

Sriman Gourânga Mahâprabhu, Who had descended to purify
Kaliyug - His loving associate Srimat Sanâtan Goswâmpâd
presents

Sri Sri Brihad-Bhâgavatâmrítam

Part 1

Compiled, published and commented upon

by

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(Mahant and Pandit of Sri Sri Radhakund)

Translated from the original Bengali

by

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First Edition

Published on the Disappearance day of my most worshipped
Spiritual Master

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Offering

My most worshipped Sri Sri Kunjabehari dās Bâbâji Mahârâj, who has now entered the eternal abode, has delivered a sinner like myself, who had fallen in the stinking rotten material well, with his *kripâ* and has placed me in the shade of his lotus feet that are like the wish-fulfilling tree. He has offered his shelter to a fallen soul like me and has showered his bounty on me in the form of initiation and instruction. His feet ooze nectarine *kripâ* and it so powerful that it can intoxicate even a materialistic worm like myself and bless me with the good fortune of residing in Brajadhâm. My eyes are shrouded with ignorance and lack of education; however he has opened them with the light of his mercy. He has granted me the good fortune of serving the great *bhâgavatas* of Brajadhâm and has thus made me most grateful. This fallen pretender of humility dedicates this text with utmost love in the immaculate hands of his Spiritual Master.

Sheltered at his lotus feet,

Ananta dās.

Request

The excellence of Sri Sri Brihad-Bhâgavadâmrta as compiled by the great Goudiya Vaishnav Âchârya Srimad-Sanâtan Goswâmpâd is well known to everybody in the world of devotees. It expresses the principles of *bhakti* and *ras*, as well as the features of *Braja-Bhajan*¹ in a magnificent way. Indeed, it drives the practicing devotee to the lotus feet of Sri Sri Râdhâ Govinda. This exquisite text is like the self-illuminated sun in the sky-like Goudiya-Vaishnavism. Therefore, this gem of a text is incomparable in this world. By the most earnest desire of the residents of Sri Râdhâkund, all of whom are *Paramahamsa Bhâgavat Vaishnavs*, I had written the explanation of the first part of the original text in very brief.

Sri Sri Guru Mahârâj heard this text many times, yet his thirst for *bhakti* was not quenched. He passed away during the publication of the first edition in Bengali. I dedicate this English edition also to him.

In spite of taking the utmost precautions, there are still many mistakes in this text. We appeal to the good devotees to please rectify them and relish the sweetness of this text. Then the tiny attempt by this worthless being will be considered successful.

Ananta dâs.

¹ The devotional practice in Brijdhâm

Sri Sri Brihad-Bhāgavatāmritam

Sri Sri Gour-vidhur-jayati¹

Preface

"Sri Brihad-Bhagavatāmritam" is an unparalleled work in the world of *bhakti*-literature. It explains the Goudiya Vaishnav philosophy so marvelously by using attractive examples from the *Purānas*, that it becomes extremely interesting. In Bhakti-Rasāmrita-Sindhu Srimat Rupa Goswamipād has written –

*"srimat prabhupādāmbhojaiḥ
sarva bhāgavatāmrite
vyaktikritasthī gurhapi
bhakti siddhānta mādhurī".*

Meaning – "My spiritual master Srimat Sanātan Goswāmipād explained the deepest and the sweetest principles of *bhakti* in the book Sri Brihad-Bhāgavatāmritam in clear terms".

Srimat Krishnadās Kavirāj Goswāmipād too has written -

*"sanātan koilo text bhagabatāmrite,
bhakti bhakta krishnatatwa jāni jāhā hoite".*

Meaning – "This text explains all the facts regarding devotion, the devotee and everything pertaining to Sri Krishna."

Since the principles discussed in this text are difficult to comprehend, the author himself (Sanātan Goswāmi) has written the purport of this text. This is another important and special feature of this text.

Most probably by "*gurha bhakti siddhānta*" Srimat Rupa Goswāmi had meant the *Rāgbhakti* of Braja. Although Brihad-Bhāgavatāmritam does not mention *Ragātmikā* and *Rāgānugā bhakti*, we see that Sanātan Goswāmipād has written in the beginning of his Digdārshini purport --

*"bhakti jra nihilarthabarga janani ja brahmasakshatkrite
ranandatisayaprada biswajagat soukhadurimukti rjaya!
sri rādhāmanam padambujyagang jashaya mahanāshrya,
ya karja brajalokobat gurutara-premnybo tashyo namah".*

Meaning - "*Bhakti* is the mother of all *prushārthas*². Whoever takes her shelter gets more happiness than Brahmānanda³. By her blessing, we can make ourselves free from the attachments of worldly comfort and luxuries. She reposes solely at the lotus-feet of Sri Sri Rādhāman. Bhakti is that supreme path that the *Brijwāsīs* practice with love and respect – we offer our humble obeisance unto that Bhakti devi".

Here "*ya kāryā vrajalokovat, gurutara - premnaiva*" speaks about *Rāgānugā bhakti*. Sri Brihad-Bhāgavatāmritam has expressed the deep and sweet principles of *bhakti* expertly through a narrative".

The texts written by Sri Rāmānujāchārya, Madhwāchārya, Nimbārkāditya and Vishnusawami do not mention anything about *Rāg-bhakti* or *Rāgānugā bhakti*. Sri Nimbārkāchārya mentioned in the ninth stanza of his tenth text -

*"kripasya dainyadi yuji prajāyate
yayā bhavet premavishesha laxmanah*

*bhakti hananyadhipateh mahatmanah
sa chottomā sādhanā – rupikāparā "*

¹ All glory to the moon-like Sri Goursundar

² The ultimate goal of any living being

³ The bliss arising out of merging into the Brahman

The above stanza tells us that, the devotion achieved by the blessings of Lord Krishna is known as '*prem lakshmanā uttama bhakti*' or *sādhyā-bhakti*¹. There is another *bhakti* called *sādhana-bhakti*². According to Sri Jiva Goswāmipād also, *bhakti* or devotion is of two types – *sādhana-bhakti* and *sādhyā-bhakti*³. Again, *sādhana bhakti* is of 2 types –

1. *vaidhi* (to follow the path of devotion, since the scriptures exhort us to do so)
2. *rāgānugā* (spontaneous and natural love for Sri Krishna)

Sri Nimbark mentioned two types of *bhakti* - *sādhana bhakti* and *sādhyā bhakti*. According to him *sādhyā bhakti* is also known as *premlakshana bhakti*⁴. He did not mention that *sādhana bhakti* is of two types (*vaidhi* and *rāgānugā*). Sri Harivyas Devji, who has explained the '*dash-shloki*'⁵ has written in his explanation of the tenth verse that, *sādhana bhakti* is of two types - (1) *vidhi bhakti* (2) *ruchi bhakti*.

He did not mention *Raganuga bhakti*. He has also written that *bhakti* is of two types (1) *vihitā*⁶ (2) *avihitā*⁷. But different reasons and evidences lead to the conclusion that, Sri Harivyas Devji most probably came after Sri Rupa Goswāmipād, and most probably even after Srimat Jiva Goswāmipād. We see that, Sri Bhatta (the Spiritual Master of Sri Harivyas) had composed a text called Yugalshatak in 1652 *samvat* (1596 AD) while Srimat Jiva Goswāmipād wrote Gopal-Champuh Uttarkhand in 1514 Shakābda (1592 AD). Hence we can say that Sri Harivyas devji came after Srimat Jiva Goswāmipād, or may be they were contemporaries. It is Srimat Jiva Goswāmipād who had mentioned that *Raganuga bhakti* is synonymous with *Avihitā Bhakti*.

Sri Vyopdev wrote Muktaṭhal, where he stated that *Bhakti* is of two types - *Vihitā* and *Avihitā*. Most probably Vyopdev belonged between the end of the twelfth century and beginning of the thirteenth century. In some places the text also mentions "Sridhar". Thus we conclude that Vyopdev came after Sridhar Swami.

Sri Vallabhāchārya has mentioned "*Pushtibhakti*" in his text, and Srila Rupa Goswāmipād has said that it is synonymous with *Raganuga bhakti*. In the end of "Tatwadeep Nibandha", Vallabhāchārya has written that he is the follower of Sri Krishna, Vyāsdev and Sri Vishnu Swami. Whatever it may be, Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahāprabhu has appeared to purify Kaliyug and his self-surrendered followers such as Srila Rupa and Sanātan alone have given a crystal clear idea of *Rāg-bhakti* or *Raganuga bhakti*.

In this text, the respected author has described mixed devotion (*mishrā bhakti*), right up to pure devotion, which culminates into *Rāg-bhakti* of Vrajadhām. He has explained through a narrative about the levels of *bhakti* and the status of the devotees who worship various divine forms. Every devotee has expressed humility and eagerness (which are the soul of devotion). Yet, they have stated their flaws and eulogized openly the devotees of higher *bhakti-ras*. In this manner, the author has expertly elucidated pure, unadulterated *bhakti* through the devotional statements made by the devotees themselves.

Sri Brihad-Bhāgavatāmritam is indeed matchless. It contains *leelā*, *bhāva*, *ras*, and *siddhānta* – in short, all the information regarding the Vaishnav-world. In the *Vaishnav-sampradāy*, this text is as bright as the brilliant sun and hence no further introduction is required.

My most respected Guru Maharaj expressed his wish that if we publish a simplified version of Sri Brihad-Bhāgavatāmritam then the common man who does not have the knowledge of Sanskrit will be greatly benefited. He expressed his wish and ordered me to fulfill his wish. When by his blessings, the manuscript was ready, he became eager for its publication, and entrusted Srimat Jay Nitai Das Babaji Mahārāj - a resident of Sri Rādhākund with proof-reading. This most compassionate Bābāji Mahārāj corrected it and gave permission for its publication. Permission was also granted by Srimat Gopal Das Babaji Mahārāj (of Jiva Goswami Gherā) and Srimat Madanmohan Das Babaji Mahārāj, (my dearest friend and *bhajan*-instructor). Both these Babajis are the residents of Rādhākund.

¹ Love – the ultimate goal

² Devotion that we can obtain by *sādhana*.

³ *vide* Bhakti-rasāmrita-Sindhu.1.2.1 – purport by Srimat Jiva Goswāmipād.

⁴ Bhakti designated as Eternal Love

⁵ Ten important verses om Srimad-Bhāgavatam

⁶ Devotion practiced only because it is commanded in the scriptures

⁷ When we perform bhakti, but not because the scriptures command us to do so

As a resident of Sri Râdhâkund, I have to serve the Vaishnavs regularly. So I could not move to any other place for the purpose of publishing. In this situation our friend Sri Shyamkânta Basâk volunteered to serve Sri Sri Guru Mahârâj selflessly and willingly undertook the responsibility of proof-reading the printed version and help with the publishing of the book. It was through his relentless effort that the publishing of this book (the Bengali version) became possible.

Thus the first Bengali edition was printed in Vrindaban. During this time our Guru Maharaj fell ill and he was pleased to see the master-print of the book, which was brought to him by Sri Basâk Mahâshaya. The final print could not be presented to him, as meanwhile he had left for the eternal abode. This text is the result of his mercy which is like a wish-creeper. The glorious principles expounded in this text are like flowers that have been knit into a beautiful garland. This fallen pretender of a servant has only one ardent prayer with tears in his eyes at the lotus feet of his Sri Guru Mahârâj - that - may this text please him.

If the readers are slightly benefited, even then I shall consider this little effort successful. Also, if Sri Gurudev and the Vaishnavs bless me, then I would definitely like to publish the 'Uttar Khand (Part-II)' of this text.

Praying for a speck of kripâ from Sri Gurudev and the Vaishnavs,

Most fallen

Ananta dâs

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First Chapter: Bhauma (earthly)

Sri Janamejaya expressed his interest to listen to the last part of Mahabhārat from Mahāmuni Jaimini. Jaimini begins to narrate the wonderful divine conversation between King Parikshit and his mother Uttarā. In Prayāg, Nārād saw how the *brāhmin* served his Shālagrām Shila and realized that the *brahmin* had got Sri Krishna's blessings. He heard about the great *bhakti* of the south Indian king and went to South India and Indra's glorious *bhakti* from the *Rājā*.

Second Chapter: Divya (celestial)

Nārād went to heaven to visit Indra and sung Indra's glory. Hearing about Sri Brahmā's bhakti from Indra, Sri Nārād went to Satyalok and sang the glory of Brahmā's bhakti. Here Nārād Muni heard about the great devotion of Lord Shiva and went to Shivalok.

Third Chapter: Prapanchatit (beyond the material world)

Sri Nārād went to Shivalok and sung His glory, the devotees of Lord Shiva eulogized the residents of Vaikuntha, description of the mortal body of the devotees which is actually transcendental, and Shivji glorified Prahlād.

Fourth Chapter: Bhakta (devotee)

Sri Nārād went for Prahlād's *darshan* and sang his glory. Glory of Sri Prahlād and Sri Hanumān, and Hanumānji sang the glory of the Pāndavas.

Fifth Chapter: Priya (loving)

Nārād visited Hastinapur and glorified the Pandavas. Hearing the glory of the Yādavs from the Pāndavas, Nārād went to Dwārakā, He also heard the glory of Sri Uddhav from the Yadavs.

Sixth Chapter : Priyatama (most loving)

Hearing Sri Uddhav's greatness, Nārād became eager to meet him; Nārād went to Dwārakā and heard about the glorious prem of the Brijwāsīs from Sri Uddhava; Rohini devi describes Sri Krishna's *viraha* for the *Brijwāsīs*, Sri Rukmini Devi also narrated how much *Brijwāsīs* had mesmerized Sri Krishna by the power of their *prem*. Sri Baladev also supported the Brijwāsīs and narrated their painful *viraha*. Love and affection for Brijwāsīs drove Lord Krishna out of His senses and this made the residents of Dwārakā cry.

Seventh Chapter : Purna (absolute)

When Nārād heard the wailing of the residents of Dwārakā, he instructed Garud to take Sri Krishna to the Raivatak mountain of Nava Vrindaban. Garud along with Sri Krishna and Baladev went to Nava Vrindaban and Lord Krishna was brought to His external sense by the efforts of Baladev and Rohini Devi, the Queens were overwhelmed by Lord Krishna's forest-attire. By Baladev's effort Lord Sri Krishna remembered Himself as the Lord of Dwārakā. Afterwards Garud brought Him back to Dwārakā. Rukmini devi glorified the Gopis as she had heard from Uddhav, Satyavama Devi's *mān*, the Lord Himself described the glory of the *Brijwāsīs* and Gopis. Sri Krishna expressed his gratitude to Nārād and described the *ras* of '*viraha*'. Blessings were bestowed on Sri Nārād, Sri Krishna and

Baladev dined with Nârad. Sri Nârad came to Prayâg and sang the glory of *Vraja-Bhakti* which prompted the sages to take shelter of *Vraja-bhakti*.

Sri Sri Brihad-Bhâgavatâmrítam

First Part First Chapter (Bhouma)

*"vande'ham sriguroh sriyuta-padakamalam sri gurun-vaishnavâmscha
sri rupam sâgrajâtam sahagana-raghunâthân-vitam tam sajeevam,
sâdwaitam sâvadhutam parijana-sahitam krishna-chaitanya-devam
sri râdhâ-krishna-pâdân sahagana-lalitâ-sri-vishâkhânvitâmscha."*

*"shachi-tanuja-gourachandra-bhaktavrinda-toshakam
swakirtirvardhanam samastasâdhubhih sabhâjîtam,
sadaiva râdhikâ-varânghripankajâalimânasam
bhajâmyaham mahâshayam kripâmbudhim sanâtanam."*

Once upon a time Janamejaya (son of Parikshit) heard the wonderful story of Mahâbhârat from Mahâmuni Jaimini. He heard the last part of the story with special eagerness and said – “Dear *brahmin*, although I heard Mahâbhârat from Maharshi Vaishampâyan earlier, I did not relish so much *ras*, as I have relished from you. Now please end the story on a sweet note as well.” Sri Jaimini replied – “O best amongst the kings! Vyâsdev beheld Sri Bhagavân, Bhakti Devi and Maya Shakti in Bhakti-Samadhi-yoga. He realized directly the beauty and sweet pastimes of the Lord and compiled Srimad-Bhâgavatam. His son Sri Shukadev Muni, who was the result of his immense austerity, was *âtmârâm*¹ and *âptakâm*². He was very much attracted to Sri Krishna and studied the entire Srimad-Bhâgavatam, although it is a very large text. On the other hand, your father had been cursed by a *brahmin* and was waiting for his death on the banks of the Gangâ. Sri Shukadev recited the nectarine Srimad-Bhâgavatam in his assembly and relieved him from the fear of death as well as aroused supreme bhakti in his heart.

When King Parikshit's mother Uttarâ saw her son nearing his supremely glorious end – a goal that he desired, she was overwhelmed with sorrow. Maharaj Parikshit explained to his mother about the immortality of the soul and said that birth and death are nothing but the rule of the material world. She was consoled and said, “Dear child, Sripâd Bâdarâyani³ is the best of the *paramahamsas*. He has gifted you with the relish of the nectarine divine *ras* called Srimad-Bhâgavatam. If you could narrate to me even a slight bit of its gist, that is most enjoyable, then I shall feel blessed.”

When Parikshit heard Uttarâ's request, he said – “Dear mother, there is hardly any time left for me to journey to the next world, hence if you wish to hear in brief what my most worshiped Spiritual Master Sri Shukadev Muni has narrated to me – the most confidential part – that is – the meditation on the nocturnal pastimes of Sri Vrindâban, then I can describe to you little bit, since time is very short. Mother Uttarâ replied, “My child, sugar is the condensed form of sugarcane, while amritam is the condensed for the Ksheersâgar (ocean of milk). Similarly, what you are about to describe (the gist of Srimad-Bhâgavatam) is certainly the sweetest portion of the entire Srimad-Bhâgavatam. Please speak from your own realization and make me relish at least little bit.”

King Parikshit was supremely pleased when he saw how eager his mother was to hear the divine discourse. He became impatient with joy and decided to make his mother relish the best and the sweetest portion – the cream – of Srimad-Bhâgavatam. He said, “Dear mother! Although I shall depart very soon, and I had decided to keep a vow of silence, yet your question is so sweet, that it forces me to speak. By the mercy of my Spiritual Master Shukadev Muni, I shall narrate the nectarine Srimad-Bhâgavatam to you. Please listen attentively and with self-control.”

“Dear mother! Once in the month of Mâgh, the best of the sages had gathered around Sri Mâdhav, in Prayâg, which is the king of all holy places. Meanwhile a wealthy *brahmin* desired to feed some devotees and arrived there with his relatives. He cleaned one spot and worshiped the Supreme Lord in the form of Shâlagrâm *shilâ* with many ingredients. After the sevâ, he fed many *brahmins*,

¹ One who is blissful in his own self

² Self-satisfied; does not desire anything from outside sources.

