

The Post and the Person

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Abstract: Sri Narada desired to proclaim the glories of Lord Siva. As previously described, he praised Siva as the greatest devotee of Lord Krsna and most dear to Him, and Lord Siva became upset by hearing those praises. Siva then related a number of incidents which, according to him, were evidence that he was not dear to Krsna at all. [Sri Srimad Bhaktivedanta Narayana Gosvami Maharaja, Hari Katha. **The Post and the Person.** *Academ Arena* 2018;10(2):13-21]. ISSN 1553-992X (print); ISSN 2158-771X (online). <http://www.sciencepub.net/academia>. 2. doi:[10.7537/marsaaj100218.02](https://doi.org/10.7537/marsaaj100218.02).

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[Dear Readers, Please accept our obeisances. All glories to Sri Sri Guru and Gauranga. This year, 2018, Siva-ratri is on February 14. Please accept this lecture Srila Gurudeva gave in Holland in 1997:]

Sri Narada desired to proclaim the glories of Lord Siva. As previously described, he praised Siva as the greatest devotee of Lord Krsna and most dear to Him, and Lord Siva became upset by hearing those praises. Siva then related a number of incidents which, according to him, were evidence that he was not dear to Krsna at all.

Now Lord Siva compares himself to Sri Prahlada Maharaja, (*See Endnote 1) the famed devotee of Lord Nrsimhadeva described in Srimad-Bhagavatam. He told Narada, “Sri Prahlada Maharaja is superior to me, and it is he who is the dear devotee of the Lord.”

Even though Lord Siva is superior to Prahlada Maharaja, he told Narada that Prahlada Maharaja is superior. Why? He said this to encourage people to follow Prahlada Maharaja’s ideal character and teachings.

However, Prahlada Maharaja cannot enter Sri Krsna’s transcendental abode, Vrndavana, whereas Lord Siva resides there eternally as Gopisvara. Siva serves Sri Krsna personally in numerous ways. He and his wife Parvati-devi meditate on asta-kaliya-lila, Lord Sri Krsna’s confidential eight-fold daily pastimes. These secret pastimes are very confidential, yet both Siva and Parvati are able to meditate upon them. Siva is hundreds of thousands of times superior to and more worshipable than Sri Prahlada Maharaja, and yet the artful Siva declared Prahlada Maharaja to be superior. Why did he do so? In one sense Prahlada Maharaja is superior, and in another sense he is not.

We can reconcile this by considering the two perspectives from which to understand the identity of Lord Siva: We can see Siva from the point of view of his post, and also from the point of view of his personality. As a personality, separate from his post, he appears as an associate of the Supreme Lord, such as Gopisvara, Hanuman and Bhima. As Gopisvara he resides eternally in Vrndavana. As Hanuman he always associates with and serves Lord Rama. As Bhima he always serves Lord Krsna. And, when Hanuman and Bhima combine together in this present age of Kali-yuga, they become Madhvacarya, our Sampradaya-guru.

From the point of view of Lord Siva’s function as the god of annihilation, and also that of Brahma as the secondary creator of the universe, Siva and Brahma are actually posts. Lord Brahma and Lord Siva are not ordinary human beings, but their posts are like that of the president or prime minister of a nation, wherein the man representing the post has to perform a certain defined job.

Both as the post and the person, Siva is superior to Brahma. Lord Siva is an expansion of Lord Visnu,

but sometimes a jiva may become Siva's expansion known as Rudra. If a man purely performs the duties of varnasrama for one hundred births, he may become Brahma.⁶ In other words, he may attain the position or post of Brahma. In turn, when a person in the post of Brahma carries out his function expertly for one hundred births, he becomes qualified to perform the function of Siva in his manifestation as Rudra. Siva's post is therefore superior to that of Brahma, and this is also evidence that Siva is more powerful than Brahma.

The Duty of Destruction

What is the function of Lord Siva's post, and why is it superior to that of Lord Brahma? One reason is that Brahma cannot execute pralaya, the complete destruction of the universe – a very dangerous thing, whereas Siva can do so.

Siva's function as destroyer is similar to that of a farmer who plants and cultivates a large area of wheat. The farmer carefully waters and nourishes the crop, guarding it from animals, and after five or six months the wheat matures and ripens. Then, either by hand or a machine, the farmer harvests the plants and carefully removes the grains from their shafts. The rest of the plant-matter becomes refuse, subject to rotting and attracting disease, vermin, and snakes. Therefore, the farmer sets fire to it and burns it.

Just as the farmer extracts the grains from the plants, Lord Siva extracts the eternal spirit souls from their material bodies and from the world. At the time of annihilation he creates an inferno, setting the entire universe on fire, but the spirit souls are not destroyed.

