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THE BEWILDERMENT OF BRAHMA

Conversation between

Sukadeva Goswami and Maharaja Pariksit

Srila Sukadeva Goswami said: O best of devotees, most fortunate Pariksit, you have inquired very nicely, for although constantly hearing the pastimes of the Lord, you are realizing His activities to be newer and newer.

*satām ayaṁ sāra-bhṛtām nisargo
yad-artha-vānī-śruti-cetasām api
prati-kṣaṇaṁ navya-vad acyutasya yat
striyā viṭānām iva sādhu vārtā*

Paramahamsas, or devotees who have accepted the essence of life, are attached to Krishna in the core of their hearts, and He is the singular goal of their lives. It is their nature to talk only of Krishna at every moment, because such topics are ever fresh and ever new. They are attached to these topics, just as materialists are attached to topics of women and sex.

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

Then, after saving the boys and calves from the

mouth of Aghasura, who was death personified, Lord Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, brought them all to the bank of the river and spoke the following words: “My dear friends, just see how this riverbank section is extremely beautiful because of its pleasing atmosphere. And just see how the blooming lotuses are attracting bees and birds by their aroma. The humming and chirping of the bees and birds is echoing through the beautiful trees in the forest. Also, here the sands are clean and soft. Therefore, this must be considered the best place for our sporting and pastimes. I think we should take our lunch here, since we are already hungry because the time is very late. Here the calves may drink water and go slowly here and there to eat the grass.”

Accepting Lord Krishna’s proposal, the cowherd boys allowed the calves to drink water from the river and then tied them to trees where there was green, tender grass. Then the boys opened their baskets of food and began eating with Krishna in great transcendental pleasure. Like the whorl of a lotus flower surrounded by its petals and leaves, Krishna sat in the center, encircled by circles of His friends, who all looked very handsome. Every one of them was trying to look forward towards Krishna, thinking that Krishna might look towards him. In this way they enjoyed their lunch in the forest.

Among the cowherd boys, some placed their lunch on flowers, some on leaves, fruit, or bunches of leaves, some on the bark of trees, some on rocks and some ate from their baskets. These were the make-believe plates of the cowherd boys when they ate their lunch. All the cowherd boys enjoyed their lunch with Krishna, sharing with one another the different tastes of the different preparations they had brought from home. Tasting one another’s preparations, they began to laugh and make each another laugh. Krishna is *yajña-bhuk*, that is, He eats only offerings of *yajña*. However, to exhibit His childhood pastimes, He now sat with His flute tucked between His waist and His upper cloth on His right side and with His horn, bugle and cow-driving stick on His left. Holding in His hand a very tasty rice preparation made with yogurt and pieces of suitable fruit between His fingers, He sat like the whorl of a lotus flower, looking towards all His friends, personally joking with them and creating jubilant laughter among them as He ate. At that time, the denizens of heaven who were watching, were struck with wonder at how the Personality of Godhead, who eats only in *yajña*, was now eating with His friends in the forest.

O Maharaja Pariksit, while the cowherd boys,

YOGURT RICE AND PICKLES

Sripad Vallabhacharya



who kept only Krishna within the core of their hearts, were thus engaged in eating their lunch in the forest, the calves went far away, deep into the forest, being allured by green grass. When Krishna saw that His friends the cowherd boys were frightened, He, the fierce controller even of fear itself, spoke to mitigate their fear. Krishna said “My dear friends, do not stop eating. I shall bring your calves back to this spot after finding them Myself. Let Me go and search for the calves. Don't disturb your enjoyment.” Then, carrying His yogurt and rice in His hand, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krishna, immediately went out to search for the calves of His friends. To please His friends, He began searching in all the mountains, mountain caves, bushes and narrow passages.

O Maharaja Pariksit, Brahma, who resides in the highest planet in the sky, had observed the activities of the most powerful Krishna in killing and delivering Aghasura, and was astonished. Now that same Brahma wanted to show some of his own powers to see for himself the power of Krishna, who was engaged in His childhood pastimes, playing as if with ordinary cowherd boys. Therefore, in Krishna's absence, Brahma took all the boys and calves to another place. Thus he became involved in the pastimes of the Lord, for in the very near future he would see just how powerful Krishna actually is.

—Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (BhāgavataPurāna) » Canto 10: The SummumBonum» Chapter.13: The Stealing of the Boys and Calves by Brahma» Verses 1-15

The cowherd boys derived transcendental bliss as they were having their lunch with Lord of the universe! At first all the boys, gathered all the various dishes which they had brought, and the first portion was offered to Lord Sri Krishna. Because of this, these dishes which had been offered to the Lord, became unlimited by His Grace! Now all the boys were able to eat without restriction, as the quantity became unlimited. Along with the cowherd boys, our Lord also began to eat His food.

To exhibit His sweet childhood pastimes of eating, Krishna now sat with His flute tucked beneath His waistcloth on His right side and with His horn, bugle and cow-driving stick on His left. He held in His left hand a very nice preparation of yogurt-rice mixed with ghee, and in His right hand he kept, in his fingers, pickles made of fruit which can be eaten with the rice.

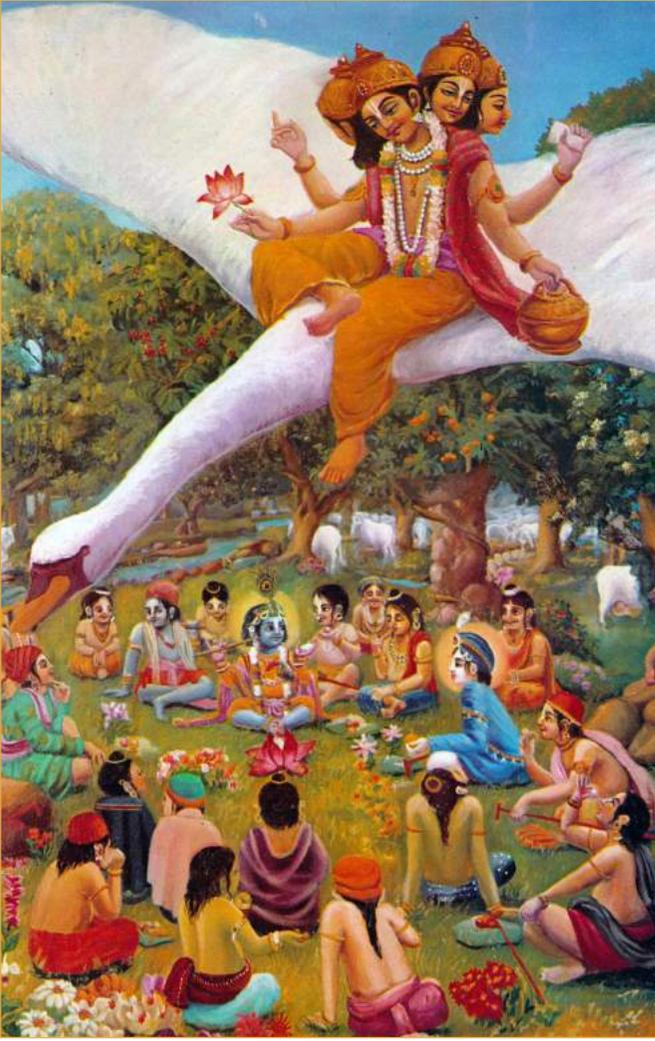
Even when Lord went away to search for the calves He was still carrying the yogurt rice on the palm of His hand. He neither ate it nor threw it away! He carried this yogurt rice, in His hand, as He went into the caves of the mountains, forests and other dangerous places, in search of the calves.

—Excerpt from Sripad Vallabhacharyas "Sri Subhodini" » Canto 10: The Summum Bonum » Chapter.13: The Stealing of the Boys and Calves by Brahma » Verse: 11 .

