

Exploring Sri Kṛṣṇa Līlā and Nature's Union in the Śrīmad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa**Mohan Kumar Pokhrel, PhD**

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<https://doi.org/10.3126/dristikon.v14i1.66003>**Abstract**

The Śrīmad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa explores the union of characters in the narrative, highlighting the intrinsic relationship between Sri Kṛṣṇa līlā (the divine acts of Sri Kṛṣṇa) and the natural world as depicted in this sacred text. One of the distinctive features of the Śrīmad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa is the seamless integration of characters, both human and divine, with the natural world. The major objectives of this study are to explicate the characters of the Śrīmad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa manifesting Sri Kṛṣṇa līlā to Nature; to analyze the union of characters relating to Sri Kṛṣṇa līlā to Nature in the text; and to evaluate the union of characters in connection to Nature in the Śrīmad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa. The analysis of the epic is based on the theory of Baruch Spinoza on Nature. The theorist sees God in the objects of Nature. Interpretative method is the way of study in this article. The conclusion drawn from this investigation is that union of characters in the Śrīmad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa shows sameness between Sri Kṛṣṇa līlā and Nature. The union of characters in this scripture serves as a powerful reminder of the inseparable bond between humanity, divinity, and the exquisite tapestry of nature, inviting devotees to experience the transcendental bliss of Sri Kṛṣṇa līlā while recognizing the sacredness of the environment that evolves.

Keywords: godhead, conservation, intertwining, līlā, scripture

Introduction

The Śrīmad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa is a revered *Hindu* scripture that narrates the stories and teachings of Kṛṣṇa , a central deity in *Hinduism*. Among its many sections, the "Sri Kṛṣṇa Līlā" refers to the divine play and activities of Srī Kṛṣṇa throughout his life. The intertwining of nature and characters within the narrative creates a captivating backdrop for the unfolding of Sri Kṛṣṇa 's divine journey. The "Śrī Kṛṣṇa Līlā" is a term that encapsulates the enchanting and miraculous life events of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. It begins with his birth in Mathura, where he was born in a prison cell to Devaki and Vasudeva, and soon after, he was miraculously transported to Vrindavan to be raised by Yashoda and Nanda. In this context, Prabhupāda (2012) incorporates: "Śrī Kṛṣṇa transferred from Mathurā to Vṛndāvana" (p. 13). Explaining this argument, one analyzes that Vṛndāvana is a better place to raise Śrī Kṛṣṇa than Mathurā. The stories encompass his mischievous yet endearing childhood, his playful interactions with

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his friends and devotees (the *gopīs*), his heroic exploits during the *Mahābhārata* war as Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and his profound philosophical teachings to Arjuna on the battlefield, which are recorded in the *Bhagavata-Gita*.

Nature serves as an integral component of the "Sri Kṛṣṇa Lila," providing both a symbolic and literal backdrop to Śrī Kṛṣṇa's divine activities. Vrindavan, where Śrī Kṛṣṇa spent his early years, is described as a bucolic paradise with lush forests, meandering rivers, and vibrant flora. This natural setting complements Śrī Kṛṣṇa's playful and carefree demeanor, reflecting the harmony between the divine and the natural world. Śrī Kṛṣṇa's affinity for animals and his enchanting flute melodies that resonate through the forests further underline his unity with nature.

The *Śrīmad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa* weaves a tapestry of characters that interact with Śrī Kṛṣṇa in diverse ways, revealing various aspects of his personality and divine mission. Nature is the focal point for the union of characters in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa*. Śrī Kṛṣṇa arranges a picnic to please *gopīs* in the forest of Vṛndāvana. In this context, Śūkadeva Gosvāmī writes ahead:

One day, Kṛṣṇa decided to take His breakfast as a picnic in the forest. Having risen early in the morning, He blew His bugle made of horn and woke all the cowherd boys and calves with its beautiful sound. Then Kṛṣṇa and the boys, keeping their respective groups of calves before them, proceeded from Vrajabhumi to the forest.¹ (10. 12: 1)

Śrī Kṛṣṇa unites characters by arranging a picnic in Vṛndāvana. In this connection, his *līlā* indicates closeness with Nature. On this ground,, Sārātha Darśinī (2011) argues that Śrī Kṛṣṇa has good relation with his cowherd mates in forest from the agreement of picnic (p. 291). At present, humans are the followers of Śrī Kṛṣṇa for the celebration of picnic in the beauty of Nature.

