



Śrī Mokṣadā Ekādaśī

Issue no: 225

23<sup>rd</sup> Dec 2023

## AKRURA'S CRUELTY

AKRURA'S ARRIVAL IN VRINDAVAN  
*Srila Sukadeva Goswami*

THE ALL-POWERFUL POSITION  
*Disciples of His Divine Grace*  
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

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## AKRURA'S ARRIVAL IN VRINDAVAN

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Sukadeva Goswami said: After passing the night in the city of Mathura, the high-minded Akrura mounted his chariot and set off for the cowherd village of Nanda Maharaja. As he traveled on the road, the great soul Akrura felt tremendous devotion for the lotus-eyed Personality of Godhead, and thus he began to consider as follows.

[Sri Akrura thought:] What pious deeds have I done, what severe austerities undergone, what worship performed or charity given so that today I will see Lord Keshava? Since I am a materialistic person absorbed simply in sense gratification, I think it is as difficult for me to have gotten this opportunity to see Lord Uttamahshloka as it would be for one born a *sūdra* to be allowed to recite the Vedic mantras. But enough of such thoughts! After all, even a fallen soul like me can have the chance to behold the infallible Supreme Lord, for one of the conditioned souls being swept along in

the river of time may sometimes reach the shore. Today all my sinful reactions have been eradicated and my birth has become worthwhile, since I will offer my obeisances to the Supreme Lord's lotus feet, which mystic yogis meditate upon.

Indeed, today King Kamsa has shown me extreme mercy by sending me to see the lotus feet of Lord Hari, who has now appeared in this world. Simply by the effulgence of His toenails, many souls in the past have transcended the insurmountable darkness of material existence and achieved liberation. Those lotus feet are worshiped by Brahma, Shiva and all the other demigods, by the goddess of fortune, and also by the great sages and Vaishnavas. Upon those lotus feet the Lord walks about the forest while herding the cows with His companions, and those feet are smeared with the kunkuma from the gopis' breasts. Surely I shall see the face of Lord Mukunda, since the deer are now walking past me on my right. That face, framed by His curly hair, is beautified by His attractive cheeks and nose, His smiling glances and His reddish lotus eyes.

I am going to see the Supreme Lord Vishnu, the reservoir of all beauty, who by His own sweet will has now assumed a humanlike form to relieve the earth of her burden. Thus there is no denying that my eyes will achieve the perfection of their existence. He is the witness of material cause and effect, yet He is always free from false identification with them. By His internal potency He dispels the darkness of separation and confusion. The individual souls in this world, who are manifested here when He glances upon His material creative energy, indirectly perceive Him in the activities of their life airs, senses and intelligence. All sins are destroyed and all good fortune is created by the Supreme Lord's qualities, activities and appearances, and words that describe these three things animate, beautify and purify the world. On the other hand, words bereft of His glories are like the decorations on a corpse. That same Supreme Lord has descended into the dynasty of the Satvatas to delight the exalted demigods, who maintain the principles of religion He has created. Residing in Vrindavan, He spreads His fame, which the demigods glorify in song and which brings auspiciousness to all.

