



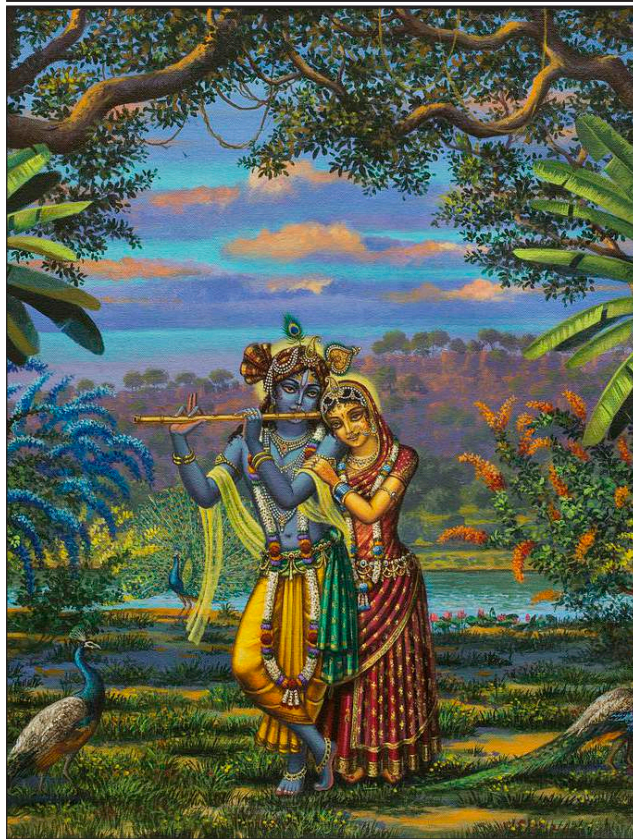
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Vidura requested Mitrēya Ṛṣi to kindly chant all those superhuman transcendental activities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

VIDURA'S EAGERNESS TO HEAR KR̥ṢṆA-KATHĀ

Srila Sukadeva Goswami

Vidura, the best amongst the Kuru dynasty, who was perfect in devotional service to the Lord, thus reached the source of the celestial Ganges River [Hardwar], where Maitreya, the great, fathomless learned sage of the world, was seated. Vidura, who was perfect in gentleness and satisfied in transcendence, inquired from him.

Vidura said: O great sage, everyone in this world engages in fruitive activities to attain happiness, but one finds neither satiation nor the mitigation of distress. On the contrary, one is only aggravated by

such activities. Please, therefore, give us directions on how one should live for real happiness. O my lord, great philanthropic souls travel on the earth on behalf of the Supreme Personality of Godhead to show compassion to the fallen souls who are averse to the sense of subordination to the Lord. Therefore, O great sage, please give me instruction on the transcendental devotional service of the Lord, so that He who is situated in the heart of everyone can be pleased to impart, from within, knowledge of the Absolute Truth in terms of the ancient Vedic principles delivered only to those who are purified by the process of devotional service.

O great sage, kindly narrate how the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is the independent,

desireless Lord of the three worlds and the controller of all energies, accepts incarnations and creates the cosmic manifestation with perfectly arranged regulative principles for its maintenance. He lies down on His own heart spread in the form of the sky, and thus placing the whole creation in that space, He expands Himself into many living entities, which are manifested as different species of life. He does not have to endeavor for His maintenance, because He is the master of all mystic powers and the proprietor of everything. Thus He is distinct from the living entities. You may narrate also about the auspicious characteristics of the Lord in His different incarnations for the welfare of the twice-born, the cows and the demigods. Our minds are never satisfied completely, although we continuously hear of His transcendental activities.

The Supreme King of all kings has created different planets and places of habitation where living entities are situated in terms of the modes of nature and work, and He has created their different kings and rulers. O chief amongst the *brāhmaṇas*, please also describe how Narayana, the creator of the universe and the self-sufficient Lord, has differently created the natures, activities, forms, features and names of the different living creatures. O my lord, I have repeatedly heard about these higher and lower statuses of human society from the mouth of Vyasa, and I am quite satiated with all these lesser subject matters and their happiness. They have not satisfied me with the nectar of topics about Krishna.