There are two kinds of universal devastations: one at the end of Lord Brahma's day and one at the end of his life. At the end of his day (4,320,000,000 solar years) he rests in a mystic sleep within the body of Garbhodakasayi Visnu, and all the conditioned living entities enter as well. (*See Endnote 3)

While the entire universe is submerged in water, the living entities rest in their subtle bodies within the transcendental body of Garbhodakasayi Visnu. They await the start of the next day of Brahma, the next material creation or manifestation. Some of them become liberated, and others do not.

When Lord Brahma completes the one hundred celestial years of his life, Lord Siva again performs this duty of destruction. At that time all the spirit souls enter into the body of Karanodakasayi Visnu or Maha Visnu. At the end of each day of Lord Brahma, all souls enter Garbhodakasayi Visnu, and at the end of Brahma's life, even the millions of manifestations of Garbhodakasayi Visnu enter Karanodakasayi Visnu (*See Endnote 4) along with the spirit souls. At the time of creation, Karanodakasayi Visnu generates innumerable manifestations of Garbhodakasayi Visnu, and at the time of complete annihilation, they enter back into his body. (*See Endnote 5)

Lord Siva is not a living entity, but he is also not in the category of Lord Visnu. He is much more powerful than any living entity, even up to Lord Brahma. However, he is not equal to Lord Visnu. Because he is almost as good as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, he can see the three phases of time: past, present, and future. One of his eyes is like the sun and another is like the moon. He also has a third eye, located between his eyebrows. It is from this third eye that he generates fire and employs it at the time of the universal destruction.

Seen from this perspective – the destroyer – Lord Siva cannot serve Sri Krsna directly, because he is engaged at his post. Those souls who are liberated after hundreds of thousands of lifetimes of devotional practice, having renounced all responsibilities and concerns of the world – including occupations like that of Brahma and Siva – and who constantly hear about, glorify, and remember Lord Krsna, take birth in this world as pure devotees like Prahlada Maharaja. This was told by Lord Siva to Sri Narada.

Prahlada Maharaja has nothing to do with this world; nothing to create or demolish. He rejected all such affairs as insignificant. Although he had inherited a large kingdom, it was controlled and governed by his ministers. His senses were totally absorbed in the transcendental loving service to the Supreme Lord. He was always engaged in hearing the name and glories of the Lord, singing and speaking about his glories, remembering and meditating on him, offering prayers, carrying out the his orders and fully surrendering to him.

Devotees in Prahlada's category have no need to approach Lord Krsna's manifestations like Lord Nrsinhadeva and Lord Rama, for the Lord personally comes to them in these forms. Lord Siva told Sri Narada that because he is always engaged in the post of controlling the universe, he can neither see nor offer services to the Lord daily, as Prahlada Maharaja sees Lord Vamanadeva or Lord Nrsinhadeva. Vamanadeva and Nrsinhadeva are both manifestations of the same Lord, who regularly gives Prahlada his divine association and the opportunity to serve and offer obeisance at his lotus feet.

Although both Brahma and Siva are actually superior in bhakti to Prahlada Maharaja, their posts involve contact with the three gunas, or modes of material nature, namely goodness, passion, and ignorance. The role of Lord Brahma is creation and procreation in raja-guna, the mode of passion. Lord Siva's role of demolition and dissolution is in tama-guna, the mode of ignorance. It is for this reason that they are called guna-avatars, incarnations of the material qualities.

Prahlada Maharaja is nirguna, transcendental to the three modes of nature. He has nothing to do with

activities in material goodness, passion, and ignorance, by which this world is shackled. Lord Siva is also beyond the three modes of nature, but he adopts the mode of ignorance (tama-guna) to efficiently perform his function.

The Personal Associate

Regarding Lord Siva's glorification of Prahlada Maharaja, now consider Lord Siva's identity as a transcendental personality – separate from his post.

Sometimes senior Vaisnavas express sincere recognition of the novice, inspiring him or her on the path of devotion. The Vaisnava may say, "Oh, you work so hard and earn money, and with that money you support and nourish me. I have no means at all. I do nothing but visit for a short while, eating, and sleeping at your expense. I would not be able to speak the glories of Lord Krsna at this festival if you had not arranged for the management of all the activities here, so you are superior to me."

Out of sincere humility, gratitude and affection, liberated souls speak in this endearing manner, and at the same time they are fixed in the realization that they are always being personally maintained by the Supreme Lord. The senior Vaisnava has the disciple's personal benefit in mind.