³ The son of Bâdarâyan or Vyâsdev – in short, Shukadev. Vyâsdev is called Bâdarâyan, since he resided in Badrinâth dhâm.

Vaishnavs, the poor and the suffering with *mahāprasād* with reverence. Ultimately he partook of the *prasād* and offered all the fruits of his *karma* to Sri Bhagavân. Later on, he seated Lord Shâlâgrâm on the throne and prepared to leave. Devarshi Nârad, who was watching all this, felt that he wanted to ascertain who the best recipient of Sri Krishna's *kripâ* was. Therefore, as the *brahmin* was about to leave, he got up from the assembly of the sages and told him – "O great brahmin, you alone are the supreme recipient of Sri Krishna-*kripâ*." The *brahmin* replied, "O sage! What characteristic of divine *kripâ* did you see in me? I don't think I have received any *kripâ* whatsoever. If you indeed wish to see what divine *kripâ* is like, then please go to a king who lives in south India. He is a great devotee and see how wonderfully he, along with his entire family, serves Sri Krishna and His devotees. The manner in which he welcomes guests and his excellent qualities will astonish you." When Sri Nârad heard this, he became most curious. He went to the city where the king lived. He saw that the king was more wonderful than what the *brahmin* had described. He was serving the Deity of Sri Bhagavân that is eternal, conscious and blissful in his capital city, in an excellent manner. He used to arrange grand new festivals every day and serve the Vaishnavs with delicious *prasâdam*.

Sri Nârad was supremely pleased. He approached the king and said, "Dear King! You have indeed received Sri Krishna's *kripâ*, for you have engaged all your wealth and facilities to serve the Supreme Being and His devotees." The Mahârâja was embarrassed to hear his own praise from Devarshi Nârad. He bowed his head and said, "O Devarshi! We are human beings; we are suffering under the threefold misery; how is it possible for worthless beings such as myself to receive Sri Krishna-*kripâ*? If you wish to see Krishna-*kripâ*, then please visit the *devatâs* residing in the heaven. They drink nectar and so do not fall ill or die. Again, Indra is the best of the *devatâs*. Even Bhagavân Vishnu has accepted the position of his younger brother in the form of Lord Vâman. This means that He has acceded to being under Indra's command."

(Here, we should note the point that, '*bhakti*' implies '*sevâ*'. According to our desire, sometimes we perform *sevâ* to please God, and at other times we serve to satisfy ourselves. When we serve God with the sole desire to please Him, then it is called 'pure-bhakti', while when we perform *sevâ* to satisfy ourselves, it is called 'adulterated-*bhakti*'. This adulteration can comprise of *karma*, *gyân*, *yog* etc. So far, the *bhakti* we have studied is that adulterated by *karma*. It is also called '*ârop-siddha bhakti*'.¹ It means that, although it is not bhakti in the true sense, the person performing this type of *bhakti* appears to have *bhakti-bhâv*. Revered Sri Sanâtan Goswâmi wants to prove that pure devotion is the topmost. Therefore at first he has presented the *brahmin* of Prayâg, whose *bhakti* is adulterated with *karmâ*,² as the recipient of Sri Krishna-*kripâ*.)

Second Chapter (celestial)

When Devarshi Nârad heard the king speak in this manner, he went to the heavenly planets. There he beheld Lord Vâman surrounded by the *devatâs*. The celestial beings were serving the Lord with excellent ingredients, and Sri *Bhagavân* too was spreading bliss all around with His remarkable nectarine speech that was full of *ras*. Indra, the king of the *devatâs* was sitting next to Vâmandev and describing the favors that the good Lord had bestowed upon him. While singing His glory Indra was floating in tears. When *Bhagavân* Vishnu left for his own abode, Sri Nârad approached Indra, blessed him and said, "O king! You alone are the recipient of Sri Krishna-*kripâ*. You have obtained the vast kingdom of the heavenly planets, the Lord himself has accepted the position of your younger brother, and respects you as His elder brother. You are indeed very fortunate!"

Indra offered obeisance to the great sage and spoke embarrassedly, "O sage! Do you not know how much this heavenly kingdom is full of troubles? I think you are joking with me. How many times the *asuras* have attacked us, and we have had to flee from here! The heaven is, alas contaminated with arrogance, competition, malice etc. Moreover, please don't think that Lord Vâman has accepted the position of my younger brother due to my devotion. Rather, He has agreed to become a son to my parents because of their immense *tapasyâ*. It is on their request that He accepts my *pujâ*, that too, not always. Sometimes He just gives me *darshan* for a moment and then disappears.

¹ Srîmat Jîva Goswâmpâd has explained in detail the characteristics and classifications of different types of bhakti (*ârop-siddhâ*, *sanga-siddhâ* and *swarup-siddhâ*) in the 217th chapter of Bhakti-sandarbhâ. My most worshiped Spiritual Master 108 Srîmat Kunjabehari das Bâbâji maharaj has explained the definition and types of bhakti in accordance with Bhakti-sandarbhâ in his text 'face-to face with the Supreme truth' that is published by Sri Krishna Chaitanya Shâstra Mandir (radhakund).

² Since he desires material happiness by serving Lord Shâlâgrâm .

O sage! If you really wish to see the recipient of divine mercy, then please visit your father Brahmâ. Fourteen Indras undergo birth and death in his single day. His one night is also of the same duration. Thus he lives for one hundred years, every day of his life-span comprising of such a day and night. He has created all these worlds. *Bhagavân* Sahasrasheersâ¹ Purush Himself appears and accepts his offering, thus making him extremely happy. In fact, you know his greatness more than I do. So what can I say?"

Parikshit said, "Dear mother! When Sri Nârad heard Indra, he exclaimed 'Very good!' Then he praised Indra and went to Satyalok. From far he could already hear the chanting of the *yagna*. Upon reaching there, he saw that *Bhagavân* Sahasrasheersâ Purush was present there, accompanied by Laxmiji. He was accepting offerings from Brahmâji and spreading joy all around. When the Lord left for His own abode, Brahmâji sat on his *âsan* and engaged in hearing and glorifying Sri Krishna's greatness. He was supremely engrossed and was shedding copious tears. Meanwhile, Nârad went to Brahmâji and said, "Dear father, you are surely the supreme recipient of Sri Hari's *kripâ*. You create and nourish this universe. The *Vedas* and the *Purânas* that propound the four ultimate goals of living beings and how to achieve them too have risen from your mouths.² Sri *Bhagavân* is subjugated by your *bhakti*, and therefore He accepts your offering. O father, why should I call you Sri Krishna's dear one? I think you are That Sri Krishna Himself, and have simply accepted this body to perform the pastimes of creation etc."

When Brahmâji heard this, he was overcome with anger and kept on repeating "I am His servant! I am His servant!" He told Nârad in a sad voice, "O child, I have been drilling into your head since you were a child that I am not *Bhagavân* Sri Krishna, and I have backed up my statement with logic and proofs. Surely you remember this?"³

Mahâmâyâ, Sri Krishna's potency creates, nourishes and destroys the worlds. I am mesmerized by her illusory power and pride myself on being the Creator'. I am fearful of death, and so I worship the Divine Being. I desire liberation and not *bhakti*. The Lord too accepts my offering, simply to keep His vow to protect and preach the Vedas. He does not shower any mercy on me."

Dear Nârad, "Forget *bhakti*, I am always full of anxiety, ever since I have offended his lotus feet. That wicked Hiranyakashipu had become powerful due to the boons I have granted to him, and then he had perpetrated violence against Lord Vishnu and the Vaishnavs. The Lord had appeared as Narasimhadev to show compassion to his great devotee Prahlâd. Then he had ordered me, 'O Brahmâ! Never grant such boons to the wicked *asuras*.' Yet, I had granted similar boons to Râvan and his ilk. They too had become arrogant and tormented the Vaishnavs. Sri *Bhagavân* tolerates offences towards himself, but never against His devotees. I have been the cause of such offences against the Vaishnavs; hence I am always immersed in guilt.

O Nârad! Just try to remember, how much offence I committed when I stole the cowherd boys and the calves who are Sri Krishna's dear associates. He is the Lord of Mâyâ, and I dared to show Him my illusory prowess! I have performed such a dastardly act that every time I remember this incident, I hang my head in shame.

O Nârad! Today you are eager to seek out the recipient of divine mercy. Hence, I shall disclose a secret to you. No one is more fortunate than Sriman Mahâdev, in this matter. He is intoxicated by drinking the nectar of Sri Krishna's lotus feet. He verily shakes the universe when he dances in the ecstasy of Sri Krishna-*ras*. He grants boons to the *devatâs* such as Indra, and even to me. What's more, in *tattva*, he is non-different from Sri Krishna. When the ocean of milk was being churned, there arose strong venom called Kâlkut that was so powerful that it could destroy the universe. Then the Lord enabled Shivji to drink this poison, and thus declared his glory to the world."

Parikshit said, "O Mother! When Nârad heard Brahmâji, he was full of joy, and prepared to leave for Kailâsh. Brahmâji told his son Nârad, 'Dear child, Shivalok, that is present outside this universe, is eternal, blissful, and the embodiment of Truth. You too are empowered by *bhakti* to travel there. Therefore go there and take *darshan* of the extreme glory of Mahâdev'.

¹ The Lord with thousand heads.

² Brahmâji has four heads.

³ Please read Brahmâ-Nârad conversation in the second skandha of Srimad-Bhâgavatam.

When Nârad heard the greatness of Shivji from his father Brahmâ, he started singing "Shiv-Krishna" and left for Shivalok in supreme joy."

Third Chapter (Beyond the material world)

Sri Nârad went to Shivalok; he saw from far that Shivji was worshipping Lord Sankarshan¹ with a heart immersed in devotion. He was singing hymns with supreme adoration, and sometimes he was dancing and chanting beautifully with wonderful *bhâv*. Mother Umâ *devi* was clapping in rhythm with His dance and thus encouraging Him all the more. His followers such as Nandishwar were praising him by loudly saying "Jay!! Jay!!" When Sri Nârad saw Shivji immersed in *bhakti-ras*, he joyously offered his obeisance to him. He said, "O Lord of the Lords! You are the sole recipient of Sri Krishna's supreme most mercy." Saying this, Nârad started singing sweetly all that he heard from Brahmâ about Shivji's greatness. Then he went closer to Shivji to take the dust of his lotus feet. But Shivji embraced Devarshi and said, "O Nârad! What are you doing?" Then he stopped dancing and sat down. Nârad started glorifying him as the 'supreme controller'. However Sri Shankar, who is the crest-jewel of all Vaishnavs, could not bear to hear such nonsense. He shut his ears with both his hands and spoke in anger – "O Nârad! I am not the supreme controller, neither have I received any Sri Krishna-*kripâ*. I am always striving to get simply the mercy of the servant of His servant."

Parikshit said, "Dear mother, When Nârad heard this, he stopped glorifying Shivji as being non-different from Sri Krishna. He was overcome with reverence and spoke slowly like an offender, 'O Lord! You alone know the rare excellent qualities of Sri Vishnu and the Vaishnavs. You preach their glory in the world by your actions. On many occasions, Sri Krishna too has worshipped you and has spread your glory in the world.'"

Hearing this, Shivji placed His palm on Nârad's mouth, and said – "Please do not divulge my audacity." Then He laughed loudly and said, "Dear Nârad, just see, my Lord is so wonderful! I am such an *aparâdhi*, yet, He has not neglected me."

Nârad was supremely blissful when he heard Shivji's words that were so full of *bhakti-ras*, and started praising him. He said, "O Lord! There is no way you could have committed any offense, since Sri Krishna loves you so much. Moreover, by your mercy, many people have gained Sri Krishna-*prem* and have become fortunate. Although you have so much opulence that Brahmâ cannot even imagine, you have rejected all that grandeur; instead you go naked and immerse yourself in sweet *ras* of the Holy Name, and dance with *bhâv*." Sriman-Mahâdev replied, "O Nârad! Sri Krishna, Who is worshipped by all-renounced ego-less *Bhâgavats* such as yourself, is so exalted, while I am the root of all false ego. I am so lowly! I am always intoxicated with pride and think I am the Lord of the world, liberated, dispenser of knowledge and who can give *bhakti*. Sri Krishna loves the one who is bereft of everything. As a result, the one who has forsaken all ego, and hence all fear, they alone receive His *kripâ*, and attain Sri Vaikuntha *dhâm*, the eternal, conscious and blissful abode. Dear Nârad, Sri Krishna is extremely merciful to the residents of Vaikuntha. We do not see Him shower such mercy elsewhere. In Vaikuntha, there is no activity other than constant nectarine hymns overflowing with *prem*. That abode is flooded with remarkable waves of continuous supreme bliss. We cannot compare a speck of that joy with the entire Brahmânanda². O Nârad! How can I sufficiently glorify the residents of Vaikuntha – who possess pure devotion, and hence are constantly immersed in the blissful *ras* of serving Sri Hari Himself? In fact, even in the mortal world, those who have rejected heaven, liberation and hell – considering them as equal – and have simply ascertained the service unto Sri Hari's lotus feet as the ultimate goal, are indeed great. They continuously drink and relish Sri Krishna's sweet name, excellence and *leelâs*, due to which, their material bodies have turned eternal, conscious and blissful.

(Commentary - What Sriman-Mahâdev wants to say is – Hlâdini *shakti* and Samvit *shakti* are the characteristics of Sri *Bhagavân's* swarup *shakti* or original potency. *Bhakti* is the condensed form of these two *shaktis*. Those who have taken the shelter of the lotus feet of the Spiritual Master, have rejected the paths of *karma*, *gyân* etc. and worship Sri Hari with pure devotion, they gain His mercy. Then *bhakti* that enters in their heart due to hearing and chanting, purifies their material organs, such as, the mind, intellect, tongue, ears, eyes etc. *Bhakti* destroys their material nature and makes them transcendental. In this manner, due to the gradual *bhajan*, the practicing devotee's senses give up their material nature and become divine. When mercury and sulfur undergo friction, they forsake their respective nature and form mercuric sulfide,

¹ In Srimad-Bhagavatam we read of Shivji worshipping Lord Sankarshan.

² The bliss of merging with Brahman.

which is entirely a new substance; similarly, due to hearing and chanting, our material tendencies mingle with *bhakti* (which is transcendental) and naturally become divine. When the tendencies of our heart become one with *bhakti*, this stage is called *prem*. After surrendering unto the lotus feet of the Spiritual Master, as soon as we start *bhajan*, this process begins. As we progress gradually, depending on how much our material senses (mind, intellect etc.) are mingling with *bhakti*, they become transcendental. Therefore our senses are somewhat material and somewhat transcendental. The process is complete when they become entirely transcendental. This stage is '*prem*'.

This '*prem*' or Eternal Love is the essence of Hlâdini *shakti*. This *shakti* manifests the Divine Being, Who is sweetness personified, in our heart. It has another function, that is, to arouse *prem* for That Being, in our heart. This is the real goal of Hlâdini *shakti*.

Sri *Bhagavân* is an inexhaustible fountainhead of bliss. Yet He likes to make our lives worthwhile, and also likes to relish the bliss of *prem* arising in our heart. He finds this exceedingly enjoyable and splendid. As a result He makes us experience His *swarup-ânanda*, or the joy arising of His natural Self. To do this, He uses His Hlâdini *shakti*. This *shakti* creates a favorable situation in our hearts, so that we may experience divine bliss. This favorable state of the heart is '*prem*'.

The seventh chapter of Mâdhurya-Kâdambini states that – the one who has gained passion for Sri *Bhagavân* – even if he belong to the lowest caste – he is worthy of being worshipped by Lord Brahmâ. The devotees whom Shivji is referring to, seem to be the '*siddha-bhaktas*'. Brahmâ had said, "There is no devotee in the material world". Yet, we see that Shivji is saying that, although devotees live in the world of Mâyâ, they are beyond the material world. The Ânanda-Chandrikâ explanation of the verse such as "*hari-priya-jane bhâvâ dweshâdyâ nochitâ itî*" of Sri Ujjwal-Neelmani states that – while practicing devotion, fortunately if *bhakti* appears in our heart, it is temporary. When *bhakti* appears in this manner, it does not unite with the mind. Sometimes, when we place an object in a vessel, it may react with the matter of the vessel. However, in this case, *bhakti* does not react with the mind. Then when does *bhakti* react with the mind? We see that when we place an iron rod in the fire, immediately it does not gain the property of the fire (that is, the ability to burn). We have to keep it in the fire for quite some time. Then it gains the characteristic of the fire and can burn like the fire. While practicing devotion, till the stage of *âsakti*, our mind and *bhakti* do not become one in the true sense.

Reactions are of two types – physical and chemical. Physical reactions are reversible and temporary, while chemical reactions are irreversible and permanent. When we heat an iron rod in the fire, it does gain the characteristics of the fire, but when we plunge it in water, it once again behaves like an ordinary iron rod. On the other hand, mercury and sulfur have to undergo friction in order to react with one another (they too take some time to undergo change, like the iron rod). However mercuric sulfide does not revert to mercury and sulfur anymore. Similarly, when our mind and intellect unite with *bhakti* completely, our innermost consciousness never becomes material again. Therefore, it is better to compare this reaction with that of mercury and sulfur.

We attain the stage of *rati* or passion after crossing *âsakti*. The Ânanda-Chandrikâ explanation of Sri Ujjwal-Neelmani does not state clearly whether or not in the stage of *rati*, our *chitta*¹ will lose its material nature completely and become transcendental. However, in his explanation to the verses such as '*gyânam vishuddham*' (Srimad-Bhâgavatam 5.12.11), Srila Vishwanâth Chakravartipâd has written clearly that – when we attain *rati*, the material nature of our *chitta* is destroyed, and it becomes pure and without any contamination. When we reach the state of *prem*, the purity becomes all the more dense. In the state of *rati*, although our *chitta* becomes transcendental, the body does not become so. Yet, we see that Shivji is telling Nârad that the material body becomes transcendental. This means, he is indicating to such devotees who have attained *prem*. A *sâdhak* is a devotee who has reached *rati*, while a devotee who has attained *prem*, is called '*siddha*'. Then his material body becomes eternal, conscious and blissful – this is nothing surprising.)

Shivji told Nârad – "O Devarsh²! Such devotees are as dear to me as Sri *Bhagavân* Himself, and I also pray for their association."

Parikshit said, "O mother! When Nârad Muni heard the immense glory of the residents of Vaikuntha from Shivji, he prepared to leave. Then Shivji whispered in Nârad's ear, "O Nârad! Today you are eager to seek out the one who is the highest recipient of Sri Krishna-*kripâ*, this is why I am telling something very confidential. In this universe, there is someone who has got more *kripâ* than

¹ Sub-conscious mind.