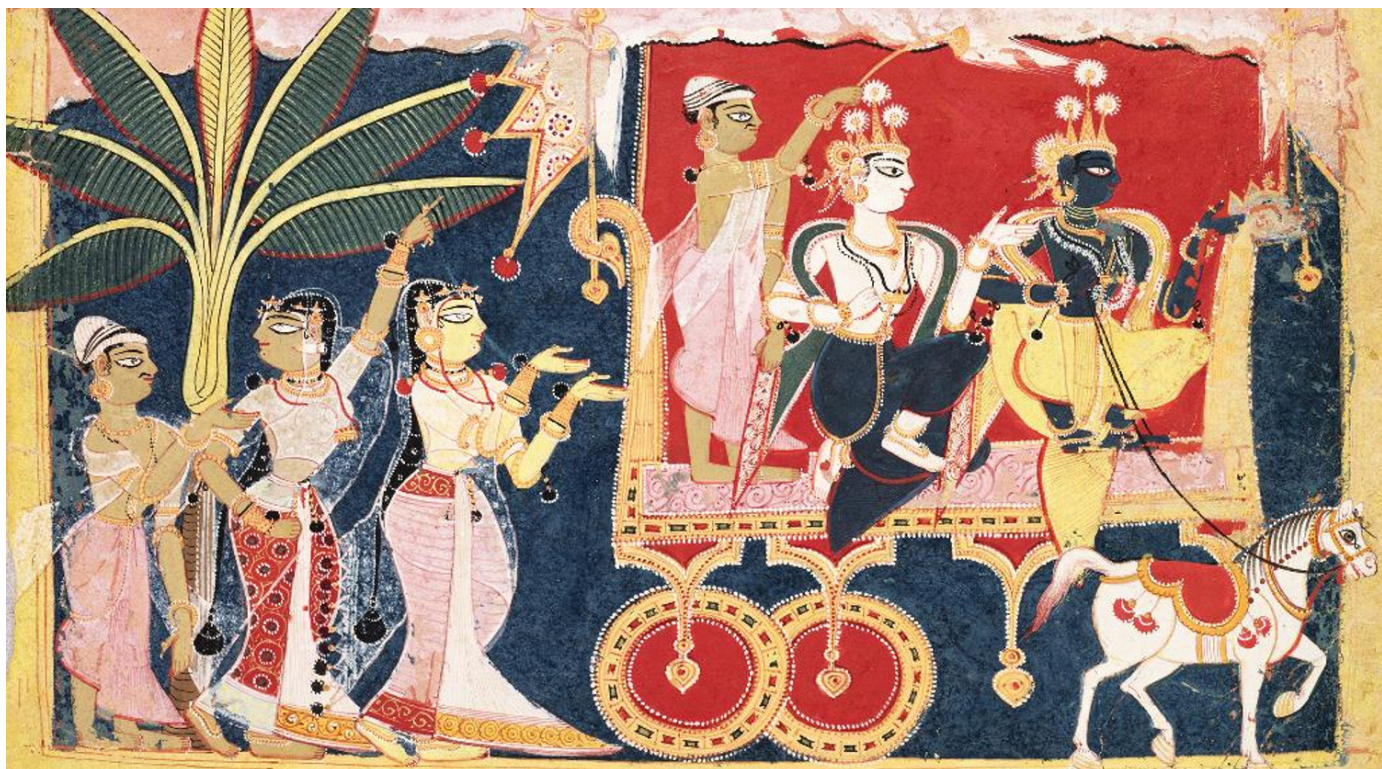
Today I shall certainly see Him, the goal and spiritual master of the great souls. Seeing Him brings

jubilation to all who have eyes, for He is the true beauty of the universe. Indeed, His personal form is the shelter desired by the goddess of fortune. Now all the dawns of my life have become auspicious.

Then I will at once alight from my chariot and bow down to the lotus feet of Krishna and Balarama, the Supreme Personalities of Godhead. Theirs are the same feet that great mystic yogis striving for self-realization bear within their minds. I will also offer my obeisances to the Lords' cowherd boy-friends and to all the other residents of Vrindavan. And when I have fallen at His feet, the almighty Lord will place His lotus hand upon my head. For those who seek shelter in Him because they are greatly disturbed by the powerful serpent of time, that hand removes all fear. By offering charity to that lotus hand, Purandara and Bali earned the status of Indra, King of heaven, and during the pleasure pastimes of the *rāsa* dance, when the Lord wiped away the gopis' perspiration and removed their fatigue, the touch of their faces made that hand as fragrant as a sweet flower.

The infallible Lord will not consider me an enemy, even though Kamsa has sent me here as his messenger. After all, the omniscient Lord is the actual knower of the field of this material body, and with His perfect vision He witnesses, both externally and internally, all the endeavors of the conditioned soul's heart. Thus He will cast His smiling, affectionate glance upon me as I remain fixed with joined palms, fallen in obeisances at His feet. Then all my contamination will at once be dispelled, and I will give up all doubts and feel the most intense bliss. Recognizing me as an intimate friend and relative, Krishna will embrace me with His mighty arms, instantly sanctifying my body and diminishing to nil all my material bondage, which is due to fruitive activities.