However, Lord Siva was not speaking for Prahlada Maharaja's benefit, but to acquaint aspiring devotees with the stages of devotion. His desire was to facilitate the service of Sri Narada Muni and Srila Sanatana Gosvami (*See Endnote 6), whose mission was to establish in the world the sequence of the grades of devotion and ultimately establish the glories of the gopis. Try to understand all these truths, and seek to gradually become firmly situated in bhakti.

Imagine that you are in a market in which there are thousands of varieties of shops. In some of those shops there are products made of iron, in some shops there are products made of gold, in some there are jewels, and in others cintamani (wish-fulfilling stones). An expert is guiding you through all the shops, pointing out different products and revealing which are superior.

If there are a thousand pounds of iron and only one ounce of gold, the gold has more value. On the other hand, many pounds of gold will not amount to the value of one Kaustubha-mani or a similarly precious stone. Millions of such precious jewels cannot compare with a tiny quantity of cintamani, and even millions of cintamani stones cannot compare with one holy name of Lord Krsna.

Now suppose someone is chanting the name of Lord Krsna alone, and another is absorbed in the name of Radha-Ramana. The name Radha-Ramana, meaning Sri Krsna, the enjoyer of pastimes with Srimati Radharani, has more transcendental taste (rasa) than the name Krsna alone. The person absorbed in

that holy name will therefore experience a greater spiritual pleasure.

Regarding the analogy of the shops in a market, that expert tells you, "This shop is good, that shop is better, and this one is the best. Similarly, in his Sri Brhad-bhagavatamrta, Srila Sanatana Gosvami establishes the gradations of excellence of various devotees and their devotion, in order to help his readers determine their spiritual path.

The history of Narada Muni's coming to the abode of Lord Siva and glorifying him was first narrated in this Sri Brhad-bhagavatamrta. Like Srila Sanatana Gosvami, Narada is also that expert described above. He desired to establish pure bhakti in the world, and therefore he played the role of searching for the greatest devotee and recipient of Lord Krsna's mercy. His search had taken him first to the "shop" of a brahmana in Prayaga, and after that to South India, to the shop of a king. Then he traveled to heaven, where he entered the shop of King Indra, and Indra sent him to the shop of Lord Brahma. Brahma sent him to Lord Siva, and Lord Siva is now sending him to Prahlada Maharaja. Gradually, Sri Narada will bring us to the greatest recipients of Lord Krsna's mercy, the gopis. In the form of Gopisvara, Lord Siva is the beloved servant and associate of those gopis.

Once, the great sage Narada Muni traveled to the abode of Lord Siva and began to glorify him, saying, "You are very near and dear to the Supreme Lord Krsna. Not only that, you are Krsna's manifestation; you are non-different from Him. You can give liberation and also krsna-prema, the rare jewel of transcendental love for Krsna." Hearing Narada glorify him in numerous ways, Lord Siva became angry and said, "Your glorification of me is false. I am not at all dear to Sri Krsna."

Lord Siva is actually most dear to Sri Krsna, and therefore Krsna can give him services which He cannot give anyone else. When the demigods and demons were churning the Milk Ocean in order to obtain the nectar of immortality, the first substance produced was a powerful and dangerous poison, burning the entire world. The demigods appealed to Sri Krsna, and He advised them to request Lord Siva to drink the poison. Thus, they worshiped Lord Siva and prayed, "Please save us! Only you can protect us!" Lord Siva collected the poison and took it in his mouth, but he hesitated to swallow it, considering, "Lord Krsna is in my heart. The poison will affect Him." He therefore kept the poison in his throat, which was burned, and his neck turned the color blue.

Now, out of genuine humility, Lord Siva told Narada: "I want to be His beloved devotee, but actually I am not. You know that I always wear ashes from the burial grounds, and a garland of skulls. All my associates are ghosts and witches, so I am not

qualified to be Krsna's dear devotee. If I am so dear to Him, why would He have ordered me to engage with the mode of ignorance in the terrible function of destroying of the universe? If I am such a great recipient of His mercy, why would he have ordered me to become Sankaracarya and preach a philosophy that is adverse to Him?"

Actually, although he expressed otherwise, it was because Siva is so dear to Krsna that Krsna was able to give him the difficult task of appearing as Sankaracarya. (*See Endnote 7) Many people had been worshipping the Supreme Lord only to fulfill their selfish purposes, thinking, "Simply by our worship of God, He will be pleased with us and satisfy all our worldly desires." They worshiped Him only so that He would rapidly arrange for all of their needs, not to please Him. Lord Krsna thought, "This is very dangerous." He called Lord Siva and instructed him, "Such false devotees will create great disturbances, so keep them far away from Me. Create a philosophy which teaches, 'brahma satyam jagan mithya – the Absolute is true, this world is false.' You should preach, 'All souls are Siva; all souls are Brahma; all are one. You are brahma, the impersonal Absolute. There is no need to worship any other God; you are the Supreme God.'" Reluctant, Lord Siva asked Krsna, "Can you please tell someone else to do this? I am not qualified for this service." Krsna replied, "No, you will have to do this. In the entire world, I see no one else who is as capable."

