in the beginning; nârâyanaḥ — Nârâyaṇa; devah — God; yasmin — in whom; lokâh — the worlds; otâš — lengthwise; ca — and; protâb — crosswise; tasya — his; hṛt-padmâj — from the lotus of his heart; jåtab — born; abja-yoniḥ — Brahmâ, the lotus-born; tapitvå — austerities; tasmai — him; bi — certainly; varami — boon; dadau — awarded; sab — he; kâma-pråśnam — any question he would like; eva — certainly; vavre — chose; tam — that; bâsmai — to him; dadau — gave.
Durvāsā answered: In the beginning, only Lord Nārāyaṇa existed. The worlds were contained within him, interwoven in him like the thread in a cloth. Born in the lotus of his heart, Brahmā performed austerities until Nārāyaṇa awarded him a boon. Brahmā asked for permission to pose any question he chose and Nārāyaṇa granted him this wish.

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

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

The transcendental superiority of Kṛṣṇa over Vaikuṇṭha’s Nārāyaṇa is also established in Kṛṣṇa’s name-giving ceremony (ŚB 10.8.19). Gargācārya told Nanda that “by dint of his virtues, Nārāyaṇa is Kṛṣṇa’s equal,” tasmān nandātmajø ‘yamte nārāyaṇa-samo gunitab. By reading Gargācārya’s statement as a babu-vrīhi rather than a tat-puruṣa compound, Kṛṣṇa’s superiority over Nārāyaṇa is revealed.

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

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

4. ŚB 1.3.28. This verse follows a number of verses in which Śūta Gosvāmī describes the distinguishing characteristics of various avatāras. The distinguishing characteristic of Kṛṣṇa, however, is that he is the source of all the avatāras (svayam bhagavān). This includes the puruṣa avatāras, from whom the other avatāras manifest, as well as their source, Nārāyaṇa of Vaikuṇṭha.
In terms of metaphysical truth (*tattva*), there is no difference between Kṛṣṇa and Nārāyaṇa; in terms of aesthetic rapture (*rasa*), however, Kṛṣṇa surpasses Nārāyaṇa (Brs. 1.2.59).

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

\[\text{sa hovācābjayoniḥ} \]
\[\text{yo 'vatārāṇāṁ madbye śreṣṭho 'vatāraḥ ko bhavitā} \]
\[\text{yena lokās tuṣṭā devās tuṣṭā bbavanti} \]
\[\text{yam śrītvā muktā asmāt sanśārād bbavanti} \]
\[\text{kathāṁ vāsyāvatārasya brahmātā bbavati} \]

**sa hovācābjayoniḥ** — the lotus-born said; *yah* — one who; *avatārāṇāṁ* — of all incarnations; *madbye* — among; *śreṣṭho* — the best; *avatāraḥ* — *avatāra; kaḥ* — who; *bhavitā* — would be; *yena* — by whom; *lokāḥ* — the world; *tuṣṭāḥ* — is satisfied; *devāḥ* — the gods; *tuṣṭāḥ* — satisfied; *bbavanti* — become; *yam* — whom; *śrītvā* — remembering; *muktāḥ* — liberated; *asmāt* — from this; *sanśārāt* — world of entanglement; *bbavanti* — become; *kathāṁ* — how; *vā* — or; *asya* — of this; *avatārasya* — incarnation; *brahmātā* — nature of Brahman; *bbavati* — is.
The lotus-born then began his inquiries: Among all avatāras, which is paramount? By which avatāra are the people of the world and the gods most pleased? And by remembering which avatāra does one become liberated from the cycle of birth and death? How can such an avatāra be considered to possess the characteristics of Brahman?

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

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

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

Brahmā’s final question as to how the pūrṇa-avatāra can be understood to possess the characteristics of Brahman is answered ahead. Brahmā’s other questions will also be answered in greater detail.
Lord Närāyaṇa then answered Brahmā: Just as on the peak of Mount Meru there are seven heavenly or wish-fulfilling (sakāmyāḥ) cities, similarly, on the surface of the earth there are also seven cities, some of which are sources of sensual enjoyment, others that are sources of liberation and freedom from desire. Of these, the city of the cowherds, Gopāla Puri, is directly Brahman itself.

There are seven well-known cities on earth that are capable of bestowing liberation: Ayodhya, Mathurā, Haridvāra, Vārānasi, Kāncipuram, Jagan-nātha Puri, and Dvārakā. Gopāla Puri is another name for Mathurā. Any city that can bestow liberation can also bestow material enjoyment. Thus each of these cities is both sakāmya and niskāmya. However, Śrī Jiva Gos-

5. Some commentators include Avanti in the list of cities, thus bringing the count to eight cities.
vāmī comments that the enjoyments they bestow are the four types of devotional liberation that satisfy one’s spiritual senses: attaining opulence like that of Nārāyaṇa (sārṣṭi), living in his abode (sālokya), serving him personally (sāmīpya), and attaining a form like his (sārūpya).

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

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

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

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

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

27. सकाम्या निष्काम्या देवों सर्वेऽं भूतानां भवति।

यथा हि वै सरसि पदं तिष्ठति तथा भूमि तिष्ठतीति चक्रेण

रक्षिता हि वै मधुरा तस्माद गोपालपुरी भवति।॥२७॥

sakāmyā nīskāmyā devōṁ sarvēṁ bhūtāṁ bhavati \ yathā hi vai sarasi padmaṁ tiṣṭhati tathā bhūmyāṁ tiṣṭhatiti
cakraṇa rakṣitā hi vai mathurā tasmād gopāla-puri bhavati \ 

sakāmyā — bestowing sense enjoyments; nīskāmyā — bestowing liberation; devōṁ — of the gods; sarvēṁ — of all; bhūtāṁ — creatures; bhavati — it is; yathā — just as; hi vai — verily; sarasi — on a pond; padmaṁ — lotus flower; tiṣṭhati — stands; tathā — so; bhūmyāṁ — on the earth; tiṣṭhati — stands; iti — thus; cakraṇa — by the discus; rakṣitā — protected; hi vai — verily; mathurā — Mathurā; tasmāt — therefore; gopāla-puri — the city of the cowherds; bhavati — is.

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

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

Śri Prabodhānanda states that there are no special qualifications necessary to enter Mathurā, such as detachment from the material world or attachment to Kṛṣṇa. It is for this reason that Nārāyaṇa says that Mathurā
blesses all the inhabitants of the world. Residence in Mathurā Purī even as a blade of grass is more auspicious than birth among the gods, including birth as the creator, Brahmā. Even those who resist devotion to Kṛṣṇa in Mathurā are nonetheless granted devotion. Whatever faults are perceived to exist in Mathurā are those of perception, nothing more. Indeed, no sinful reaction arises there when ordinary sins are performed.

28. भुजदहृद्यनं मधोमधुवनं तालसतालसं काम्यकाम्यानं
बहुलाबहुलावनं कुमुदकुमुदावनं
क्षडिरक्षडिरावनं भद्रभद्रावनं
क्षदिराभिः वर्न्दावनं एतां अवर्तां पुरीं भवति ॥२८॥

brhad brhad-avanaḥ madhor madhu-avanaḥ tāla
babula babula-avanaḥ kumuda kumuda-avanaḥ
khadira khadira-avanaḥ bhadra bhadra-avanaḥ
bhāṇḍira iti bhāṇḍira-avanaḥ śri-avanaḥ loba-avanaḥ
vrndāyāḥ vrndā-avanaḥ etāṁ āvṛtāḥ purī bhavatī ॥

brbat — being great; brhad-avanaḥ — named Bṛhadvana; madhor — of the demon named Madhu; madhu-avanaḥ — named Madhuvana; tāla — tala fruit; tāla-avanaḥ — Tālavana; kāmya — desirable; kāmya-avanaḥ — Kāmyavana; babula — Bahulā; babula-avanaḥ — Bahulāvana; kumuda — lily; kumuda-avanaḥ — Kumudavana; khadira — khadira trees; khadira-avanaḥ — Khadiravana; bhadra — blessed; bhadra-avanaḥ — Bhadravana; bhāṇḍira iti — the bhāṇḍira tree; bhāṇḍira-avanaḥ — Bhāṇḍiravana; śrī-avanaḥ — Śrīvana; loba-avanaḥ — Lohavana; vrndāyāḥ — of Vṛndā-devi; vrndā-avanaḥ — Vṛndāvana; etāḥ — by them; āvṛtā — covered; purī — the city; bhavatī — is.

7. This excludes offenses to Kṛṣṇa’s name, devotees, the holy city of Mathurā itself, and so on, all of which do have consequences when committed in Mathurā.
That abode of Gopāla is surrounded by twelve forests. The first is the largest and is therefore known as Bṛhadvana (great forest). The second is named Madhuvana after the demon known as Madhu; the third is known as Tālavana for the tāla palm trees that fill it; the fourth is known as Kāmyavana because it fulfills desires; the fifth is Bahulāvana, the forest of Bahulā; the sixth is Kumudavana, the forest filled with kumuda flowers; the seventh is Khadiravana, the forest of khadira trees; the eighth is Bhadravana, the forest of bhadra trees; the ninth is Bhāṅḍiravana, the forest of bhāṅḍira trees; the tenth is Śrīvana, the forest of Lakṣmī; the eleventh is Lohavana; and the twelfth is Vṛndāvana, the forest of Vṛndā.

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

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

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

⁸. Opinions on the grouping of these forests differ among ācāryas.
tāpanī. The word vrnda also means group, and it is to be understood that Vṛndāvana is the group leader of all twelve of Gopāla Puri’s forests. Among other things, it supplies all of the flowers for Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes and is personified as the forest nymph Vṛndā who shares in Yogamāyā Paurnāmāsī’s service of orchestrating Kṛṣṇa’s līlā.

29.  

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

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

Gods also dwell in these spiritual forests, and their singing and dancing mentioned here indicate their absorption in love of Kṛṣṇa. Śrī Brahma-sambhītā describes that in the abode of Kṛṣṇa all talking is song and all movement dance. What, then, must the singing and dancing there be like? Such poetic spiritual life of the eternal inhabitants of Kṛṣṇa’s abode causes the gods themselves to sing and dance.
The twelve Ādityas, eleven Rudras, eight Vasus, seven sages, Brahmā, Nārada, and Śiva liṅgas, such as the five Vināyakas, Vīreśvara, Rudrēśvara, Ambikeśvara, Gaṇeśvara, Nilaṅkṛthaśvara, Viśveśvara, Gopāleśvara, and Bhadreśvara reside there. Altogether, there are twenty-four liṅgas including these.

In some form or another all these divine personalities reside in Kṛṣṇa’s abode. The Rudras listed here indicate liṅga-mūrtis perpetually worshiped in the dhāma.
There are in fact only two forests in Mathurā. These are named Kṛṣṇavana and Bhadravana. It is within these two forests that the aforementioned twelve forests, some of which are pure and holy and others of which are most pure and holy, are contained. The gods live there, and the perfected souls attained their perfections there.

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

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

32. तत्र हि रामस्य राममूर्ति: प्रद्युनस्य प्रद्युनमूर्ति
   रनिरुब्दयानिरुद्धानिरुद्धमूर्तिः: कृष्णस्य कृष्णमूर्ति: ।
   वनेष्वेव मथुरास्वेव द्वादशमूर्तिः भवन्ति ॥३२॥

tatra hi rāmasya rāma-mūrtih pradyumnasya pradyumna-mūrtir
   aniruddbasyāniruddha-mūrtih kṛṣṇasya kṛṣṇa-mūrtih ।
   vaneśu evam matburāsv evam dvādaśa-mūrtayo bhavanti ।

tatra — there; hi — verily; rāmasya — Balarāma’s; rāma-mūrtih — Rāma’s Deity form; pradyumnasya — Pradyumna’s; pradyumna-mūrtih — Pradyumna’s Deity form; aniruddbasya — Aniruddha’s; aniruddha-mūrtih — Aniruddha’s Deity form; kṛṣṇasya — Kṛṣṇa’s; kṛṣṇa-mūrtih — Kṛṣṇa’s Deity form; vaneśu — in the forests; evam — thus; matburāsv — in those of Mathurā; evam — so; dvādaśa-mūrtayaḥ — twelve Deity forms; bhavanti — are present.

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

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

Regarding the twelve different forms, Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī cites the description in Śrimad-Bhāgavatam (10.43.17) of Rāma and Kṛṣṇa entering Kaṁsa’s wrestling arena to fight the wrestlers Cāṇūra and Muṣṭika. In Śrī Śukadeva’s description, all those who were blessed with the darśana
of Kṛṣṇa saw him differently. Like a priceless gem with many facets, he showed himself in different ways to everyone present. Each of them saw Kṛṣṇa in relation to one of the five primary or seven secondary rasas. Their varied perceptions bear out the truth of Kṛṣṇa’s position as rasa-rāja, the king of connoisseurs of love. He tastes and is tasted in all five primary and seven secondary flavors of sacred aesthetic rapture (bhakti-rasa).