THREE SETS OF CALVES AND BOYS

Sri Vishvanatha Chakravarti Thakura

After seeing the killing of Aghasura, Brahma wanted to see more of Krishna's powers, and therefore came to this spot. Brahma abducted the cowherd boys and calves from the bank of the Yamuna, hid them elsewhere and then disappeared. The boys and calves that Brahma stole were created by maya. Since that maya arises from the Lord's maya, one could say that everything was done under the Lord's maya. Bewildered by the Lord's energy, Brahma stole the calves and boys created by maya in order to see Krishna's powers. Brahma was thinking, “When I steal the boys and calves, will Krishna show some power and display another wonderful pastime? Will He search and find the calves Himself or come to me and pray to get them back? Or will He not be able to understand anything?” Such thoughts were possible only because Brahma was bewildered by the Lord's energy. Thus when Brahma desired to steal the



boys and calves, yogamaya hid the real boys and calves and mahamaya instantly produced exact replicas for Brahma to steal.

Editors' comments: In *brahma-vimohana-līlā* there are three sets of cowherd boys and calves: The original ones who were kept under the spell of yogamaya; the replica set of cowherd boys and calves created by mahamaya which were stolen by Brahma and the third sets of boys who were Krishna's Vasudeva expansions. To make this third set, Krishna expanded Himself into the exact number of missing cowherd boys and calves, with their exact bodily features.

— Sārārtha-darśinī commentary on Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam by Srīla Vishvanātha Chakravartī Thakur » Canto 10: The Summum Bonum » Chapter.13: The Stealing of the Boys and Calves by Brahma » Verse:15 » Translation by Bhanu Swami. Edited by Mahanidhi Swami.

KRISHNA'S EXPANSIONS INTO INDIVIDUAL CALVES AND COWHERD BOYS

His Divine Grace

A.C.Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupada

Therefore in order to satisfy the mothers of

His friends, as well as to convince Brahma of the His supremacy as the Personality of Godhead, Krishna immediately expanded Himself as the missing cowherd boys and calves. In the Vedas it is said that the Supreme Personality of Godhead has already expanded Himself into the many living entities by His energy. Therefore it was not very difficult for Him to expand Himself again to become the various boys and calves. Krishna expanded Himself to become exactly like the boys, who were of all different features, facial and bodily construction, and who were different in their clothing, ornaments and in their behavior and personal activities. In other words, although each boy, being an individual soul, had entirely different tastes, activities and behavior, Krishna expanded Himself to perfectly take up all the different positions of the individual boys. He also became the calves, who were also of different sizes, colors, activities, etc.,. This was possible because everything is an expansion of Krishna's energy. In the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* it is said, *parasya brahmaṇaḥ śaktiḥ*. Whatever we actually see in the cosmic manifestation—be it matter or the activities of the living entities—is simply an expansion of the energies of the Supreme Lord, as heat and light are the different expansions of fire.

Thus expanding Himself as the boys and calves in their individual capacities, and surrounded by such expansions of Himself, Krishna returned to the village of Vrindavana. After entering the village of Vrindavana, all the calves entered their respective cowsheds, and the boys went to their respective mothers and homes. The residents of Vrindavana had no knowledge of what had happened.

The mothers of the boys heard the vibration of their flutes before their return, and to receive them, they came out of their homes and embraced them. Out of maternal affection, milk was flowing from their breasts, and they allowed the boys to drink it. However, their offering was not exactly to their sons but to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who had expanded Himself into the forms of their sons. This was a chance for all the mothers of Vrindavana to feed the Supreme Personality of Godhead with their own milk. Therefore not only did Lord Krishna give Yashoda the opportunity to feed Him, but this time He also gave the same opportunity to all the other elder gopi's .