Feeling ashamed, Lord Siva now told Narada, "At last, I had to agree to follow His order. Appearing as Sankaracarya I preached everywhere, 'You are brahma, you are brahma, you are the impersonal brahma. The entire world is false.' I am so much regretting this. I know I have committed a great offence by causing so many people to be averse to Lord Krsna. Still, to carry out His order I spread this doctrine. It is clear by the fact that He sometimes gives me such orders that I am not His dearest one."

Cheating the Cheaters

Lord Siva also expressed to Narada his regret in having given benedictions to Lord Krsna's enemies. To fulfill his Lord's desires, he had given benedictions to demons like Ravana, Vrkasura, Salva and Jayadratha, and thus he had performed many activities that were seemingly opposed to Krsna and krsna-bhakti.

Narada Muni said, "Master, please don't try to mislead me. I know that whatever you do is to please Lord Krsna and to assist Him in His pastimes, for the benefit of all beings. You told me that you have many times given benedictions to His enemies. I know that His enemies, as well as the enemies of His devoted cousins, the Pandavas, worship you for ill-motivated benedictions. I also know that you grant them

benedictions. But those benedictions are not foolproof; they always have some loophole. Actually, you cheat these beneficiaries in order to please Lord Krsna. You are undoubtedly His dearest friend."

Siva and Narada continued to discuss some historical incidents which, according to Siva, proved that he was not dear to Krsna – but according to Narada, proved the opposite.

A Loophole

The great epic Mahabharata tells of King Jayadratha, one of the many demons who received such a clever benediction from Lord Siva. Duryodhana, the paternal cousin of the five Pandava brothers, had given his sister Dushala in marriage to King Jayadratha, and therefore the king had also become like a brother-in-law of the Pandavas. Once, Jayadratha tried to kidnap the Pandavas' wife, Draupadi, desiring strongly to make her his own wife. As he forced her onto his chariot, she admonished him, crying, "I am the wife of the Pandavas. When they catch you, they will punish you and kill you!"

Jayadratha's arrogance prevented him from hearing her, and he continued his abduction. Meanwhile, the sage Narada approached the Pandavas and informed them, "Oh, I saw Jayadratha taking away Draupadi, and she was weeping!"

Two of the Pandavas, Bhima and Arjuna, immediately chased after Jayadratha. Bhima dismounted his chariot and ran faster than Jayadratha's horses. With his bow and arrows, Arjuna created a fire that surrounded the chariot of Jayadratha, who was then captured and could not move. Severely beaten by Bhima and arrested by Arjuna, Jayadratha was bound to the chariot and taken to where Yudhishthira Maharaja had been staying with Draupadi.

Bhima and Arjuna spoke to Yudhishthira, their respected senior brother. Bhima urged him, "I want to kill Jayadratha. Please order me to kill him."

In support of Bhima, Arjuna said, "Jayadratha has performed a heinous act and should be killed."

King Yudhishthira replied, "The offense was committed against Draupadi. We should take the case to her, and we will do whatever she orders."

When Jayadratha was brought at the feet of Draupadi, she mercifully told her husbands, "Don't kill him; forgive him. He is our brother-in-law. If you kill him, your cousin-sister will be widowed and she will weep for the rest of her life."

Bhima and Arjuna then approached Lord Krsna and appealed to Him: "What should we do? We have vowed to kill Jayadratha, and now Draupadi tells us to forgive him."

Krsna replied, "For one who has been honored, dishonor is worse than death."

Arjuna then shaved King Jayadratha's head, leaving five patches of hair, and he shaved one side of

his face, leaving the other side unshaven. Jayadratha felt humiliated, and after being released by Bhima and Arjuna he considered it better to have died. He thought, "I will somehow take revenge." Thus absorbed, he went to Gangotri in the Himalayas and undertook a severe type of penance to please Lord Siva.

After some months he gave up all food, water, and bodily activities, and was about to die. At this point Lord Siva came before him and asked what boon he wanted as a result of his austerity. Jayadratha replied, "I want revenge against the Pandavas. I want to defeat and kill all of them." Lord Siva told him, "You can defeat the Pandavas, but only Yudhisthira, Bhima, Nakula and Sahadeva; not Arjuna." Jayadratha said, "If you cannot benedict me to my full satisfaction, then please grant that neither Arjuna nor anyone else will be able to kill me." Lord Siva replied, "I can grant you this: if your head is severed and falls on the ground, the person who caused this will die immediately. Your life will be saved and your head will rejoin your body. You may be 'killed' hundreds of thousands of times, but you will not die. On the other hand, if your severed head falls into your father's hands and he throws it on the ground, then you will die." Jayadratha was satisfied, thinking, "My father would never do this."