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

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

9. Bg. 4.11 immediately comes to mind.

10. According to Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu, the titulary Deities of the five direct (mukhya) and seven indirect (gaṇya) rasas are Kapila (śānta/neutrality), Mādhava (dāsya/servitude), Upendra (sakṣya/fraternal love), Nṛsiṁha (vātsalya/parental love), Nandananda (çīḍgāra/conjugal love), Balarāma (haṣyā/laughter), Kūrma (adbhuta/wonder), Kalki (vīrya/chivalry), Rāmacandra (kāruṇya/empathy), Paraçurāma (krodha/anger), Varaha (bhaya/fear), and Matsya (vibhatsa/disgust).
ekām | bi | rudrā | yajanti | \( \text{dvitiyām} \) | bi | brabmā | yajati | \( \text{tytīyām} \) | brabmājā | yajan- | ti | \( \text{caturthīm} \) | maruta | yajanti | \( \text{pañcamīm} \) | vināyakā | yajanti | \( \text{ṣaṭṭhīm} \) | vasavo | yajanti | \( \text{saptamīm} \) | ṛṣayo | yajanti | \( \text{añstāmīm} \) | gandharvā | yajanti | \( \text{navamīm} \) | ap- | saraso | yajanti | \( \text{daśamī} \) | vai | by | antardhāne | tiṣṭhati | \( \text{ekādaśameti} \) | svapada | ṁ | gatā | \( \text{dvādaśameti} \) | bhūmyām | bi | tiṣṭhati | !!

ekām — the first; bi — specifically; rudrāḥ — Rudras; yajanti — is wor- shiped; dvitiyām — the second; bi — specifically; brabmā — Lord Brah- mā; tytīyām — the third; brabmājāḥ — the sons of Brahmnā; caturthīm — the fourth; marutaḥ — the wind gods; pañcamīm — the fifth; vināyakāḥ — the Vināyakas; ṛṣṭhīm — the sixth; vasavah — the Vasus; saptamīm — the seventh; ṛṣayāḥ — the seers; añstāmīm — the eighth; gandharvāḥ — the Gandharvas; navamīm — the ninth; apsarasaḥ — the heavenly courte- sans, the Apsarās; daśamī — the tenth; vai bi — most certainly; antard- hāne — in an invisible state; tiṣṭhati — remains; ekādaśamā — the elev- enth; iti — known as; svapada | ṁ — to his own abode; gatā — gone; dvādaśamā — the twelfth; iti — known as; bhūmyām — on earth; bi — verily: tiṣṭhati — remains.

The first of these twelve forms is worshiped by the Rudras, the second by Brahmā, the third by the sons of Brahmā, the fourth by the Maruts, the fifth by the Vināyakas, the sixth by the Vasus, the seventh by the seven Āśis, the eighth by the Gandharvas, the ninth by the Apsarās. The tenth is invisible, the eleventh has gone to the Vaikuṇṭha abode, and the twelfth is on earth.
Brahmā is perplexed by this section of the text, and in the section beginning with text 75 he will voice his doubts, which Nārāyaṇa will subsequently address. The basic point Nārāyaṇa is making here is that the one Supreme God appears in different forms. Of the twelve forms mentioned here, the eleventh is the most important, as will be explained later in this Upaniṣad.

34. तां हि ये वजन्ति ते मृत्युं जन्ति मुक्ति रम्भने।
गर्भजन्तरामरणातप्राचाल्यं कु दुःखं जन्ति ||34||

tāṁ bi ye yajanti te mṛtyuṁ taranti muktiṁ labhante | garbha-janma-jarā-
marāṇa-tāpa-trayātmakaṁ duḥkhaṁ taranti ||

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

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

35. तद्यथे श्लोका भवन्ति।
सम्प्राप्य भद्रवं रम्यां सदा ब्रह्मादिसेविताम्।
शक्तश्रृंखलामादि-शरीरस्य सुमस्तदिभि: ||35||

tad apy ete ślokā bbavanti |
samprāpya matburāṁ ramyāṁ sadā brahmādi-sevitāṁ |
śāṅkba-cakra-gadā-sāṛīga-rakṣitāṁ musalādibhiḥ |

tat — therefore; api — also; ete — these; ślokāḥ — verses; bbavanti — are;
samprāpya — coming; matburāṁ — the land of Mathurā; ramyāṁ — love-
ly; sadā — always; brahmādi — by Brahmā and others; sevitām — frequent-ed; śāṅkha — the conch; cakra — the discus; gadā — the mace; śārūga — the bow; rakṣitām — protected; musalādibhiḥ — with clubs, and so on.

There are a number of verses in this connection:

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

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

36. yatra saṁsthitaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ tribhiḥ śaktiḥ samāhitah
rāmāniruddha-pradūnmaḥ rukminiḥ sabito vibhuḥ

yatra — there; asau — he; saṁsthitaḥ — remains; kṛṣṇaḥ — Kṛṣṇa; tribhiḥ — with three; śaktiḥ — by his sakti; samāhitah — attended; rāma — Rāma; aniruddha — Aniruddha; pradūnmaḥ — Pradyumna; rukminiḥ — Rukmini; sabitaḥ — with; vibhuḥ — the powerful Lord.

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

Nārāyaṇa’s words to Brahmā in this verse partially answer Gāndharvī’s question concerning Kṛṣṇa’s older brother. They also indirectly answer her questions concerning Kṛṣṇa’s birth from Devaki, and, once again, how he took birth among the cowherds.
Kṛṣṇa’s elder brother Rāma is his immediate expansion (vaibhava-prakāśa), from whom the catur-vyūha consisting of Vāsudeva Kṛṣṇa, Saṅkarṣaṇa Rāma, Pradyumna, and Aniruddha expand for the sake of līlās in the city of Mathurā. Rāma and Kṛṣṇa are one and the same person. Their complexion and emotional makeup differ slightly, but they are the same Supreme God. Here Nārāyaṇa tells Brahmā that Rāma is a member of the catur-vyūha. In subsequent verses he will reveal that Rāma is synonymous with the praṇava onikāra (Oṁ). Thus Nārāyaṇa speaks here of Rāma’s majesty.

By mentioning Rukmiṇī as the sakti of Kṛṣṇa, Nārāyaṇa implies that she represents the entirety of his sakti. All of Kṛṣṇa’s innumerable saktis emanate from his svayam-sakti. Although Kṛṣṇa’s svayam-sakti is Rādhā, this sakti appears as Śrī Rādhā in Vṛndāvana and as Rukmiṇī in Dvārakā/Mathurā, rukmini dvāravatayām tu rādhā vṛndāvane vane.11

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

In contrast to his four-armed appearance in Mathurā, Kṛṣṇa appears in Vṛndāvana in a two-armed form, the form that Gāndharvi is most familiar with. This two-armed form is his original form (svayam bhagavān), whereas his appearance before Devaki is a partial manifestation of this form, athāham aṁcita-bhāgena devakīyāḥ putratāṁ śubbe (ŚB 1.2.9).

What follows is a more detailed explanation of Kṛṣṇa’s expansions and saktis, emphasizing the catur-vyūha’s identity with the syllable Oṁ.

11. Prabhodhānanda Sarasvatī cites this verse in his commentary on verse 50. He attributes it to both the Skanda and Matsya Purāṇas. Rüpa Gosvāmī brings out the connection between Rādhā/Satyabhāmā and Candrāvalī/Rukmiṇī in his works Vidagdha-mādhava and Lalita-mādhava.
The one is verily made up of four words that are derived from the elements of the syllable Oṁ.

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

The “one” mentioned in this verse is the Supreme Brahman, whom Nārāyaṇa has equated with Kṛṣṇa. This one is also known as the fourfold vyūha: Vāsudeva Kṛṣṇa, Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna, and Aniruddha. They, in turn, are identified with the syllable Oṁ, which consists of the three Sanskrit letters a, u, m, and their vibration. By establishing Kṛṣṇa’s identity with the catur-vyūha and the catur-vyūha’s identity with oṁkāra, it is clear that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Brahman.
being conscious; ātmānam — self; gopālah — Gopāla; abam — I; iti — thus; bhāvayet — one should think.

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

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

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

12. Gopālā-tāpanī (1.29) refers to the mantra of this Upaniṣad as a Vaiśṇava mantra.
sults in the complete satisfaction of the twigs and branches; in this conscious-ness, whatever is to be done for oneself should be done as an offering to him.”

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

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

The Purānic record also supports the Vaiṣṇava understanding of this text. In Śrimad-Bhāgavatam, which is clearly the most sophisticated theological treatise among the Purāṇas, we find the milkmaids of Vraja chant-
ing so 'ham at the height of their love in separation from Gopāla Krṣṇa. After Krṣṇa disappeared from the circular love dance, the gopīs, lost in thought of him, declared themselves to be Krṣṇa (asāv abam) (ŚB 10.30.3). However, even as they declared themselves to be Krṣṇa, they were searching for him. They did not actually become Krṣṇa, for if they had there would have been no further possibility to enjoy rasa with him for which they were so eager. Thus their feelings of oneness with him are described in the same Bhāgavata verse as being vibbrama, mistaken. Theirs was a case of mistaken identity caused by love. Moreover, vibbrama means beauty. Thus they experienced a nuance of love within a beautiful pastime (vibbrama-vilāsa) of lover and beloved. In Ujjvala-nilamaṇi 11.28–30, Rūpa Gosvāmī identifies this nuance as the anubbāva called lilā, which he understands in this instance to mean “imitation of the beloved.”

39. स मोक्षमाच्छते | स ब्रह्माचिन्तित | स ब्रह्माविद्वान | ||39||

\[
\text{sa mokṣam aśnute} \ | \ \text{sa brahmatvam adbigacchati} \ | \ \text{sa brahmavid bhavati} \ |
\]

\[
sah — he; mokṣam — the liberated state; aśnute — enjoys; sah — he; brahmatvam — the status of Brahman; adbigacchati — attains; sah — he; brahmavit — knower of Brahman; bhavati — becomes.
\]

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

The result of perfecting the devotional meditation recommended in the previous verse is described here: one attains liberation by being delivered from the karmic web of ignorance, one attains divine status, and one comes to know Brahman in the fullest sense. Knowing Brahman in the fullest sense is understood to be knowing him as Gopāla Krṣṇa, since the recommended meditation specifically refers to him (gopalo 'ham) and not a generic sense of Brahman. Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī comments that attaining the status of Brahman means realizing a spiritual relationship with
Brahman in which one possesses a form of pure consciousness. Being delivered from the negative influence of *karma* and attaining one’s spiritual identity constitutes the twofold standard of *mukti* (liberation) spoken of in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (2.10.6), *muktiḥ bitvāṁyathā-rūpaṁ svarūpeṇa vyavas-thitiḥ*. *Bhagavad-gītā* (18.55) speaks of this twofold development as well when Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna that by attaining Brahman (*brahma-bhūta*) one transcends the material conditions of hankering and lamenting (*na śocati na kāṅkṣati*) and thus becomes qualified for a life of devotion proper (*mad-bhaktim labhate parām*).

The *svarūpa* (spiritual form) of the liberated soul exists eternally in a dormant condition and is awakened through the cultivation of *bhakti*. Śrī Jiva Gosvāmī says the following about this form in his *Pṛti-sandarbha* (10):

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

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

Other than the first two fruits derived from worshiping Gopāla Kṛṣṇa, deliverance from *karma* and attainment of spiritual identity, which can also be attained by worshiping other forms of Godhead, a third fruit per-
tains to his worship alone: knowledge of Brahman in the form of Gopāla Kṛṣṇa, who represents the heart of Brahman—Brahman in full, appearing in humanlike form (narākṛti param brahma).  

40. Yo gopaṇa jīvān vai ātmatvenaṁśti-RARYANTAM ĀLĀTI SA GOPĀLA BHAVATI BI | oṁ tad yat so 'ham | param brahma krṣṇātmako nityānandaika-rūpāb so 'ham | oṁ tad gopāla eva param satyam abādhitam | so 'ham ity ātmānam ādāya manasaikyāṁ kuryāt | ātmānam gopālo 'ham iti bhāvayet | sa evāvyaktō 'nanto nityo gopālo ||

yaho — one who; gopān — the cowherds; jīvān — the living beings; vai — certainly; ātmatvena — as his very self; āṣṭi-paryantam — from the beginning of creation; ālāti — takes; saḥ — he; gopāla — Gopāla; bhavati — is known as; bi — verily; oṁ — Oṁ; tat — that; yat — which; so 'ham — I am he; param — supreme; brahma — Brahman; krṣṇātmakaḥ — the essence of whom is Kṛṣṇa; nityānanda — eternal bliss; eka-rūpāḥ — one with; so 'ham — I am he; oṁ — Oṁ; tat — that; gopālaḥ — Gopāla; eva — certainly; param — supreme; satyam — truth; abādhitam — unobstructed; so 'ham — I am he; iti — thus; ātmānam — self; ādāya — controlling; manasa — with the mind; aikyaṁ — oneness; kuryāt — should do; ātmānam — the self; gopālaḥ — Gopāla; abham — I am; iti — thus; bhāvayet — should think; saḥ — he; eva — certainly; avyaktāḥ — unmanifest; anantaḥ — unlimited; nityāḥ — eternal; gopālaḥ — Gopāla.

13. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmi uses the term narākṛti param brahma for Gopāla Kṛṣṇa throughout his writing. He attributes it to the Brhat-sahasra-nāma-stotra of the Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa.
He who from the very beginning of creation takes the living entities, known as the gopas, as his very self is verily Gopāla. One should think: The truth is identical with the sacred syllable Oṁ, and I am he. I am he who is the Supreme Brahman, the essence of whom is Kṛṣṇa, whose only form is one of eternal bliss. That Gopāla is the unobstructed Supreme Truth. Thinking, “I am he,” one should take control of the self and concentrate the mind. One should then meditate on the self, thinking, “I am Gopāla.” Verily Gopāla is unmanifest, infinite, and eternal.

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

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

14. Viśveśvara Tīrtha explains “Gopāla” thus: he who from the very beginning (a) accepts (alati) the jīvas (gopas) as identical with himself.
with him as his loving devotees in potential, and the principal path for
them chalked out here in Gopāla-tāpanī is one that culminates in loving
him in the oneness characterized by the cowherds of Vraja. On this path
devotees progress from worshiping to actually being worship itself in the
form of becoming the bbāva, or spiritual emotion, they cultivate. This
spiritual emotion for Kṛṣṇa is nondifferent from him, inasmuch as Gopāla
Kṛṣṇa is that face of Brahman that corresponds with the bbāva of Vraja
bhakti that this spiritual plane’s inhabitants are constituted of. The dynam-
ic nature of advaya-jñāna-tattva (nondual consciousness) that is experi-
enced by the enlightened is fully expressed as Goloka—the dynamic union
of love between Gopāla Kṛṣṇa and his cowherds, who know svayam bhaga-
vān Śrī Kṛṣṇa as their very own in a compact of love.