² 'Devarshi' when addressed, changes into 'Devarsh'.

me, your father, residents of Vaikuntha such as Garud, and even Mahālakṣmī. That person is none other than Śrī Prahlād.

Dear Nārada, just remember those famous words of the Purānas – ‘I am the only salvation for my devotees; hence I do not desire anyone other than my devotees – not Lakṣmī *devī*, and not even myself.’ Hence, who can possibly describe the greatness of such exclusive devotees? Again, amongst such devotees, Prahlād is undoubtedly, the most fortunate! All of us, including Lakṣmī *devī*, have observed Śrī Prahlād’s good fortune when the Lord delivered Hiranyakashipu. The entire universe was burning by the fire emanated by the blazing form of Lord Narasiṃha. None of us was able to approach Him; why, even Lakṣmī *devī* was trembling and dare not go near Him. However, as soon as the Lord’s eyes fell on His supreme devotee Prahlād, that extremely blazing form transformed into the embodiment of parental love.

O Nārada! Although the Lord wanted to grant liberation to Prahlād, he had only begged for *bhakti*. Simply to express Prahlād’s greatness, the Lord repeatedly exhorted him to accept liberation. Hence, by repeatedly rejecting the Lord’s offer of *mukti*, he proved his steadfastness in *bhakti*. Moreover we see that, Śrī *Bhagavān* has accepted the position of a security guard at the gates of Bali Mahārāj, and He has protected the wicked Bānāsura – it is all because of His dearest devotee Prahlād. Therefore you quickly visit Suta and take Prahlād’s *darshan*. You will be happy. But remember, never commit the mistake of glorifying him or offering respects. He is the best of saints – he cannot tolerate hymns and obeisance from us. If you want to feel happy, then just bless him and show your good will by embracing him. Please hug him on my behalf as well!”

(Here, we must note the point that Shivji has stated that Prahlād Mahārāj is greater than eternal associates such as Garud. This is because, just as the devotee forsakes all for Śrī *Bhagavān*’s pleasure, Śrī *Bhagavān* too surrenders Himself to His devotee. This indicates that He wishes to increase the devotee’s *prem*, and hence gives him a greater relish of His beauty and sweetness, more than He gives to His eternal associates. In this manner, He displays His surrender unto the devotee. Going by this rule, Prahlād Mahārāj is more superior.

We observe another point that, although the *Vraja*gopīs are the most supreme, yet Indra has pointed to Brahmā, Brahmā to Mahādev and Mahādev has declared Prahlād as the greatest devotee. After this, we shall find some more devotees directing Nārada to others as more ‘exalted’. Why so? The reason is that – it is natural for us to realize the glory of that devotee who has similar *bhakti*-desire (*sajātīya*), yet greater than ourselves. If a devotee has a *bhakti*-desire different from ours, although he or she may be more exalted, we shall not realize it. Consequently, Indra, Brahmā etc. have pointed to devotees greater than themselves and not directly to the *Gopīs*.)

Fourth Chapter (Devotee)

Śrī Prahlād

Parikṣhit Mahārāj said – “Dear Mother! Shivji’s statement surprised Nārada who traveled quickly on his ‘mental’ chariot and entered Suta. He was so impatient to behold Prahlād, who was the foremost devotee. He saw Prahlād in a secluded place, immersed in meditation. He was relishing the *ras* of the lotus-feet of Śrī *Bhagavān*. In meditation itself, he could make out that Nārada has entered. So he got up to welcome the great sage. But no sooner than he did this, Nārada hastened to be by his side, and Prahlād offered him obeisance. When Prahlād started worshipping him with all the paraphernalia, the sage stopped him with reverence. With tear-filled eyes he started embracing Prahlād again and again.

Nārada said, “Dear child! You alone are the greatest recipient of Śrī Krishna’s bounty. Today my labor has borne fruits. I have been traveling all the way from Prayāga to Suta searching for the greatest recipient of Śrī Krishna–*kṛpā* and at last my effort has borne fruit. Dear child! Your father had created tremendous obstacles on your path, yet you have overcome all of them by the power of your *bhakti*. You have also transformed the *asura*-children, who were of *tāmasic* nature, into supreme *bhāgavats*.

Lord Nrisiṃha was so furious to see how his devotee was being tortured. Therefore he was about to destroy the whole universe. Then the *devatās*, who were extremely afraid of His blazing anger begged you to assuage Him. As soon as you fell at His lotus feet, He picked you up and licked

you all over. O supreme *bhāgavat!* When Sri *Bhagavān* offered you the topmost position, you rejected it. However, to please Him you accepted the kingdom. Sri *Bhagavān* is like a honey bee, whose only means of survival is, to drink the honey like *prem* from the devotee's lotus like heart. Sri *Bhagavān* always wants that all living beings should attain love for His lotus feet. As a result, to salvage every living entity, you accepted the kingdom, so that you could preach divine *prem*. This is why the royal throne could not harm your spiritual endeavor.

O best of the devotees! What more can I say? Your mercy alone has enabled even Bali, your grandson, to subjugate Sri *Bhagavān* and keep Him as a security guard."

Parikshit said, "Dear Mother! Sri Prahlād was embarrassed by Nārād's statements. He offered him obeisance and said, 'O Gurudev! Even material knowledge does not develop in childhood, then how can a child gain supreme knowledge – that pertaining to Sri Krishna-*bhakti*? You extolled me – yet all these qualities that you naturally find in steadfast devotees – I do not possess any one of them. When my heart is in peril, I remember only my Master, and consequently I am not overwhelmed by trouble. This does not indicate that I have gained His mercy. Real Sri Krishna-*kripā* is expressed only in His servants. When the devotee has the good fortune to serve the lotus feet of the Lord, in various beautiful ways, we can say that he has indeed got His mercy. When he saves us from troubles, or destroys our *anarthas*, it does not signify '*kripā*'. You may say that – 'Lord Nrisimha has petted and fondled you, does it not reveal His *kripā*?' Then I beg to reply – the *Māyāvādīs* call such petting as the activities of *Māyā*, and they say that the Supreme Being does not perform such actions – it is impossible for Him. Some devotees feel it is just Sri *Bhagavān's leelā*. As soon as you come close to the fire, you will stop feeling cold, and stop feeling lethargic. Similarly, Sri *Bhagavān* has a natural paternal tendency towards one and all, since He is naturally compassionate. Therefore, we cannot call His petting and fondling as 'real *kripā*'. The great souls who are truly devout say that devotees such as Sri Hanumān, who have obtained the good fortune to serve the Lord in an exceptional manner, they have truly got His mercy. I cannot call His loving gestures as 'mercy', I am afraid.

O Master! Whatever divine pastimes Lord Nrisimha performs, is simply to protect the *devatās* who are His devotees, salvage His associates Jay and Vijay from the bondage of curse, and to help keep the vow made by His son Brahmāji. He does not perform any *leelā* to show compassion towards me. O Gurudev! If He indeed had any mercy for me, do you think He would have deceived me, by giving me a kingdom? Do try to recollect His vow – 'When I am merciful to someone, I take away his wealth'. As a result, it is very clear that He has been unmerciful towards me when He gave me the kingdom. Moreover, because of the kingdom, I have also gained servants, friends and relatives; this has obliterated my devotional practice as well. He has also declared with His holy lips that material pleasures never attract His exclusive devotee; yet I am addicted to kingdom and material happiness. Then, don't you think my addiction for material wealth such as the kingdom has been a blow to a staunch and exclusive *bhakti*?

(Commentary - Here, really speaking, a devotee is never addicted to material pleasure. We should realize that Sri Prahlād is simply stating this out of humility that is natural for him. When we reach a mature stage in *bhakti*, gradually such humbleness awakens in us. As devotees, we should always seek out our faults and consider even little good quality in others as great. *Bhakti* is naturally sweet and soft. When we become devotees, we gain excellent qualities such as humility and politeness. These qualities highly nourish our *bhakti*. When we possess all excellent qualifications and brilliance, yet we consider ourselves extraordinarily worthless, such a *bhāv* is 'humility'. Actually, humility is 'complete self-surrender and sacrifice at the lotus feet of Sri *Bhagavān*'.)

Some people think humility stands for weakness, cowardice and inferiority complex. Consequently they look down on humility. Yes, such qualities are *tāmasic*, hence fit to be treated with contempt. However, we should never possess these qualities. Materialistic people censure and protest when we say that devotees should be humble. They are mistaken. A devotee's humility is very exceptional, special and arises out of only *prem-bhakti*. In fact this starting quality arises in us only when we reach the mature stage of *prem-bhakti*. The devotees who are very pure, untouched by sin, alone can consider themselves fallen. Our *Vaishnav sampradāy* is full of such examples. If we are sinful and offensive, we do not want to acknowledge it. However, the great souls who are inoffensive and are the jewels adorning Mother Earth, consider themselves as burden for her. They think they are tarnishing her beauty – such lofty thoughts are possible because they have *bhakti*, which is the best of all God qualities. *Bhakti Devi* has such inconceivable impact on them. Thus we see that the inferiority complex arising out of *tamo-guna* (mode of ignorance) and the

humility awakened in the heart of a supreme *bhâgavat* who is full of *prem-bhakti* are as unlike each other as darkness and light. They are as dissimilar as lust and love. It is impossible for ordinary mortals to understand this fact. Mundane humility is like a piece of glass, while the meekness arising in the loving heart of a devotee is as priceless as diamond. We shall speak more on this topic in the second volume of Sri Brihad-Bhâgavatâmr̥itam; therefore we are not going into the detail here.

Sri Prahlȧd was humble, because of his natural devotion. He considered himself unworthy and has declared himself to be addicted to material pleasure. His modesty is making him glorify Sri Hanumân (since he has got the good fortune to serve Lord Râmchandra).

Prahlȧd told Nârada – “O Gurudev! You mentioned the way I preached to the *asur*-children – but in reality, I have proved my lack of education that is customary for an *asur*. I have no spiritual knowledge whatsoever. Due to the association of the *asuras*, I have still not got rid of dry knowledge. We can gain special divine mercy only by resorting to pure devotion, that is unadulterated by *karma* and *gyân*. Yet, where do I have the characteristics of such pure devotion? And without pure devotion how can I get the mercy of the Lord? Also I want to tell you that the Lord has not taken the position of Bali’s security guard due to my devotion, but rather he is guarding the gates of Satal so that Bali cannot escape from there. That too, He is not visible to everyone all the time; sometimes someone may see Him at Bali’s gate. When we are very much eager to attain Sri *Bhagavân*, He gives us *darshan* wherever we are, at that moment. As a result, some devotees get His *darshan* at the gate of Satal. I don’t see this as an effect of my *bhakti*, or how you can consider me great?

O Gurudev! You will be sad to hear all my tales of woe; hence it is better if you go to Kimpurushvarsha, where Sri Hanumân resides. There you will see how Sri *Bhagavân* bestows His bounties on him. Hanumânji is steadfast in *brahmacharya*, knows all the scriptures and he is extremely courageous. Consequently, he is the chief servant of Lord Râmchandra. To serve His Lordship he had easily crossed the fathomless ocean. He had fulfilled the wish of Vibhishan, and had destroyed the vast army of the demons. In the battle between Lord Râm and Râvan, Lakshman had been hit with the powerful weapon called '*shakti-shel*'. Then Hanumânji had brought the medicinal herb for Lakshman that relieved him from pain.¹ So think how mighty he is! He had brought great joy to Mother Sitâ by conveying the message of Râvan’s deliverance. On the pretext of obtaining her necklace, he only got the merciful gift of *prem* and *bhakti*. O Master! The shâstras extol his great glory in verses such as '*kapi-patir-dâsyê*'. You too know his glory, what more can I tell you? Do visit Kimpurushvarsha and be pleased to behold Sri Hanumân.

Sri Hanumân

Parikshit said, “Dear mother, when the great sage heard Prahlȧd speak thus, he went quickly to Kimpurushvarsha to meet Hanumânji. From the sky itself he saw that Hanumânji was engaged in worshipping Lord Râmchandra’s lotus feet with marvelous ingredients collected from the woods. It appeared as if the Lord was actually present there. The Gandharva-singers were singing hymns from Râmâyan. Hanumânji was hearing the nectarine glorification of Lord Râm and shedding tears of joy. Sometimes he was offering prostrated obeisance while glorifying the Lord in poems and prose. When Nârada saw this, he was overcome with bliss and called out loudly – “O Raghunâth! All glory to Sri Jânaki-*kântâ*! All glory to the elder brother of Lakshman!” Hearing the sweet names of his Ishtadev Lord Râm, Hanumânji was so overwhelmed with joy that he jumped into the sky and hugged him tightly. The great sage too started dancing in the sky and washed Hanumânji with his tears of love. Within a moment, Hanumânji regained composure and offered obeisance to Nârada. Then he took him inside the *mandir*. After Nârada Muni offered obeisance to the Deity, Hanumânji seated him on an *âsan* with great love and care.

Hanumânji’s profound devotion sent Nârada Muni in raptures. His body expressed tears and goose bumps. He spoke with great emotion, “Dear best of the monkeys! It is true indeed that you are exceptionally blessed by Sri *Bhagavân*. Aho! You are the embodiment of wonderful ocean of nectarine

¹ When Lakshman is severely wounded by Indrajit during the war against Râvan, Hanumân is sent to fetch the *Sanjivani*, a powerful life-restoring herb from the Dronagiri mountain in the *Himâlayas* to revive him. Râvan realises that if Lakshman dies, a distraught Râm would probably give up, and so has his uncle Kalnemi tempt Hanumân away with luxury. However, Hanumân is tipped off by a crocodile (actually a celestial being under a curse) and kills the demons. When he is unable to find the specific herb before nightfall, Hanumân again displays his might by lifting the entire Dronagiri mountain and bringing it to the battlefield in Lankâ, thus helping others find the herb to revive Lakshman. An emotional Râm hugs Hanumân, declaring him as dear to him as his own beloved brother Bharat.

² The Beloved of Mother Jânaki or Sitâ

bhajan. You have surrendered to the Lord in all respects, and hence you have gained His supreme *kripā*. You are not only His servant, but also His *sakhā*, vehicle, *āsan*, umbrella, fan, the one who sings odes to Him, minister, captain, best support, and the one who spreads His glory all around."

Parikshit Mahārāj said, "Mother! When Nārād spoke thus, Hanumānji, who had Sri Rāmchandra's special *kripā*, became full of *viraha*. The pangs of his suffering were set ablaze. He started crying. After Nārād had consoled him somewhat, he said, 'O great sage! I am extremely fallen. I am bereft of the Lord's lotus feet; why are you reminding me of Him and making me cry? If He would have truly accepted me as His servant, would He have abandoned me like this? You love me, so you think I have received His *kripā*.'

(Commentary – Here, we should note the point that Hanumānji is the eternal associate of Lord Rāmchandra and performs His *sākshāt sevā*. Yet, he wishes to relish the *ras* of *sāadhan-bhakti* and wants to preach that by serving the Deity we can gain divine love. Therefore he is engaged in adoring the Deity in Kimpurushvarsha. The Deity is non-different from *sākshāt Sri Bhagavān*. He loves His devotees, and therefore He is present in every *mandir* to receive *sevā* from us. In fact, sometimes, He is more pleased with Deity-sevā than when a devotee serves Him in *sākshāt*. Let us understand with the help of an example. When a wife is in the presence of her husband, whether she likes it or not, she is forced to serve him. Hence, her *sevā* does not prove her love for him. However, when the husband has gone abroad, if a wife takes his photo, decorates it with garland, *chandan* etc., serves him with great adoration to assuage the fire of her *viraha* – then her love for him is proved beyond doubt. When the husband hears about her *sevā*, he is more pleased with her than actual *sevā*. Her love subjugates him entirely. Similarly when supremely loving devotees, who are full of *anurāg* and *viraha* from their Beloved, serve His Deity with all their heart, they receive supreme *kripā* of Sri *Bhagavān*.)

Actually, we cannot compare transcendental incidents with material ones. Although the loving wife serves her husband through his photo, she is still serving merely a picture, while we should remember that *sākshāt Sri Bhagavān* is non-different from His Deity. In the Deity-form Sri *Bhagavān* is only maintaining silence and receiving *sevā* from us that we offer from the depth of our hearts. In this way He blesses us. We read in Sri Chaitanya-Charitāmrita how the South Indian brahmin subjugated Sri Gopāl, who walked all the way from Sri Vrindāban to appear as a 'witness'. Even our great preceptors such as Sri Rupa and Sanātan too had imprisoned the Lord with their love, and their Deities spoke to them, ate and interacted with them. All of us know this; therefore we should serve our deities with full understanding that – '*protimā noho tumi, sākshāt brajendranandan*¹'. Then we will get His bounty.)

Hanumānji told Sri Nārād, "O sage! At present, Sri Bhagavān has descended in Mathurā and is showering immense *kripā* on the Pāndavs. His *kripā* on them is as colossal as Mount Sumeru, while His mercy on me is not even as big as a speck of dust. Since childhood, He has been saving them from life-threatening problems such as poisoning etc. They are endowed with great qualities such as patience, righteousness, popularity, knowledge, love and devotion. The Lord wishes to spread their glory, and consequently He saves them from time to time. When the Lord is their friend and philosopher, how can they have any problem? The Lord simply arranges troubles for them to spread their glory.

The Pandavs control Sri Bhagavān by their bhakti – so much so – that the Lord becomes their charioteer, minister, ambassador and follower. He has even offered His respects and sung odes to them. Similarly you will see that the Pāndavs too serve Him, are His friends and beloveds. O sage! Please consider, love desires unobstructed immense joy. Love is constrained when there are feelings such as awe and reverence. Love always wants to be free of hesitation; it warrants complete frankness. The Pandavs and Sri Krishna are free, frank and friendly to each other, hence they can serve one another without any hesitation. Such loving service is beyond my comprehension. The Lord resides continuously in the capital city of the Pandavs. As a result, it has become a place of pilgrimage even for great sages. Why does anyone perform tapasyā? To gain Sri Bhagavān's *sākshātkār*, isn't it? We see that Sri Bhagavān is constantly present before the Pandavs. Therefore, their capital Hastināpur has become the end result for all austerities.

O sage! I'm sure the Pandavs know some magical mantra that has mesmerized Sri Bhagavān, who is the greatest hypnotizer.

¹ You are not an 'image' but actually Brajendranandan Sri Krishna.

(Commentary – Hanumânji is trying to say that we can control Sri Bhagavân by prem. So prem is the magical mantra by which we can captivate Him, there is no other means by which the all-mesmerizing Sri Krishna can be spellbound. This proves the love of the Pândavs beyond doubt.)