Who in human society can be satisfied without hearing sufficient talk of the Lord, whose lotus feet are the sum total of all places of pilgrimage and who is worshiped by great sages and devotees? Such topics can cut off one's bondage to family affection simply by entering the holes of one's ears. Your friend the great sage Krishna-dvaipayana Vyasa has already described the transcendental qualities of the Lord in his great work the *Mahābhārata*. But the whole idea is to draw the attention of the mass of people to *kṛṣṇa-kathā* [*Bhagavad-gītā*] through their strong affinity for hearing mundane topics. For one who is anxious to engage constantly in hearing such topics, *kṛṣṇa-kathā* gradually increases his indifference towards all other things. Such constant remembrance of the lotus feet of Lord Krishna by the devotee who has achieved transcendental bliss vanquishes all his miseries without delay.

O sage, persons who because of their sinful activities are averse to the topics of transcendence and thus ignorant of the purpose of the *Mahābhārata* [*Bhagavad-gītā*] are pitied by the pitiable. I also pity them because I see how their duration of life is spoiled by eternal time while they involve themselves in

presentations of philosophical speculation, theoretical ultimate goals of life, and different modes of ritual. O Maitreya, O friend of the distressed, the glories of the Supreme Lord can alone do good for people all over the world. Therefore, just as bees collect honey from flowers, kindly describe the essence of all topics—the topics of the Lord.

Kindly chant all those superhuman transcendental activities of the Supreme controller, the Personality of Godhead, who accepted incarnations fully equipped with all potency for the full manifestation and maintenance of the cosmic creation.

Sukadeva Goswami said: The great sage Maitreya Muni, after honoring Vidura very greatly, began to speak, at Vidura's request, for the greatest welfare of all people.

Sri Maitreya said: O Vidura, all glory unto you. You have inquired from me of the greatest of all goodness, and thus you have shown your mercy both to the world and to me because your mind is always absorbed in thoughts of the transcendence. O Vidura, it is not at all wonderful that you have so accepted the Lord without deviation of thought, for you were born from the semen of Vyasa. I know that you are now Vidura due to the cursing of Mandavya Muni and that formerly you were King Yamaraja, the great controller of living entities after their death. You were begotten by the son of Satyawati, Vyasa, in the kept wife of his brother. Your good self is one of the eternal associates of the Supreme Personality of Godhead for whose sake the Lord, while going back to His abode, left instructions with me. I shall therefore describe to you the pastimes by which the Personality of Godhead extends His transcendental potency for the creation, maintenance and dissolution of the cosmic world as they occur one after another.

— *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (Bhāgavata Purāṇa)* » Canto 3: *The Status Quo*
» Chapter 5: *Vidura's Talks with Maitreya* » Verses: 1-22. ॐ

TWO IMPORTANT KṚṢṆA-KATHĀ'S

His Divine Grace

A .C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Because people are very much interested in hearing social and historical presentations, Srila Vyasa has compiled many books such as the *Purāṇas* and *Mahābhārata*. These books are reading matter for the mass of people, and they were compiled with a view to reviving their God consciousness, now forgotten in the conditional life of material existence. The real purpose



of such literatures is not so much to present topics of historical references, but to revive the people's sense of God consciousness. For example, *Mahābhārata* is the history of the Battle of Kurukshetra, and common people read it because it is full of topics regarding the social, political and economic problems of human society. But factually the most important part of *Mahābhārata* is *Bhagavad-gītā*, which is automatically taught to readers along with the historical narrations of the Battle of Kurukshetra.