In this verse Nārāyaṇa further describes Gopāla Kṛṣṇa as the “unob-
structed Supreme Truth.” By this he implies that his own position is sub-
ordinate to that of Gopāla Kṛṣṇa when considered in terms of potential for
experiencing and being experienced in aesthetic rapture. Therefore,
Kṛṣṇa’s being the unobstructed Supreme Truth implies that he is akhila
rasāmṛta mūrti, the reservoir of sacred aesthetic rapture (Bṛ. 1.1.1). He is
the Deity of abhituki (causeless), apratihatā (unobstructed) love. It is this
love alone that fully satisfies him (yayātmā samprasiṣṭi).15

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

41. मदुरायां स्थितित्वर्भेन सर्वदा मे भविष्यति।
शक्तविहङ्करं जापद्वायमालायांक्षुस्तः वै ||89||

15. See ŚB 1.2.6.
O Brahmā, I will remain forever in Mathurā, surrounded by my symbols—the conch, discus, club, lotus, and flower garland.

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

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

In this verse Nārāyaṇa speaks about how one can attain eternal residence in Mathurā. Śrī Prabodhānanda comments that some readings have cit-svarūpam in place of viśva-rūpam, in which case the text changes from “the universal form” to “who possesses a spiritual form as his identity.” Other-
wise, *viśva-rūpam* means “he in whom the universe is contained” or “he in whom all forms are contained,” in which case it is a reference to Kṛṣṇa within whom his form as Nārāyaṇa resides. In either case, his form is extraordinary and effulgent, unlike material forms. So much is this the case that Nārāyaṇa describes himself as formless here only to emphasize that his spiritual form has no material qualities. Descriptions of God as formless are found throughout the *Upaṇiṣads*, as are descriptions of his spiritual form. Thus it should be clear that when the *śruti* describes God as formless, it speaks of his being without material form.

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

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

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

43.  

arihannante yastu jambudvīpā śvātōpāpi va.  
yo 'rcayet pratimāṁ mām ca sa me priyataro bhūvi ||43||  

*mabhū-maṇḍale yas tu jambu-dvīpe sthitō 'pi va ||

**yo 'rcayet pratimāṁ mām ca sa me priyataro bhūvi ||**

*mabhū-maṇḍale — in the district of Mathurā; yah — one who; tu — on the other hand; jambu-dvīpe — on the island of Jambu; sthitāh — residing;
api — even; vā — or; yah — one who; arcayet — worships; pratimān — Deity form; mām — me; ca — and; saḥ — he; me — my; priyatarah — most dear; bhūvi — in the world.

Or simply by residing in the region of Mathurā in Jambūdvipa and worshiping my Deity form, one becomes most dear to me.

Whereas in the previous verse Nārāyaṇa speaks of meditation (smaranaṁ), in this verse he speaks of ritualistic worship (arcanam), which is generally recommended for those who are not yet qualified to sit in meditation. Ritualistic worship of Kṛṣṇa is very common in Mathurā and has been for centuries. The most important Deities of Kṛṣṇa, dating back to the time of his grandson Vajra, were worshiped by the principal followers of Śrī Caitanya, who through their devotional zeal were able to secure the patronage of Hindu monarchs and thus establish large temples for these Deities. In this way, they attracted many pilgrims to Mathurā, making it one of the most important places of pilgrimage on earth (referred to here by its ancient scriptural name, Jambūdvipa).

44.  

The Deity form of Kṛṣṇa situated in Mathurā is to be always worshiped by you. People worship me in four ways according to their qualifications.
Prabodhānanda Sarasvati comments that through the words of Nārāyaṇa, “Durvāsā stresses Kṛṣṇa’s pūjā as being above all others. He is saying to the gopīs: ‘For those like you who are the most qualified (paramādhikārī), Kṛṣṇa’s form in Mathurā is the most worshipable, not the other Viṣṇu forms present there, such as Padmanābha.’ Some people also worship Kṛṣṇa as one of the members of the catur-vyūha. For them, it is said here that there are different levels of qualification that correspond with the particular object of their worship.” He also emphasizes that when Nārāyaṇa says mām in this verse, he means himself in the form of Kṛṣṇa.

45. युगानुवर्तिनो लोका यजन्ति ह सुमेधसः।
गोपालं सानुजसं रामरक्षितम्य सह तत्परम्।॥४५॥

yugānuvartino lokā yajantibha sumedhasah |
gopālam sānujain rāma-rukmiṇyā saba tat-param ॥

yugānuvartinaḥ — those following the principles of religion according to the age; lokāḥ — people; yajanti — worship; iba — in this world; sumedhasah — truly intelligent; gopālam — Gopāla; sānujain — with his brother; rāma-rukmiṇyā — with Rāma and Rukmiṇī; saba — with; tat-param — thereafter.

In this world, the most intelligent people following the principles of religion for the age will worship Gopāla and those born after him, such as his brother Rāma and Rukmiṇī for whom he has great affection.

The word anuja in this verse should not be understood to indicate that Rāma was born after Kṛṣṇa, for within the lilā he is his elder brother. It should be understood in terms of Balarāma being an expansion of Kṛṣṇa and in this sense appearing after him.

The worship of Gopāla Kṛṣṇa in the current age of quarrel (Kali-yuga) is best performed through congregational chanting of his name (saṅkīrtanam), as demonstrated by him in his appearance as Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya.
(Gaura) some five hundred years ago. The word *sumedhasa˙* in this verse also appears in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.5.32, where the *avatāra* for the Kali-yuga is described along with the method of his worship. While *sumedhasa˙* literally refers to those endowed with very good intelligence, it refers more to those who have acquired spiritual merit in relation to *bhakti* (*bhakty-unmukbi-sukṛti*) in this and previous lives. They thus have subtle theistic intellect and a psychological makeup that enables them to embrace the worship of Gaura and Gopāla.

46.  

\[ \text{gopālo 'ham ajo nitya˙ pradyumno 'ham sanātana˙} \]
\[ \text{rāmo 'ham aniruddbo 'ham ātmānam arcayed budbaḥ} \]

I am Gopāla, unborn and eternal. I am the everlasting Pradyumna. I am Rāma and I am Aniruddha. The wise man thus worships the *ātmā*.

Śrī Prabodhānanda understands *ātmā* in this verse to refer to the *paramātma*, as it often does throughout the *Upanīṣads*. Thus as discussed earlier, one should worship God thinking I am Gopāla in the sense that the individual soul is ultimately of the same spiritual nature as God (*abhedopāsānam*). Śrī Prabodhānanda comments further that the wise person referred to here “is one who is fixed in the mood he personally prefers” (*svasyeṣṭa-bhāvanā-sudṛdbah*).
Those living in the forests of Bhadravana and Kṛṣṇavana should worship this form of the Lord without material desire by personal religious principles, which I myself have enunciated in their various divisions.

Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī suggests that books such as Brhad-gautamiya-tantra contain the methods for the worship of Kṛṣṇa that he himself teaches. The religious principles are those acts by which Kṛṣṇa is attained that are characterized by desirelessness.

48.  

Even those who are without any direction in these religious principles and who are swallowed up by the argumentative character of this age may still reside in Mathurā if they are devoted to me.
Here the zenith of Mathurā’s glory is revealed: it overflows with benevo-

cence. It is supreme among holy places because residence there is not lim-

ited to pious souls. Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī cites the Ādīvarāha Purāṇa in

this regard, yeṣāṁ kvāpi gatir nāsti teṣāṁ madhupuri gatiḥ: “Those who have

no other refuge can find shelter in Mathurā.”

In this verse Nārāyaṇa also underscores the value of devotion. The

power of affinity for Kṛṣṇa is unmatched in terms of how easily it affords

spiritual progress, as well as the degree of spiritual advancement it culmi-

nates in. Furthermore, Nārāyaṇa’s statement expresses the very nature of

love: those who have love for Kṛṣṇa, however lacking in other areas, are

special to him. This is something we all experience within the scope of hu-

manity. Loving eyes can never see, and for good reason.

49. yathā tvaṁ sāha pūtnāśtu yathā rudro gāṇaiḥ sāha |

yathā śrīyābhāyukto 'bhin tatbā bbakto mama priyah ||

yathā — just as; tvaṁ — you; sāha — with; putraiḥ — sons; tu — but; yathā

— just as; rudraḥ — Rudra Śiva; gāṇaiḥ — associates; sāha — with; yathā

— just as; śrīyā — with Lakṣmī; abhyuktaiḥ — joined with; ab&m — I; tathā

— so; bbaktaḥ — devotee; mama — my; priyah — dear.

My devotee is dear to me just as you are to your sons, Rudra is to his

associates, and I am to Lakṣmī.

50. sa bovācābhajaiḥ | caturbhīr devaiḥ katbām eko devaiḥ syād

ekam aksaraṁ yad viśrutam anekāksaraṁ katbāṁ bbūtam ||

sa bovācābhajaiḥ |

caturbhīr devaiḥ katbām eko devaiḥ syād

ekam aksaraṁ yad viśrutam anekāksaraṁ katbāṁ bbūtam ||
Then the lotus-born asked: How can four Deities make a single God? And how does the single syllable Oṁ, which has been explained as being unique in the śrūtis, become fourfold?

After hearing Nārāyaṇa’s explanation, the four-headed Brahmā expresses his doubts.

51. "Then he said: Certainly originally one Brahmā was the unmanifest; from that syllable, the five sense objects became.

saḥ — he; bovāca — said; abjayoniḥ — Brahmā, the lotus-born; caturbhīḥ — with four; devaḥ — Deities; katham — how; ekaḥ — one; devaḥ — Deity; syāt — could be; ekam — one; akṣaram — letter; yat — what; viśrutam — famous; aneka — many; akṣaram — letter; katham — how; bhūtam — became.

saḥ — he; bovāca — said; taµ — to him; ha vai — certainly; pūrvaµ — originally; bi — verily; ekam — one; eva — only; advitiyam — without a second; brahma — Brahmā; āsit — was; tasmāt — from that; avyaktam — the unmanifest; eva — certainly; aksaram — indestructible syllable; tasmāt — from that; aksarāt — syllable; mabat-tattvam — the five sense objects; tair avṛtam akṣaram bhavati — the five sense objects; tebyo bbūtāni — the elements; taiḥ — with them; avṛtam — covered; aksaram — imperishable sound; bhavati — became."
Nārāyaṇa answered: Originally there was only one truth without a second. That was Brahman. From that Brahman came the unmanifest and indestructible syllable Oṁ. From that indestructible sound vibration came the mabat-tattva. From the mabat came the ego. From the ego, the five tanmātras, or sense objects; from them, the elements. The imperishable sound Oṁ is covered by the elements.

Nārāyaṇa begins his answer to Brahmā’s submissive inquiry by explaining that the entire varied creation expands from a singular source. Thus it should not be difficult to understand that if the singular Brahman, which is represented in sound by the syllable Oṁ, can manifest a variegated universe that is different in nature from himself, being unconscious, certainly he can manifest expansions of himself who are, like himself, pure consciousness. Nārāyaṇa goes on to say that the praṇava oṁkāra and by extension any of its expansions, such as the catur-vyūha and their particular representation in sound, are covered by the material elements. By this he means that they are covered in the sense that they are the hidden keys to freeing one from the influence of these elements, for they can never be covered by the material elements in the way illusioned beings are. Nārāyaṇa’s statement can also be understood to mean that the material elements cover the materially conditioned souls from God.

In Nārāyaṇa’s statement that Brahman is originally one without a second, the word “one” indicates that he is free of sajātiya-bheda, or difference from an object of the same category as himself. The word “only” indicates that he has no internal differences and is thus free of svagata-bheda; the words “without a second” indicate that nothing exists which is different from him, indicating that he is free of vijātiya-bhedā, or difference from an object categorically different from himself. He is advaya-jñāna-tattva, nondual consciousness, even while possessed of śakti.

Śrī Jiva Gosvāmī points out that while Nārāyaṇa says that originally there was only one Brahman and does not mention his svarūpa-śakti, this is appropriate because God’s svarūpa-śakti is nondifferent from himself. His svarūpa-śakti is his nature and the source of all other śaktis, by which he ex-
periences and expresses the joy that he is. She is his power, which is inseparable from the powerful himself, sakti-saktimātore abhinna-vastuvāt.17

52. Ākṣarōjñamātoreśam-jātirōjñapratīṣṭhitam
Brhamabhac hī vai s mukto 'ham asmi | Ākṣarōjñamātorem H]|52|

aksaro 'ham omkāro 'ham ajaro 'maro 'bbayo 'mrto
brahmābhyam bi vai sa mukto 'ham asmi \ aksaro 'ham asmi ||

aksaraḥ — imperishable; abam — I; omkāraḥ — omkāra; abam — I; ajarah — never grow old; amaraḥ — never die; abbayah — fearless; amṛtah — immortal; brahma — Brahman; abhayam — fearless; bi vai — most certainly; sah — he; muktah — liberated; abam — I; asmi — am; aksarah — indestructible; abam — I; asmi — am.

I am imperishable. I am omkāra that never grows old, dies, or knows fear. I am immortal. I am verily the fearless Brahman. Therefore, I am liberated and indestructible.