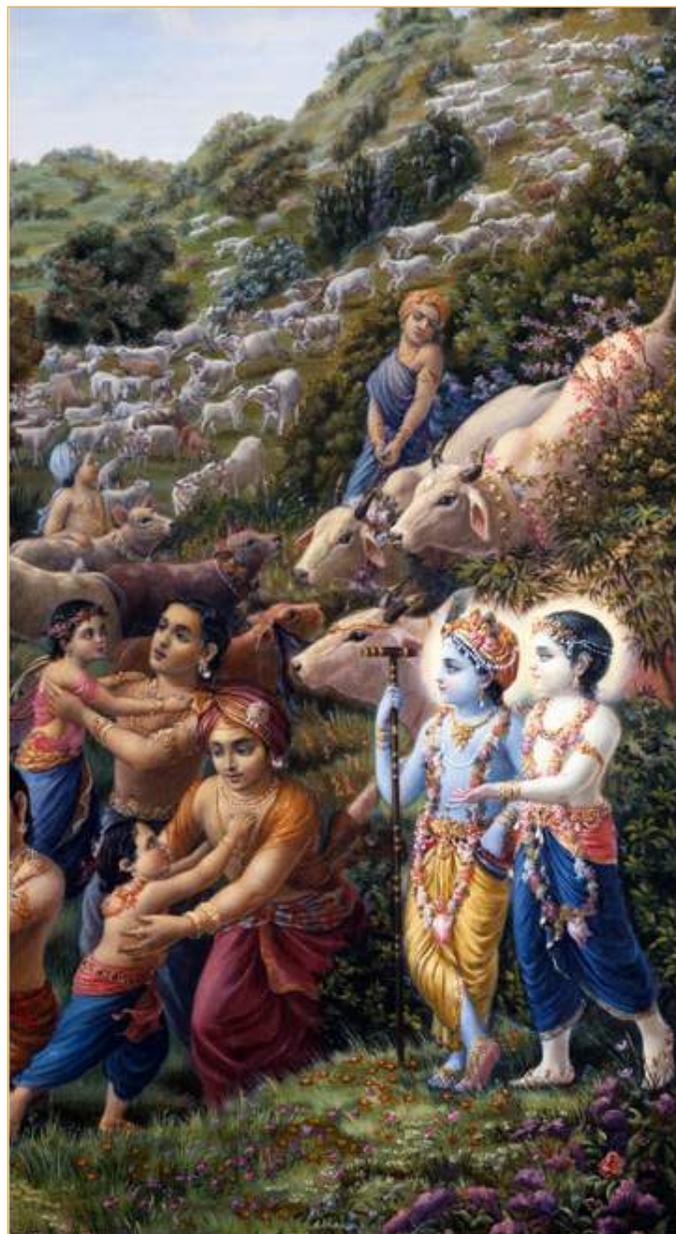
All the cowherd boys dealt with their mothers as usual, and the mothers, on the approach of evening, bathed their respective children, decorated them with tilaka and ornaments and gave them necessary food after the day's labor. The

cows also, who had been away in the pasturing ground, returned in the evening and called their respective calves. The calves immediately came to their mothers, and the mothers began to lick the bodies of the calves. These relations of the cows and the gopis with their calves and boys remained unchanged, although actually the original calves and boys were not there. Actually the cows' affection for their calves and the elder gopis' affection for their boys causelessly increased. Their affection increased naturally, even though the calves and boys were not their offspring. Although the cows and elder gopis of Vrindavana had greater affection for Krishna than for their own offspring, after this incident their affection for their offspring increased unlimitedly, exactly as it did for Krishna. For one year continuously, Krishna Himself expanded as the calves and cowherd boys and was present in the pasturing grounds.

As it is stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Krishna's expansion is situated in everyone's heart as the Supersoul. But in this case, instead of expanding Himself as the Supersoul, He expanded Himself as a portion of calves and cowherd boys for one continuous year.

One day, a few days before a year had passed, Krishna and Balarama were maintaining the calves in the forest when They saw some cows grazing on the top of Govardhana Hill. The cows could see down into the valley where the calves were being taken care of by the boys. Suddenly, on sighting the calves, the cows began to run toward them. They leaped downhill with joined front and rear legs. The cows were so melted with affection for the calves that they did not care about the rough path from the top of Govardhana Hill down to the pasturing ground. They hurriedly went to the calves with their udders full of milk, and they raised their tails upwards. When they were coming down the hill, their udders were pouring milk on the ground out of intense maternal affection for the calves, even though they were not their recent calves. These cows had their own newer calves, and the calves that were grazing beneath Govardhana Hill were larger; they were not expected to drink milk from their mothers but were satisfied with eating grass. Yet all the cows came immediately and began to lick their bodies, and the calves also began to suck milk from their udders. There appeared to be a great bond of affection between the cows and calves.