Vidura explained to Maitreya his position of being fully satiated with the knowledge of mundane social and political topics and having no more interest in them. He was anxious to hear transcendental topics regarding Lord Sri Krishna. Because there were insufficient topics directly concerning Krishna in the *Purāṇas*, *Mahābhārata*, etc., he was not satisfied and wanted to know more about Krishna. *Kṛṣṇa-kathā*, or topics regarding Krishna, are transcendental, and there is no satiation in hearing such topics. *Bhagavad-gītā* is important on account of its being *kṛṣṇa-kathā*, or speeches delivered by Lord Krishna. The story of the Battle of Kurukshetra may be interesting for the mass of people, but to a person like Vidura, who is highly advanced in devotional service, only *kṛṣṇa-kathā* and that which is dovetailed with *kṛṣṇa-kathā* is interesting. Vidura wanted to hear of everything from Maitreya, and so he inquired from him, but he desired that all the topics be in relationship with Krishna. As fire is never satisfied in its consumption of firewood, so a pure devotee of the Lord never hears enough about Krishna. Historical events and other narrations concerning social and political incidents all become transcendental as soon as they are in relationship with Krishna. That is the way to transform mundane things into spiritual identity. The whole world can be transformed into Vaikuntha if all worldly activities are dovetailed with *kṛṣṇa-kathā*.

There are two important *kṛṣṇa-kathās* current in the world—*Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-*

Bhāgavatam. *Bhagavad-gītā* is *kṛṣṇa-kathā* because it is spoken by Krishna, whereas *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is *kṛṣṇa-kathā* because it narrates about Krishna. Lord Chaitanya advised all His disciples to preach *kṛṣṇa-kathā* all over the world without discrimination because the transcendental value of *kṛṣṇa-kathā* can purify one and all from material contamination.

— *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (Bhāgavata Purāṇa) » Canto 3: The Status Quo » Chapter 5: Vidura's Talks with Maitreya » Verse: 10, Purport by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada* ❀

KINDS OF HEARING

Srila Bhaktivinod Thakur

Vijaya-kumara: O master, I would like to know how many stages there are between first hearing about the Lord and finally attaining the greatest good fortune.

Goswami: There are five stages: 1. *śravaṇa-daśā* (hearing), 2. *varaṇa-daśā* (desiring), 3. *smaraṇa-daśā* (remembering), 4. *bhāvāpana-daśā* (attaining ecstasy), and 5. *prema-sampatti-daśā* (the greatest good fortune of spiritual love).

Vijaya-kumara: Please describe *śravaṇa-daśā*.

Goswami: When he attains faith in hearing about Krishna (*Kṛṣṇa-kathā*), a soul throws materialism (*bahirmukha-daśā*) far away. In that stage the soul yearns to hear about Krishna. Such a soul intently hears about Krishna from an exalted devotee. This is described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (4.29.40):

*tasmin maham-mukharitā madhubhic-caritra-
pīyūṣa-śeṣa-saritaḥ paritaḥ sraṁvanti
tā ye pibanty avitṛṣo nṛpa gādha-karṇais
tān na spṛṣanty aśana-tṛd-bhaya-śoka-mohaḥ*

"My dear king, in the place where pure devotees live, following the rules and regulations and thus purely conscious and engaged with great eagerness in hearing and chanting the glories of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, in that place if one gets a chance to hear their constant flow of nectar, which is exactly like the waves of a river, one will forget the necessities of life namely hunger and thirst and become immune to all kinds of fear, lamentation, and illusion."

Vijaya-kumara: Sometimes the people hear about Krishna from materialists. What is the result of that hearing?

Goswami: One may hear about Krishna from a materialist, or one may hear about Krishna from a devotee. These two kinds of hearing are different in many ways. By hearing about Krishna from a materialist, the hearer does not gradually attain faith. On the other hand, by hearing about Krishna from a devotee eager to engage in devotional service, the hearer attains spiritual piety. In some future birth spiritual faith will rise within him. When he attains this faith, a soul is eager to hear the glories of Krishna only from the mouths of great devotees. This stage is called *śravaṇa-daśā*. *Śravaṇa-daśā* is of two kinds: 1. *krama-śuddha-śravaṇa-daśā*, and 2. *krama-hīna-śravaṇa-daśā*.

Vijaya-kumara: What is *krama-hīna-śravaṇa-daśā*?