The word aksara means both “imperishable” and “syllable.” The characteristics of the syllable omkāra mentioned are also shared by aksara, the imperishable Brahman. Thus the two are one, and in turn, both Brahman and omkāra are identified with Narāyaṇa. Narāyaṇa is both imperishable and represented by the syllable Oṁ. He tells Brahmā as much in this verse: aksaro 'ham, omkāro 'ham.

In this way Narāyaṇa is building on his answer to Brahmā, as he begins in this verse to move from his example of the variegated universe arising from the singular Brahman back to the actual question as to the fourfold nature of Brahman/omkāra that gives rise to the catur-vyūha.

17. Jiva Gosvāmi quotes this statement from an unidentified source.
Brahman is pure existence, the universal form, and light. He is all-pervasive and one without a second, but through māya he becomes fourfold.

Brahman is pure existence, which is joyful and thus free from all misery. Through his īkṣaḥ he becomes the form of the universe (viśva-rūpac). It is stated in the Vedānta-sūtra that Brahman’s motivation for expanding himself as the universe is to express joy in the form of divine play (lokavat tu lilā kaivalyam), the lilā of creation (ṣṛṣṭi-lilā).

The word viśva also means unlimited, and the word rūpac can be extrapolated to include not only form but also attributes, pastimes, and powers. In this sense, Brahman is said to be pure existence that is possessed of unlimited form, attributes, and powers by which he engages in limitless pastimes. Being light (prakāṣa), he reveals himself everywhere for the benefit of others and is thus all-pervading (vyāpaka).

The four characteristics attributed to Brahman in this verse are personified by the four aspects of the catur-vyūha. Vāsudeva Kṛṣṇa personifies pure consciousness (sattā-mātra), Saṅkarṣaṇa (Rāma) personifies existence (viśva-rūpac), Pradyumna personifies revelation (prakāṣa), and Aniruddha personifies all-pervasiveness (vyāpaka). Vāsudeva is further identified with Nārāyaṇa, Saṅkarṣaṇa with Mahā Viṣṇu, Pradyumna with Garbhodakaśāyi Viṣṇu, and Aniruddha with Kṣirodakaśāyi Viṣṇu. These four are fur-
ther identified with consciousness, ego, intelligence, and mind, respectively, as well as with the four directions.

Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī comments that the word māyā is defined in the Viṣṇuprakāśa lexicon as both pride and mercy, māyā dambhe kṛpāyāṁ ca. While it is commonly used to indicate the external ākāti of God, here it indicates his internal energy dwelling in the hearts of his devotees. By his internal ākāti and out of mercy for his devotees, the singular Brahman becomes four-fold, appearing in various forms that correspond with his devotees’ love for him.

54–55. रोहिणीतनयो रामो अकाराक्षरसम्भवः।
तैजसात्माकः प्रद्युम्ना उकाराक्षरसम्भवः॥५४॥
प्राज्ञात्मको निरुद्धो मकाराक्षरसम्भवः।
अर्धामात्रात्मकः कृष्णो यस्मिन् विश्वं प्रतिष्ठितम्॥५५॥

rohini-tanayo råmo a-kārākṣara-sambbavah

The son of Rohiṇi, Rāma, comes out of the first part of the praṇava, produced from the letter a. Pradyumna, who is composed of fire, is produced from the vowel u.
Aniruddha is identified with the prajñā state and is produced from the letter $m$, the third element of oṅkāra. The half syllable that cuts off the vowel is Kṛṣṇa, in whom the entire universe is seated.

Having established Brahman’s identity with Oṁ, Nārāyaṇa begins to explain how the four Deities of the catur-vyūha are contained within this sacred syllable and how they manifest from it. Oṁ represents the entire conscious reality manifest in the four stages of waking, dreaming, deep sleep, and beyond. The first three of these represent covered material stages of consciousness, while the fourth represents enlightenment.

The “waking” state (viśva/universe) is so-called because it involves the sensual experience common to all. In this state, souls look outward, identifying with sense objects. The “dream” state, (taijasa/luminous) is so-called because it involves looking inward while the senses other than the mind rest. The stage of “deep dreamless sleep” (prajñā/knowing) is so-called because it involves existence in which all of the senses including the mind are at rest, a condition likened to self-realization in which the self unconsciously lives momentarily in itself, unfettered by the mind and senses. The “fourth” state (turiya/the fourth), involves transcendence of the other three stages, a permanent condition of self- and God-realization.

The four Deities of the catur-vyūha contained within the syllable Oṁ are the tutelary Deities presiding over these four stages of consciousness. Śrimad-Bhāgavatam 12.11.21–22 describes this as follows:

\[\begin{align*}
vāsudevaḥ saṅkarṣanaḥ \\
pradyumnah puruṣah svayam \\
aniruddha iti brahman \\
mūrti-vyūho 'bbidhiyate \\
\end{align*}\]

Vāsudeva, Saṅkarṣana, Pradyumna, and Aniruddha are the names of the direct personal expansions of the Supreme Godhead, O brāhmaṇa Śaunaka.
sa viśvas taijasah prājñas
turiya iti vyttibhiḥ
arthendriyāśaya-jñānair
bhagavān paribhāvyate

One can conceive of the Supreme Personality of Godhead in terms of awakened consciousness, sleep, and deep sleep—which function respectively through external objects, the mind, and material intelligence—and also in terms of the fourth, transcendental level of consciousness, which is characterized by pure knowledge.18

Rāma, being Rohiṇi’s son, is Balarāma and thus is not to be confused with the catur-vyūha headed by Rāmacandra. He presides over the waking state of consciousness. Pradyumna presides over the dream state of consciousness, and Aniruddha presides over deep dreamless sleep. These three are represented within omkāra by the letters a, u, and m, respectively.

Vāsudeva Kṛṣṇa presides over the fourth, or enlightened, stage of consciousness. He is represented by the entire omkāra. Śrī Prabhodhānanda comments that the half syllable mentioned in the verse “refers to the entire praṇava taken as a whole, because it cannot be pronounced on its own. Thus by this device of equating Kṛṣṇa with the praṇava as a whole, it is indicated that he is the complete manifestation of the Supreme Person. Therefore, Nārāyaṇa says, ‘in whom the entire universe is established.’ ” Another thing to be noticed about the language of these verses is that rather than using the word sambhava (produced from) as in the previous three lines, in this last line the word ātmaka is used to denote the direct relationship of the letter to the divine manifestation. This gives added glory to the praṇava in its entirety by emphasizing its nondifference from Kṛṣṇa.

Māndākya Upaniṣad 9–12, which it appears a number of commentators have drawn from in commenting on this verse, concludes its discussion on

the four stages of consciousness as follows: “The word Oµ as one sound is the fourth state of supreme consciousness. It is beyond the senses and the end of evolution. It is nonduality and love. He goes with his self to the Supreme Self who knows this, who knows this.”

Having Kṛṣṇa as her essence, Rukmini is the basis of the material nature and the creator of the universe. Based on the revealed knowledge (śruti) arising from the questions of the women of Vraja and also on account of her being associated with Brahman, Kṛṣṇa’s potency (Rukmini) is identified with praṇava by the Brahmavādins.

Having explained how the catur-vyūha is inherent within omkāra, Nārāyaṇa goes on to explain how Kṛṣṇa’s principal sakti also inheres therein. She is represented alphabetically within omkāra by the bindu, and theologically speaking she is present because God and his sakti are nondifferent, just as energy and its energetic source are one.

Śrī Jiva Gosvāmi comments elsewhere that some philosophers think that māyā is only that aspect of Brahman that manifests the world, which
they, in turn, think is ultimately unreal (asat). Śrī Jīva says, however, that they are mistaken and cites several verses and Sanskrit lexicons to establish that the word māyā, while referring to the illusory world of material names and forms, also refers to God’s spiritual energy (cit-śakti). Here, this śakti is addressed as Rukmiṇī and described as being Kṛṣṇa’s essence, the basis of the material energy, and the creator of the universe.

Śrī Jīva also explains that the use of the name Rukmiṇī does not refer to her alone but to the internal śakti of Kṛṣṇa in general. In this connection, he cites the following statement that he attributes to both the Matsya and Skanda Purāṇas, rukmini dvāravatyaṁ tu rādhā vyṇḍāvane vane: “The svarūpa-śakti appears in Dvārakā as Rukmiṇī and in Vṛndāvana as Rādhā.”

Thus by extension it can be concluded that the name Rukmiṇī used in this verse includes other forms of Kṛṣṇa’s internal śakti and Śrī Rādhā in particular since the Gopāla-tāpanī deals ultimately with the kind of bbakti that is centered on Kṛṣṇa’s original form, the form standing next to Rādhā. However, because the subject here is overtly the catur-vyūha, Rukmiṇī’s name is mentioned, as she is the manifestation of Kṛṣṇa’s śakti in relation to his form within the catur-vyūha.

The primacy of Rādhā, however, is further implied in this verse when Nārāyaṇa attributes this Upaniṣad to the questions of the gopīs headed by Gāndharvī.19 Without their questions and level of interest in Kṛṣṇa, this text would not be known to human society. They are not interested in Kṛṣṇa’s appearance within the catur-vyūha; they are attached to him in his original form, the most complete expression of Parabrahman.

Jīva Gosvāmī comments elsewhere that para means “supreme” and mā means “mother.”20 The gopīs are the supreme mothers who rightfully stand next to Brahman, making him whole. They alone, and among them Rādhā

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19. The śruti is considered to be eternal, although it manifests within human society through sages, whose names are often attached to those śrutis. Thus although the conversation between Nārāyaṇa and Brahmā cited by Durvāśa took place long before the gopīs asked Durvāśa their questions about Kṛṣṇa, Nārāyaṇa still knows of Gopāla-tāpanī’s future appearance and considers the gopīs’ questions to be the source of this section of it.

20. See Jīva Gosvāmī’s commentary on the first verse of Śrī Brahma-saṁhitā.
in particular, can reveal all there is to know about him. Indeed, it is for her sake—to shed light on the measure of her love—that Kṛṣṇa manifests as the catur-vyāha and conducts his līlā in Mathurā and Dvārakā. In these līlās he apparently leaves her behind, but under scrutiny it becomes clear that he did so only to highlight her love in separation as surpassing all other expressions of love for him and endearing him the most. Thus it should be clear that she is his svayam-śakti, and as much as he is represented within the praṇava omkāra, so too is she.

Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī comments further in this regard that the words vraja-strī can be read as connected to the previous line, breaking up the word vraja-strī-jana-sambhūta. The verse then reads, “Having Kṛṣṇa as her essence, Rukmiṇī is the basis of the material nature and the creator of the universe. She is a woman of Vraja. In the śrutiś that were produced among the people, her association with Brahman is celebrated. For this reason and because the praṇava-mantra glorifies the divine nature, the Brahmavadins call her prakṛti.” This reading—“She is a woman of Vraja”—serves to further emphasize the position of Rādhārāṇī in terms of her being the supreme manifestation of Kṛṣṇa’s śakti (svayam-śakti), even while Rukmiṇī’s name is used in the verse.

57. तस्मातोकरसम्पूतो गोपलो विश्वस्थित: ||७॥

tasmād omkāra-sambhūto gopalo viśva-samsthitah

| tasmāt — therefore; omkāra-sambhūtaḥ — proceeds from omkāra; gopālaḥ — Gopāla; viśva-samsthitah — in whom the universe is situated. |

Therefore, Gopāla, in whom the entire universe is situated, proceeds from the omkāra.

This verse concludes uttara-tāpani’s instruction on the significance of omkāra in relation to Gopāla Kṛṣṇa and the catur-vyāha, which began with verse 37. “Therefore” (tasmāt) marks the conclusion. The word viśva-
saṁsthitah can also mean that Gopāla Kṛṣṇa manifests in different forms or that all forms are within him.

58. क्रीमोकारस्थैवक्तवं पठ्यते ब्रह्मवादिभः ।
मथुरायां विशेषेण मां ध्यायन् मोक्षमश्वते ॥५८॥

klīṁ-oṁkārasya-aiśkṛyataṁ paṭṭhyate brāhma-vādibhiḥ
matburāyāṁ viśeṣena māṁ dhyāyan mokṣam aṣnute ॥

klīṁ — the kāma-bīja syllable; oṁkārasya — of oṁkāra; aiṣkṛyataṁ — identity; paṭṭhyate — is read; brāhma-vādibhiḥ — by those knowledgeable about Brahman; matburāyāṁ — in Mathurā; viśeṣena — especially; māṁ — me; dhyāyan — meditating; mokṣam — the state of liberation; aṣnute — enjoy.

Those who are knowledgeable about Brahman utter the syllable klīṁ in the understanding that it is one with Oṁ. All who meditate on me, especially those in the land of Mathurā, enjoy the state of liberation.

This verse prefaces Nārāyaṇa’s instructions on pūjā and meditation that begin with the following verse and conclude in verse 62 with the words venu-śrīga-dharaṁ tu vā. In this preface Nārāyaṇa stresses the value of pūjā and meditation performed in Mathurā, making it clear that location influences one’s spiritual practice and that the best location in which to worship and meditate on Gopāla Kṛṣṇa is Mathurā.

The liberation spoken of here is freedom from obstacles in attaining Kṛṣṇa. The two seed mantras oṁ and klīṁ have the identical essence, identical power, and designate the same reality. Thus the foregoing analysis of the praṇava oṁkāra also applies to klīṁ.

59. अख्यप्रेत विकसितं हत्पदं तत्र संस्थितम् ।
दित्यध्वजातप्रेतत्तु चिदित्तं चरणद्वयम् ॥५९॥
One should visualize me situated on a blooming, eight-petaled lotus in the heart and meditate on my feet, which are marked with the divine signs of the flag and parasol.