When the battle of Kuruksetra began, Jayadratha took the side of the Pandavas' enemy, Duryodhana. One evening during the battle, as the sun was setting, Jayadratha's father was absorbed in prayer and making an offering of water to the Sun-god. Arjuna saw this opportune moment. With the skillful release of an arrow, he severed Jayadratha's head from his body and caused it to fall into the hands of his meditating father. Startled and without thought, Jayadratha's father tossed the head on the ground. Then, opening his eyes he exclaimed, "What was that wet thing?" Seeing that he had just thrown his son's head, he began to cry, "Oh my son! Oh my son! You are dead now!"

A Clever Benediction

Envious of Krsna and with a desire for the strength to destroy him, the demon Salva also took shelter of Lord Siva. He performed a severe type of austerity and ate no more than a handful of ashes daily. After one year, Lord Siva became pleased with him and asked him to beg for a boon.

Salva begged from Lord Siva the gift of an airplane, saying, "This airplane should perform as I wish; it should be operated by my mind. On my order it should go to heaven or anywhere I desire. In summer it should be air-conditioned. If there are only two men, there should only be two seats, and if I want to travel with hundreds of thousands of persons, many seats should manifest. It should never crash due to mechanical difficulty, and it should be equipped with

all varieties of weapons. It should be dangerous and fearful to the Yadus."

Lord Siva agreed, and Salva was helped by the demon Maya Danava to manufacture a mystical airplane that began to destroy Dvaraka, Lord Krsna's abode. Salva personally attacked from above, and his soldiers attacked on the ground. Headed by Pradyumna, the Yadu dynasty warriors fought with Salva and his army, but they could not defeat him.

Finally, Lord Krsna personally appeared on the battlefield, and after much intense fighting on both sides and many mystic displays by Salva, the Lord took up His disc, cut off the demon's head, and gave him liberation.

In this way, the benedictions given by Lord Siva to the enemies of Lord Krsna always have a weak point – a loophole. Lord Siva is extremely clever, and he is always serving his Lord, Sri Krsna. Narada knew this fact, and he wanted to publicize Lord Siva's glories. Siva is very near and dear to Krsna, and non-different from Him. Try to always honor him, for he is Krsna's greatest devotee.

nimna-ganah yatha ganga
devanam acyuto yatha
vaisnavanam yatha sambhuh
purananam idam tatha

[(Just as the Ganga is the greatest of all rivers, Lord Acyuta the supreme among deities and Lord Sambhu [Siva] the greatest of Vaisnavas, so Srimad-Bhagavatam is the greatest of all Puranas. (Srimad-Bhagavatam (12.13.16)]

The Principle of Siva

The principle of Siva – Siva-tattva – is extremely complex. The principle of Brahma is not as complicated, because Lord Brahma is always a jiva, a finite spirit soul. Sometimes, when there is no qualified jiva, Lord Visnu (Krsna's expansion) personally takes the post of Brahma, but that is rare. Lord Siva is not like that; he is not a finite soul.

After passing through the eight material coverings, and after crossing the Viraja (the river that divides the material world and the spiritual world) and the planet of Lord Brahma (the highest material planet), one comes to the planet of Siva. There he is known as SadaSiva, a manifestation of Lord Visnu.

Siva-tattva can be understood by the analogy of yogurt and milk. Yogurt is nothing but a transformation of milk. Milk can become yogurt, but yogurt cannot become milk. This analogy is found in Sri Brahma-Samhita and elucidated in Srila Jiva Gosvami's commentary: "Just as milk is transformed into yogurt by contact with a transforming agent, Sri Govinda, Lord Sri Krsna, similarly accepts the form of Sambhu (Siva) in order to accomplish a specific purpose. The example of yogurt is actually given in order to convey the idea of cause and effect, not the

idea of transformation. Sri Krsna is reality and cannot be transformed, so it is not possible for Him to undergo any kind of distortion. A wish-fulfilling gem manifests many things according to one's desire, yet its constitutional nature remains untransformed."

Ramesvara Mahadeva

When Sri Ramacandra was making the bridge to Lanka, he established a Siva-linga (deity form of Siva) called Ramesvara. All the common people began glorifying Lord Siva, shouting, "Ramesvara ki jaya! You are Rama's isvara: you are the lord of Rama." The demigods were unsatisfied by this and announced through an arial voice, "Ramas ca asau isvarah: Rama is God, and Sankara is also God; they are the same." Hearing this, the Siva-linga broke. Lord Siva emerged from the linga and told them all, "You are all foolish; you do not know my tattva, the established truths regarding my identity. Rama is my beloved and my God, and that is why I am called Ramesvara."