Having been embraced by the allfamous Lord Krishna, I will humbly stand before Him with bowed head and joined palms, and He will address me, "My dear Akrura." At that very moment my life's purpose will be fulfilled. Indeed, the life of anyone whom the Supreme Personality fails to recognize is simply pitiable. The Supreme Lord has no favorite and no dearest friend, nor does He consider anyone undesirable, despicable or fit to be neglected. All the same, He lovingly reciprocates



cates with His devotees in whatever manner they worship Him, just as the trees of heaven fulfill the desires of whoever approaches them. And then Lord Krishna's elder brother, the foremost of the Yadus, will grasp my joined hands while I am still standing with my head bowed, and after embracing me He will take me to His house. There He will honor me with all items of ritual welcome and inquire from me about how Kamsa has been treating His family members.

**Sukadeva Gosvami continued:** My dear King, while the son of Shvaphalka, traveling on the road, thus meditated deeply on Sri Krishna, he reached Gokula as the sun was beginning to set. In the cowherd pasture Akrura saw the footprints of those feet whose pure dust the rulers of all the planets in the universe hold on their crowns. Those footprints of the Lord, distinguished by such marks as the lotus, barleycorn and elephant goad, made the ground wonderfully beautiful. Increasingly agitated by ecstasy at seeing the Lord's footprints, his bodily hairs standing on end because of his pure love, and his eyes filled with tears, Akrura jumped down from his chariot and began rolling about among those footprints, exclaiming, "Ah, this is the dust from my master's feet!"

The very goal of life for all embodied beings is this ecstasy, which Akrura experienced when, upon receiving Kamsa's order, he put aside all pride, fear and lamentation and absorbed himself in seeing, hearing and describing the things that reminded him of Lord Krishna.

Akrura then saw Krishna and Balarama in the village of Vraja, going to milk the cows. Krishna wore yellow garments, Balarama blue, and Their eyes resembled autumnal lotuses. One of those two mighty-armed youths, the shelters of the goddess of fortune, had a dark-blue complexion, and the other's was white. With Their fine-featured faces They were the most beautiful of all persons. As They walked with the gait of young elephants, glancing about with compassionate smiles, Those two exalted personalities beautified the cow pasture with the impressions of Their feet, which bore the marks of the flag, lightning bolt, elephant goad and lotus. The two Lords, whose pastimes are most magnanimous and attractive, were ornamented with jeweled necklaces and flower garlands, anointed with auspicious, fragrant substances, freshly bathed, and dressed in spotless raiment. They were the primeval Supreme Personalities, the masters and original causes of the universes, who had for the welfare of the earth now descended in Their distinct forms

of Keshava and Balarama. O King Pariksit, They resembled two gold-bedecked mountains, one of emerald and the other of silver, as with Their effulgence They dispelled the sky's darkness in all directions.

Akrura, overwhelmed with affection, quickly jumped down from his chariot and fell at the feet of Krishna and Balarama like a rod. The joy of seeing the Supreme Lord flooded Akrura's eyes with tears and decorated his limbs with eruptions of ecstasy. He felt such eagerness that he could not speak to present himself, O King. Recognizing Akrura, Lord Krishna drew him close with His hand, which bears the sign of the chariot wheel, and then embraced him. Krishna felt pleased, for He is always benignly disposed toward His surrendered devotees. As Akrura stood with his head bowed, Lord Sankarshana [Balarama] grasped his joined hands, and then Balarama took him to His house in the company of Lord Krishna. After inquiring from Akrura whether his trip had been comfortable, Balarama offered him a first-class seat, bathed his feet in accordance with the injunctions of scripture and respectfully served him milk with honey.

The almighty Lord Balarama presented Akrura with the gift of a cow, massaged his feet to relieve him of fatigue and then with great respect and faith fed him suitably prepared food of various fine tastes. When Akrura had eaten to his satisfaction, Lord Balarama, the supreme knower of religious duties, offered him aromatic herbs for sweetening his mouth, along with fragrances and flower garlands. Thus Akrura once again enjoyed the highest pleasure. Nanda Maharaja asked Akrura: O descendant of Dasharha, how are all of you maintaining yourselves while that merciless Kamsa remains alive? You are just like sheep under the care of a butcher. That cruel, self-serving Kamsa murdered the infants of his own sister in her presence, even as she cried in anguish. So why should we even ask about the well-being of you, his subjects? Honored by Nanda Maharaja with these true and pleasing words of inquiry, Akrura forgot the fatigue of his journey.

— Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (Bhāgavata Purāṇa) » Canto 10: The Summum Bonum » Chapter 38 » Verses 1–43 » Translations by Disciples of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

## THE ALL-POWERFUL POSITION

Disciples of His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Akrura establishes the all-powerful position of the Supreme Lord, whom he is about to see in Vrindavan. The false concept of separation from the Lord is described in the Eleventh Canto of the Bhāgavatam (11.2.37): *bhayaṁ dvitīyābhiniveśataḥ syād īśād apetasya viparyayo 'smṛtiḥ*. Although all existence emanates from the Absolute Truth, Krishna, we imagine a "second thing," this material world, to be entirely separate from the Lord's existence. With this mentality, we try to exploit that "second thing" for our sense gratification. Thus the psychological underpinning of material life is the illusion that this world is somehow separate from God and therefore meant for our enjoyment. It is ironic that the impersonal philosophers, in their radical renunciation of this world, claim it to be utterly false and totally separate from the Absolute.

Unfortunately, this artificial attempt to divest this world of its divine nature, or, in other words, its relation to God, does not lead people to utterly reject it but rather to try to enjoy it. While it is true that this world is temporary and thus in one sense illusory, the mechanism of illusion is a spiritual potency of the Supreme Lord. Realizing this, we should immediately desist from any attempt to exploit this world; rather, we should recognize it as God's energy. We will actually give up our material desires only when we understand that this world belongs to God and is therefore not meant for our selfish gratification. The word *abhīyate* here refers to a process of surmising the presence of the Lord through meditative introspection.

This process is also described in the Second Canto of the Bhāgavatam (2.2.35),

*bhagavān sarva-bhūteṣu  
lakṣitaḥ svātmanā hariḥ  
dṛśyair buddhy-ādibhir draṣṭā  
lakṣaṇair anumāpakaiḥ*

"The Personality of Godhead, Lord Sri Krishna, is in every living being along with the individual soul.

And this fact is perceived and hypothesized in our acts of seeing and taking help from the intelligence." Akrura states that the Lord is free of the egoistic pride afflicting ordinary, embodied souls. Yet the Lord appears to be embodied like everyone else, and therefore someone might object to the statement that He is free of egoism.

Srila Vishvanatha Chakravarti comments on this puzzle as follows: "How can we distinguish between being free of false ego and being afflicted by it? 'If a living entity is situated in a body,' [argues the objector,] 'he will encounter the unhappiness and confusion that occur within it, just as a person living in a house, whether he be attached to it or not, cannot avoid experiencing the darkness, warmth and cold that occur within it.' This objection is answered as follows: By His internal potency the Lord dispels the darkness of ignorance along with the separateness and bewilderment it produces."

— Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (Bhāgavata Purāṇa) » Canto 10: The Summum Bonum » Chapter 38 » Verse 11 » Purport by Disciples of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupada.

### AKRURA'S CRUELTY Srila Jiva Goswami

The next morning Father Nanda and Mother Yashoda, filled with love for their son, and fearing that some peerless calamity may again fall upon them, hugged their son Krishna, took Him inside the house, spoke to Him with words of love, bathed Him, dressed Him in splendid garments, anointed Him with fragrant powders and ointments, and made Him rest for some moments. They thought He was delicate and weak. Still, when He fought with the demons, Nanda and Yashoda could see that at those times their son had all the powers of Lord Narayana.

Thinking, "Now it is time to milk the cows," the blissful and delightful cowherd-boy Sri Krishna, accompanied by His elder-brother Balarama, and taking with Him all the paraphernalia for milking the cows, and calling a great host of servants to assist, approached the cows.

When, accompanied by Sri Balarama, dark-limbed Sri Krishna approached the cows, the

following event occurred. Making a great mooing sound that eclipsed all other sounds, the cows surrounded splendid-like-a-raincloud Sri Krishna. Even in the absence of the calves, the cows unleashed a great flood of milk. Affectionate-to-the-calves Krishna and Balarama quickly brought the calves there to drink the milk.