Prabodhānanda suggests that the spirit of this verse is that one should meditate on Nārāyaṇa/Kṛṣṇa being situated in Mathurā as if one’s heart were that sacred abode.
holds the lotus and bow in the same hand. At other times, he places the bow before him and holds only four articles.

61.  sukeyurānvitaṁ bābun  kaṇṭhaṁ mālā-ṣuṣobhitam |
      dyumat-kirīṭa-valayāṁ śpurun-makara-kuṇḍalam ||

sukeyura — with armbands; anvitaṁ — decorated; bābuṁ — arm; kaṇṭhaṁ — neck; mālā — garland; ṣuṣobhitam — decorated; dyumat-kirīṭa-valayāṁ — armband and bracelets; śpurun-makara-kuṇḍalam — dangling dolphin earrings.

[One should meditate on me] decorated with armbands, a beautiful garland, an effulgent crown, and dangling, dolphin earrings.

In his commentary on the Dāmodarāṣṭakam of Padma Purāṇa, Sanātana Gosvāmī states that the gopīs consider Kṛṣṇa’s earrings his most fortunate ornaments because they are free to kiss his cheeks on a regular basis.

62.  biraṁmayāṁ saumya-tanunī svā-bhaktāyābbhaya-pradām |
     dhyāyen manasi māṁ nityāṁ veṇu-śrīga-dbaram tu vā ||

biraṁmayāṁ — golden; saumya-tanunī — beautiful body; svā-bhaktāya — to his own devotee; abbhaya-pradām — bestowing fearlessness; dhyāyet — should meditate; manasi — in the mind; māṁ — me; nityāṁ — always; veṇu-śrīga-dbaram — holding the flute and horn; tu — but; vā — or.

One should always meditate on me in this effulgent form, which is
beautiful and awards fearlessness to my devotees. Or, alternatively, one should meditate on my form holding a flute and buffalo horn.

Here Nārāyaṇa concludes his description of the meditation he recommends to Brahmā. Having described himself in the previous verses, in this verse he suggests as an alternative that one can meditate on svayāṁ bhagavāṁ Śrī Gopāla Kṛṣṇa, who bears the flute and buffalo horn in his two hands. Gopāla Kṛṣṇa is crowned with a colorful peacock feather, garlanded with forest flowers, and decorated with different colored clays from the rich Vṛndāvana soil. His sweet and charming attire is less majestic than that of Nārāyaṇa.

The two separate meditations recommended in these verses differentiate the viññāṇa-mārga from the rāga-mārga, both of which, as we have seen, are discussed throughout Gopāla-tāpanī.

63.  

The name Mathurā has been given to this land because the manifest essence of the knowledge of Brahman, by which the entire universe has been churned, appears there.

In verses 63–74, Nārāyaṇa gives his own explanation of the meditation recommended in the previous five verses. He extends the meditation such that it becomes identified with the viśva-rūpa, thus revealing the universality of the object of contemplation. In meditation on the viśva-rūpa, which
is recommended for beginners, the universe itself is conceived of as a form of God.

Verses 58 and 59 spoke of meditating on Kṛṣṇa while residing in Mathurā, if not physically, at least within one’s heart. Before Nārāyaṇa begins to speak about meditating on a universal form of himself in which natural phenomena are identified as his bodily parts, he further glorifies Mathurā as that place within the universe that, being one with himself/Kṛṣṇa, brings an end to one’s material entanglement. He also explains why Mathurā is so named. All the commentators have written on the etymology of the word Mathurā in their explanation of this verse, and in doing so they have taken poetic license.21

The Sanskrit verbal root math means “to churn,” as in churning butter from milk. Śrī Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī comments as follows: “The act of churning produces butter from cream; similarly, knowledge of the Supreme Person—the personal form of Brahman—is revealed through the churning of the entire universe. The word vā (or) indicates an alternative that is not openly mentioned in the verse, namely bhakti-yoga. The place where both knowledge of the Lord and bhakti-yoga are revealed in their fullest, most perfect manifestation is known as Mathurā. In other words, mathurā refers to the practices of knowledge and devotion (jñāna-bhakti-sādhanam).” He suggests that this meaning derived from the etymology of the word Mathurā can be established from the Unādi-sūtra.22

Viśveśvara Tīrtha comments, “That by which the entire universe is churned is called matha, or knowledge of Brahman. That knowledge is the person Gopāla.” He adds that the word vā implies that “the universe is churned by Madana Gopāla.”

This Gopāla conquers manmatha (Cupid, who churns the mind). The gopīs have referred to him in the midst of their moonlight rendezvous re-

21. Scholars have not been able to find conclusive etymology for Mathurā. The word matha does not have a corresponding meaning in the dictionary, and there is no suffix -urā in usage in Sanskrit.

22. Unādi-sūtra is a predecessor of Pāṇini’s grammar. It describes the usage of affixes.
corded in Śrīmad-Bbāgavatam (10.32.2) as sākṣān-manmatha-manmathāḥ, “He who bewilders or churns the mind of Cupid.” For this reason he is also known as Madana Gopāla.

If Cupid churns the world, as he no doubt does, he who captivates Cupid churns the impurity of lust out of one’s heart and leaves pure love of God. This purified substance is the king of knowledge: prema-bhakti (rāja-vidyā).\(^{23}\) It is this knowledge that makes it possible to understand the world perfectly, transcend it, and enter the land of love.

The status of Kṛṣṇa as the transcendental Cupid, however, is qualified by the maidservants of Rādhā. Her parrot sings thus:

\[
\begin{align*}
rādbā-saṅge yadā bbātī \\
tadā ‘madana-mobanāḥ’ \\
anyathā viśva-mobo ’pi \\
svayam ‘madana-mobitaḥ’
\end{align*}
\]

When Kṛṣṇa is with Rādhārāṇī he shines brightly and is thus known as the enchanter of Cupid; otherwise, he himself is enchanted by erotic feelings [for her], even though he enchants the entire world. (Govinda-līlāmṛta 13.32)

Jaya Rādhe! Madana-mohana-mohini!

\[64. \text{Aśṭa-dik-pālibhir bhūmiḥ padmaṁ vikasitam jagat} \]
\[\text{sanśāvarṇa-saṁjātanā sevitanā mama mānase} \]

\[\text{aśta-dik-pālibhīḥ — by the guardians of the eight directions; bhūmiḥ — land; padmaṁ — lotus; vikasitam — blooming; jagat — the world;}\]

\(^{23}\) See Swāmī Tripurārī, Bhagavad-gītā, 283–84.
The blooming lotus is the earth and is identical with the universe; it
grows from the waters of the ocean of *saṁsāra* and is dwelt in by
the eight lords of the directions. It exists in my mind.

Nārāyaṇa here explains the meditation suggested in verse 58 in terms of
the *virāṭa-rūpa*. The earth is an auspicious place within the universe be-
cause it offers humanity the opportunity for spiritual practice as well as
material enjoyment. The impetus it provides for spiritual advancement is
unparalleled throughout the universe because on earth Śrī Kṛṣṇa enacts
his humanlike pastimes (*nara-līlā*) and reveals the highest reach of love.
Thus the earth dwells like a blooming lotus in the mind of Nārāyaṇa. Its
blooming represents Nārāyaṇa’s mental blessing, issuing forth in all eight
directions throughout the universe. This lotus grows from the waters of
*saṁsāra* and rests above its waves of illusion. Those who wish to contem-
plate the world as the form of God should think in this way about his
mind.

65.    चन्द्रसूर्यत्विशो दिव्यध्वजः मेरुबिरांमयः ।
       आतप्त्रम् ब्रह्मलोकम् अद्वैद्वाम् चरणम् स्मृतम् ॥६५॥

*candra-sūrya-tviśaḥ* — the light of the moon and sun; *divyāḥ* — divine; *dh-
vajāḥ* — flags; *meruḥ* — Mount Meru; *biraṁmayah* — golden; *ātat pratram* —
parasol; *brabma-lokam* — Brahma-loka; *adborbvam* — above and below;
*caranam* — feet; *smrtam* — are held to be.

The feet of that universal form are said to be both above and below.
The splendors of the sun and moon are the divine flags that decorate
them, and Mount Meru is the golden staff holding up the parasol, Brahmaloka.

Here Nārāyaṇa elaborates on verse 58. Similar descriptions with varying details can be found in Śrimad-Bhāgavatam. Another description of the viśva-rūpa is found in the eleventh chapter of Bhagavad-gītā. Because this form is considered imaginary, serving as a tool for meditation, differing descriptions are of little consequence.

66. 

śrīvatsam ca svarūpaṁ ca vartate lāñchanaṁ saha |
śrīvatsa-lāñchanaṁ tasmāt katbyate brahma-vādibhiḥ ||

śrīvatsam — the sign known as śrīvatsa; ca — and; svarūpaṁ — identity; ca — and; vartate — remains; lāñchanaṁ — symbols; saha — with; śrīvatsa-lāñchanaṁ — the epithet “Śrīvatsa-lāñchana”; tasmāt — therefore; katbyate — is said; brahma-vādibhiḥ — by the knowers of Brahman.

Both my form and the universal form have their identifying marks, such as the śrīvatsa. Therefore, I am known to the philosophers of Brahman by the name Śrīvatsa-lāñchana.

Nārāyaṇa mentioned his śrīvatsa, a marking on his chest, in verse 60. This mark consists of curling white hairs that approximate the shape of the moon and indicate his relationship with his consort. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī describes it thus: “The śrīvatsa is said to be either a white mark in the shape of the moon on the Lord’s chest (according to the Gautamiya-tantra) or hairs that curl to the right (according to Bhāvārtha-dīpikā and other sources).” Based on this verse, Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī has further identified the śrīvatsa as the vairāja-jīva svarūpa, or the samaṣṭi-jīva of the universal form.
of God. The samaśti-jīva is the collective status of individual souls just prior to their individual manifestations in accordance with the rule of karma.24 The jīva souls are merged in a state of deep sleep (suśupti) within Mahā Viṣṇu, and when the time for the creation to manifest arises, these jīvas move toward differentiation by first appearing as a collective within Brahmā and then expressing their individuality in accordance with their latent karma. As mentioned earlier, it is in this sense that the baddha-jīva first takes birth as Brahmā. This Brahmā, the vairāja-puruṣa or vairāja-jīva, represents the śrīvatsa of Nārāyaṇa when the universe is conceived of as Nārāyaṇa’s form.

67. येन मूर्तिमिवावचनं तेजसा स्वस्वरूपिणा।
बहुते क्रीसुभागवं हि मणि वदन्तीशामानिन्तः। ||६७॥

yena suṛyāgni-vāk-candraṁ tejasā sva-svarūpiṇā
tvartate kaustubbākhyamāni maṇiṁi vadtantisā-māninaḥ ||

Those who accept that I am God (as the virāṭa-rūpa) say that the word and the power of the Lord to illuminate, from which the sun, fire, speech, and the moon have their beginnings, is the kaustubha jewel.

Those who worship the virāṭa-rūpa conceive of the celestial lights and speech’s power to illuminate as the kaustubha jewel. In verse 60, Nārāyaṇa mentions that the kaustubha jewel decorates his chest. This jewel is also considered to represent all jīvas, whom Nārāyaṇa keeps close to his heart. Because the celestial realms give shelter to the pious, they too are consid-

24. See SB 11.3.12 commentary of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvati Thākura. See also SB 3.20.16 and Gopāla-tāpani 1.26.
ered the refuge of the jivas, as is the illuminating power of speech on account of its capacity to give salace.

The etymology of the word kaustubha is explained by Śrī Jīva Gosvāmi as follows: “Ka refers to the sun and fire, due to its similarity with the sun. The letter a refers to the word (vāk) due to its being the first sound from which all words are formed. The vowel au refers to the moon, because the word glau (which means moon) partially contains this sound, and the etymologists say apy aksara-samyena nirbrūyāt, ‘One can also explain the meaning of a word by a similarity of syllables.’ ”

68. sattvaµ rajas tama iti abaṅkāraś catur-bhujaḥ
paṅca-bhūtātmaṁ śaṅkham kare rajasi saṁsthitam

sattvaµ — the mode of goodness; rajaḥ — passion; tamah — darkness; iti — thus; abaṅkārāḥ — ego; catur-bhujaḥ — four arms; paṅca-bhūtātmaṁ — five elements; śaṅkham — conch shell; kare — in the hand; rajasi — in the mode of passion; saṁsthitam — situated.

The material ego (abaṅkāra) and the modes of goodness, passion, and ignorance are the four arms [of my universal form]. The hand that holds the conch shell, which is identified with the five elements, represents the mode of passion.

In this verse Nārāyaṇa explains how devotees of the virāṭ-rūpa conceive of his arms, which were previously mentioned in verse 60. He also begins to describe the virāṭ-rūpa’s paraphernalia. Three of his four arms represent the three modes of nature. The fourth arm represents abaṅkāra, or the material sense of identity (ego). The hand identified with the mode of passion bears the conch, and the conch itself is identified with the five elements: earth, water, fire, air, and space.

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Śrī Prabodhānanda adds to this the idea that because these modes of nature and the material ego are considered the four arms of the virāṭ-rūpa, they are worshipable. In his commentary to the subsequent verses describing the universal form, he concludes that all things conceived of as bodily parts of the virāṭ-rūpa are venerable.

69. बालस्वरूपमत्यं ननस्करं निगद्दे ।
आद्या माया भवेच्छाद्यं पद्य विशं करे स्थितम् ॥६९॥

*bāla-svarūpam atyantam manas cakra nigadyate ।
ādyā māyā bhavet chāṅgani padmā viśvān kare sthitam ॥

*bāla-svarūpam* — the nature of a child; *atyantam* — exceedingly; *manas* — the mind; *cakra* — the discus; *nigadyate* — is said to be; *ādyā* — the original; *māyā* — *māyā*; *bhavet* — shall be; *śāṅgana* — Kṛṣṇa’s bow; *padmā* — the lotus; *viśvā* — the universe; *kare* — in the hand; *sthitam* — placed.