Granting Perfect Love

Lord Siva eternally resides in Lord Krsna's abode, Vrndavana, where he manifests many forms to render devotional services to Him. The form of Gopisvara Mahadeva (*See Endnote 9) was manifested by Lord Krsna's desire. When Krsna desired to perform His rasa dance, Srimati Radhika, the embodiment of His pleasure potency, manifested from His left side and Gopisvara Mahadeva manifested from His right side. The form of Siva who lives in Kasi or Kailasa in the material world is a partial manifestation of the original Sadasiva in Vrndavana. The many other commonly worshiped forms of Lord Siva are expansions of Sadasiva. They are not the original. Partial expansions such as Pippalesvara Mahadeva, Bhutesvara Mahadeva, Rangesvara Mahadeva and so on cannot award the benediction that can be attained by the mercy of Gopisvara – the highest perfection of love, namely vraja-prema.

Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami has composed a prayer in his Vraja-vilasa-stava:

muda gopendrasyatmaja bhuja parisranga
nidhaye

sphurad gopirvrndair yam iha bhagavatam
pranayibhih

bhajadbhistair bhaktyas vamabhilasitam praptam
acirad

yamitire gopisvaram anudinam tah kila bhaje

I daily worship Gopisvara Mahadeva, who is situated on the bank of Yamuna. That very Gopisvara was worshipped with deep devotion by the gopis, and he quickly fulfilled their desire to attain a supremely precious jewel in the form of the embrace of the son of Nanda Maharaja [Krsna].



Srila Sanatana Gosvami, the great Vaisnava saint who resided in Vrndavana near the old Sri Madana-Mohana temple, would go daily to see Sri Gopisvara Mahadeva at his temple. Once, in his older years, Sanatana Gosvami had a dream wherein Gopisvara Mahadeva appeared and instructed him: "Now that you are old, please do not go through so much trouble to see me." Sanatana Gosvami replied, "I will continue to come. I cannot change this habit." Gopisvara Mahadeva said, "Then I will come and stay very near to your residence, manifesting in Bankhandi." The very next day, Sri Gopisvara Mahadeva appeared in Bankhandi, halfway between his original temple and Srila Sanatana Gosvami's residence. Seeing this,

Sanatana Gosvami became overwhelmed with transcendental ecstasy, and from that day on he visited Bankhandi Mahadeva every day.

Wherever he was, Srila Sanatana Gosvami could not live without his beloved Lord Siva – Gopisvara Mahadeva and Bankhandi Mahadeva in Vrndavana, and Kamesvara Mahadeva in Kamyavana forest. In Govardhana he would stay near his very dear friend, Cakresvara Mahadeva, who acquired the name when he served Govardhana Hill and the Vrajavasis by holding up his trident like a cakra, protecting them from the torrential deluge sent by King Indra.

Prior to this, Lord Siva had asked Sri Krsna for the boon to witness His childhood pastimes. Krsna ordered him to situate himself in Nandagaon in the form of a hill. Siva followed this order and became Nandisvara Hill, and he thus became known as Nandisvara. (Lord Brahma became Brahma-parvata, the mountain in Srimati Radhika's birthplace, Varsana. Because Brahma is so near to Radhika, he is also our Gurudeva.)

We honor Lord Siva as a great Vaisnava and as Guru. We do not worship him separately. We observe Siva-ratri, Lord Siva's appearance day, and we glorify him in connection to his relationship with Sri Krsna. Srila Sanatana Gosvami has written in his Hari-bhaktivilasa that all Vaisnavas should observe Siva-caturdasi (Siva-ratri). Lord Siva, in whom all good qualities reside, should certainly be honored by the observance of this day.

We offer obeisance to Lord Siva with prayers like this:

vrndavanavani-pate! jaya soma soma-maule
sanaka-sanandana-sanatana-naradedya
gopisvara! vraja-vilasi-yuganghri-padme
prema prayaccha nirupadhi namo namas te
(Sankalpa-kalpadruma 103)

O Gatekeeper of Vrndavana! O Soma, all glories to you! O you whose forehead is decorated with the moon, and who is worshipable by the sages headed by Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatana and Narada! O Gopisvara! Desiring that you bestow upon me prema for the lotus feet of Sri Sri Radha-Madhava, who perform joyous pastimes in Vraja-dhama, I offer obeisances unto you time and again.