When the cows were running down from the top of Govardhana Hill, the men who were herding them tried to make them stop. Older cows are taken care of by the men, and the calves are taken care of by the boys; and as far



as possible, the calves are kept separate from the cows so that the calves do not drink all their milk. Therefore the men who were taking care of the cows on the top of Govardhana Hill tried to stop them running down, but they failed. Baffled by their failure, they were feeling ashamed and angry. They were very unhappy, but when they came down and saw their children who were taking care of the calves, all of a sudden they became very affectionate toward them. It was very astonishing. Although the men came down disappointed, baffled and angry, as soon as they saw their own children, at once their anger, dissatisfaction and unhappiness disappeared and their hearts melted with affection. They began to show paternal love for the boys, and with great affection they lifted them in their arms and embraced them. They began to smell their children's heads and enjoy their company with great happiness. After embracing their



children, the men took the cows back to the top of Govardhana Hill. As they went, they began to think of their children, and affectionate tears fell from their eyes.

When Balarama saw this extraordinary exchange of affection between the cows and the calves and between the fathers and their children—when neither the calves nor the children needed so much care—He began to wonder why this extraordinary thing had happened. He was astonished to see all the residents of Vrindavana so affectionate to their own children, exactly as they had been to Krishna. Similarly, the cows had become very affectionate to the calves—as much as they were to Krishna. Balarama therefore concluded that the extraordinary show of affection was something mystical, either performed by the demigods or by some powerful man. Otherwise, how could this wonderful change have taken place? He concluded that this mystical change must have been caused by Krishna, whom Balarama considered His worshipable Personality of Godhead. He thought, “This was arranged by Krishna, and even I could not check His mystic power.” Thus Balarama understood that all those

boys and calves were simply expansions of Krishna.

Balarama inquired from Krishna about the real situation. He said, “My dear Krishna, in the beginning I thought that all these calves and cowherd boys were either great sages and saintly persons or demigods. However, now it appears that they are actually Your expansions. They are all You. You, Yourself are playing as the calves and boys. What is the mystery behind this? Where have those other calves and boys gone? And why are You expanding Yourself as the calves and boys? Will You kindly tell Me what is the cause?” At the request of Balarama, Krishna briefly explained the entire thing: how the calves and boys had been stolen by Brahma and how He was concealing the incident by expanding Himself in order that the villagers would not know that the original calves and boys were missing.

—Excerpt from *Krishna, The Supreme Personality of Godhead* » Chapter 13:
The Stealing of the Boys and Calves by Brahma

WHY DID KRISHNA DECEIVE EVEN BALARAMA?

Srila Vishvanatha Chakravarti Thakura

From the day after the bewilderment of Brahma, all the cows would ignore their newly born calves at the time of milking and feed their old calves, which had stopped taking milk from their udders. Why did Balarama realize this now, after seeing it for so many days? And why didn't the other cowherd men even notice this? The reason was because they were all covered by *yogamaya* from the day of the *brahma-vimohana-līlā*. Therefore, even though they saw the strange behavior of the cows, Baladeva, the gopis and the gopas did not think to investigate it.

Baladeva is the elder brother of the cause of the universe, and His dear friend, so Krishna should not have deceived Him. Though Krishna should have revealed everything to Baladeva previously, He did not because He did not want Balarama to experience separation from Sridama and His other friends for one year. Krishna Himself did not suffer any separation because He was close to them in an expanded form that searched for their calves. Balarama did not appear in an expanded form during this pastime. Then, after a year passed, when the Lord desired, *yogamaya* gradually withdrew her cover over Balarama. It was done gradually so that Baladeva could take the viewpoint of the devotee, and also to immerse Him in the ocean of the Lord's power.