The mind, whose nature is exceedingly like that of a child, is said to be the universal form’s discus. The original energy, known as *māyā*, is his bow, Śāṅga, and the universe is the lotus situated in his hand.

The mind in and of itself is innocent or pure. However, just as children are colored by their association, and this often at the cost of innocence, the mind becomes colored by its association and loses its purity or neutrality.

Following the description of the conch in the previous verse, this verse continues the explanation of Nārāyaṇa’s weapons. Śrī Nārāyaṇa identifies the mind with the virāṭa-rūpa’s discus. The discus of the virāṭa-rūpa is held in his hand that represents the sattva-guṇa. Both the bow and the lotus are held together in the hand that represents the tamo-guṇa. The bow and lotus in this hand are identified, respectively, with *māyā-śakti*’s power to throw the *jīva* into illusion (*vikṣepātmika*) and the universe itself.

25. Śrī Prabodhānanda has stated in his commentary to verse 60 that the bow is lying before the Lord and is not in any hand.
Nārāyaṇa’s description of how devotees conceive of the virāṭa-rūpa’s mace continues in the following verse.

70. आद्य विद्या गदावेद्यासर्वधे मे करे स्थिता ।
धर्मार्थकमेयूरिविद्यैत्विद्यमहति ॥७०॥

ādyā vidyā gadā vedyā sarvadā me kare sthitā |
dbharmārtha-kāma-keyūrair divyair divya-mabhiraitaiḥ ॥

ādyā — original; vidyā — knowledge; gadā — the mace; vedyā — to be known; sarvadā — always; me kare — in my hand; sthitā — situated; dharma-artha-kāma-keyūra — with the armlets of dharma, artha, and kāma; divyaiḥ — with the divine; divya-mahi-īritaiḥ — praised by the residents of the divine world.

The original knowledge is to be known as the mace, which is always situated in my hand. My arm is decorated with divine armlets, praised by the residents of the transcendental world, which are the three goals of life: dharma, artha, and kāma.

The original knowledge (ādyā vidyā) is knowledge of the self. Nārāyaṇa identifies it with the mace of the virāṭa-rūpa, which is held in the hand of the universal form of God identified in verse 68 with the material ego (ahaṅkāra). The armlets of Nārāyaṇa, described earlier in verse 61, are identified here in relation to the three common goals of life: dharma (religion), artha (economic development), and kāma (sense enjoyment). Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī comments that the fourth goal, mokṣa (liberation) is implied in this description. These four are the armlets of the universal form. They are praised by transcendentalists because they are the blessings of life.

The balance of Nārāyaṇa’s ornaments mentioned in text 61 are elaborated on in the following two verses.
kaṇṭhaṁ tu nirguṇaṁ proktāṁ mālyate ādyayājaya
mālā nigadyate brahmaṁs tava putrais tu mānasaiḥ

kaṇṭhaṁ — neck; tu — but; nirguṇaṁ — free from material qualities; proktāṁ — said; mālyate — adorned with a garland; ādyayā — by the original; ajayā — unborn; mālā — garland; nigadyate — said; brahmaṁ — O Brahmā; tava — your; putraiḥ — by sons; tu — but; mānasaiḥ — by mind.

O Brahmā, my neck is said to be free of material qualities. It is encircled by my unborn, original energy, which your mind-born sons call a garland.

The neck of the universal form is nirvišeṣa-brahma and his garland is the covering aspect (āvaraṇātmikā) of his māyā-śakti.

kūṭa-sthāṁ sat-svarūpaṁ ca kiriṭaṁ pravadanti māṁ
kṣarottamaṁ prasphurantam kuṇḍala-yugalaṁ smṛtam

kūṭa-sthāṁ — unchangeable; sat-svarūpaṁ — whose form is truth; ca — and; kiriṭaṁ — crown; pravadanti — they say; māṁ — me; kṣarottamaṁ — supreme aspect of the mutable; prasphurantam — appearing; kuṇḍala — earring; yugalaṁ — pair; smṛtam — are said to be.

They also say of me, whose divine form is unchangeable, that I am the crown. My earrings are the supreme aspect of the mutable world.

Here Nārāyaṇa identifies himself as the crown of the virāt-rūpa and his earrings with the supreme aspect of the material world, that which brings
about the liberation of the living beings from the world’s clutches. Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī comments on the universal form’s earrings: “In the perishable universe, the two things that are supreme are suṅkhyā and yoga; they are the Lord’s earrings. This is confirmed by the Bhāgavata (12.11.11), bibharti suṅkhyām yogam ca devo makara-kunḍale: ‘The Lord wears suṅkhyā and yoga as a pair of makara-shaped earrings.’ Wherever different spiritual paths are mentioned in the Vedas or Purāṇas, it should be understood that the same fundamental teaching is being presented according to different schools.”

Śrī Gitopaniṣad (5.5) describes suṅkhyā and yoga as one because they lead to the same goal. In the Gitā these two terms imply contemplative practice and selfless action, respectively. They can also be understood to mean external and internal processes of self-realization. In this understanding, suṅkhyā involves distinguishing the self from material nature through an external process of elimination, whereas yoga speaks of an internal process of elimination beginning with yama-niyama and ending in samādhi. In either case, the fulfillment of these two well-known systems is a passport to leave the material atmosphere, whereas Bhakti-devī herself is the visa to Kṛṣṇa lilā.

73. 

*dhyāyen mama priyo nityam sa mokṣam adbigaccati |
sa mukto bhavati tasmai svātmānam ca dadāmi vai ||73||

dhyāyet — should meditate; mama — my; priyaḥ — dear; nityam — constantly; saḥ — he; mokṣam — liberation; adbigaccati — attains; saḥ — he; muktah — liberated; bhavati — becomes; tasmai — to him; svātmānam — my self; ca — and; dadāmi — I give; vai — most certainly.

The dear devotee who constantly meditates on me in this way will attain liberation. Once he is liberated, I most certainly give myself to him.
This is an important verse in which this Upaniṣad once again makes it clear that love of God is a postliberated status. This was stated earlier in the commentary to verse 38 of the uttara-tāpanī. Furthermore, Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa cites it in his bbāṣya to Vyāsadeva’s Vedānta-sūtra 3.3.47. This sūtra, atidesāc ca, establishes that there is an eternal distinction between the individual soul and Brahman, even while the two are united in love. Here Nārāyaṇa says it thus: “Once my devotee attains liberation, I most certainly subordinate myself to him.”

74. एतस्य भक्तिः मया प्रोक्तं किमेत्व ।
स्वरूपं द्विविधमेव संगुणं निरंगुणात्मकम् ||७४||

etat sarvam bbavisyad vai maya proktam vidbe tava |
svarupam dvividham caiva sagunam nirgunatmakam ||

etat — this; sarvam — all; bbavisyat — will be; vai — certainly; maya — by me; proktam — spoken; vidbe — O Brahmā; tava — your; svarūpaṁ — identity; dvividham — two kinds; ca — both; eva — verily; sagunam — with attributes; nirgunatmakam — without attributes.

O Brahmā, all that I have spoken to you regarding the two types of form, saguna and nirguna, will come to be.

The fruit of the meditation Nārāyaṇa has been describing is delineated in this and the preceding verse, bringing this section to its conclusion. Two types of meditation have been prescribed for those initiated into the chanting of the Gopāla mantra, one leading to the other. Meditation on the virāt-rūpa, described in this verse as saguna (with material qualities), leads to meditation on the actual form of Nārāyaṇa/Kṛṣṇa, described here as nirguna (without material qualities).

This latter meditation on the spiritual form of Gopāla Kṛṣṇa accompanied by the chanting of the Gopāla mantra results in mature realization of Parabrahman—his form, qualities, and pastimes—from the vantage point
of one’s particular service identity. What Nārāyaṇa has recommended in this section for those not qualified to engage in such internal meditation is a method of fixing the mind on himself in conjunction with the world of the senses—the external universe. Contemplation of the worldly creation as the body of Nārāyaṇa by identifying aspects of it with his spiritual form leads naturally to internal meditation on that form.

The lotus-born Brahmā asked: How is it possible for the manifest mūrtis of the Lord that were previously mentioned to have ornaments? And how do gods such as the Rudras, Brahmā, the sons of
Brahmā, the Viṇāyakas, the twelve Ādityas, the Vasus, and the Gandharvas worship them? Which mūrti returns to his own abode and which remains after disappearance? Which mūrti do human beings worship?

As this new section of the text begins, Brahmā expresses the doubts that arose in him on hearing Nārāyaṇa’s description of the twelve Deities of Mathurā’s twelve forests (2.32). The text in the manuscript that this translation and commentary are derived from reads vyaktānāṁ mūrtināṁ (manifest Deities). However, both Viśveśvara Tīrtha’s commentary and the following verse leave room to reasonably conjecture that the manuscript he was working with may have read avyaktānāṁ mūrtināṁ (unmanifest Deities). Thus Brahmā may have asked, “How is it possible for the unmanifest mūrtis of the Lord that were previously mentioned to have ornaments?” Prabodhānanda also comments that some manuscripts read vyaktānāṁ mūrtināṁ (separate Deities), which would then make the verse say, “How is it possible for the separate mūrtis of the Lord that were previously mentioned to have ornaments?”

Brahmā wants to know in what manner the gods worship these Deities. The word vā (or) implies that he also wants to know which gods worship which Deities. His confusion arises partly from the teaching that Nārāyaṇa/Kṛṣṇa is worshipable by everyone, while previously, in verse 33, it was mentioned that certain gods worship certain Deities. Brahmā also wants to better understand Nārāyaṇa’s description of the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth Deities of the Mathurā forests, who were respectively described as being invisible (antardhāne), as having returned to Vaikuṇṭha (sva-pade), and as remaining on the earth (bhumiṣṭhe) and being worshiped by humans.

76. स होवाच तं हि वै नारायणो देवः।
आद्या अन्वया द्रादशमूर्तियः सर्वेषु त्योकेषु
सर्वेषु देवेषु सर्वेषु मनुष्येषु निष्ठन्ति।।७६॥
Lord Nārāyaṇa said to Brahmā: The twelve originally unmanifest forms are present in all worlds, among all gods and all humans.

Here Nārāyaṇa responds to the first question: “How can these Deities be decorated when they are unmanifest in form?” Nārāyaṇa tells Brahmā that these Deities, while unmanifest in the sense that they only manifest to those who worship them, are nonetheless eternally existing in all worlds among both gods and humans. They are ādya, original, or eternally existing without beginning. Śrī Jiva Gosvāmī comments that the word ādya means anādi-siddha, “existing in the same perfect state without any beginning.” He adds that the word avyakta means that they are unmanifest to anyone other than those who worship them and that the word tiṣṭanti underscores the idea that these Deities are manifest only to their worshipers.

Thus Brahmā’s first question concerning how Deities that are unmanifest can be ornamented is answered by Nārāyaṇa in conjunction with describing how they are worshiped by the various gods. By their worship, the Deities become manifest. If Brahmā’s question is how the twelve manifest Deities can be worshiped when the teaching thus far has emphasized the exclusive worship of the one Supreme Brahmā—a question about how one Deity can also be many—Nārāyaṇa begins his answer in this verse and concludes it in the following one.

77. रूद्धेऽऽ तौदी ब्रह्मण्येवं ब्राह्मी देवेशु देवी मनुष्येऽऽ मानवी विनायशेऽऽ विपन्नाशिनी
I am worshiped by the Rudras in my form as Rudra, on Brahmaloka as Brahmā, to the gods as God, to humans as a human. Among the Vināyakas my form is that of the remover of obstacles, Gaṇeśa; to the Ādityas I am light; to the Gandharvas I appear as a Gandharva; to the Apsaras I appear as Gau, whose form is revealed in song; to the Vasus I appear as the desirable Vāsavi; and after I disappear, I then appear in the invisible form Aprakāśini [or the form that sometimes reveals itself, Prakāśini].

These twelve forms are different manifestations of the same God as he appears to specific groups of worshipers. Their appearance and ornamentation reflect the hearts of their devotees. The many forms of the one God are one with the pure hearts of his devotees. God is fully present within love of
God, and there is no meaning to God independent of love of God. Indeed, we are well advised to venerate love of God more than God himself.

This truth accounts for the spiritual bias that fuels the liberated worlds of sacred aesthetic rapture (rasānanda). Thus this obscure yet important section of Gopāla-tāpanī provides a śruti reference for this experience of the Vaiṣṇavas.

The word gauḥ, which usually means “cow,” is the cause of some confusion. Does this mean that God appears to the Apsarās as a cow? Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī solves this problem in the following way: “The word gauḥ should be understood here to be derived from the verbal root gai, ‘to sing.’ The name thus means ‘one whose form is revealed by song.’” It is explained here that the Deity described as invisible is called Prakāśī, visible only in the heart of his devotees. The Deity that remains on earth is the one worshiped by the human beings who are Brahman-realized.