By Siva's Benediction

A brahmana in Kasi Varanasi once prayed to Lord Siva, "I want to give my daughter in marriage, but I have no money. Please give me money." Lord Siva told him, "Go to Vrndavana and meet with Srila Sanatana Gosvami. You can ask him to give you some wealth for your daughter's marriage." The brahmana went to Vrndavana, by foot, and there he asked the villagers there for the whereabouts of a person named Sanatana Gosvami. As they all knew him, they pointed out his residence.

Srila Sanatana Gosvami was practicing bhajana near the Yamuna River at Kaliya-hrada, the former abode of the very poisonous snake named Kaliya. Kaliya-hrada was close to the Yamuna, and therefore its surrounding area was full of sand. Srila Sanatana Gosvami wore only a loincloth. He used to go begging door-to-door for a small amount of prasada (Krsna's food remnants), and would take as his meal only one dry chapatti (flat bread), with no salt.

The brahmana arrived at his cottage and told him, "I went to Sankara Mahadeva, Lord Siva, and he told me to meet you. He said you will give me some wealth for my daughter's marriage." Sanatana Gosvami replied, "I have no possessions. You can see that I have nothing but a loincloth." Then he thought, "Oh, Siva cannot tell a lie. He is my bosom friend." Thinking of Lord Siva and contemplating further, he remembered a touchstone he had once disgarded and then forgotten. Now he told the brahmana, "Go to the Yamuna and remove some of the sand, and there you will find a touchstone. It is somewhere in the sand, though I don't remember where."

The brahmana found the jewel, touched it to iron, and the iron turned into gold. He was very, very happy that Lord Siva had told him to come to Vrndavana, and thought with gratitude, "My prayer has been answered by him." On the way home, however, his greed for money increased and he began thinking, "Why did Sanatana Gosvami keep the touchstone in the sand? It had no use there. He must have still more valuable jewels."

He thus returned, and Sanatana Gosvami asked him, "Why have you come back?" He replied, "I've come because I know that you have more valuable jewels than this." Sanatana Gosvami then said, "Go and throw the touchstone in the Yamuna. The brahmana did so with all his power, and then Sanatana Gosvami told him, "Come here. Come here." He gave him the mantra, "Hare Krsna Hare Krsna Krsna Krsna Hare Hare, Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Hare Hare" and said, "I do not have worldly jewels, but I have transcendental jewels. The jewel of Lord Krsna and Sri Radha will come to you in a very short time. So remain here. Your daughter's marriage will take place automatically. Stay here and chant Hare Krsna." That brahmana followed his instruction and became a very elevated saint.

*[Endnote 1] In the hermitage of Sri Narada Muni, Prahlada Maharaja heard the message of Srimad-Bhagavatam while within the womb of his mother. From his birth, Prahlad was fixed in transcendental realization of the all-pervading presence of the Supreme Lord, and he preached love of God to his schoolmates at the tender age of five. Despite efforts by his atheistic father to change his nature – efforts that culminated in repeated attempts to

kill him by means of administering poison, putting him in boiling oil, tossing him from the top of a cliff and so on – Prahlada continued to experience great joy by remembering Lord Visnu and chanting his holy names. Prahlada was protected by the Supreme Lord in every situation. Finally, Lord Visnu appeared in the form of a half-man, half-lion and killed his demonic father. When offered a benediction by the Lord, Prahlada simply asked for the liberation of his father, as well as that of all conditioned souls. He is honored in this world by all pure devotees.

*[Endnote 2] “Srla Madhvacarya is the original acarya for those who belong to the Madhva-Gaudiya-sampradaya.” (SB 6.1.40. purport) “This Madhva-Gaudiya-sampradaya is also known as the Brahma-sampradaya because the disciplic succession originally began from Brahma. Brahma instructed the sage Narada, Narada instructed Vyasadeva, and Vyasadeva instructed Madhva Muni, or Madhvacarya.” (Krsna Introduction).

*[End note 3] “The Vedas say, ‘svadharma-nisthah sata janmabhih puman virincatam eti - One who strictly follows the principles of varnasrama-dharma for at least one hundred births will be rewarded with the post of Lord Brahma.’” (Srimad-Bhagavatam, 5.20.33 purport)

Varnasrama-dharma - the institutions dividing society into four divisions of social life and four occupational divisions of castes.