Parikshit said - dear mother! While speaking thus, Hanumânji was overcome with supreme bliss and dancing with Nârad Muni. Afterwards, he gained little composure and told Hanumânji, "O Devarshe! Go quickly to the Pândavs and see how the supreme Brahman is residing in a human form in their palace. There you will see His best servants, the Pândavs and your desire will be fulfilled. Please do not think that 'we are firm brahmachâris, while the Pândavs are householders immersed in material activities', for then you will become an aparâdhi. Remember, the Pândavs are renounced in the real sense, and are truly detached from material pleasures; consequently, they are worthy of being worshiped even by preceptors who are paramhamsas! Yudhishtir Mahârâj performs administration and râjsuya yagnas, but only to please Sri Bhagavân, never to fulfill his sense gratifications. He has accepted the empire only so that he can preach divine bhakti in all directions, thus benefit all living beings and ultimately please Him. He performs yagnas just because he wants an excuse to keep Sri Krishna near Him, and so that Sri Krishna too would be happy to gain the proximity of His loving ones and help in the yagnas – an activity that makes Him happy. The Pândavs are famous all over the universe, and their reputation is so spotless that even the devatâs desire it. However respect and adulation cannot satisfy a person suffering from the pangs of hunger; food is all he craves, similarly Sri Yudhishtir and his brothers are burning in the fire of Sri Krishna-prem, and so material pleasures such as the empire and adulation cannot please them."

(Commentary – Hanumânji is indicating that, nothing can pacify a hungry man other than food, similarly a premi desires nothing but Sri Krishna. When we relish Sri Krishna's sweet names, beauty, excellences and pastimes, our hearts become gradually detached from material pleasures and get fixed on Sri Krishna. When we reach the mature stage of bhajan, then we lose all interests other than Sri Krishna. Then we can say we are truly renounced. This is why we see in the devotional texts, that when our senses are naturally interested only in Sri Krishna and disinterested in anything else, it is real renunciation. When prem appears in the heart, it stops feeling the body and related subjects as 'mine' and centers solely around Sri Krishna.)

Hanumânji said, "Dear sage! what to speak of other pleasures, Sri Draupadi devi, who is a jewel amongst women, brothers such as Bhim and Arjun, who are endowed with all talents are not so dear to King Yudhishtir; he loves them only because they love the lotus feet of Sri Krishna. O respected sir! I am, but a monkey. How can I glorify the Pândavs enough? How much capable am I to sing their glory? You know more than I do, hence please visit Hastinâpur and behold the Pândavs; this will make you supremely happy."

Fifth Chapter (loving)

King Parikshit said, "Dear mother, when Nârad heard Hanumânji speaking thus, he started dancing joyously and went to Hastinâpur. Quickly he entered the palace of Yudhishtir Mahârâj. At that time, King Yudhishtir was consulting his friends and relatives on how to bring Sri Krishna from Dwâarakâ. He wanted them to cook up some trouble or think of some *yagna* so that he could call Him and take His *darshan*. Just then Nârad arrived on the scene. Dharmarâj¹ Yudhishtir ran towards him with respect and offered him obeisance. Yudhishtir brought Nârad to the assembly and seated him on a beautiful *âsan*. Then he started worshipping Nârad, but Nârad took all the paraphernalia from him, and in stead worshipped Yudhishtir. The Devarshi picked up his veenâ and repeatedly sang all that Hanumânji had told him about the Pândavs. In his sweet hymn, he described the grand bounties that Sri Krishna had showered on them.

Sri Nârad said, "O Dharmarâj! In the material world, you are the most fortunate of all, since Sri Krishna is your favorite worshipped Deity. He is your Spiritual Master, cousin, ambassador, charioteer and well-wisher. Not only this, he has also accepted the position of your servant. He is very rare even for *devatâs* such as Brahmâ and Rudra². He is the Supreme Truth that all the Vedic scriptures ordain, and Sri Nrisimha, Sri Vâman, Sri Râmchandra are His portions. All incarnations are bits of His portions and the all-knowing Gargâchârya has revealed Him confidentially in some secluded spot. This means that Sri Gargâchârya has established Sri Krishna as *Swayam Bhagavân*, and has

¹ One who knows righteous conduct

² Shivji

said that we can compare Sri Krishna to a very small degree only with Lord Nârāyan, and not in all aspects. Sages such as myself beg for His mercy by resorting to all sorts of paths – such as – being *âtmārām* and liberated, practicing *bhakti* and keeping the association of Vaishnavs, yet we do not succeed in achieving His *kripâ*. However, you have managed to subjugate Sri Krishna Who is none other than *Swayam Bhagavân*. He is pleased with you in all respects."

(Commentary – Here, Nârād is indicating that Vedic scriptures such as Srimad-Bhâgavatam propound that Sri Krishna, in His form as Nanda-nandan, is *Swayam Bhagavân* and is the Supreme non-dual Truth. A fathomless fountainhead gives rise to countless streams, similarly Sri Krishna is the most absolute Supreme Truth, and infinite incarnations descend from Him. So He is '*Swayam Bhagavân*'. Srimad-Bhâgavatam is saying –

'ete châmsha kalâ pumsah krishnastu bhagavâna swayam'.

Meaning – 'These (all that I have listed so far) are portions or the portions of the portions of the Supreme Being; however Sri Krishna is God Himself.'

With this statement Suta Muni Hanumânji firmly established Sri Krishna as 'God Himself'. Our preceptors explain that this statement from Srimad-Bhâgavatam is the definition of the original truth.

According to the scriptures-

"Definition' is that statement which reigns supreme and looms large over an entire text. It explains the goal of the text.'

A text states the definition only once and does not repeat it. Srimad-Bhâgavatam declares only once that – *krishnastu bhagavâna swayam*.

This grand statement is like the sovereign emperor. It is flying proudly like a flag of victory over all other statements in Srimad-Bhâgavatam. Our Goswâmis say that this sentence is the 'Pledge of Declaration' proclaimed by Lord Sri Krishna-Dwaipâyan Veda-Vyâs.¹ Great preceptors such as Sridhar Swâpipâd have based their explanation of Srimad-Bhâgavatam on this statement, and have accepted that Sri Krishna is the Supreme Truth. What is the importance of this statement, and why does the Srimad-Bhâgavatam declare it in this manner – if we want to understand all these facts nicely, we have to acquaint ourselves little bit with Srimat Jiva Goswâpipâd's way of thinking. We should resort to his charming explanation of Srimad-Bhâgavatam that is Srimad-Bhâgavat-Sandarbha.

In Tattva-Sandarbha, Srimat Jiva Goswâpipâd has said – 'Brahmâ is His effulgence, Paramâtmâ is his majestic portion and Sri Nârāyan, the Lord of Vaikuntha is His *vilâs* – may such Sri Krishna Who is God Himself shower the bounty of *prem* to the devotee who worships Him.' He has presented various logic and justifications in his Sri Krishna-Sandarbha to explain in detail the defining statement of Srimad-Bhâgavatam - '*ete châmsha kalâh pumsah krishnastu bhagavân swayam*' – and have proved that Sri Krishna is God Himself. Here, we lack the space necessary to state all this, so dear devotees will please excuse us. However, those of you who are really interested in knowing this, will please refer Sri Krishna-Sandarbha.

Swayam Bhagavân Sri Krishna is the *amshi* or the source, while Sri Narasimha, Sri Râmchandra etc. are the *amsha* (part). Considering this aspect, Sri Krishna is definitely different from these incarnations. Following this same logic, Sri Krishna's abode and associates too are exceptional when compared to the abode and associates of the incarnations. Similarly there is a difference between how much Sri Krishna is subjugated by His devotees and the other incarnations are subordinate to their respective worshippers. We should remember that when the Lord becomes subordinate to His devotee, He is showing *kripâ* on him. This is why Sri Nârād has praised the Pândavs much more than Prahlád or Hanumânji. Sri Prahlád has not been able to subjugate Lord Narasimha and Hanumânji does not exert much control over Lord Râmchandra; however the Pândavs bind Sri Krishna with their profound *prem*. This indicates that Sri Krishna has more *kripâ* on the Pândavs than Lord Narasimha and Lord Râmchandra have over Their devotees.)

Sri Nârād told Yudhishtir Mahârāj, "Dear King, when the Lord appeared as Sri Narasimha or Sri Râm, He did not liberate *asuras* such as Hiranyâksha, Hiranyakashipu, Râvan, Kumbhakarna etc. although he killed them. When He had not even offered *mukti* to them, then it is needless to say that

¹ Vyâsdev is called 'Krishna' due to his dark complexion, 'Dwaipâyan' since he was born in an island, and 'Veda-Vyâs' since he had penned down the Vedas.

He did not give *prem-bhakti* to any one of them. Only as Sri Narasimha, the Hanumânji granted *bhakti* to Prahlâd, that too it is adulterated with knowledge.¹

During the incarnation of Lord Râm, He has given pure devotion to some devotees, such as, Hanumânji, Jâmbavân, Sugreev, Vibhishan, Guhak and Dasharath. However, we do not get to hear even the slightest talk of pure love that is devoid of awe and reverence, way back in those days. Recently, your cousin Sri Krishna has offered *mukti* to all those killed by either Him or Arjun etc. Forget humankind, even trees and creepers that are in the mode of ignorance – all have received Sri Krishna-*kripâ* and are shedding love-tears.

Dear brothers of Sri Krishna! Even those qualities that we do not see in Lord Nârâyan, the Lord of Vaikuntha – are expressed in Sri Krishna! He is the paragon of beauty, handsomeness, *lâvanya*! All His excellences are so exceptionally sweet – how can I describe them? They are all remarkable! His *leelâs*, talents, glorious love, and even the earth on which He performs His love-sports are all wonderful! Dear King, Sri Krishna's beauty and pastimes are beyond this material world. Although they are present in the Golok *dhâm*, if He had not descended on this earth with His *dhâm* and associates, the people of material earth would have never realized His extraordinary sweetness. Of course, His beauty and *leelâs* were always present here on earth; but now, by His mercy, they have revealed themselves and so all of us are able to relish them. At present His marvelous qualities such as 'love for His devotees' and so many other sweetness have revealed themselves to their maximum extent. Therefore the fact that He alone is 'God Himself' is also very clear.

After this, Sri Nârâd looked at Yudhishtir in wonder and said, "Dear king, leave alone Sri Krishna's mercy, even His seemingly unmerciful acts are supremely glorious. The blood-sucking demoness Putanâ had full intention to kill Him by smearing poison on her breasts, yet He has given her the status of His mother. The deadly snake Kâliya was so inimical to Him that he had bitten Him all over His beautiful body, yet He showered exceptional bounty on him by placing His sweetly dancing lotus feet on his head – that is so rare for even the best of sages and yogis to attain. Kamsa, the *asur*, had attained so much absorption in Him during his life-time, that even topmost yogis fail to achieve, and while dying he got the touch of Sri Krishna's lotus feet. He left his body while beholding *sâkshât* the moon-like face of Sri Krishna and so he attained the supreme realm.

Sri Parikshit said, "Dear mother, when the great sage was speaking thus, suddenly he was overcome with shock and bit his tongue, since it had lustily continued to glorify Mâdhav unabated. He chastised it and said, 'You lowly tongue! Again you started glorifying Mâdhav! Today, you are supposed to sing the greatness only of His dear devotees – the Pândavs. If you are able to do this with your might, I shall consider you blessed.' Then he told the Pândavs, 'O great fortunate ones! Each of you loves Sri Krishna so much that He too reciprocates similarly with you. Although he is the life and soul of the Yâdavs, He resided in your home for a long time. When He was about to leave for Dwâarakâ, your mother Kuntidevi kept Him back by humbly obstructing His path and glorifying Him. Sri Krishna has brought great fame to Yudhishtir Mahârâj in this life and the next. He has helped Bhimsen to kill *asuras* like Jarâsandha and thus gave him His own extraordinary glory. Arjun has become popular due to His friendship. Nakul and Sahadev too are very dear to Him – this everybody has seen during the offering made at the Râjsuya Yagna. He calls Draupadi as His 'dear *sakhî*, and have saved her from the wrath of Durvâsâ and from the clutches of the evil Duhshâsan. O king, Sri Krishna has accepted the food offered by Vidur and has celebrated the grand departure of Bhishma, only because they were partial to you. He has boldly declared in the Kaurav-assembly – I consider as my enemies all those who are inimical to the Pândavs, since the Pândavs are as dear to me as my own life. Therefore my dear king, it is my audacity that I am trying to glorify you. Sri Krishna alone knows your good qualities and He alone can describe them."

Parikshit said, "Mother! When Yudhishtir heard his glory from Sri Nârâd, he thought he was joking and lowered his face in embarrassment. He heaved a great sigh of sorrow and said – 'O best of

¹ Prahlâd's *bhakti* is mixed with *gyân* – we already know this from Prahlâd's own statements. Hanumânji *bhakti* is better than his, and the devotion of the pandavs is still better. We shall gradually learn how pure *bhakti* manifests itself to the maximum degree in the *Gopis* of Sri Vrindâban. The *Gopis* serve the lotus feet of Sri Govinda in a most extraordinary and amazing manner, hence their *bhakti* is absolutely spotless.

orators! We have often analyzed, and yet have never been able to conclude that Sri Krishna has been merciful to us. ¹

Sri Yudhishtir Mahārāj continued, 'O sage! In fact, when the ordinary people see what all troubles we have gone through, they will start disbelieving the scriptures that says – nothing inauspicious can befall the devotees. Recently Sri Krishna has killed our opponents and has conferred the kingdom to us. This has resulted in more suffering. We were happier earlier. It is because of this kingdom that kind elders such as Bhishma and Drona, valorous sons such as Abhimanyu and all good kings were forced to die. Now we are not getting a moment's joy due to their separation. O sage! You know very well how terrible it is to be separated from a Vaishnav. Also, it is a long time since we have got *darshan* of Sri Krishna's lotus like face. Now He is in Dwârakâ and is making the Yâdavs happy by giving them His company – those Yâdavs who are dearest to Him and are His supreme friends and relatives. Yes, sometimes you do see Him acting as our emissary or charioteer – but that is simply to lessen the burden of Mother Earth and to establish righteousness – not to shower *kripâ* on us.'"

Parikshit continued, "Mother! Then Bhimsen, who is Sri Krishna's close friend, said – 'O sage! He is the best of the cunning! I'm sure you have learnt this sort of oratory skill from Him. Look, Sri Krishna's *leelâs* are very much inconceivable. We know very well how and where He uses His oratory talent – and to achieve what purpose. It is because we know the truth, we do not believe everything He says.

After this Sri Krishna's dear *sakhâ* Arjun, who was overcome with grief said, 'O exalted soul! You feel your dearest Lord Sri Krishna has shown *kripâ* on us, yet don't you think that it has only caused us more grief? During the Kurukshetra war, I stopped Him so many times, yet He had accepted fatal wounds on His beautiful body, just for my sake. That has hurt me so much like appear such in my heart, that I am not able to forget it. How is it possible for me to feel happy? He has brought injury upon himself, to maintain righteousness - is it a sign of love and *kripâ*?

Sri Nakul and Sahadev said – 'O sage! It is true that Sri Krishna showed us mercy by accepting the first offering from us during the Râjsuya yagna. However now, He is deceiving us in every respect. Leave aside accepting the first offering, He never gives us a glimpse of His beautiful self. It has become rare to get his *darshan*. We have given up all hope of survival.

When Draupadi heard them she was so overcome with grief that she started crying. With a voice choked with tears, she said, 'O exalted soul! I was expecting some glorious outcome from this war, and had not expressed any sorrow. I knew everything happens by Sri Krishna's will alone, and so had controlled myself. I expected that after the war, Sri Krishna would forever continue to live by my side and please me with his sweet speech. But alas! All my hopes are shattered. He does not even come here, like He used to do earlier. What *kripâ* can I feel now?'

Parikshit Mahārāj said – Mother! Kuntidevi, who lives only for Sri Krishna's *darshan*, was grief-stricken. She spoke with eyes brimming with tears, "O sage! I have drowned many times in the ocean of trouble alone with my sons, and each time Sri Krishna has saved me. As a result I used to consider myself luckier than His mother Devaki. I thought He has more *kripâ* on me than anyone else. However now, He feels that 'I have given them a kingdom free of all problems' and so he has forsaken us and lives in Dwârakâ. On the other hand, here, I can hear only the constant heart-rending wails of the wives of the dead relatives. All around me I can hear only lamentations. O sage! I can get no peace other than from His *darshan*. It is because of this that I had rejected all wealth and had begged for troubles that enable us to get his *darshan*. But now I can see that He considers the Yâdavs to be His close relatives and He has nearly severed all relations with us. Therefore if I die quickly, I shall consider it His *kripâ*. O exalted soul! If you indeed wish to see the recipient of Sri Krishna-*kripâ* then please visit the Yâdavs. They are constantly immersed in the ocean of extraordinary bliss since they are the foremost of Sri Krishna's loving associates. You very well know their special greatness, what more can I say?"

¹ Commentary – Please let us note that, really speaking, dissatisfaction is a symptom of *bhakti*. As we attain higher and higher levels of *bhakti*, we consider ourselves more and more devoid of devotion. When we reach the stage of *prem*, this dissatisfaction become so intense that it arouses great lamentation in our heart. In this stage, although the Lord's *kripâ* is continuously drenching the devotee, he is not satisfied. Sri *Bhagavân* too, binds the devotee with the cords of His love, yet He is not pleased. This is the confidential fact about Sri *Bhagavân*, *bhakta* and *bhakti-sâdhanâ*.

Sri Parikshit said, "Dear mother, when Sri Nârad heard Kuntidevi, he hastened to Dwâarakâ and repeatedly offered obeisance while entering the city. From far he could see the blessed Yâdavs are sitting happily in their parliament called 'Sudharmâ'. They were naturally handsome and were decorated with ornaments and garlands of Pârijât flower. The assembly was echoing with magnificent songs and dances. The musicians were glorifying them with various musical instruments. They were absorbed in joking with one another. They were so resplendent that even the sun was feeling embarrassed. However the brilliance was such that, instead of scorching the eyes, it was soothing. They looked so beautiful as they were seated around King Ugrasen and lovingly awaited Sri Krishna's arrival.

When they came to know that Sri Nârad had entered, the Yâdavs hurried to welcome him with reverence. On seeing them Nârad Muni fell like a stick in front of them. The Yâdavs picked him up, and holding his hand they brought him to the assembly and seated him on a grand throne. However Nârad did not accept that seat, and in stead he sat on the floor. Seeing this, the Yâdavs too surrounded him and sat on the floor. The Yâdavs had brought some ingredients to worship Devarshi – but he offered obeisance to those ingredients, stood up and said humbly with folded palms – "O Yâdavs! You are beyond the material existence! You are the special recipients of Sri Krishna's mercy. Now please be kind to me and bless me so that I can continue to sing your glory alone. You are so fortunate as to constantly behold Sri Krishna, touch Him and speak to Him. You follow Him, sit with Him and dine with Him. You walk and sport with Him and your bond with Him is unbreakable – you are so much bound to Him by the cords of love. As a result, the Lord has forgotten the luxury of Vaikuntha and has gifted you with greatly inexpressible novel pleasures. O Ugrasen! O king of kings! You are famous in the whole world as the special recipient of Sri Krishna-*kripâ*. Who can describe the glory of your good fortune? When you sit on the royal throne, Sri Krishna presents Himself before you like an ordinary servant and address you as – 'O my master! I am your servant, please command me.' This is why I offer you and your associates my repeated obeisance."