78. आविर्भाव-तिरोभाव स्वपदेति तिष्ठति।
तामसी राजसी सांत्विकी मानुषी
विज्ञानघनानन्दय: सबिदानन्दैकरसे
भक्तियोगेन तिष्ठति॥७८॥
āvirbhāva-tirobhāva sva-pade tiṣṭhati |
tāmasī rājasī sāttviki mānuṣī vijñāna-ghana ānanda-ghanāḥ
sac-cid-ānandaika-rase bhakti-yoge tiṣṭhati ||

āvirbhāva — appearance; tirobhāva — disappearance; sva-pade — own abode; tiṣṭhati — stands; tāmasi — in the mode of ignorance; rājasī — in the mode of passion; sāttviki — in the mode of goodness; mānuṣi — human; vijñāna — spiritual realization; ghanāḥ — solid; ānanda — joy; ghanāḥ — embodied; sac-cid-ānanda — eternity, knowledge, and bliss; eka-rase — exclusively characterized; bhakti-yoge — in bhakti-yoga; tiṣṭhati — stands.
The *mūrti* that is sometimes manifest and sometimes unmanifest remains in his own abode. His forms, whether human or in the modes of ignorance, passion, or goodness, are the embodiment of spiritual realization and joy, and are permanently situated in *bhakti-yoga*, exclusively characterized by eternity, knowledge, and bliss.

More details are given here about the Deity who in texts 33 and 75 was described as having gone to his own abode (Vaikuṇṭha). Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī comments that this *mūrti*, which is “sometimes manifest and sometimes unmanifest,” occasionally descends to this world and at other times remains situated in his own abode (*sva-pade*). The word *sva-pade* is taken as significant by Śrī Prabodhānanda and indicates that in his opinion this Deity is the source of Mathurā’s other eleven Deities. “His own abode” is Goloka, which, Śrī Prabodhānanda says, is a special manifestation of earthly Vṛndāvana.

Śrī Prabodhānanda hears this Deity speaking about his manifest and unmanifest pastimes in Vṛndāvana in the following verses, which he attributes to the *Gautamiya-tantra*.²⁶

> This beautiful land of Vṛndāvana is my eternal abode. The woods that extend for five *yojanas* are veritably my own body. The Kālindi River, which flows through it, is the Śuṣumnā channel that carries the currents of pure nectar. Living there in subtle form are the gods and other beings, and I, who am the essence of all the gods, never abandon this wood at any time. In every age, I am sometimes manifest and sometimes unmanifest, but this effulgent, transcendental aspect of my abode is not perceptible to the mundane sense of sight.

Although his different forms appearing in the world are apparently in different modes of nature (animal forms, godly forms, and so on), they are not un-

²⁶. I have not been able to find these verses in the extant edition of *Gautamiya-tantra*, but it is in *Padma Purāṇa* (4.75.8–13).
der the influence of material nature. His form is described here as being “the embodiment of spiritual realization and joy” and “permanently situated in bhakti-yoga, exclusively characterized by eternity, knowledge, and bliss.”

He can be perceived in the pure condition of bhakti-yoga by those who have knowledge (vijñāna) characterized by realization of his form, qualities, and pastimes, which are the antithesis of unconscious matter. In explaining this, Prabodhânanda Sarasvatî comments that the word ghanah in this verse means “solid” or “dense,” and thus ānanda-ghanah means “solidified spiritual energy” or “spiritual energy that has taken form.” Ānanda-ghanah (solidified joy) also indicates a form that is the antithesis of all distress. As Kṛṣṇa is constituted of eternity, knowledge, and bliss, so too is pure devotion.

79. ॐ तत्म्याने ।
ॐ ततो भू-भुव-सवा तस्माति वै प्राणाम नमः नमः ॥७९॥

oṁ tat prāṇātmane
doṁ tat sad bhūr bhuvah svasa tasmāi vai prāṇātmane namo namah ।

oṁ — Oṁ; tat — that; prāṇātmane — the soul of the life breath; oṁ tat sat — this is the truth; bhūḥ bhuvah svah — the earth, the atmosphere, and heaven; tasmāi — to him; vai — definitely; prāṇātmane — to the soul of the life breath; namo namah — repeated obeisances.

I offer obeisances to the soul of the life breath. Oṁ, this is the truth throughout the three worlds. I offer repeated obeisances to him who is verily the soul of prāṇa.

With this verse Nārāyaṇa begins a seventeen-verse prayer (stuti) glorifying Gopāla Kṛṣṇa as the essence of all forms of God, the Supreme Brahma. Previously it was shown that the prāṇava omkāra represents Kṛṣṇa. Here Nārāyaṇa states that he is prāṇātmā, the soul (ātmā) of one’s life air (prāṇa).
Sri Prabodhanananda says that “Krsna is deserving of the commitment of one’s entire life breath. That which is designated by the praṇava is not prāṇa, which is, after all, unconscious matter, but that supreme substance possessing multiple energies, Brahman.”

The word prāṇa is often used to refer to the fivefold life air, which the soul is said to be floating on within the body. The fivefold division of this life air is prāṇa, apāna, udāna, vyāna, and samāna. The movements of the body are generated from the heart, and all subsequent movement, which is made possible by the senses, is powered by the life airs. The main air passing through the nose in breathing is called prāṇa. The air that passes through the rectum as evacuated bodily air is called apāna. The air that pervades the entire body and adjusts the foodstuff within the stomach is called samāna. The air that passes through the throat during breathing is called udāna. The air that governs muscular functioning is called vyāna.

In the Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad (3.1.9) the situation of the soul in relation to prāṇa is explained as follows:

```
eso 'nur ātmā cetasā veditavyo
yasmin prāṇah paṇcadhā svānirviveśa
prāṇaiś cittam sarvam otam prajānāmi
yasmin viśuddhe vibhavaty esa ātmā
```

The atomic soul is floating in five kinds of bodily airs. When purified from the influence of these airs, it shines forth and can be known by perfect intelligence.

Prāṇa is mentioned in all but one of the verses in this stuti. The other four life airs, apāna, vyāna, udāna, and samāna, are mentioned in verses 81, 83, 85, and 87, respectively. Sri Prabodhanananda comments that because prāṇa is situated in the heart and vyāna pervades the entire body, these two airs are predominant and are thus related more closely to Kṛṣṇa himself. Apā-
na, samāna, and udāna, on the other hand, are more closely related to his secondary features or expansions.

Nārāyaṇa points out that along with his being the soul of everyone’s life air, Kṛṣṇa is also the soul of the three worlds—bhūḥ, bhuvaḥ, svaḥ—which represent the physical, mental, and intellectual planes of experience. Since the jīvas in which he dwells as the inner soul pervade the three worlds, he is the soul of all jīvas and the entire world.

The fact that it is Kṛṣṇa whom Nārāyaṇa is glorifying and equating with praṇava oṁkāra is clear from the following verse, in which his names Kṛṣṇa, Govinda, and Gopi-jana-vallabha are once again used and identified with the praṇava oṁkāra, the Supreme Brahman.

80. ॐ श्रीकृष्णय गोविन्दय गोपीजनाभय।
      अनन्तशुरुष्वस्त्रमैै प्राणात्मने नमो नमः ॥८०॥

oṁ śrī-kṛṣṇāya govindāya gopī-jana-vallabhāya
oṁ tat sad bhūḥ bhuvaḥ svaḥ tasmai vai praṇātmane namo namaḥ  

oṁ — Oṁ; śrī-kṛṣṇāya — to Kṛṣṇa; govindāya — to the Lord of the cows;
gopi-jana-vallabhāya — to the lover of the gopis.

Oṁ. Obeisances to Kṛṣṇa, Lord of the cows and lover of the gopis.
Oṁ, this is the truth throughout the three worlds. I offer repeated obeisances to him who is verily the soul of prāṇa.

81. ॐ अपानात्मने ।
      अनन्तशुरुष्वस्त्रमैै प्राणात्मने नमो नमः ॥८१॥

oṁ apānātmane
oṁ tat sad bhūḥ bhuvaḥ svaḥ tasmai vai praṇātmane namo namaḥ  

apānātmane — to the downward breath.
Oṃ. Obeisances to the soul of the downward breath. Oṃ, this is the truth throughout the three worlds. I offer repeated obeisances to him who is verily the soul of prāṇa.

82. ॐ कृष्णाय रामाय प्रद्युम्नायानिरुध्दाय  ॐ तत्सद्दूर्मस्वस्तस्मेः वै प्राणायामेव नमो नमः ॥५२॥

oṃ kṛṣṇāya rāmāya pradyumnāyāniruddhāya
oṃ tat sad bhūr bbuvah svas tasmai vai prāṇātmane namo namah  

kṛṣṇāya — to Kṛṣṇa; rāmāya — to Rāma; pradyumnāya — to Pradyumna; aniruddhāya — to Aniruddha.

Obeisances to Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma, Pradyumna, and Aniruddha. Oṃ, this is the truth throughout the three worlds. I offer repeated obeisances to him who is verily the soul of prāṇa.

83. ॐ व्यानात्मने  ॐ तत्सद्दूर्मस्वस्तस्मेः वै प्राणात्मने नमो नमः ॥५३॥

oṃ vyānātmane
oṃ tat sad bhūr bbuvah svas tasmai vai prāṇātmane namo namah  

vyānātmane — to the bodily airs that govern muscular functioning.

Oṃ. Obeisances to the soul of the breath that governs muscular functioning (vyāna). Oṃ, this is the truth throughout the three worlds. I offer repeated obeisances to him who is verily the soul of prāṇa.

84. ॐ श्रीकृष्णाय रामाय  ॐ तत्सद्दूर्मस्वस्तस्मेः वै प्राणायामेव नमो नमः ॥५४॥

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ॐ श्री-कृष्णाय रामाय
ॐ तत सद भुर भुवाय स्वस तस्मै वै प्राणात्मने नमो नमः ।

śrī-krṣṇāya rāmāya — to Kṛṣṇa and Rāmacandra.

ॐ। ओबेसांस तो कृष्ण जो समान है रामचन्द्र (अथ वल्लभा)। ओम, इस यह है रूढ़ि तीन दुनिया। मैंने भाव ओबेसांस तो जिस ने यह है प्राण।

85. ॐ उदानात्मने।
ॐ तत्सूर्व: स्वस्तमे वै प्राणात्मने नमो नमः।॥५॥

ॐ उदानात्मने
ॐ तत सद भुर भुवाय स्वस तस्मै वै प्राणात्मने नमो नमः ।

उदानात्मने — to the breath that passes through the throat.

ॐ। ओबेसांस तो उखाला जो समान है उदाना। ओम, इस यह है रूढ़ि तीन दुनिया। मैंने भाव ओबेसांस तो जिस ने यह है प्राण।

86. ॐ कृष्णाय देवकीनन्दनाय।
ॐ तत्सूर्व: स्वस्तमे वै प्राणात्मने नमो नमः।॥६॥

ॐ कृष्णाय देवकी-नन्दनाय
ॐ तत सद भुर भुवाय स्वस तस्मै वै प्राणात्मने नमो नमः ।

कृष्णाय देवकी-नन्दनाय — to Kṛṣṇa, the son of Devaki.

ॐ। ओबेसांस तो कृष्ण, तो देवकी। ओम, इस यह है रूढ़ि तीन दुनिया। मैंने भाव ओबेसांस तो जिस ने यह है प्राण।
87. ॐ समानात्मने।
       ॐ तत्सद्भूतःस्वस्तमै वै प्राणात्मने नमो नमः॥७॥

om samānātmane
om tat sad bhūr bhuvaḥ svas tasmai vai prāṇātmane namo namah

samānātmane — the life air that pervades the whole body.

Om. That Gopāla is the soul of the life air that pervades the whole body. Om, this is the truth throughout the three worlds. I offer repeated obeisances to him who is verily the soul of prāṇa.

88. ॐ गोपालय निजस्वरूपाय।
       ॐ तत्सद्भूतःस्वस्तमै वै प्राणात्मने नमो नमः॥८॥

om gopālāya nija-svarūpāya
om tat sad bhūr bhuvaḥ svas tasmai vai prāṇātmane namo namah

gopālāya — to Gopāla; nija-svarūpāya — the Supreme Truth’s own form.

Om. Obeisances to Gopāla, the true form of the Supreme Truth. Om, this is the truth throughout the three worlds. I offer repeated obeisances to him who is verily the soul of prāṇa.

89. ॐ यो 'सायु प्रधानात्मम गोपालः।
       ॐ तत्सद्भूतःस्वस्तमै वै प्राणात्मने नमो नमः॥९॥

om yo 'sau pradhānātmam gopālah
om tat sad bhūr bhuvaḥ svas tasmai vai prāṇātmane namo namah

yah — the one who; asau — that person; pradhānātmam — the soul of the material energy; gopālah — Gopāla.
Oṁ. That Gopāla is the soul of the source of the material energy (*pradāna*). Oṁ, this is the truth throughout the three worlds. I offer repeated obeisances to him who is verily the soul of *prāṇa*.

90. ॐ योःसाबिद्यात्मा गोपालः ।
     अः तत्सदूर्भुत्वःस्वस्ततःैै प्राणात्मने नमः ॥९०॥

oṁ yo ’sāv indriyātmā gopālaḥ
oṁ tat sad bhūr bhuvaḥ svas tasmai vai prāṇātmane namo namaḥ ।

*yah* — the one who; *asau* — that person; *indriyātmā* — the soul of the senses; *gopālaḥ* — Gopāla.

Oṁ. That Gopāla is the soul of all the senses. Oṁ, this is the truth throughout the three worlds. I offer repeated obeisances to him who is verily the soul of *prāṇa*.

91. ॐ योःसौ भूतात्मा गोपालः ।
     अः तत्सदूर्भुत्वःस्वस्ततःैै प्राणात्मने नमः ॥९१॥

oṁ yo ’sau bhūtātmā gopālaḥ
oṁ tat sad bhūr bhuvaḥ svas tasmai vai prāṇātmane namo namaḥ ।

*yah* — the one who; *asau* — that person; *bhūtātmā* — the soul of the material elements; *gopālaḥ* — Gopāla.

Oṁ. That Gopāla is the soul of the material elements. Oṁ, this is the truth throughout the three worlds. I offer repeated obeisances to him who is verily the soul of *prāṇa*.