As He had always done before, Sri Krishna performed all His duties. Still, His heart filled with grief, He remembered what Devarsi Narada had said. Then, the thought that He would eventually return to Vraja brought peacefulness to His heart. Sri Krishna thought: "Now I must depart in order to kill Kamsa. My departure will bring great suffering to My loving parents. Devarsi Narada's words cannot prove false. Ah! How will I be able to tolerate separation from the people of Vraja? It is firmly decided that I must depart. What will I gain by thinking all these unhappy thoughts? Instead I will remain always rapt in meditation, meditation on the glorious and blissful day when, in the future, I will return to Vraja."

As he was thinking in this way, Sri Krishna saw a chariot suddenly arrive. As the sun is reflected on the water, so a great soul's thoughts become reflected in the events of this world. 19. Seeing the person riding on the chariot, Sri Krishna thought: "The person driving this chariot carries no weapon. Perhaps he is a messenger." Then Sri Krishna worried: "Perhaps he has come with a message from Kamsa."

At that moment the reddish sun was about to set in the western ocean, Setting, the sun extinguished its light and plunged the world into darkness. After the fourth prahara the sun had indeed set. Still, with His own personal effulgence, powerful Sri Krishna removed the darkness of the night. Even though he had never seen them before, Akrura, riding on a chariot, saw Krishna and Balarama from far away and immediately understood who They were. Staying amongst Their lifted-up-ears cows and eager cowherd friends, Krishna and Balarama cast a thirst-filled glance at Akrura.

"Only the eyes can perceive the forms of things." These words the saintly sages speak. In the matter of seeing the form of Sri Krishna, the eyes' power defeats the power of the ears. The handsome form of Krishna and Balarama, whose delightful

splendor even the sapphires and the moon yearn to attain, now stood before Akrura, the same Akrura who fell unconscious when he first saw Krishna's and Balarama's glorious-like-painted-pictures footprints.

Speaking the following words, Akrura described the forms of Sri Krishna and Sri Balarama: "The first person is the Deity of delightful and splendid blackness descended to this world. His companion is delightful, effulgent, fair, and handsome. Garbed in glorious garments, the first person attracts all glorious goddesses with His splendid handsomeness. Garbed in glorious and graceful garments of many colors, the second person is glorious like His companion. "The great handsomeness of His face defeating the blue lotus flowers, the first of these two persons is charming and delightful. His playful and blissful companion has a splendid and handsome face that defeats the splendor of the white lotus flowers. The first person has graceful eyes that with their splendor eclipse the splendor of the graceful eyes of the khañjana birds. The other person has eyes with reddish corners, eyes like black bees anointed with reddish flower-pollen.

"The first person has cheeks glorious with delightful shark-shaped earrings. His companion always wears a glistening earring on one ear. The first person has a sesame-flower nose like an arrow resting in the archer's bow of His eyebrows. The other person has a bodily luster that conquers playful Kāmadeva's heart.

"The first person wears many colorful and glistening jewel-ornaments on the two snakes that are His effulgent-like-sapphires arms. His companion has wonderful arms that defeat even the mighty pillars made of *puṣparāga* (topaz) jewels. The first person has a sacred golden-line on His graceful black-*nikāṣa*-stone chest. The other person has a chest so glorious its splendor is a scythe to cut into pieces the glory of the jewel-paved realms of Lord Shiva's Mount Kailasa.

"The first person has a face and form filled with splendid handsomeness, handsomeness the poets praise in many poems. His companion has a face and form all the wise philosophers declare to be sublimely charming and handsome at every moment. The first person walks with feet that defeat the lotus flowers. He walks in His own realm of

Vraja. the other person shyly moves His feet as He walks to assist His companion.

"The first person playfully rests His graceful hand on a graceful dark tree entwined by a flower-vine. Catching a ball tossed in the game, His companion touches the tree's branches, branches like a farmer's plow. The first person carefully arranges the garments covering His body. Seeing His kinsmen, the other person runs to meet them."

Akrura gazed at dark and fair Krishna and Balarama, one of whom wore garments like lightning while the other wore garments like a dark cloud, who each wore a glorious earring in His left ear, who were the masters of many glorious cows, who were filled with bliss, whose holy names are filled with glorious powers, who enjoy pastimes as They herd the cows, who rescue Their devotees from the cycle of repeated birth and death, and who, staying amongst the cows, played like two baby elephants. Their garments like sapphires and gold, splendid horn and flute tucked into Their waistbands, and glorious rope and stick in Their hands, Krishna and Balarama charmed Akrura's heart.