*[Endnote 4] “At the beginning of Brahma’s day, all living entities become manifest from the unmanifest state, and thereafter, when the night falls, they are merged into the unmanifest again. Again and again, when Brahma’s day arrives, all living entities come into being, and with the arrival of Brahma’s night they are helplessly annihilated.” (Bhagavad-gita 8.18-19)

“At the end of the day, under the insignificant portion of the mode of darkness, the powerful manifestation of the universe merges in the darkness of night. By the influence of eternal time, the innumerable living entities remain merged in that dissolution, and everything is silent.” (Srimad-Bhagavatam 3.11.28)

“The dissolution of the three worlds is effected by the incarnation of darkness, Rudra, represented by the fire of eternal time which blazes over the three worlds. These three worlds are known as Bhuh, Bhuvah and Svah (Patala, Martya and Svarga). The innumerable living entities merge into that dissolution, which appears to be the dropping of the curtain of the scene of the Supreme Lord’s energy, and so everything becomes silent.” (Srimad-Bhagavatam 3.11.28 purport)

“It is said that the blazing fire from the mouth of Sankarsana rages for one hundred years of the

demigods, or 36,000 human years. Then for another 36,000 years there are torrents of rain, accompanied by violent winds and waves, and the seas and oceans overflow. People forget all these devastations of the worlds and think themselves happy in the material progress of civilization. This is called maya, or ‘that which is not.’” (Srimad-Bhagavatam 3.11.31 purport)

“Thereafter, at the end of the millennium, the Lord Himself, in the form of Rudra, the destroyer, will annihilate the complete creation as the wind displaces the clouds. This creation is very appropriately compared to clouds.” (Srimad-Bhagavatam 2.10.43)

*[Endnote 5] “There are two types of dissolution of the manifested cosmos. At the end of every 4,320,000,000 solar years, when Brahma, the lord of one particular universe, goes to sleep, there is one annihilation. And at the end of Lord Brahma’s life, which takes place at the end of Brahma’s one hundred years of age, in our calculation at the end of 8,640,000,000 x 30 x 12 x 100 solar years, there is complete annihilation of the entire universe, and in both the periods both the material energy called the mahat-tattva and the marginal energy called jiva-tattva merge in the person of the Supreme Lord.” (Srimad-Bhagavatam 1.10.21 purport)

*[Endnote 6] “Karanodakasayi Visnu is the first incarnation of the Supreme Lord, and he is the master of eternal time, space, cause and effects, mind, the elements, the material ego, the modes of nature, the senses, the universal form of the Lord, Garbhodakasayi Visnu, and the sum total of all living beings, both moving and nonmoving.” (Srimad-Bhagavatam 2.6.42)

*[Endnote 7] Lord Siva was referring to the long history in relation to Sripad Sankaracarya’s propagating the concept of the living entities’ oneness with God in all respects. Before the appearance of Sankaracarya fifteen hundred years ago, voidist Buddhism, which rejects the Vedas, was prominent in India. Sankaracarya is an incarnation of Lord Siva, the topmost devotee of the Lord. However, in order to drive away Buddhism and re-establish Vedic authority, he had to compromise with the atheistic Buddhist philosophy and preach a non-devotional doctrine.

*[Endnote 8] “In this case the special transforming agent is constituted of a mixture of maya’s aspect of the mode of ignorance, the minuteness aspect of the marginal potency, and a slight degree of the combined knowledge (sahvit) and bliss (hladini) aspects of the transcendental potency. The effulgent subordinate controller in the form of Sambhu-linga, being united with this special transforming agent, is constitutionally the semblance of God’s expansion.” (Brahma-samhita commentary by Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura)

*[Endnote 9] In his original and most pure form, Siva is eternally Gopisvara Mahadeva. Yet, he performed the following human-like pastime in which he 'became' Gopisvara:

"Lord Siva wanted to become a gopi. He performed austerities, and when Paurnamasi Yogamaya became pleased and appeared before him, he prayed to join Krsna's rasa-lila. Paurnamasi mercifully assisted him in dipping in Brahma-kunda, and he immediately assumed the form of a teenage gopi. He then went to the place where rasa-lila was being performed, and hid there in a grove.

"Krsna and the gopis sensed that someone of a different mood had come. They asked each other, 'Why are you not so happy today? What is the matter?' After searching, they discovered the new gopi and asked 'her', 'Who are you? What is your name? Who are your parents? What is your husband's name? Where is your in-laws' house?'

"When Siva could not reply, they began to slap her so much that her cheeks became swollen and she began to cry, 'Yogamaya, Yogamaya. Save me. I will never again come to Vrndavana, and I will never dare take part in rasa-lila.' Paurnamasi arrived, and she

requested the gopis to show Lord Siva mercy. 'She is the object of my mercy,' Paurnamasi told them. The gopis then accepted her as a gopi and Krsna named her Gopisvara (she whose isvaras, controllers, are the gopis). He blessed her to become the guard of the rasa-lila and said, 'Without the sanction of Gopisvara, no one will be able to enter the rasa-lila.' " (Pinnacle of Devotion)

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