Goswami: When the hearing is done without determination, and when it does not touch Lord Krishna's pastimes, it is called *krama-hīna*. If there is no touch of Lord Krishna's pastimes, the rasas will not become manifested.

Vijaya-kumara: What is *krama-śuddha-śravaṇa-daśā*?

Goswami: When hearing is done with great determination, and when it touches on Lord Krishna's pastimes, then the *rasas* will become manifested. Hearing about Lord Krishna's *aṣṭa-kālīya nitya-līlā* (regular pastimes in the eight periods of the day) and His birth pastime and other *naimittika-līlā* (occasional pastimes) is called "*krama-śuddha-śravaṇa-daśā*". To properly engage in devotional service one must perform *krama-śuddha-śravaṇa*. By again and again engaging in *krama-śuddha-śravaṇa-daśā* and hearing the Lord's pastimes, one perceives how sweet the Lord's pastimes are. At that time the activities of *rāgāmugā-bhakti* is in the heart of the hearer. Then the hearer thinks in his heart, "Aha! Subala has such wonderful ecstatic love! I



Sri Śhaktinīmod Thakur

should serve Krishna in *sakhya-rasa*, as Subala does." This kind of activity is called *lobhā* (greedy desire). To thus worship Krishna by greedily following the liberated residents of Vraja is called *rāgāmuga-bhakti*. I have given an example in *sakhya-rasa*. *Rāgāmuga-bhakti* exists in the four *rasas* that begin with *dāsyā-rasa*. By the mercy of Lord Caitanya, who is the master of our lives, one can become qualified for *śṛṅgāra-rasa*. Seeing the beautiful gopis of Vraja, one can yearn to become like them. That yearning will lead one to the path of fulfilling that yearning. In truth, this is revealed in the conversation of the spiritual master and the disciple. That is *śravaṇa-daśā*.

Vijaya-kumara: How does one attain the perfection of *śravaṇa-daśā*?

Goswami: When one understands that Lord Krishna's pastimes are eternal, and when one declares that they are pure and spiritual, one's heart will become enchanted by them. Then one will become agitated with an intense desire to enter those pastimes. When he sees that the disciple is qualified, the spiritual master will show him the eleven *bhāvas* described in the scriptures. When the disciple's heart is passionately devoted to the Lord's pastimes, that is the perfection of *śravaṇa-daśā*.

— Conversation between Vijaya-kumara and Gopala-guru Goswami
An Excerpt From *Jaiwa dharma*, Chapter Forty *Sampatti-vicāra*, The
Greatest Good Fortune ॐ

ŚRĪ KṚṢṆA-KATHĀ-MĀHĀTMYA
THE GLORY OF THE DESCRIPTION OF SRI KRISHNA

Srila Rupa Goswami

*śrutam apy aupaniṣadan
dūre hari-kathāmṛtāt
yam na santi dravac-citta-
kampāśru-pulakādayaḥ*

The message of the *Upaniṣads* is far from the nectar topics of Lord Hari. For this reason *Upaniṣad* study does not result in a heart melting with emotion, or ecstatic symptoms, such as trembling, shedding tears, or standing of hairs on the body.

—Sri Bhagavan Vyasapada

*naiva divya-sukha-bhogam arthaye
nāpavargam api nātha kāmaye
yāntu karṇa-vivaraṁ dine dine
kṛṣṇa-keli-caritāmṛtāni me*

O Lord, I do not pray for heavenly happiness, I do not even aspire for liberation. Simply let, day after day, the nectar of Krishna's transcendental pastimes flood my ears.