Now having attained the eternal fruit of his journey, Akrura, the hairs of his body now erect, and his body like a *śāla* tree with trembling leaves, at once descended from his chariot. After descending from his chariot, he threw his body on the ground and offered respectful obeisances. Again and again he offered obeisances. Then he stopped. He forgot that he was the uncle of Krishna and Balarama. Overcome by directly seeing the supreme power and splendor of Krishna and Balarama, Akrura forgot that in ordinary material terms he was Their elder and They were his juniors.

As Akrura continued to offer obeisances and did not stop, Sri Krishna, after saying, "O cowherd friend, with the help of all Our friends please milk the cows and take them all back to their barns," Sri Krishna, accompanied by Sri Balarama, and walking as a powerful lion walks, approached Akrura and with both His hands mercifully picked Akrura up. Choked with emotion, Akrura had no power even to speak his own name. When the elder cowherd men understood who Akrura was, Krishna and Balarama, distressed at Akrura's being so overwhelmed, embraced him and, forgetting that he was Their to-be-treated-with-reverence uncle, took his hands in Theirs and led him to Their own

home. Acting with perfect courtesy, Sri Krishna made His elder brother, Sri Balarama, walk ahead and lead the way.

Accompanied by His younger brother Sri Krishna, Sri Balarama welcomed Akrura, offered him appropriate hospitality, and gave him delicious foods to eat. After Akrura had finished his meal, Sri Balarama offered him the best scents to bring a sweet fragrance to his mouth. Then Sri Balarama brought Akrura to see Vraja's King Nanda. Meeting with humble Akrura, remembering the many sufferings caused by Kamsa, tears filling his eyes, and offering the blessing that Akrura shall become free of all troubles, Vraja's King Nanda praised Akrura for his many virtues.

King Nanda said: "When I think how Kamsa is so cruel at heart to so many saintly and righteous people, my heart trembles, bursts into flames, and burns again and again. Alas! Now only ashes remain of what was once my heart." After going to the residence King Nanda had given for him to rest within, Akrura happily sat on a couch and was again honored with great respect by Krishna and Balarama, who had now finished eating the evening meal prepared by Their mothers. In that secluded place Sri Krishna, by gazing at Akrura filled with a thirst to kill Kamsa and perform many other activities after that act was done, asked Akrura about his intentions in coming to Vraja. Sri Krishna's sweet and graceful words brought great happiness to Akrura.

Sri Krishna said: "O gentle and saintly uncle, did you have a pleasant journey? Is everything auspicious for you? Is that wretch Kamsa still not dead yet after all this time? Are My mother and father still alive? From what root has the plant of your auspicious arrival here sprouted?" Then Akrura said: "You have already asked how Kamsa hates the heroic Yādava warriors. Especially since the day of Devaki's wedding, he has hated them. he also diligently hears of all Your activities. To Kamsa people like me are like clumps of *dūrvā* grass growing in the middle of a road. He tramples us again and again. Vasudeva's brother Devabhaga's very pure son, who bears the name Uddhava, and who now suffers from the terrible sickness that is separation from You,

has become known by the name Pavana-vyadhi (he whose bodily airs are in disarray).

Sri Krishna said: "This I all know. Now, starting from the beginning, please tell everything else." After first looking carefully in every direction, Akrura softly said: "Narada Muni brings to You the happiness of victory. He makes arrangements that You may vanquish demons like Kamsa. O Krishna who dearly love the people of Vraja, to encourage Kamsa to fight with You, Kamsa who was filled with fear of You, Narada suggested that Kamsa act in an abominable way to You both, O Krishna and Balarama, because You two are the seventh and eighth sons of Devaki. Balarama was the seventh son of Devaki. While He was still an embryo, Yogamaya transferred Him into the womb of Rohini. Then You, O Krishna, were born as the eighth son of Devaki. Vasudeva placed You on the bed of Yashoda, took Yashoda's newborn daughter Yogamaya with him, and then pretended that Yogamaya was a daughter born from Devaki. Sri Krishna said: "All this news makes great wonder shine very gloriously within Me."

— Śrī Gopāla-Campū of Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī » Translation by Kṣhākrathā Dasa.



!! Sri Sri Nitai Gaurchandra Jayati !!

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