Sri Parikshit said," Mother, when the Yâdavs heard Nârad speak thus, they touched his holy feet and offered obeisance to the great sage. They said, 'O most worshipped sage! You have glorified us – nothing is impossible by the grace of the King of the Yâdavs (Sri Krishna). We can achieve anything by just the inkling of coming into His contact, since He is an ocean of compassion and the best self-less well-wisher. However, O sage! Uddhav is the one who is the dearest to Him. He is Sri Krishna's minister, disciple and the most loving one. Only Sri Uddhav always remains close to Him – He is the only one who is fortunate enough to serve Him. O sage! Sri Krishna sends him where He would have gone Himself – He treats him as his personal representative. For example, when Shâmba, the son of Jâmbmati had kidnapped Duryodhan's daughter, the Kauravs such as Bhishma and Drona had imprisoned him. At that time, Sri *Bhagavân* had sent Uddhav to free him from bondage.¹ Sri Uddhav is with the Lord all the while – while eating or joking. He alone relishes the Lord's *mahâprasâd* everyday. He massages Sri *Bhagavân*'s lotus feet, and when the Lord falls asleep in bliss, he takes them in his lap and goes to sleep there itself. Ohh! Serving the lotus feet of Sri Mâdhav holds such exquisite *ras*! And Sri Uddhav is the only one who is the connoisseur of that *ras*. He alone is revealing to the world the importance of serving the Lord's sacred feet. What more can we say – he has attained *sârupyâ*² in this very body itself! He has abandoned his natural fair complexion and has achieved the same complexion as that of Sri Krishna. He dons Sri Krishna's *prasâdi vanamâlâ*,³ golden yellow robes, gem-studded *makar-kundals*⁴ and necklace. This makes him look very handsome and we feel pleased to see him. When we see him all at once, we mistake him to be our very own Devakinandan, and this makes us inconceivably happy.

Devarshi Nârad was ecstatic when heard about Sri Uddhav's great fortune. His body was decorated with the symptoms of love-ecstasy and he stood up joyously to visit him. Ugrasen, the Yadu king, said, "O great sage, we have already told you that Sri Uddhav never leaves the Lord without His command and does not remain away from him even for a single moment. Therefore you enter quickly into the inner compartments of the palace, where Sri Krishna is now present, and meet

¹ Commentary – "Sri Krishna sends him where He would have gone Himself"this indicates that he sends only Sri Uddhav to console the Nanda Mahârâj and other Brijwâsis. However that is extremely confidential, so the Yâdavs did not reveal this part to him.

² Similar form as that of Sri Krishna

³ Garland made from wild flowers

⁴ Ear-rings shaped like decorative crocodiles.

Sri Uddhav. Please convey the message to him that, today the time for the Lord's arrival is long past, and that we are all anxious to see Him – so please will he bring his Master in the assembly hall as soon as possible, since the assembly is bereft of a leader without Him ?”

Sixth Chapter (most loving)

Sri Parikshit said, “Mother! Nârad was overwhelmed with *prem-ras* when he heard the glory of Sri Uddhav; although he held the *veenâ* in his hands, he could not play it. The path leading to the inner compartments was extremely interesting, and he managed to enter the palace since he was accustomed to it. However, he looked either like one possessed by ghosts or like a madman. Sometimes he would fall on the floor and at other times become stupefied. He would roll on the ground, cry piteously in misery, sing and dance. The next moment he would simultaneously exhibit all the symptoms of love-ecstasy.”

Sri Parikshit said, “Mother! Now I shall describe a supremely attractive pastime of the Lord, so if you see me out of control, please soothen me, and after that please continue to listen with patience.

On that day, due to some reason, Srimân Uddhav had left the Lord, Who was sleeping in the bedroom, and was sitting at the doorstep nearby. He seemed distracted. He was surrounded by Sri Baladev, Devaki, Rohini, Rukmini, Satyabhâmâ, Padmâvati (Kamsa's mother) and some maidservants. Just then Nârad entered, with wonderful symptoms of love-ecstasy. They were astonished to see him. They took great care and brought him back to good health. Then they wiped his tears and softly asked him – ‘O great sage! Why are you in such an extraordinary state? We don't think we have seen such symptoms before. Please relax for a moment!’

Nârad slowly opened his eyes overflowing with tears and offered *namaskâr*. His body was covered with goose bumps. With tear-choked voice, he said, ‘Please unite me with that magnificent Uddhav, who is the blessed of us all. Kindly bestow this mercy on me so that I can take the dust of his feet. Then only my soul will rest in peace. Nârad exclaimed in wonder, “Aho! No servant, whether old or new, have got the Lord's bounty in the manner that Sri Uddhav has obtained. And he has got it in ample amount. Sri *Bhagavân* has proclaimed him as His great majesty in statements such as “*twantu bhâgavateshwaham*” - “he is the greatest of all exalted devotees.” Aho! He has himself expressed that His sons such as Brahmâ, brothers such as Balarâm, friends such as Shiva, consorts such as Ramâ devi, and even His own beautiful form is not so much dear to Him as Sri Uddhav. Other than this, today the Yâdavs have revealed Sri Uddhav's greatness and glorious fortune to me. It is indeed extraordinary. Alas! All their exultant praises have entered my heart through the ears and have all of a sudden plundered my heart of its patience.”

When Sri Uddhav heard Nârad Muni speak thus, he stood up in haste, reverently took his feet onto his lap and embraced him. He came to know that Nârad Muni was trying to ascertain the topmost recipient of Sri Krishna-*kripâ*, and he remembered all the devotees who had received such mercy. His heart was full of the priceless treasure called Sri Krishna-*prem*, and he became very much agitated and overwhelmed with love. He started crying in all humility and the symptoms of love-ecstasy decorated him. When Sri Balarâm had consoled him somewhat, he told Nârad, “Dear sage! You are all-knowing, the best of the truthful and the primeval Guru of the divine path of devotion. You have just now described what all mercy I have got from Sri *Bhagavân*. King Ugrasen and the Yâdavs know that I have very clearly received much more *kripâ* from Him than what you have described. I too was proud enough to believe the same. However, ever since I've been to Brijdhâm, I have undergone an indescribable experience that has crushed my Sumeru¹-like pride into dust. I am no longer so foolish as to consider myself fortunate. O sage! Sri Krishna was kind enough to send me to Brijdhâm under the pretext of consoling the *Brijwâsis* who are burning in the blazing fire of *viraha*. Thus He was extremely compassionate to me. Thus I learnt of Sri Krishna's love, His loved ones and the sweetness of this love. I am feeling exceedingly blessed.

When Sri *Bhagavân* was in Mathurâ, He had sent me to Brijdhâm to console the *Brijwâsis* who were suffering in His *viraha*. This was only an excuse to make me realize slightly the colossal *prem* of the *Brijwâsis*. He wanted to make this fallen self proclaim in the world the glory of their *prem* to a small degree. When I went to Brijdhâm, and saw the inexpressible *bhâv* of Srimati Râdhârâni and other

¹ The highest mountain as mentioned in the scriptures

maidens of Braj, and how they were suffering in Sri Krishna–*viraha*, I was stupefied. I lived there for some months and was fortunate enough to get a first-hand experience of their glorious prem.

Dear sage! All the *Brijwāsīs* have great love for Sri Krishna, yet the *Gopikās* have attained the peak of love. Seeing their topmost *bhāv*, I became exceptionally devoted to them. No devotee has seen this type of *bhāv* or to this extent anywhere in the world. Their language too is so *bhāv*-full that I was amazed to hear it. Seeing the sweet *bhāv* of the *Gopīs*, I had exclaimed in emotion – “Oho! In all creation, these *Brijwāsī*-maidens – the sweethearts of Sri Krishna – are the most fortunate of all! They are the only resorts of the topmost *prem* called *mahābhāv*! Sri Krishna is God Himself and He is all nectarine *ras* personified, while they have the deepest feeling for Him – that is *rudha-mahābhāv*. This means they have relished Sri Krishna’s sweetness to the maximum degree and have gone into love-delirium, and it is impossible for anyone else to relish this extraordinary sweetness.

Dear sage! When I was in Brijdhâm I was wonderstruck by the glorious *prem* of the Vraja-beauties. Seeing them, I had expressed an impossible desire – it was like this –

All these moss, creepers and herbs from Sri Vrindâban are supremely fortunate, since they can easily get the foot-dust of the *Vraja-gopīs* on their heads. If only I could get the birth of any one of those moss, creepers and herbs, then I too could make my life blessed by obtaining a single speck of foot-dust of the *Vrajānganās*. If I would be born as a creeper, then I would be associating with another creeper with the same *bhāv*. That creeper too would be craving to get the lotus feet of the *Vraja-gopīs*. When the breeze will blow, it will fall on me and I too will drop on it. In this manner I will get the ‘*sangā*¹’ of a ‘*sajātiyā*²’ devotee, and my greed for the lotus feet of the *Gopīs* will soar higher.

You may ask –

‘O Uddhav! If you are born as a blade of grass, then you will remain on the side-walk, while the beautiful and fortunate *Vraja-gopīs* will stroll away on the main road – then how will get their foot-dust?’

To this I reply –

‘When the flute will drive the *Gopikās* mad and they will run helter-skelter towards their *Prān-vallabh*³, then as if they will realize which the road is and which the side-walk is! I am looking forward to that situation – and so I am begging to become a grass and moss.’

O sage! I wanted the foot-dust of the *Gopīs* to perform my *abhishek*⁴ and this intense greed made me pray repeatedly to the dust of the lotus feet of the *Brijwāsīni Gopikās*. How sweetly they sang Sri Krishna-*kīrtan* with voices that are absorbed in *prem*! How it purified the three worlds! After going to Brijdhâm I have repeatedly sung those songs that would immerse me in the ocean of bliss. It is well-known how I had behaved and what desire I had while I was in Brijdhâm. O exalted sage! I am afraid that if I glorify them I will start expressing the symptoms of Sri *Bhagavān*’s love-ecstasy and that is extremely painful and disastrous. As a result I cannot say anything more. I beg humbly of you that please do not insist on hearing further about this topic.”

Parikshit said – “Mother! Sri Rohini devi had resided for a long time in Gokul, and was very dear to those residents. When she heard Sri Uddhav speaking thus, she understood what he meant. She gazed at him with eyes full of tears and said, “Dear Uddhav! Please calm down. I have stopped thinking about them, and so I feel little bit happy now. Please don’t bring to memory those *Brijwāsīs* – they are greatly unfortunate, struck by vast ill-fate, immersed in the ocean of grief, scorched in the forest-fire like *viraha*, and writhing in pain caused by the venom like separation. Ever since Sri Vasudev had brought me from Gokul, the painful picture of the *Brijwāsīs* suffering in the pangs of *viraha* is still today sketched in my memory. At that time, the miserable cries of Mother Yashodâ had made hard rocks too weep with her; her piteous cry of suffering had disintegrated the Thunderbolt⁵,

¹ Devotional association

² One with the same devotional mood as ourselves

³ The Beloved of one’s life

⁴ Holy bath

⁵ Indra’s weapon, that is famous as the ‘strongest’ of all weapons wielded by the *devatās*.

and who can describe the condition of Sri Râdhâ and the other *Gopis*? Who knows whether they are dead or alive?

Dear Uddhav! When your Guru Sri Krishna had returned from the *âshram* of His Guru Sândipani, then I had briefed Him about the situation in Brijdhâm. Although I knew that it was futile, still I told Him to lessen the burden of my heart. My words had certainly not softened your Master, for in stead of going there Himself, He sent you, who are an expert in oratory and ambassadorship.

O Uddhav! You have just now glorified the *Brijwâsis* as the 'topmost recipient of Sri Krishna-*kripâ*'. Yet, we see that the *Brijwâsis* are struck with ill fortune. Is this the characteristic of blessedness? When your Lord and Master was in Brijdhâm, He never brought them any joy - I assure you. I have lived long enough there, to come to this conclusion. Ever since Sri Krishna had gone there, demons have been troubling that land. Starting from Putanâ, right up to Keshi – there is no limit to the attacks by the *asurs*. *Devatâs* such as Varun and pythons too had caused so much trouble! The *Brijwâsis* never inquired in to the cause of their suffering; neither had they tried to mitigate it. They were only mesmerized by Sri Krishna's sweetness, and prayed for His welfare. They were never interested in their own welfare. The *Brijwâsis* had natural love for Him and whatever they had – they surrendered to Him, for His pleasure. They knew Him as 'Nanda-nandan'¹; they never considered Him as the 'Supreme Being' or the 'Lion of the great Yadu dynasty'. Consequently they were in love with Him and it was possible for them to behave in such a manner.

Your Master lived in Brijdhâm purely out of selfish motive, and as long as He did that, He never ever did any favor on the *Brijwâsis*. And now that He has achieved His selfish ends, especially since He is living most happily with His relatives – what He is doing for them – we can very well imagine.

(Commentary – Rohini devi wants to say that – 'Sri Krishna has abandoned the *Brijwâsis*, and is burning them in the tortuous fire of His *viraha*; one cannot describe how much He is deliberately tormenting them! Here there is none who can feel this pain, so I don't want to go into the details.')

When the old, senseless, impudent² Padmâvati (the mother of Kamsa) heard Rohini devi, she shook her head and exclaimed, "Aho! It is so sad! The *Gopas* were so cruel to dear Achyut! They sent Him to the dark and deep forest since childhood and engaged Him in cattle-grazing. They did not even give Him shoes although they made Him wander in the thorny woodlands. If driven by hunger, He ever drank little buttermilk or milk, the monstrous *Gopis* such as Yashodâ bound Him with ropes meant to tie the cattle! After Yashodâ had meted out such barbarous treatment to Him, if He, out of hunger, ever drank little milk from the neighbor's house, they would holler and let loose all hell – "O Yashode! Look at this son of yours! He lets loose the calves; He mocks at us if we scold Him, sometimes He steals milk and curds and distributes them to the monkeys" etc. etc. such statements are very famous in Srimad-Bhâgavatam, is it not? What could the poor boy do? He was, after all, a mere child. Therefore, He was forced to tolerate all the suffering in silence. He bore tremendous pain and served their cattle; thus He has done them more than enough favor –now what more can He possibly do?"

Parikshit Mahârâj said – "Dear mother! Rohini devi, who was very serious, neglected Padmâvati's speech entirely (as if she had not spoken at all), and addressed Uddhav. She said, "Dear Uddhav! Now your Master has vanquished all His enemies and has become the King of Kings. He is relaxing in the capital of the Yâdavs in peace. Currently even the *devatâs* are offering obeisance at His feet. Alas! Now He no longer remembers those poor *Brijwâsis*!"

Rukmini devi, who loves Sri Krishna more than her life, was so far listening silently to Rohini devi's lamentations. Now she spoke - "Dear mother! The Lord is soft like butter from within. Without knowing what is going on in His heart, why do you speak so? The Lord has told me so much about the greatness of Sri Vrindâban and He has expressed such remarkable *bhâvs* – please hear about them. Do you know, the Lord speaks about *Brijdhâm* even in His sleep? Sometimes He lovingly calls out sweetly to His cows – Gangâ, Yamunâ, Shyâmali, Dhavali? At other times, He stands in a beautiful *tribhanga*-form. Sometimes He says – 'Mother! Please give me butter!' Occasionally He mistakenly addresses me as – 'Dear Râdhe!' or 'Dear Lalite!' Now and then He tugs at the hem of my sari and exclaims, 'Dear Chandrâvali! How can you deceive me so?' Sometimes, He wets the ground with

¹ The Son of Nanda

² Since she begot her son through the titan called Drumil

tears, and other times, He gets up from the bed, crying miserably. We drown in sorrow, when we hear His piteous cries.

(Commentary – We should remember that we can control Sri *Bhagavân* only by love, however to what extent we can control Him depends on the type and amount of love. The love of the *Brijwâsis* is supreme – amongst them, the *prem* of Srimati Râdhârâni is the topmost. Consequently, it is natural that they control Sri *Bhagavân* entirely. Yet we see that most of the times they are suffering in the pangs of *viraha*. This is because of two sweet *prem-rasas* – *viraha* (separation) and *milan* (conjugation). Both of them arise from *prem*, and so both are intensely blissful. Our preceptors have accepted *viraha* as a separate ‘*ras*’ in its own right, since *viraha* nourishes *milan*. Sri Ujjwal-Neelmani says –

‘*binâ vipralambhena sambhogah pushtimashnute*’

Srila Vishwanâth Chakravartipâd has explained this statement in his *Ânanda-chandrika* purport as follows –

You may ask, “If the only function of *viraha* is to nourish the conjugal *ras*, then why call it a separate *ras*? Why not consider it simply a part of *sambhog-ras*?” We reply that—*viraha* does not have only one function—that is, to nourish *sambhog-ras*; when a lover and His beloved have the permanent mood of passion and love, then *viraha* arouses intense *sphurti* of each other in them. Their world becomes full of one another. *Viraha* gives them a relish that is much more exceptionally wonderful than even *sambhog-ras*. As a result, we feel justified in conferring on *viraha* the status of a separate ‘*ras*’.

Viraha is more prominent in the *Vraja*-beauties. It is this *viraha* that has made their love unsurpassed in all creation. When a large elephant walks freely on the road, we cannot ascertain the degree of its strength; however if the elephant is tied up with fetters, and it displays its complete strength to break free from the shackles, all are astonished to see the vast amount of strength it possesses. Similarly, during *milan*, the lovers can relish each others howsoever they wish – thus we cannot estimate the prowess of their *anurâg*. But when they are shackled by the fetters of *viraha*, and they cannot relish their beloved according to their desire, then alone the agitation of *anurâg* bursts from within. Then the *rasik* devotees can realize the strength of their *anurâg*.

It is as if the *Gopis’ viraha* is like an ocean, and Sri *Bhagavân* has churned this ocean using *viraha* like Mount Mandâr¹. When the *devatâs* and the *asurs* had churned the Ocean of Milk, it had thrown up plenty of gemstones. Similarly, Sri Krishna has churned the *viraha*-ocean of the *Gopis* so that they throw up all the precious dazzling *bhâvs* that were hitherto concealed in their bosom, and now He has placed this garland of prized *bhâvs* around His loving devotees. The truth is that, Sri *Bhagavân* had not forsaken them. Love naturally makes the lovers experience one another. During *viraha*, externally the lovers burn in separation, however inside they enjoy the intense pleasure of experience of their loved one. Therefore, the Mahâjan has said –

“The tormentuous *viraha* of the *Vraja-gopis* is continually dancing in glory over all the pleasures of the realm of love.”