—Sri Kaviratna

*aho ahobhir na kaler vidūyate
sudhā-su-dhārā-madhuram pade pade
dine dine candana-candra-śītalam
yaśo yaśodā-tanayasya gīyate*

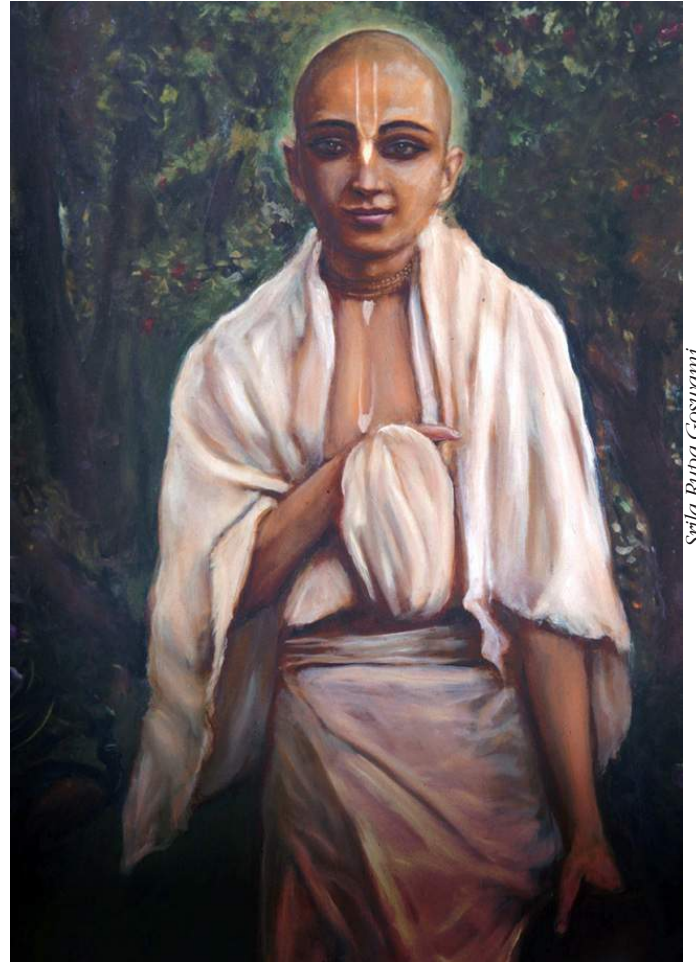
One who daily sings the glories of Yashoda's son, Krishna, which are cooling as sandalwood and camphor, is not troubled by the days of Kali-yuga. For him at every step there is a torrential flood of the sweetest nectar.

—Sri Kaviratna

*nandanandana-kaiśora-
lilāmṛta-mahāmbudhau
nimagnānām kim asmākaṁ
nirvāṇa-lavaṇāmbhasā*

We have now plunged into the great nectar-ocean of the transcendental youthful pastimes of Maharaja Nanda's son, Krishna. Of what use to us is the salt-water of impersonal liberation?

—Sri Yadavendra Puri



Srila Rupa Goswami

*tvat-kathāmṛta-pāthodhau
viharanto maha-mudaḥ
kurvanti kṛtinaḥ kecic
catur-vargaṁ tṛṇopanam*

O Lord, the saintly devotees, who happily play in the nectar ocean of the narration of Your glories, think the four *puruṣārthas* (material piety, economic development, sense-gratification, and liberation) insignificant as a blade of grass.

—Sri Sridhar Swami

*tatraiva gaṅgā yamunā ca tatra
godāvarī tatra sarasvatī ca
sarvāṇi tīrthāni vasanti tatra
yatrācyutodāra-kathā-prasaṅgaḥ*

The Ganges, Yamuna, Godavari, Saraswati, as well as all holy places of pilgrimage, stay where the transcendental topics of the infallible Supreme Personality of Godhead are narrated.

—Unknown author

yā bhukti-lakṣmīr bhūvi kāmukānām
yā mukti-lakṣmīr hr̥di yoga-bhājām
yānanda-lakṣmī rasikendra-mauleḥ
sā kāpi līlāvatu mādhavasya

May Lord Madhava's pastimes, which bring a sense-pleasure stronger than that experienced by the hedonists, a liberation more real than that felt by the yogis in their hearts, and a bliss more intense than that tasted by the most expert drinkers of nectar, protect you.