92. ॐ योःसावत्ममपूर्णो गोपालः ।
     अः तत्सदूर्भुत्वःस्वस्ततःैै प्राणात्मने नमः ॥९२॥

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Oṁ yo 'sāv uttama-puruṣo gopālaḥ
Oṁ tat sad bhūr bhuvah svasa tasmai vai prāṇātmane namo namah

yah — the one who; asau — that person; uttama-puruṣah — the Supreme Person; gopālaḥ — Gopāla.

Oṁ. That Gopāla is the Supreme Person. Oṁ, this is the truth throughout the three worlds. I offer repeated obeisances to him who is verily the soul of prāṇa.

93. ॐ योः परं ब्रह्म गोपालः:
ॐ तत्सुर्पुरुषस्वस्तम् वै प्राणात्मने नमो नमः ||९३||

Oṁ yo 'sau param brahma gopālaḥ
Oṁ tat sad bhūr bhuvah svasa tasmai vai prāṇātmane namo namah

yah — the one who; asau — that person; param brahma — the Supreme Spirit; gopālaḥ — Gopāla.

Oṁ. That Gopāla is the Parabrahman. Oṁ, this is the truth throughout the three worlds. I offer repeated obeisances to him who is verily the soul of prāṇa.

94. ॐ योः सर्वभूतत्मा गोपालः:
ॐ तत्सुर्पुरुषस्वस्तम् वै प्राणात्मने नमो नमः ||९४||

Oṁ yo 'sau sarva-bhūtātmā gopālaḥ
Oṁ tat sad bhūr bhuvah svasa tasmai vai prāṇātmane namo namah

yah — the one who; asau — that person; sarva-bhūtātmā — the soul of all beings; gopālaḥ — Gopāla.
Oṃ. That Gopāla is the soul of all beings. Oṃ, this is the truth throughout the three worlds. I offer repeated obeisances to him who is verily the soul of prāṇa.

95. ॐ योऽसोऽ जाग्रत्वश्वप्नुसुप्पुवत्तीत्व तुर्यतात्त्वो गोपालः।
ॐ तत्सत्सूत्तस्यस्वस्यस्यैं प्राणः तत्त्वमेव नमो नमः।

Oṃ yo ’sau jāgrat-svapna-suṣuptim atītya turyātito gopālah
doṁ tat sad bhūr bhuvaḥ svas tasmai vai prāṇātmane namo namaḥ

yah — the one who; asau — that person; jāgrat-svapna-suṣuptim — the three states of consciousness; atītya — transcends; turyātītaḥ — beyond the fourth state of consciousness; gopālah — Gopāla.

Oṃ. Gopāla transcends the three states of consciousness: wakefulness, dream, and deep sleep; he is even beyond the fourth state of divine consciousness. Oṃ, this is the truth throughout the three worlds. I offer repeated obeisances to him who is verily the soul of prāṇa.

Among the Hindu sages, consciousness is generally considered to encompass four dimensions: waking (jāgrata), dreaming (svapna), dreamless deep sleep (suṣupti), and transcendence, referred to simply as the “fourth” (turīya). Each dimension represents a successively more profound experience of the nature of being.

The first two dimensions represent the experience of the physical and mental planes, in which consciousness perceives itself through the medium of the senses and the mind. The physical world is the world of everyday experience, and the mental world is the world of greater possibilities drawn from the experience of the physical or waking state but not limited by its jurisdiction. It affords a greater sense of the freedom that corresponds with the nature of the self. Each of these dimensions, however, conceals to a large extent the possibility of the soul, which exists indepen-
dently of the senses and mental system. Should these two—the mind and senses—shut down, the soul itself can rest.

In a limited way, we experience this in dreamless deep sleep. Similarly, when the world of physical and mental experience begins to withdraw and ultimately shut down, as the expansion of the world represented by the outgoing breath of Viśnu reverses with his inhalation, all materially conditioned souls enter suṣupti. In dreamless deep sleep, they exist in restful experience independent of the world of the mind and senses until the world again manifests. At that time in conformance with the constraints of karma under which they are still bound, all materially conditioned souls again enter the stream of life. If they are fortunate, in one of their innumerable lives they can reach the shore of transcendence, the fourth dimension: turiya, self- and God-realization. In this dimension, being is experienced from the vantage point of the Godhead.

Gopāla-tāpani, however, seeks to take us to a fifth dimension, and thus here in its next-to-concluding words it states, turyātīto gopālaḥ. Mokṣa, liberation, including devotional liberation, is turiya (the fourth dimension), but Vraja prema in which Gopāla Kṛṣṇa is realized is beyond the “fourth.” It is the fifth goal of life, paścama-puruṣarthya—prema vastu. This prema, or selfless, spontaneous love, is the highest ideal, to which Gopāla Kṛṣṇa bows and through which he is realized.

96. एको देव: सर्वभूतेशु गूढः
   सर्वव्यापी सर्वभूतान्तरत्मा ।
   कर्माध्यक्ष: सर्वभूताधिकासः
   साधी चेतन: केवले निर्गुणं दीपित ॥६॥

eko devaḥ sarva-bhūteṣu gūḍhaḥ
sarva-vyāpi sarva-bhūtāntarātmā ।
karmādhyakṣaḥ sarva-bhūtādhivāsah
sākṣi cetā kevalo nirguṇaḥ ca ॥
ekāḥ — one; devaḥ — Deity; sarvā-bhūteṣu — in all beings; gūḍbaḥ — hidden; sarvā-vyāpi — all-pervading; sarvā-bhūtāntarātmā — the indwelling soul of all creatures; karmādhyakṣaḥ — the director of karma; sarvā-bhūtādbivāsaḥ — the resort of all beings; sākṣi — the witness; cetā — the consciousness; kevalaḥ — only; nirguṇaḥ — without material qualities; ca — and.

One Supreme Deity is hidden in every living being. He is the all-pervading, indwelling soul of all creatures. He is the director of the activities of creation, the resort of all beings, the witness, and consciousness, unique and free from material qualities.²⁷

In his conversation with Nārāyaṇa, Brahmā questioned how the singular Supreme Brahman can at the same time be fourfold, as in the case of the catur-vyūha. In this verse Nārāyaṇa anticipates further doubts from Brahmā regarding the Supreme Soul’s becoming many, as in the case of the innumerable jīva souls. How does he do so? Here Nārāyaṇa explains that he enters into each soul and hides within them. Taittiriya Upaniṣad (2.6.1) states that Brahman desired to become many, so ‘kāmyaty, bahu syāµ pra-jāyeyeti. He then created and entered his creation, tat sṛṣṭvā tad evānu-praviṣat. He became the many souls and also entered into them, where he hides waiting to be discovered as the jīva realizes its brightest prospect in life: to meet its master and know his love.

Because God is all-pervasive, his entrance into the world is different from that of ordinary jīvas, who are limited by time and space. Such jīvas perceive the material sky to be all-pervasive, but God’s all-pervasiveness is not merely like that of the sky, for he is indwelling at the same time that he is all-pervading. He rests in the heart of all jīvas, and indeed, within every atom of material existence, while he simultaneously pervades the entirety of the material world. Furthermore, being the director of all beings, he is not like the God of the Mīmāṁsākas, who sets up the world but remains uninvolved in it, allowing it to be ruled by the principle of karma. Because

²⁷. This text is also found in Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 6.11.
he is the resort of all beings, no being is equal to him, unlike what the Nyāya philosophers hold. He is both the efficient and ingredient cause of the world. He is not transformed from his transcendent status into the world of matter, for he is witness to it all and thus remains unchanged. The world is the transformation of his sakti. He, being nirguna, is pure consciousness free from material qualities and unique in that he possesses innumerable potencies.

97.  

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{rudrāya} & \text{ namah} & \text{adityāya} & \text{namah} & \text{vināyakāya} & \text{namah} & sūryāya & \text{namah} \\
\text{śrīrāya} & \text{namah} & \text{indrāya} & \text{namah} & \text{agnaye} & \text{namah} & \text{yamāya} & \text{namah} \\
\text{nirṛtaye} & \text{namah} & \text{vāyave} & \text{namah} & \text{kuverāya} & \text{namah} & \text{iśānāya} & \text{namah} \\
\text{brahmaṇe} & \text{namah} & \text{sarvebhya} & \text{devaḥ} & \text{namah} \\
\end{align*}
\]

*rudrāya* — to Rudra; *namah* — salutations; *adityāya* — to Āditya; *vināyakāya* — to Vināyaka (Ganeśa); *sūryāya* — to Sūrya, the sun god; *vidyāyai* — to the goddess of learning (Sarasvatī); *indrāya* — to Indra; *agnaye* — to the god of fire (Agni); *yamāya* — to the god of death; *nirṛtaye* — to the goddess of the lower regions; *vāyave* — to the wind god Vāyu; *kuverāya* — to the treasurer of the gods, Kuvera; *iśānāya* — to Lord Śiva; *brahmaṇe* — to Lord Brahmā; *sarvebhyaḥ* — to all; *devaḥ* — to the gods; *namah* — salutations.

In this text consisting of fourteen salutations, Nārāyaṇa shows Brahmā how to worship the one Supreme God as he appears in different forms. Śrī Prabodhānanda considers all the personalities mentioned to be vibhūtīs, or manifestations of God’s divine power. By this power, others are able to do God’s work.

98. दत्त्वा स्तुतिः पुण्यतमां ब्रह्मणे स्वस्वरूपिणे ।
दक्षतं सदेवभूतानामान्यतानं बभूव स ॥ ९८॥

dattvā stutim punyatamāṁ brahmaṇe sva-svarūpīṇe ।
dkartvam sarvabhūtānāṁ antardhāne babhūva saḥ ॥

dattvā — having offered; stutim — these hymns; punyatamāṁ — most holy; brahmaṇe — to Lord Brahmā; sva-svarūpīṇe — his own original identity; kartvam — mastery; sarva-bhūtānām — over all living beings; antardhāne — invisible; babhūva — became; saḥ — he (Nārāyaṇa).

After giving this most sacred hymn, Nārāyaṇa accepted Brahmā as a manifestation of himself and bestowed on him mastery over all creatures. Then Nārāyaṇa disappeared.

With this and the following verse, Durvāsā concludes his teaching to Gāndharvi and the gopīs, having recited the sacred conversation between Nārāyaṇa and Brahmā. He mentions here that after receiving Nārāyaṇa’s instruction Brahmā was empowered by him for the work of creation and thereby accepted by Nārāyaṇa as an empowered manifestation of himself, avesāvatāra.

99. ब्रह्मणे ब्रह्म-पुत्रेण नारदाय यथाश्रुतम् ।
तथा प्रोक्तस्तु गाम्यवर्ग गच्छन्तं स्वामयान्तिकम् ॥ इति ॥ ९९॥
brahmaṇe brahma-putrebyo nāradāya yathā śrutam ।
tatbā proktas tu gāndharvi gacchadhvam svālayāntikam ॥ iti ॥

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brahmaṇe — to Lord Brahmā; brahma-putrebhyah — to the sons of Brahmā; nāradāya — to Nārada; yathā — just as; śrutam — heard; tathā — so; proktaḥ — spoken; tu — so; gāndharvī — O Gāndharvī; gacchadhvaḥ — you gopīs; svālayāntikam — to your own homes; iti — thus concludes Durvāsā’s speech.

I have told you, Gāndharvī, exactly what was said to Brahmā, to Brahmā’s sons, and to Nārada, just as I have heard it. You and all the gopīs may now go home.

Thus Gopala-tāpanī-śruti rests. May all who read it now go home following the teaching of this text, which points us in the proper direction. May Śrī Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī, Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī Thākura, Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, and the host of commentators whose work preceded this commentary be pleased with it. I offer it unto my divine guardians, Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhar Deva Gosvāmī, on this Pūrṇimā day in the month of July 2003, which corresponds with the day commemorating the disappearance of Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī, the divine architect of the Gauḍīya sampradāya. May he also be pleased with this commentary and mercifully bestow sambandha-jñāna on those who study it carefully in the mood of devotion to Śrī Gaura-Gopāla.
Gopālā-tāpanī Upaniṣad

The Upaniṣads inform us that we should move from mortality to immortality. However, Gopālā-tāpanī Upaniṣad takes us further still, from immortality to the nectar of immortality. It speaks to us of an experience of immortality that is both positive and progressive. Rather than an experience of immortality that involves only the cessation of mortality, retiring the soul in eternal passivity, the passages of Gopālā-tāpanī underscore the potential of the soul to experience divine play in a realm where reason finds dignity not merely in suppressing sensual passions but more so, in bowing to divine passion. Although Kṛṣṇa’s divine play is the ideal of Gopālā-tāpani, being an Upaniṣad, the text is true to its genre and therefore sober. It stresses the discipline of freedom—the master—and its fruit, the music that sets God in motion. As Nietzsche would have it, so too does Gopālā-tāpani: freedom is disciplined in that it is a product of a very long period of constraining oneself. Whereas Gopālā-tāpani differs, of course, is that its eternity is not a euphemism for death. It is the doorway to a land beyond time through which one enters to participate in God’s play, where God, believes it or not, has become a dancer. Apply yourself in the discipline of Gopālā-tāpani, the yoga of devotion that sheds light (tāpani) on the cowherd Kṛṣṇa (Gopālā), and learn to love like you could never have imagined or reasoned was possible. This eternal text of revelation descends from a land of love far beyond the reach of the mind—where words cannot reach—and thus about which we cannot say enough.

Swāmī B. V. Tripurāri’s commentary is deeply perceptive. It draws tastefully on much older Sanskrit commentaries penned by saints of Swāmī’s own lineage and, in doing so, serves to further establish him not only as a contemporary voice of devotional Vedānta but as a person of both wisdom and heart.