In the "Sri Kṛṣṇa Lila" section of the "The *Śrīmad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa*," the interplay between nature and characters creates a rich and enchanting narrative tapestry. Nature serves as a mirror to Sri Kṛṣṇa 's divine attributes and emotions, while the characters around him showcase the myriad relationships humanity can have with the divine (qtd. in Prabhupāda 2012, p. 262). Ultimately, this narrative not only recounts the life of Lord Kṛṣṇa but also imparts profound philosophical insights and spiritual wisdom that continue to inspire and guide people on their journey.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa Lila encompasses a wide array of characters, from cowherds and *gopīs* to demons and divine beings. Integrating such diverse characters into the narrative along with the influence of nature requires managing the complexity of relationships and interactions. In essence, the union of characters and nature in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa's Sri Kṛṣṇa Lila* presents a rich tapestry of themes that touch on divinity, human nature, ecological harmony, symbolism,

and more. Scholars and readers alike have engaged with these complexities to derive profound insights and interpretations from this timeless text.

- In what ways do the characters in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa* manifest Śrī Kṛṣṇa to Nature?
- How do the unions of characters in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa* reflect Śrī Kṛṣṇa lila and Nature?
- Why do the unions of characters reflect SriKṛṣṇa *līlā* and Nature in the text?

On the basis of the research questions, the objectives of this analysis are to explicate *the* characters of the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa*; to analyze the union of characters relating to Sri Kṛṣṇa *līlā* and Nature in the text; and to evaluate the union of characters in connection to Nature and Sri Kṛṣṇa *līlā* in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa*.

Review of Literature

Different critics have expressed their views on *Bhakti* literature of the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa* from different perspectives. In this context, Krishna Sharma (2009) explicates: "The term *Bhakti* means nothing more than a loving devotion to God" (p.12). Concerning Sharma's logic, one incorporates that his notion is notified in connection to *Vaiṣṇavism*. The point of view of *Vaiṣṇavism* highlights the progression of *Bhakti* literature. However, it is noteworthy to have feelings from activities and language to serve God. The devotees service to clarify *Bhakti*. *Bhakti* relates the ideas of fondness and *Bhakti* literature stresses on the ethics of devotees. Muktaben Dasharathbhai Thakkar (1966) promotes the significance in the processes *Bhakti*. The critic incorporates: "*Bhakti* begins with self-surrender, culminates in self-knowledge and ends in union with God" (p. 5). In this context, one argues that *Bhakti* enlarges love to god so that it is known as "love for love's sake" (p. 6). Thus, *Bhakti* is useful to connect human beings to god.

Tulsidās incorporates about Rāma *Bhakti*: "Rāma is born in countless ways, and there are ten millions of *Rāmāyanas*" (qtd. in Wadley, p. 7). This analysis emphasizes the expansion of Rāma *Bhakti*. This evaluation of Rāma *Bhakti* from Tulsidās is admirable because he converts Rāma from a mythical hero to divine being from the appearance of his various forms. The same idea has been highlighted by Sheldon Pollock (1993). The critic draws the concentration of booklovers that Rāma is sacred object of worship (p. 261). On this ground, it is fascinating to analyze that Rāma *Bhakti* has been happening in the *Hinduism* since the age of Vālmikī. Dheeraj Kaushik and B. K. Goswāmī (2017) have different line of argument about Rāma *Bhakti*. The critics have their arguments to enhance *Rāma Charitmānas*. Under such condition, they evaluate that that *Rāma Charitmānas* is useful for humans to make their ethical life great (p. 65). This argument of *Rāma Charitmānas* [description of the character of Rāma] is

to enhance Rāma *Bhakti*. Theological principles are useful for the development of modern society.

Basing his argument on Rāma *sampradāyasa*, Vasudha Paramasivan (2010) argues that "the *Rāmcāritmānas* is generally considered to be the quaint essential work of Sagun Ram *Bhakti*" (p. 32). Her position is different in respect, commonly suggests the importance of Rāma *Bhakti* in the *Hinduism*. Paramasivan's (2010) famous formulation stresses that the path of devotion is easy as well as pleasant and it is the independent source of happiness (p. 34). This, however, is accepted by the ritual practices by the *Hinduism*. In conclusion, the cult which is related to Rāma *Bhakti*, highlights the position and status of Rāma as a founder of democracy in modern context. This is why, modern human beings discuss on the *Rāmarājya* [State of Rāma] regarding the rule of Rāma as the best ruler of the world.