This means that – if we take the sum total of all the joys of love – even then the pain of *viraha* is so much more pleasurable than all these joys taken together, that it celebrates victory over conjugation. This is the exceptional state called ‘mingling of poison and *amritam*’ in *prem*. It is a peculiar condition. Thus, although Sri *Bhagavân* is residing in *Dwâarakâ*, we should remember that He is subordinate to love and that He is relishing the remarkable *prem-ras* of the *Vraja-gopis* in this manner.)

Rukmini devi said, “Mother! Even last night the Lord saw some dream and has become miserable. He was crying and is now depressed. He has covered His beautiful face with His upper cloth and is lying down as if He is asleep. Alas! He has not performed any of His daily duties.”

Hearing this, Queen Satyabhâmâ said in envy, “O Bhâmini! Are you mad? As if the Lord behaves like this only in sleep! He acts in such a manner even when He is awake! Really, I think we are His wives only in name; in fact, even the maid servants of the *Vraja-gopis* are dearer to Him than we are.”

King Parikshit said—“Mother! When Sri Baladev, Sri Krishna’s elder brother heard the queens speak in this manner, He seemed to become angry. He said, “O daughters-in-law! We are engrossed in

¹ Mount Mandâr is a huge mountain that was used by the *devatâs* and the *asurs* to churn the Ocean of Milk to obtain *amritam* – the elixir of life. Here, we are comparing the colossal *viraha* of the *Gopis* to the Mandâr mountain.

discussing the poor *Brijwāsīs*; that is how brother Krishna is pretending to be asleep and is putting on the act of seeing dreams. He is trying to deceive us. I have been to Brijdhâm to console the *Brijwāsīs*. I understood very well, that no one other than Sri Krishna can restore their health and happiness. So, on returning, I pleaded with Him in all earnest, "Dear brother Krishna! Please go to Brij once and save the *Brijwāsīs*." He assured me "I will", yet in His heart He does not desire the same.

As soon as Sri Krishna heard this, He quickly got up from the bed and because He is completely under the control of His dear ones, He started crying loudly. As He left the bed, tears streamed continually from His eyes that are as beautiful as the petals of a fully bloomed lotus. He said in a choked voice, "True! My heart is made up of great thunderbolt, since it is still not breaking into pieces. Those *Brijwāsīs* brought me up and took care of me since childhood, yet I am so callous that I have now forgotten their extraordinary love. Forget helping them in any small way, I am only tormenting the gentle *Brijwāsīs*. Dear brother Uddhav! You know everything and are dear to me—please, immediately tell me what should I do? Please save me from this ocean of sorrow!"

Parikshit Mahârāj said—"Mother! Devaki *mâtā*, the ever-loving mother, was afraid that Sri Uddhav would advise her son to go to Gokul, so she replied before Uddhav could open his mouth. She said, "Dear child! The *Brijwāsīs* are indeed your best well-wishers. Just give them all that they want." Hearing this, Padmāvati, the Queen of the Yadu dynasty (since she was King Ugrasen's wife), became instantly afraid that Sri Krishna would give the kingdom to the *Brijwāsīs*. Therefore, although Rohini had disregarded her earlier, she decided to overlook the insult and pretended to show interest in Sri Krishna's health. She said, "O Krishna! Better You listen to my advise. Both you brothers have taken care of the cattle in Nanda-gop's¹ house in return of the food and shelter provided to you. Never mind the fact that they didn't pay you anything, although you deserved it. Now let King Ugrasen get Gargamuni to calculate all that they have done for you and repay each *paisa* to them. Don't worry, the king will pay them in terms of money double the cost of the love they have conferred on you."

Sri *Bhagavān* disregarded her and again morosely asked Sri Uddhav, "O best of the learned! You know all the intentions of the *Brijwāsīs*; please tell me what they'd desire." Sri Uddhav sighed heavily and said, "Dear Lord! The *Brijwāsīs* want nothing other than Yourself. They don't want the best of the empires, or any majesty, or the wealth of the heavens, or any worldly wealth. I know for sure that the only way to keep them alive, is for you to go there. They have forsaken all pleasures simply to obtain you. Just ask your elder brother – He knows very well, what their situation is."

(Commentary – Sri Uddhav means to say, that, the *Brijwāsīs* want to get Sri Krishna in only one form – and that is – 'gopabesh benukor, nabakishor nabor'². If they get Him elsewhere, in any other form, they are not happy. This is why, when Sri Krishna was residing in Mathurā, although they were dying in Sri Krishna-*viraha*, they did not go there to see Him. They only desire is to see Sri Krishna happy, and they do not have any liking of even the slightest desire for self-pleasure. This is because they have supreme especially pure love for Sri Krishna. They feel that, Sri Krishna can never be happy anywhere else other than in Brijdhâm. Their pure loving hearts firmly believe that He is only behaving like this to execute His duties. In that case, even if they leave Brij and go to Him, they will not be able to serve Him and care for Him as per their wish. They will not have the opportunity to express their love for Him and give Him any pleasure – this will make them all the more unhappy. Over and above, when Sri Krishna sees them, He will remember their past interactions and happy times they have spent together in Brij, and His misery will increase manifold. Thinking thus, the *Brijwāsīs* cannot dream of going somewhere else to see Sri Krishna. When Sri Uddhav had been in Brijdhâm he had experienced this profound and pure love of the *Brijwāsīs*. As a result he said that Sri Krishna has no means to make the *Brijwāsīs* happy other than go there Himself.)

When Sri Baladev heard Uddhav and also saw Sri Krishna's state of mind, "He could no longer control Himself and started crying loudly. He wailed, "Dear brother! What to speak of the *Gopas* and *Gopīs* of Brijbhumi - even the cattle, animals, birds, trees such as the Kadamba, creepers and grass love you so much that they have surrendered their lives to You. The lakes have dried; the hills are diminishing day by day. Maybe a few of the human beings still have faith in Your promise, and are still waiting for Your *darshan*. Possibly this is the reason that has kept them alive. The River Yamunā has almost dried, and Girirāj that was so high, has now entered the earth. Dear brother! Do You wish to hear any further? If even now, You do not show compassion, then don't worry – Yamrāj (the god of death) will

¹ Gop = cowherd

² Sri Krishna dressed as a cowherd-boy, holding the flute; He should be in the threshold of youth, and groomed like a magnificent dancer.

very soon display his generosity to them¹. Those *Brijwāsīs* who are still alive, have given up bathing, eating and drinking, therefore they are as good as dry logs of wood. There is no doubt, then, that they will perish in the wild forest-fire (the fire of *virahā*)."

When the tender-hearted Sri Krishna heard this, He put His arms around Baladev and started wailing most piteously. Tears washed the unguents on His body. In this manner, He wept along with Sri Baladev, and rolled on the floor. Within a moment, He had fainted. Seeing this, Rohini, Uddhav, Devaki, Rukmini, Satyabhāmā and all the inmates started weeping out of anxiety. Ugrasen, Vasudev and the other Yādvas heard this and rushed inside. They were shocked with grief when they saw Sri Krishna in such a wretched state. They all started sobbing.

Seventh Chapter (absolute)

Parikshit Mahārāj said—"Dear mother! In this manner the entire Yādav family started crying. Within a moment all universe became full of their heart-wrenching wails. There was none in Dwārakā who could console them (since all were in the same sorrowful state). Therefore, the four-headed Brahmā arrived there along with his family that comprised of the *Vedas* and the *Purāns*. The *devatās* too came there. Brahmāji saw that his father Lord Mahā-Nārāyan had attained an extraordinary state of illusion. Seeing His Lordship pain for His dearest ones and about to express His most confidential sweet *prem*, he lost self-control and wept for some time. When he had stolen the calves in Sri Vrindāban he had experienced Sri Krishna's incomparably sweet *leelā* with His dear associates. Now that lovely and brilliant picture revealed in his heart. He carefully controlled himself and started pondering on how to restore His Lordship to good health. Very soon, he got an idea. He looked at Garud who was overwhelmed with sorrow, and soothed him. Then he addressed him thus, "O Vainateya (son of Vinatā)! In the middle of the Dead Sea, on Mount Raivatak, Vishwakarmā has built Nava-Vrindāban. Further, he has decorated it with statues of Nanda, Yashodā, other *Gopas* and cattle. It resembles the original Vrindāban in every aspect. You immediately carry Sri Krishna along with Baladev in this state itself, and take Them to that artificial Vrindāban. Please be careful and fly slowly. Let only Rohini devi go there; the others should remain here itself.

Garud understood Brahmāji's plan; he placed Sri Krishna and Balarām slowly on his back and carried Them to Mount Raivatak. Meanwhile, Baladev regained some poise. Brahmāji consoled Vasudev and the other *Gopas*, and convinced them to return to their respective palaces. On reaching the artificial Vrindāban, which was decorated with statues of *Gopas* and *Gopīs*, Garud slowly lowered Sri Nandanandān down on a soft bed. Devaki, the loving mother, Rukmini, Satyabhāmā, the other consorts and even Padmāvati were unable to abandon Sri Krishna in that piteous state; so they too arrived in Nava-Vrindāban along with Uddhav. However, Brahmāji implored them to stay out of sight. Therefore, they continued to watch Him from a distance. Nārād considered himself an *aparādhi*, since he had caused all this to happen. So he neither came here along with the *devatās*, nor did he go away along with the Yādav men. Out of curiosity, he observed from the sky in an invisible state—He so badly wanted to relish the sweet pastimes of the Lord. Garudji remained unobserved in the sky, and continued to serve the Lord by shading Him with his wings.

In a short while, Sri Balarām recovered completely and understood Brahmāji's idea – Sri *Bhagavān* has fainted out of intense love-*viraha* for the *Brijwāsīs*, and so there is no way to bring Him back other than to make Him experience the joy of uniting with them. He has fainted due to a particular type of *prem*, therefore it is absolutely necessary to give Him the pleasure of meeting the same type of *premik*. In this state it is impossible to carry Him to the real Vrindāban, since if the *Brijwāsīs* see Him in this state, no one knows what will happen to them. Some catastrophe will fall on them, and instead of the Lord gaining sense, He may undergo more severe attack. This is why Brahmāji thought it was a good idea to take Him to the artificial Vrindāban, since Vishwakarmā had built nice statues of the *Gopas* and *Gopīs* such as Nanda-Yashodā out of gems and stones. They looked extremely real; also he had arranged the natural scenery just like Sri Vrindāban, with the same trees and creepers. Brahmāji wanted to bring Sri Krishna here along with Sri Baladev and Rohini, since they had been present with Him in Vrindāban. He wished to relieve Him of His love-faint by drawing the picture of His very sweet pastimes in Brijdhām.

As soon as Sri Baladev got the idea, at first He wiped His face, and then He wiped the beautiful face of His younger brother. Then, He softly pushed a flute inside the belt, near His belly, and a cow-horn

¹ Even the god of death is not so hard-hearted as You—so he will put an end to their lives, and thus to their suffering.

at His waist. He also put a stick (to manage the cows) and a garland of Kadamba flowers round His neck. He decorated Sri Krishna's crown with peacock-feathers and ear-rings with fresh gunja-seeds. In this manner, He decorated Sri Krishna in the garb of a woodlander with ingredients made by Vishwakarmâ. Then He lifted Him forcefully from the bed and called Him loudly, "Dear Krishna! Dear brother! Get up, get up! Wake up! Look, Shridâm and Your friends are waiting for You. Mother and father are not telling You anything out of love. Moreover just see, all these *Gopikâs* are gazing at Your sweet face and whispering in each other's ears. I am sure they are making fun of You." In this manner, Sri Baladev lovingly called Him many times. Ultimately He forcibly lifted Him and made Him sit. After a long time, Sri Krishna regained consciousness. He looked around in wonder and uttering 'Shiv' 'Shiv', He got up from the bed.

Sri Krishna opened His beautiful eyes and gazed at His surrounding. Seeing His father Nanda Bâbâ in front of Him, He smiled and shyly touched His feet. He saw that Mother Yashodâ, who was standing next to his father, was gazing unblinkingly at Him with love. Seeing her, He laughed in joy and said, "Dear mother! Today morning I saw so many dreams. They were so real, as if I was awake. I saw that I had gone from here to Mathurâ and killed the wicked Kamsa. O mother! I saw as if I had built a grand city called Dwârakâ on the sea shore. In fact I dreamt of so many things that it will take a long time to narrate all of them."

Sri Krishna saw that in spite of telling her about His dreams, His mother was still gazing at Him without blinking. He thought - "may be mother is worried since I had overslept. She is afraid of my ill-health". So Sri *Bhagavân* consoled her by saying, "Mâ, I saw such long dreams; so I could not wake up on time as I usually do." Then He told Baladev, "Ârya¹! If You do not consider it impossible to have such amazing dreams, then I shall narrate them to You in detail, when we go to the woods."

(Commentary – Sri *Bhagavân* is bliss personified and love offers the highest bliss. As a result, Sri *Bhagavân* is ever-anxious to relish the sweet *ras* of His devotee's *prem* and *bhakti*. This suprememost love is not present anywhere other than in Brijdhâm. Consequently, Sri Krishna is considering His pastimes in Mathurâ and Dwârakâ as dream. We see in Srimad-Bhâgavatam that "*bhagavân bhakta-bhaktimân*". This means that Sri *Bhagavân* is devoted to His devotee. Although all devotees love Him, yet He loves the devotee according to the type and amount of love the devotee has for Him. Sri *Bhagavân*'s love can be classified into two –

- *sopâdhik* (with attributes)
- *nirupâdhik* (without any attribute)

The love with attributes means it has contamination. It is not all-pure. As a result, it cannot give pure relish. On the other hand, when the love is without attributes, or contamination, it is pure. It gives a pure relish. A devotee's love may have many hidden impurities; however we can categorize them into two main points.

1. a desire for self-pleasure
2. the love of Sri *Bhagavân* because of His majesty. For example, we may love a singer because he sings very well. This indicates that we don't love the singer as a person, but his ability to sing. So we love the talent and not the person. Similarly if we love Sri *Bhagavân* because He is almighty, your love is adulterated.

The love of the *Brijwâsis* is absolutely unadulterated in all respects. They do not contain even a whiff of the above two contaminations. Their love is crystal clear and it is also greatest in amount. Therefore their love is the topmost and this love controls Sri *Bhagavân* absolutely. Sri Krishna has stated in Bhagavad-Gitâ –

"ye yathâ mâm prapadyante tânstathaiva bhajâmyaham"

Meaning - "The *Brijwâsis* have forgotten everything else and are entirely engrossed in Sri Krishna. However, it is Sri Krishna's inherent nature that even though He may get a great love, He cannot ignore a small love. If He ignores the love of Devaki and Vasudev, it goes against His quality called '*bhakta-vâtsalya*'². This is why He left *Brijdhâm* although it is the inexhaustible source of love-*ras*; He wanted to rid the Yâdavs from the torture inflicted on them by *asurs* such as Kamsa. However, in spite of living in Mathurâ, when He reminisces about the pastimes of Brijdhâm, then the *leelâs* He has performed in Mathurâ and other places fade in comparison with the dazzling love-*ras* of Brijdhâm. Then He feels He is just dreaming. This is how the

¹ The Indian Âryans addressed their elder brothers as 'Ârya' out of respect. Wives also addressed their husbands as - 'Aarya-putra (O son of an Aarya)'. We have quite a few addressive terms that contain the word 'Aarya'.

² One Who loves his devotee.

pastimes in Dwâarakâ etc. differ from the especially pure pastimes of Brijdhâm that is drenched with delightful love.)

Parikshit Mahârâj said—“Dear mother! Sri Krishna greeted His mother and addressed brother Baladev with respect. Then He stretched His hand for picnic-food (since He thought it was time He went cattle-grazing with His friends). The intelligent Rohini devi marked this and said, “Child! Today Your oversleep has made your mother slightly ill with worry, since You are her only child. So no need to talk too much with her. The *Gopa*-boys have already left for the woods along with the cattle. Now better You follow them. I will prepare lovely delicacies and send You.” When Sri Krishna heard the loving words of Mother Rohini, He thanked her. He softly stole the butter that Vishwakarmâ had already placed in Mother Yashodâ’s hand, laughed, and called brother Baladev to go to the forest. However seeing that Baladev had already left, He kept the butter to Himself. He did not eat it (since He wanted to share it with His elder brother). In this manner, He took a few steps towards the forest, and then addressed the *Gopis* in jest. He stopped the cattle using His flute, and started joking with Srimati Râdhikâ Who was surrounded by Her *sakhis*. He said, “Dear Beloved of my soul! I am exclusively devoted to You. In spite of getting me in a lonely place like this, why are You not talking to me? Have You gone into *mâri*? Have I committed some *aparâdh* to Your lotus feet? Oho! I know! You have learnt of my dream of last night! O my darling! I dreamt that I have forsaken You and have gone to some far away place called Dwâarakâ. There I married many princesses who were ready to die for me. And that I have got many children and grand children. Anyway, forget all this; now I must hasten to the forest. Today evening, I shall meet You and make You happy”. After narrating his dream to the statue of Râdhikâ and promising Her, Sri Nanda-Nandan plummeted Her with flowers. He looked around surreptitiously, embraced Her and planted a kiss on Her lips. Then He hurried forth and caught up with the other cowherd boys and the cattle.

When Devaki devi saw this extremely captivating wonderful flute-playing cowherd-form of Sri Krishna, something she had seen before, then although she was old, her breasts started oozing milk. Some of the queens such as Rukmini and Jâmbamati could not bear the onslaught of that extraordinary sweet beauty; they lost all self-control since they were overcome with great love. They fell down unconscious. Old Padmâvati, along with Satyabhâmâ was intoxicated with passion and rushed behind Sri Krishna with stretched arms to catch Him. The intelligent Kâindi devi, who is the daughter of the Sun-God, had already experienced Sri Krishna’s Vrindâban-form earlier, hence she managed to control herself, but with much difficulty. She, with Uddhav’s assistance, caught both the crazy women and held them back.

(Commentary – Why did these women go mad on seeing Sri Krishna’s cowherd form, dressed in wild flowers and natural decorations? The answer is that although, Sri *Bhagavân* is always sweet, the sweetness He expresses else where other than in Vrindâban, is His ordinary sweetness. Srila Rupa Goswâmpâd has written –

*leelâ premnâ priyâdhikyam mâdhurye venu-rupayoh,
itya-sâdhârananm proktam govindasya chatushtayam.*

Meaning - "Sri *Bhagavân*’s extraordinary sweet beauty, sweet pastimes, sweet flute-song and sweet *prem* are the exclusive property of Brijdhâm alone."

He is “*asamânorddha-rupashri vismâpita charâcharah*”—which means—This ‘Vrindâban-attire’ of Sri Shyâmsundar bewitches the moving and the non-moving, and is matchless in the all creation.