—Sri Sankara

— From *Srila Rupa Goswami's Padyāvalī*, *Sri Krishna-kathā-māhātmya*, *The Glory of the Description of Sri Krishna*, Verse 39-45. Translated by *Kusakratha dasa*, Edited by *Grahila dasa* 🙏

MAITREYA INSTRUCTS VIDURA

Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Thakur

Before the creation of this phenomenal world the Godhead as such with His full transcendental effulgence together with the desire of creation latent in Him was manifest as the absolute entity. Maya, the delusive energy of Godhead is His eternal potency. The phenomenal world was created through the instrumentality of maya from whom *mahātattva* and the other elements came into existence, then the presiding deities of the other elements prayed with folded hands to the Supreme Lord, craved shelter and indulgence of His Lotus feet that they might be given knowledge and strength enough to carry on what might go to fulfill His heart's desire. The sage Maitreya then describes how the immanent Godhead entering into the twenty three elements joined them together, how the latter manifested themselves along with their working capacities and how the Virat-rupa (the most extensive body) was created as the repository of all universal beings.

Hearing all these from the sage, Vidura enquired also how the *nirguṇa* Supreme Personality can condescend to accept attributes and functions for His pastimes; how He, self-contented as He is, can have desires for playing like a child; how a jiva a potency of that transcendental Godhead, can be subjected to maya; how the jivas do suffer from forgetfulness of their own real selves and the miseries of this world when Godhead lives in them as Immanence. To these lengthy queries of Vidura, the sage Maitreya gave a long reply which it is not possible to be written in detail within this short compass, for which the readers are referred to the seventh chapter of the third canto of *Srimad Bhagavatam*. To satisfy the curiosity of the readers only the following lines are culled therefrom.



The Virat-rupa, the repository of all universal beings.

The sage Maitreya replied, that Godhead has His majesty quite inconceivable to us. He has His external potency maya through whose instrumentality jivas suffer their miseries in this world. Sorrow, fear, infatuation are the concomitant attributes of the bound jivas while in the case of liberated pure souls they are not so. The sorrows and sufferings of the jivas are the natural effect of their attachments for their mundane bodies, which can be got rid of only by pure devotion and through the grace of Godhead. Constant hearing of the chanting of His glories infuses in the jivas an attachment for the service of Godhead, in comparison with which removal of the miseries of the bound jivas is only a negligible item. Vidura's doubts are being removed by the replies of the sage, he made further enquiry about other matters, because he was assured that chanting about Godhead would go to benefit the audience and the chanter as well.

Maitreya then described how Brahma took his birth from the navel lotus of immanent Vishnu, how all his empirical attempts to search for the absolute proved to be futile and how through complete surrender alone he could receive the grace of Godhead and see Him. In his prayers to Godhead he said that this world is but a manifestation of His maya but He is at the root of all the avatars, that He never leaves the heart of those that always chant His glories, that jivas remain subject to sorrow, desire and attachments as slaves so long as they cannot fully surrender to Him. What to talk of the



Lord Brahma offering his prayers unto Lord Vishnu

ordinary run of people, even the intelligentsia, if they become averse to the words of Godhead, are bound to be hurled into miserable world. It was through the grace of Vishnu that Brahma himself received the power of creation.

The ten kinds of creation of Brahma, his line of descendance and manvantara were being described by the sage. Maitreya further described how Brahma created Sanaka, Marichi and others, Dharma and Adharma, how for the extension of creation, males and females were created from his own body and how through Daksha, one of the sons-in-law of Manu (who obtained his body from Brahma) this world has been filled with created beings. How Shri Vishnu redeemed the earth from its watery grave in the form of the Varaha (Boar) and how the same was kept afloat thereon when He vanished – all these were part of the subject-matter of his descriptions. Here the sage Maitreya remarked that anybody who serves Godhead with unconditional devotion is sure to be blessed with the best desideratum.

Of karma, jnana, yoga and bhakti, bhakti stands foremost of all to bring about the summum bonum of human existence. Therefore, barring the beasts, none should keep aloof from the service of Sri Hari.

— From the article of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur published in "The Harmonist" September 23, 1935, Volume: 32 ❀.

!! Sri Sri Nitai Gaurchandra Jayati !!

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