Editors' comments: Here it is clearly mentioned that Krishna's pastimes with His original boys continued although the boys did not realize it.

For them passing of one year was a moment. During that one year Krishna expanded himself as cowherd boys and calves and gave pleasure to the gopis and cows of Vrindavan by drinking their milk. Also it should be remembered that Brahma put to sleep the boys who were the third sets of boys created by external energy. We will discuss this subject matter in the next issue of NBS#68 entitled “When Brahma returns”.

— *Sārtha-darśinī* commentary on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* by Srila Vishvanatha Chakravarti Thakur » Canto 10: The Sumnum Bonum » Chapter.13: The Stealing of the Boys and Calves by Brahma » Verse:35 » Translation by Bhanu Swami. Edited by Mahanidhi Swami.

PRAYERS GLORIFYING THE HOLY NAME

Srila Bhaktivinod Thakura

*harinām, tuvā aneka swarūp
yaśodā-nandana, ānanda-varadhana,
nanda-tanaya rasa-kūp*

O Harinam, You possess unlimited forms, such as the beloved son of Mother Yashoda, the increaser of bliss, the son of Nanda, and the reservoir of all transcendental mellows.

*pūtanā-ghātana, trīnāvarta-hana,
śakata-bhañjana gopāl
muralī-vadana, agha-baka-mardana,
govardhana-dhārī rākhāl*

You are the slayer of the demons Putana and Trinavarta, the breaker of the cart, the protector of the cows, the player of the *muralī* flute, the destroyer of the demons Agha and Baka, the holder of Govardhan Hill, and You are a cowherd boy.

*keśi-mardana, brahma-vimohana,
surapati-darpa-vināśī
ariṣṭa-pātana, gopī-vimohana,
jamunā-pulina-vilāśī*

You killed the demon Keshi, bewildered Lord Brahma, and broke the pride of Indra, king of Heaven. You are the destroyer of the demon Arista, the enchanter of the young cowherd girls, and You like to sport along the banks of the river Yamuna.

*rādhikā-rañjana, rāsa-rasāyana,
rādhā-kunḍa-kuñja-bihārī
rāma, kṛṣṇa, hari, mādhyava, narahari,
matsyādi-gaṇa-avatārī*

You give delight to Sri Radhika, bring the

nectar of life to the *rāsa* dance, and sport in the groves near Radha Kunda. You are the reservoir of pleasure, the all-attractive one, the remover of inauspiciousness, the husband of the goddess of fortune, the half-man half-lion incarnation, and You are the source of all other incarnations such as Matsya, the fish *avatāra*.

*govinda, vāmana, śrī-madhusūdana,
yādava-candra, vanamālī
kāliya-śātana, gokula-rañjana,
rādhā-bhajana-sukha-śālī*

You are pleasing to the cows, You are the dwarf *brāhmaṇa* incarnation, and the splendrous slayer of the demon Madhu. You are the moon of the Yadu dynasty, and You always wear beautiful garlands of fresh forest flowers. You are the punisher of the Kaliya serpent, the delighter of Gokula, and You rejoice in the worship of Srimati Radharani.

*ityādika nām, swarūpe prakām,
bāduk mora rati rāge
rūpa-swarūpa-pada, jāni' nija sampada,
bhaktivinoda dhori' māge*

O Harinam, thus according to Your own sweet will You are manifest in all these forms and in many others also. Please let my love and attachment for them increase more and more. Bhaktivinoda recognizes his own priceless treasure and clasps the lotus feet of Rupa Goswami and Swarupa Damodara Goswami while offering this prayer.

— *An excerpt from Bengali songs based on Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī's Sanskrit Nāmāṣṭaka by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura Originally published in 1893. Translation by Daśaratha-sūta dāsa.*

!! Sri Sri Nitai Gaurchandra Jayati !!

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Quotations from the books, letters, and lectures of
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