How does He look?

His splendour puts to shame the brilliance of an emerald, the peacock-feather adorns His crown, His mesmerizing face is lit up with smiles, His eyes are full of loving *bhâv*, and He casts passionate glances. His gait is more praiseworthy than that of an inebriated elephant. Srila Krishnadâs Kavirâj Goswâmi has stated –

“*je ruper ek kon dubây tribhuban, sarbo prâni kore âkarshan.*”

– (Sri Chaitanya-Charitâmrita)

Meaning - "A single speck of His beauty immerses the three worlds, and drags all beings by force."

He is the very One Whom the Shrutis worship as ‘*raso vai sah*’ – He alone is *ras*¹, and now That Being has expressed His most complete *ras*-sweetness in the divine pastimes of Sri Vrindâban. His beauty spellbinds creation, and the sweet song of his flute makes even birds, deer and cattle lose their senses in ecstasy. He is so gorgeous that when He beholds Himself in the mirror He is hypnotized!

“*rup dekhi âponâr, krishner hoy chamatkâr,
âswâdite mone uthe kâm.*”

– (Sri Chaitanya-Charitâmrita)

Meaning - "Sri Krishna was wonderstruck by His Own beauty, which He craves to relish."

Naturally then, Shyâmsundar looked so stunning in His Vrindâban-attire that although Padmâvati was devoid of sweet mood, she was struck with passion and exhibited symptoms of erotism. We do not need to specify what the situation of the queens, who are already in conjugal mood, must have been. It will be no exaggeration to affirm that they reached some inexpressible state.)

Now, while grazing the cattle, Sri *Bhagavân* saw the Arabian Sea. He mistook it for the Yamunâ and was overjoyed. He started calling out to His friends to play in the water. He shouted, "O Shridâm, O Subal, O Arjun², O my dear friends! Where have you all disappeared? Come, let us make the cattle drink water and happily play in this sweet, pure and cool water of Yamunâ!" Sri Achyuta proceeded with the cattle and reached the shore on which the sea-waves were splashing. Sri Krishna looked all around and His gaze fell on His grand colossal palace. He was astonished and wondered, "What is this? Where am I? Who am I?" When He started muttering like this repeatedly, Sri Baladev told Him, "Lord Vaikuntheshwar³! Please seek within Yourself – Do You not remember how You have descended to fulfil the prayers of the *devatâs*? You have come to deliver the earth of her burdens. Therefore, please annihilate the evil and protect the good. Please help Dharmarâj Yudhishtir in his righteous activities."

(Commentary—We see that Sri Balarâm is addressing Sri Krishna as ‘Vaikuntheshwar’. Why? Sri *Bhagavân* is Nanda-nandan, lost in the love of the *Brijwâsis*. Their sweet *prem* has hypnotized Him. Therefore, Baladev is calling Him ‘Vaikuntheshwar’ (Self) to remind Him of His duties such as to rid the earth of her burden. He wants to change the mood of the Lord and bring Him back to the present. Although the Lord has descended from Golok and has relished unparalleled sweetness by sporting with the *Brijwâsis*, Baladev knows that anything heard pertaining to *Brijdhâm* can again put Him in illusion. So carefully, He refrained from mentioning Vrindâban.

Also –

sakal sambhabe krishne jâte abatâri – (Sri Chaitanya-Charitâmrita)

Meaning - "When God Himself appears on earth, all divine forms (including Vaikuntheshwar) descend from Their respective spheres and merge into Sri Nanda-nandan."

As a result it is not wrong (from philosophical point of view) to call Him ‘Vaikuntheshwar’.)

Sri Baladev said, "You have placed Yudhishtir on the throne of a '*râj-chakravarti*':⁴ However now he is frightened of the massive attacks by evil men such as Anushâlva. Therefore please go quickly and take some measures to destroy him and other evil men. After all, these demons are troubling Yudhishtir simply to take revenge on You. They are inimical towards You, and not towards Yudhishtir, since he harbors no ill-will against anyone.

Parikshit Mahârâj said—"Dear mother! When Sri Krishna heard Baladev, His mood changed. He got angry and said, "Brother! What do I care for such worthless creatures as Anushâlva? I alone am enough to finish him off. Please have faith in my words!"

¹ Some more translations could be – 'In truth He is *ras*', 'Of course He is *ras*', 'No one else is *ras*, but He' etc.

² Sri Krishna had a *Gopa* friend called Arjun.

³ The Lord of Vaikuntha.

⁴ An emperor who is elected by the representatives of the comprising kingdoms.

In this manner, Sri Krishna gradually came out of His mesmerized state. He glanced all around and became conscious that He is the Chief of the Yādavs. Then He even remembered that He had been sleeping in the bedroom of His palace; however He was surprised to see the flute in His hands, and Baladev dressed in Vrindāban-attire. Moreover, He saw that They were grazing the cattle on the sea-shore.

In this manner, as He thought more about it, He was surprised and doubtful. Sri Baladev, Who knew His heart, smiled and conveyed to Him how He had fainted in love-ecstasy and Brahmāji's plan. When Sri Krishna heard this, He looked at His elder brother and smiled in embarrassment. However Baladev did not press the matter further. In stead, He brushed the dust off His younger brother's body, and bathed Him in the sea. Sri Garud, Who is well-aware of the Lord's needs, arrived there and carried Him to the palace. Sri Uddhav, who knew everything, consoled the ladies such as Devaki devi, Rukmini devi etc. and sent them inside to attend the Lord. Mother Devaki greeted Him with blessings and quickly started making arrangements for His *bhog*. Rukmini devi and the other consorts of the Lord were standing behind the pillar, only Satyabhāmā was absent, therefore Sri *Bhagavān* asked Uddhav about her. Sri Uddhav replied, "O my Master! In the auspicious moment, when You entered Nava-Vrindāban on Mount Raivatak, then You had expressed wonderful *bhāvs*. Those fallen people who have no knowledge of *prem-tattva* will never be able to conceive such *bhāvs*. To behold Your love-ecstasy, the wicked Padmāvati (Kamsa's mother) too had gone their length with Rukmini and the other ladies. She was watching You unobserved from far. When she saw Your extraordinary love-symptoms, she said, 'O Devaki! You have no pious deeds to your credit at all! O You unlucky Rukmini! You lowly Satyabhāmā! You poor Jāmbvati! And all you women! Alas! Can't you see how Sri Krishna is behaving? Now you better not be proud of your good fortune and in stead start performing *tapasyā* so that you can become the maid servants of those cowherd women."

When Devaki mātā heard her harsh words, she replied, "You fool! What is so surprising about this? Along with Vasudev, I had already performed *tapasyā* to beget Krishna as my son; due to that *tapasyā*, He has kindly become our son. However Nanda and Yashodā had prayed to Brahmāji simply to get *bhakti*. Consequently, by the impact of *bhakti* they have gained much greater glory than we. They have just taken loving care of Him, due to which Sri Krishna is feeling so much *bhāv* for them. It is right of Him to feel like this. In fact, I too like these *bhāvs* He is expressing."

After this, Rukmini Devi spoke something with joy — if any devotee hears it, his love for Sri *Bhagavān* will increase manifold.

She said—"The *Gopis* rejected everything—material as well as spiritual, they also abandoned their husband and children, and engaged in serving Sri Krishna. They were overwhelmed with *prem*, and served Him in a most confidential manner through the *Rās*-dance and many other sports. They have gained some extremely high level, inconceivable special love from Sri Krishna. We should be meditating on their activities and moods constantly. Their *sāadhanā* is so exquisite that we should be pondering on it and meditating on it. This is why it is appropriate that the Lord is expressing much more love for them than what He shows for us. We serve Him as married wives serve a husband. We are full of awe and reverence for Him. However the *Gopis* rejected all *dharma* and served the Lord with supreme purity. As a result I think Sri Krishna is justified in feeling more *bhāv* for them and expressing more exquisite love for them. We should not feel jealous of the honorable *Gopikās*, since it is not proper for us to consider them as co-wives. They belong to an extremely high status, while we are most fallen. In stead, we should extol their *bhāv*."

(Commentary—Rukmini devi is saying that the *Gopikās* are not interested in what happens to them in the life after. They have self-surrendered to Sri Krishna in *anurāg*. Although they are the inherent *shaktis* of the Lord, they are not bound to Him by marriage, and hence the wise extol them as 'parakiyā'¹ sweethearts'. Sri Krishna is the Chief of all connoisseurs of *ras*. He wishes to relish an inconceivably sweet *prem-ras*; therefore He has made His '*ānandini shaktis*'—blissful potencies (the *Gopis*)—feel that they have an extra-marital relationship with Him. He has used *Yogamâyā* to make this happen. The women of decent families are extremely sad if they have to waver from the path of righteousness and away from their dear ones. Rather they would gladly welcome death by entering the fire or by drinking poison. Under no circumstance they can give up chastity, for they feel it is extremely shameful to do so. Extreme love forces the *Vrajadevis* to cross the boundaries of Vedic injunctions, societal norms and obstacles of every type, and serve Sri Krishna. This only proves the zenith of their Sri Krishna-*prem*.

¹ Lovers who have extra-marital relationship

Rasik-shekar¹ Sri Krishna relishes their *parakiyâ-bhâv* in a tremendously extraordinary manner. His relish is so unique and He never gets such *ras* in anything else. This is why Rukmini devi has said that, the *Gopis* are so overwhelmed by love that they serve Sri Krishna in a very confidential manner. It is very difficult for the queens to serve Him likewise. Hence the queens and other devotees too should meditate upon the *parakiyâ - bhâv* and *sevâ*.

In Brijdhâm, the *anurâg* is so astounding that both lovers have got bound by the mighty cords of deep love—day after day—how many different types of love-sports they have enjoyed—in so many different ways! Such sweet love-dalliance is beyond the imagination of the queens. Sometimes in the deep dark night, Sri Krishna has stealthily tip-toed—His heart palpitating in fear—and reached the courtyard of Sri Râdhikâ. There He has hidden in a lonely dark spot, and given peculiar calls. Then Srimati Râdhârâni has slowly risen from her bed, silently so as not to wake up Her in-laws, unbolted the door and have united with Her Beloved. Then She has tightly embraced and kissed Him. At other times, when the elders succeed in obstructing Them, the *Gopis* have to call-off the meeting and they are engulfed in deep sorrow. They cry in *viraha*; Their hearts are shrouded by pitch black disappointment. We find that Sri Krishna has secretly reached the *sanket-kunja* on the banks of the Yamunâ, and is thirstily awaiting the arrival of His sweetheart. He has prepared a bed of soft leaves and flowers for Her and is gazing lovingly at her path. The dry leaves murmur and He starts up thinking His beloved has arrived. On the other hand, the *Gopis* too visit the banks of the Yamunâ under the pretext of bringing water, and meet Him in the *sanket-kunja* to make Him happy. Often in the evenings, Sri Krishna's mesmerizing flute commands the *Gopis* to come to Him. Its mellifluous notes drives them crazy and they cross all barricades posed by the parents and relatives, and unite with Him. The *Gopis* meet Sri Krishna in Vrindâban and give Him the pleasure of relishing the wonderful *ras* of the *râs-leelâ*. It is verily impossible for the queens who are His married wives, to give Him such remarkable sweet relish. This is why Rukmini Devi is saying, "We cannot possibly feel jealous of the *Gopis*."

The ancient authors of *ras*-science do not accept that relation with a '*parodhâ*²' can be *ras*-full. However this holds good only in the case of wordly lovers, and not in the case of the lotus-eyed Vraja-beauties, since they are Sri Krishna's inherent *shaktis*, and not different from Him. Sri Krishna is God Himself and is the source of all incarnations. He is also *rasik-shekar*. To relish condensed *ras*, He has ordered Yogmâyâ to make His inherent potencies, the *Gopis*, to feel that they are '*parodhâ*' (belong to some other husband). This has made them set aside the considerations of *dharma* and *adharmâ*. Their *anurâg* has reached such a height that they have set aside all concerns for what will happen to them in this life and the next. Their love is devoid of all '*upâdhis*' or contaminations. As a result, this '*parakiyâ*' (extra-marital) *bhâv* is unadulterated and inconceivable. Srimad-Bhâgavatam says that, Sri Uddhav Mahâshai is the crest-jewel of all *sâdhus*. When he saw the height of *prem* the Vraja-beauties had for Sri Krishna, he exclaimed in joy, "The Vraja-beauties have denigrated the honorable path of the Âryans, which is impossible to forsake! Ohh! Without any doubt, it'd the best way to achieve Sri Krishna and even the Shrutis are searching for this path (but failing to arrive at it)." If the Shrutis are searching for this path, then it has to be supremely blissful and eternally spiritual. Thus it is clear that the *parakiyâ-bhâv* offers unlimited and variegated relish of erotic *ras*. It is eternal, and the topmost achievable goal for any living being.)

Sri Uddhav concluded by saying, "O my Master! When the other queens heard Rukmini Devi, they nodded in agreement; however, Satyabhâmâ Devi could not tolerate it and has entered the *mân*-room³." This made Srimad Gopijana-vallabh⁴ fly into a temper; He immediately commanded, "Bring that extremely foolish daughter of Satrâjit at once!" Now Satyabhâmâ was shrewd, and when she heard Sri Krishna's order from the maid servants, she was embarrassed. She got up from the floor, dusted herself up and rushed to the Lord. She was scared and ashamed that she had gone into *mân* in such an inappropriate time, so she hid herself behind a pillar. Nevertheless her perfume announced her arrival and Sri *Bhagavân* spoke out in anger – "You stupid daughter of Satrâjit! You narrow-minded woman! It was alright when Rukmini had got the Pârijât flower and you had gone into *mân*, but now how dare you go into *mân* upon seeing my topmost love for the *Brijwâsis*? You foolish woman! Don't you know I am under the control of the *Brijwâsis*? If forsaking all of you will make the

¹ The Chief of all connoisseurs of *ras*

² A sweetheart who is married to another. This is because she is bound and marriage will not be possible. This signifies that the 'love affair' will not go into culmination, that is, marriage. So it is a hopeless case and hence devoid of *ras*.

³ A separate room where a woman would enter if she went into *mân*. This was her way of letting the world know that someone had wronged her.

⁴ The Beloved of the *Gopis*.

Brijwāsīs happy, then I promise you that I shall abandon you forthright. This is the truth and nothing but the truth!"

(Commentary – We have already learnt that we have only one means to subjugate Sri Krishna, and that is to love Him purely, without a whiff of selfish desire and without an inkling of *aishwarya-gyân*¹. Although the residents of Mathurā and Dwārakā love Him, their love is tainted with *aishwarya-gyân*, and at times even contaminated with the desire for self-satisfaction or pleasure. However, the *prem* of the *Gopīs* is completely devoid of the desire for sense gratification and without a scent of *aishwarya-gyân*. Their love is crystal clear and sweet. It is extraordinary. The Vraja-beauties' love is self-dependent², self-sufficient, passionate and is unrivalled in the realm of *bhāv*. Sri Krishna has unlimited desires arising in His heart. The *Gopīs* have the natural abilities to fulfil those desires. Their bodies are made up of such *bhāv*³ that satisfy Sri Krishna. This indicates that their sub-conscious mind, consciousness, body, senses and everything else is made up of the ingredients that satisfy Sri Krishna. Their extraordinary *prem* has conferred on them this exceptional status.)

We know that one cannot feel sweet or conjugal passion for Sri *Bhagavān* without the desire to make love with Him. However, this 'desire to make love' can be due to our wish to please Him, or because we want sense-gratification. How much pure is the passion? Well, to the extent it is meant to satisfy Sri Krishna. The passion that seeks self-pleasure cannot control Him much. The Vraja-beauties' *prem* is self-independent. It lacks the merest scent of self-happiness; therefore it subjugates Sri Krishna to the maximum degree. After all, we must remember that He is a Servant of Love. Depending on the ratio of 'Sri Krishna's pleasure' to 'self-pleasure' in the passion, the authors of *Ras*-science classify conjugal passion into –

1. *sādhārani* (ordinary)
2. *samanjasā* (balanced)
3. *samarthā* (self-independent)

Let us study each one in detail.

1. *Sādhārani* passion– This passion is very much adulterated by the desire for sensual pleasure. One may experience this after getting Sri Krishna's actual *darshan*, or by hearing about Him. Sexual desire is the only cause for this passion; such *madhurā-ratī* (sweet passion) is called 'ordinary'. For example – as soon as Kubjā saw Sri Krishna, she felt, 'I wish I could have the pleasure of having a physical relation with such a gorgeous handsome man.' This denotes her desire for sense gratification. The next moment she felt, 'He has made me so happy by giving me *darshan*, I wish in return I could please Him, by at least serving Him with my body for a while.' It is clear that this passion is caused due to her initial desire for sense-gratification; therefore in this case, as the sensual desire diminishes, the passion too decreases. Some preceptors are of the opinion that some women of Mathurā, Dwārakā and heavenly realms too possess such ordinary passion.
2. *Samanjasā* passion– This passion arises in a devotee who identifies herself as Sri *Bhagavān*'s wife. It mostly arises when she hears about His excellences. At times, it is also caused by the desire for sexual union. In that case, this desire becomes an impurity. For example, when Rukmini and some other queens heard about Sri Krishna from Nārada Muni, after they had reached puberty, they felt a natural passion for Him. Also lust arose in them and they desired a physical union with Him. When these two feelings come together, it results in '*samanjasā ratī*'. The former (natural passion for Sri Krishna) is more than their desire for sense gratification. The queens of Dwārakā possess this *samanjasā ratī*. Sometimes they show a separate desire for sense gratification; then how much ever they may try to seduce Him, they cannot. We should realize that they can make Him behave according to their wish to the degree of love they possess, in addition to their desire for self-pleasure. Let us understand this better. Suppose a queen feels that since the *Gopīs* have greater *bhāv* than I do, and they manage to control Sri Krishna, I too shall display similar *bhāvs* externally and thus seduce Him, then she is wrong. She will never succeed, since she does not possess the *prem* of the *Gopīs*. In this case, all her actions are simply a drama. However, we should also note that Sri Krishna loves love. He cannot reject any devotee entirely. As a result, He reciprocates in proportion to the amount of purity present in her love – not by her seductive charms.
3. *Samarthā* passion– This type of *ratī* or passion is exceptional as compared to the previous two types. This passion is natural and spontaneous – it does not depend on *shravanam* etc. A *Gopī*

¹ The knowledge that Sri Krishna is God Almighty.

² No cause is required to arouse their love.

³ They are Sri Krishna-*prem*-*bhāv* personified.

craves for Sri Krishna from the beginning; it does not 'arise'. Even the sheer hint of this fragrant passion makes them naturally forget family-honor, all righteousness, self-control and shame. It is the deepest form of passion and nothing can change it. This is why we call it 'self-independent'.

Sādhārani passion is entirely adulterated by the desire for self-pleasure while *samanjasā rati* is too sometimes contaminated. Thus we see that both these passions have some impurity, though it may be to a small degree. On the other hand, *samarthā rati* is so strong that forget contaminating – the desire for sense gratification can never come within miles of its existence.

Why do we call it *samarthā* (self-independent and all-capable)? This is because the beloveds who possess this passion are all-capable of controlling Sri Krishna, Who seeks pleasure in them. This passion is all-capable of making the Vraja-beauties forget their honor, *dharma* and shame. It is all-capable to make the devotee relish entirely Sri Krishna's sweet beauty, excellences and pastimes. Not only all these, but a devotee who has this sort of passion is also all-capable of giving Sri Krishna the marvelous relish of her own sweet love. This *samarthā-rati* alone can graduate to the stage of *mahābhāva*. Consequently Sri Krishna Whom only love can control is most subjugated by the Vraja-beauties.

Upon hearing that Sri Krishna is in the control of the *Vrajadevis*, Satyabhāmā did *mān*—this is ridiculous, since there can be no comparison between the Vraja-beauties who are the proud possessors of *samarthā-rati*, and Satyabhāmā who has *samanjasā rati*, that is far inferior. This is why Sri Krishna said, "If I can please the *Gopīs* by abandoning all of you, I can do this even now.)

Sri Krishna continued – "Brahmā has thus glorified me—'O Krishna! Although You are God almighty, You are incapable of returning the favor of the *Brijwāsīs*'. This is verily the truth, since I am most indebted to the *Brijwāsīs*. You may ask—'Why don't You go and live in Brijdhām? For then You will not only be able to repay their debt, but also make them happy.' To this I reply that, "If I go to Vrindāban or even if I live there, their health will neither be restored nor will they recover from the fire of *viraha*. Although they are always suffering from the pangs of my separation, if I do go there and sport sweetly with them, their sorrow will increase. The *Brijwāsīs* are constantly burning in the fire of *viraha*. If, all of a sudden, I meet them, it will be like putting ice on a freshly burnt area. Their blazing hearts will be set aflame all the more. When someone is burnt badly by fire, we have to provide warmth, and not ice. The *Brijwāsīs* are entirely scorched by separation that is why I am providing them with the warmth of *viraha*, and thus keeping them alive. I don't see any other way out of this predicament.

You may also ask, 'The *Brijwāsīs* are such great *premi*ks—what do You mean by tormenting them so much?' I beg to reply that, 'The *Brijwāsīs* have such intense *bhāva*, that even when they see me, they are so overwhelmed and bewitched that they forget everything – including their body and body-related matters. They are so supremely engrossed in me that they lose all external sense. Even during *milan*, they are actually so much paranoid of the future *viraha*, that they become miserable. I am truly incapable of keeping them happy whether in *milan*, or *viraha*."

(Commentary – *Viraha* alone has heightened the status of the Vraja-prem. The *prem* that arises due to Sri Krishna-*viraha* is special. It is supremely glorious and pleasurable. And only the *Brijwāsīs* can enjoy this *prem*. In fact, divine *prem* arises only from the feeling that 'I am separated from the Divine Being'. Consequently, this *viraha* has some inherent inexpressible joy concealed in it. When we are unable to obtain Him, all of us sense *viraha*; however, other devotees lack the *prem* of the *Brijwāsīs*. Hence they do not feel the longing of *viraha* so much as the *Brijwāsīs*. As a result, they do not reach the ultimate peak of joy either.)

Sri Krishna said, "Moreover when they cannot see me, they are sometimes stupefied due to the blazing fire of *viraha*, at times they are almost dead, and at other times they become lunatic. Thus they attain all sorts of sweet *bhāva*. When they see darkness or the Tamāl tree, they mistake them to be me, so they hug and kiss these things. Now, with whom can I discuss these subjects? Who is here to realize such *bhāva*? No one in Dwārakā is qualified to hear all this, because they do not possess that sort of *prem*. Thus, whether I am present in Braj, or absent – both amount the same. It is pointless for me to go there.

Then you may ask—why did You marry us? Listen, I'll tell you the reason. O Satyabhâmâ – you who have done *mân*! Earlier, although I was separated from the *Gopis*, I had no wish to marry. However, Rukmini Devi wanted to commit suicide if I refused to marry her. She had sent me a letter crying pathetically to save her. The envoy carrying the letter too conveyed the same plea. As a result I had kidnapped her and accepted her hand in marriage. But after seeing her, the painful memory of the *Gopis* caused me enormous grief. I was extremely agitated and wanted some respite from that sorrow. There were sixteen thousand and one hundred *Gopis* who had performed the 'Kâtyâyani *vrata* to obtain me as their husband; you all too numbered the same. Therefore I married you.

The *Brijwâsis* are highly captivating; when I lived in Braj, I used to be constantly immersed in pleasure-sports with them. I did not even realize when night would fall, and the dawn would break. Forget the *Brijwâsis*, do you know how I looked then? I used to look stunning, and my attire and flute-song were so extraordinary! These qualities would lovingly mesmerize all the moving and non-moving in the entire creation! Now, it's still the same old me – but I have not been able to make the Yâdavs get the same *bhâv* as that of the *Brijwâsis*. You have done *mân* – but then, you belong to such a high status, don't you? So now it is very difficult for me even to attempt at breaking your *mân* with the help of the flute, since you think you are very respectable. This has made me so embarrassed that I have abandoned the flute, although it was so dear to me."

(Commentary – Satyabhâmâ's *mân* is very easy to break, unlike that of the *Gopis*. The queens are not interested in behaving in a manner contrary to the Lord's liking, since they scare in awe of Him and treat Him with reverence. These feelings cause hindrance in the path of pure *prem*. Only the Vraja-beauties possess such carefree love for Sri Krishna, and so they are able to show invincible *mân*. Consequently, Sri Krishna does not need the help of the mighty flute to break Satyabhâmâ's *mân*.)

Sri Chaitanya-Charitâmrita states –

braje gopiganer mân rosher nidân

Meaning - "In Braj, the *mân* of the *Gopis* is a fountainhead of *ras*."

Here in Dwârakâ, Sri Krishna is the King of Kings, while the flute is a toy belonging to a *Gopa* boy. Therefore, it is most unbecoming for a 'King of Kings' to break the *mân* of a queen with the help of a flute. He would become a laughing stock for the public. In fact, only Brijdhâm has sole monopoly over the flute. Its sweetness is the extraordinary wealth of Braj alone! This is why He has abandoned the flute. After all, Sri Krishna expresses His greatness in the proper place.)

Overcome with grief, Sri Krishna exclaimed, "How terribly sad! I had performed such remarkably sweet pastimes in Braj! How happy I was there! Forget performing such *leelâs* here, I can't even describe them. I have just one loving devotee, like the *Brijwâsis* – and that is – Bâdarâyani (Shukadev); he will narrate this most confidential Braj-*leelâ* to a small degree with profound love to his dear disciple Parikshit. In fact, it is due to such *rasik* orator as well as *rasik* audience that this most confidential *ras* of Braj-*leelâ* will spread in some places in the Kaliyug."

(Commentary – Undoubtedly, Sri Krishna's *leelâ* has such unimaginable impact. The effect of Braj-*leelâ* is the most impressive, since Sri Krishna expresses His sweetness to the fullest extent in Brijdhâm. This is because the *Brijwâsis* possess the sweetest *prem*. If He tries to describe Braj-*leelâ* Himself, the memory of Braj-*prem* depresses Him so much that He cannot express it any more. However, the devotees who worship Him in the sweet mood, spontaneously get a vision of these *leelâs*.)

Parikshit said, "Dear mother! When Sri *Bhagavân* started praising the immense fortune of Brijdhâm, Sri Uddhav, the best of ministers, was afraid that He would again swoon in love-ecstasy, and then they would have a problem. Therefore he signaled to the queens to come in front of the Lord. Then he made Mâtâ Devaki and Rohini enter with food-items. After this, he told Baladev to give Him the message of Sri Nârâd's arrival.

Sri *Bhagavân* smiled and asked, "Why is Nârâd not coming here directly, as he usually does? Who stopped him at the gates today?" Sri Uddhav replied jovially, "O Master! His own shame and fear have obstructed him." Hearing this, Sri *Bhagavân* arose and brought Nârâd inside. He said, "O Nârâd! O the best of my well-wishers! You are so eager to please me. O best of *rasiks*! Today you have brought me great joy!

O Devarshe! Although the memory of dear ones spark a fire of *viraha* in the heart which results in untold suffering, immense sorrow and misery, yet that grief results in supreme happiness. Hence it is more glorious than the joy of *milan*. It arouses an indescribable ecstasy that is much more than that felt during *milan*. This heartache arises from *prem* and reaches the peak during *viraha*. Yet the climax of sorrow results in ecstasy—this is a fact that only a *rasik* can appreciate. He knows how the sorrow of *viraha* evaporates, bliss pervades the heart, and we can reside very happily as if we are experiencing the joy of *milan*. In this manner, we get a continuous *sphurti* of the beloved and joy overwhelms the heart.

(Commentary – *Bhajanânanda* (the bliss of performing *bhajan*) is more than *brahmânanda* (the joy of merging with Brahman), while *premânanda* (the joy of eternal love) is greater than *bhajanânanda*. However the *viraha*-sorrow that arises out of *prem* is more than the ecstasy of *milan*. The *premik* realizes a supreme bliss that is much more than all of these and it is inexpressible.)

Due to this, although the heart suffers the pangs of separation, we are highly miserable and we want to forever cry, we feel extremely sad when we do not crave for our beloved in sorrowful *viraha*. Dear Devarshe! No one desires sorrow—all of us want happiness. Hence I would like to comment that—ice is the opposite of fire; yet when we touch ice, at first our hands and feet become numb, and as we continue to touch it we feel a burning sensation as if we are in contact with fiery coals. However we do know that we are not touching burning coals, rather we are in contact with ice, which is its opponent. The cold sensation is true, and not the burning, since our skin cannot possibly burn in the absence of heat. Similarly, the sorrow of a lover in *viraha* is false, and in reality, he is happy.

(Commentary – Sri Krishna-*prem* is joy personified. When we feel sorrow and craving that arise out of Sri Krishna-*prem*, then we should know it to be a pleasure. However it is true that in this world, the separation of lovers is indeed very painful.)

There are some who do not like the sorrow of *viraha*, yet they welcome *viraha* as 'supremely favorable'. Why? Please know that a lover considers any situation that reminds him of his sweetheart as the 'elixir of life'. A lover hates anything that makes him forget his beloved—it is worse than death! Although it is impossible for him to forget his darling, if she comes to his memory in a special way, he feels thankful and happy. He feels as if someone has blown new life into him. The zenith of love is wonderful and special. At this stage, the memory of a sweetheart is as ecstatic as getting an exquisite life.

Dear Devarshe¹ ! Today you have brought a special memory of the *Gopikās* – you have done me a great favor! I am supremely pleased with you; please ask me for a boon!"

Parikshit Mahârāj said, "Mother! When Nârad heard this, he yelled, "Jai! Jai!" Then, strumming on his *veenā* he sang 'O Gokul-mahotsav²! O Yashodâ-nandan! O Gopi-jana-manohar³!' and many other sweet Braja-names of the Lord. Thus he started glorifying Sri *Bhagavân*. The great sage had traveled all the way from the Dashâshwamedh-*ghât* of Prayâg right up to Dwârâvati (Dwâarakâ) and had spoken to so many devotees. He knew that all of them had obtained divine *kripâ* and were entirely devout in their own way. Yet now he wished to hear right from the ecstatic Sri *Bhagavân's* holy lips something that he had concealed in his heart. He knew that He is the crest-jewel of all generous people. He begged a supremely exquisite boon—his heartfelt wish – from Him. The holy sage said, 'O Sri Krishna-chandra! You are bliss personified. By Your *kripâ*, let no one ever feel that he has had enough of Your *bhakti* and *kripâ*. This is what I beg of You.'

Sri *Bhagavân* said, 'Nârad! You are supposed to be the best of intellectuals! Yet, what sort of boon have you asked? Why, everyone knows that my *bhakti* and *kripâ* are forever unsatiating. It is their nature. *Bhakti* never quenches the devotee's thirst, and he craves for more and more. It is the natural characteristic of *bhakti* – so there is no point in praying specially for this. Dear sage! Starting from Prayâg you have wandered in many places and at last you have reached here. All the devotees that you heard and met are the recipients of my *kripâ*. They have all received the auspicious benefits of my mercy and can deliver the world. Although they are different from one another depending on

¹ Addressive form of 'Devarshi'.

² The Greatest Joy of Gokul (another name of Sri Krishna)

³ The One Who steals the hearts of the *Gopis*

the type and amount of *prem*, none of them is satisfied in any manner. Hence, please ask me some other boon."

(Commentary – Nârad had traveled from Prayâg to Dwârakâ. He had met and spoken to many devotees. The latter devotees were superior to the previous ones. At last he concluded that the Braja-gopîs and Sri Râdhikâ are the topmost devotees. Each devotee had gained the priceless gift of scaling the highest point in his or her own ras. From this point of view, they were absolutely devout. However, none of them were satisfied with their *prem* and *bhakti*.)

Parikshit said, "O Mother! Hearing these words from Sri *Bhagavân*, Nârad started dancing in ecstasy. He knew that his master was the crest-jewel of all the magnanimous! So he begged two more excellent boons from Him."

Nârad said, "O my Lord! You are dissatisfied in spite of offering Your entire Self to Your devotee! Now that I know all the recipients of Your great *kripâ*, all my hard work has become worthwhile. I have now realized that the supremely fortunate *Gopîs* alone are the topmost recipients of Your mercy. This is the highest gift and the best *kripâ* for me. Although in this manner, I have already received the boon, I still have a slight desire that I have nursed in my heart for a long time. I shall disclose it to You. O Best of the generous! There is nothing that You cannot give, so I know for sure that You will fulfill my desire. O Swan Who swims in the *Prem-sarova*¹ of the *Vrajajanas*! Gokul-*dhâm* is like the Ocean of Milk, while Your Holy Names that describe Your supremely inexpressible cowherd-attire and pastimes are much more sweeter than sweet. They are the *amritam* that have risen from Your beautiful *Gopa*-form and *leelâs* that You have performed in Gokul². Please bless me so that I may always drink Your nectarine Holy Name, get inebriated and scatter joy wherever I go. In this manner I want to wander everywhere. This is the first boon I seek. The second boon I pray for is—whosoever describes Your Braja-*leelâ* in words³, hears with their ears, encases Your pastimes in his heart with any organ of the body⁴, or touches Brijdhâm⁵ where You have performed Your sweet *leelâ*, should get eternal loving devotion for Your lotus feet that are decorated with the saffron from the '*mangal-ghat*' like breasts of Srimati Râdhârâni and the other *Gopîs*."

Sri Parikshit said, "Mother! Hearing the prayer of Nârad-muni, Sri Gopinâth lovingly spread His hands and said, 'So be it!' This immersed Nârad in the ocean of supreme bliss; he started dancing and singing. The Lord too was happy to see him so joyful. Later on, Nârad ate many delicacies such as '*paramânna*' and drank delicious drinks with Sri Krishna and Sri Balarâm. Rukmini Devi served them during the meal, while Mothers Devaki and Rohini supervised. Sri Uddhav reminded him of the various dishes by saying, 'You have not tasted this, this is your favorite one, please eat more etc.' Satyabhâmâ Devi fanned him, while Jâmbavati and the other queens spoke and pleased him with their caring attitude. After the meal, Nârad washed his hands and mouth. Then Sri Krishna Himself anointed him with fragrance. He garlanded him and placed much jewelry on him. Thus the Lord worshipped him with love.

But then, Nârad Muni is a '*bhakti-lampat*' – lecherous or lusty for *bhakti*. So after taking leave from Sri Mâdhav, he wanted to share his good fortune with the sages at Prayâg. Singing the glory of the Srimad-Bhâgavatam that he had realized on his various visits, he arrived at the holy place. The sages present there were also somewhat like him—interested in only the essential subject in life. When they heard from Nârad Muni the most wonderful glory of *bhakti*, they gave up all endeavors for *karma*, *gyân* etc. and started following his instructions. They became supremely humble and started worshipping the lotus feet of Sriman-Madan Gopâl.

Parikshit said—"Dear mother! You too please desire to become the maid servant of the *Gopîs*. Sri Krishna is an adolescent cowherd boy, He is the Ocean of *râs-ras*, and surrounded by the *Gopîs* who

¹ The heart of the *Brijwâsis* that are like lakes full of *prem-ras*.

² Nârad is referring to how the *devatâs* and *asurs* obtained the material *amritam* by churning the Ocean of Milk.

³ To have faith in the greatness of the places where Sri Krishna has performed His pastimes and narrate such incidents.

⁴ To touch Srimad-Bhâgavatam and other scriptures that glorify Sri Krishna's sweet pastimes.

⁵ To roll in the dust of Brijdhâm .

⁶ A *mangal-ghat* is a small pitcher that is used for *pujâ*. It is decorated with turmeric and vermilion. It is considered auspicious. Here the author is likening the breasts of the *Gopîs* with a '*mangal-ghat*' because they too are auspicious and worthy of being worshipped.

are bewitched with *prem*. Please meditate on Him thus and chant His Holy Name with loving devotion. Constantly perform His *bhajan*. A fly cannot hold Mount Sumeru in its mouth; likewise I too cannot glorify a single *gopi*. Aho! My Spiritual Master Sripâd Bâdrâyani (Sukadev) constantly glorifies names such as Rukmini, and the names of the other consorts of Sri Krishna; yet he could not utter the name of a *Braja-gopi*. The *Gopis* are always burning in the blazing fire of *prem* that has reached the supreme most height, extraordinary in all respects and most extensive. If he takes their names, a single spark from their inflamed heart will set ablaze his entire consciousness—he will be stupefied! As a result he could not say their names. On the other hand, if he does not talk about them, the entire discourse on Srimad-Bhâgavatam would be futile, so he has carefully given a little introduction while describing their *bhâv* during the *râs-leelâ*.

Dear mother! If you lovingly adore That Sri Ballavinâth¹ sporting with the Ballavis², then by their mercy you too will know little bit glory of the *Gopis*. O mother! Whosoever hears this great story with faith, or accepts it in some manner will quickly attain the lotus feet of the *Gopis*. He too will become their *anugata* and obtain loving devotion. Thus he will be blessed.

Sri Jaimini Muni narrated this great conversation between Parikshit and Uttarâ to King Janamejaya and the king was overcome with supreme bliss on hearing this grand incident that is the most important essence of Srimad-Bhâgavatam.

Thus ends the first part of Srimad-Brihad-Bhâgavatâmr̥itam

¹ The Beloved of the cowherd maidens

² Cowherd maidens