The issues of *Bhakti* literature are in focus in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa*. The text popularizes the notion of *Bhakti* literature in extended form. The text motivates devotees to follow the path of *Bhakti* for salvation. The major concern of *Bhakti* literature in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa* is to motivate towards the activities of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Rāmānujācārya discusses on the importance of Śrī Kṛṣṇa *Bhakti* flourished in Vṛndāvana where Śrī Kṛṣṇa had performed his *Bāla Lilā*. The philosopher further points to his *Bhakti* to Kṛṣṇa: "Since I came to Vṛndāvana, I have recovered and now young and beautiful" (qtd. in Svāmin 482). The *Śrīmad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa* discusses to the scenario of Vṛndāvana as the sportive activities of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in detail. The landscape draws attention due to *Bhakti* in Śrī Kṛṣṇa. From this stand point, one can argue that the devotees show their *Bhakti* when they reach to the birthplace and workplace of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Rāmānujācārya shows a link between Śrī Kṛṣṇa *Bhakti* and the landscape of Vṛndāvana. In his review, Rāmānujācārya refers Vṛndāvana for evoking *Bhakti* to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. He extends the scope of *Bhakti* literature in relation to Vṛndāvana. Thus, Vraja Bhūmī is the fertile place for the origin of Śrī Kṛṣṇa *Bhakti* in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa*.

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swāmī Prabhupāda (2012) follows the same line of argument on Śrī Kṛṣṇa *Bhakti*. According to him: *Kṛṣṇa s tu bhagavān svayam* [Śrī Kṛṣṇa is God Himself] (p. 174). The commentator regards Śrī Kṛṣṇa not as a common person but God himself. This quotation connotes to the devotees that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is not only a hero but as real divine being. This concept promotes *Bhakti Yoga* of devotees and they dedicate themselves to Śrī Kṛṣṇa from their minds, works, and words. But to regard Śrī Kṛṣṇa as a *bhagavān* (God) is not easy to justify. The concept of the analyst is to promote *Bhakti* literature showing Śrī Kṛṣṇa as a divine being. This concept promotes *Bhakti* to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. It may contradict with the logic of the present scholars. Scholars and readers regard Śrī Kṛṣṇa not as a Supreme Personality of Godhead but as a mythical hero.

It remains a fact that the expression of B.G. Tiwari (1956) that the original flavor of *Bhakti* literature gets from the scenario of *Vraja Bhūmi*. In Tiwari's words: "The traditional association of Braja *Bhūmi* with Kṛṣṇa's childhood, the concept of the Lord and his energy or *Śakti*, in the form of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā, became more popular, in this region, than other forms of *Vaiṣṇavaism*" (p. 414) Explaining this statement, we can corroborate that *Vraja Bhūmī* is a fertile place for the origin of *Bhakti* literature. The manifestation of the playful activities of Kṛṣṇa become the subject matter of discussion of *Bhakti* literature. Tiwari refers to the tradition of *Vaiṣṇavaism* for the promotion of Śrī Kṛṣṇa *Bhakti*. He rightly presents Śrī Kṛṣṇa and his *lilās* of *Vraja Bhūmī* as the roots of *Bhakti* literature in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa*.

The logic of Śrī Kṛṣṇa *Bhakti* is found in detail in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa*. The above reviewers have pointed out their views on Śrī Kṛṣṇa *Bhakti* from different perspectives. They relate to the utility of *Bhakti* literature from the light of Śrī Kṛṣṇa *Bhakti*. The reviews of the interpreters present how importance Śrī Kṛṣṇa *Bhakti* is in the evolution of *Bhakti* literature. It discusses domain of *Bhakti* literature in detail citing the views of the commentators. Not only the devotees and sages but also Śrī Kṛṣṇa himself presents his view about the path of *Bhakti Yoga*. The *Śrīmad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa* is the only text which evaluates the importance and utility of *Bhakti Yoga* and it is reflected in the analysis of different commentators, researchers, and philosophers. Thus, the reviews show that the place of *Śrīmad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa* in *Bhakti* literature is incomparable.

Research Materials and Methods

Due to the qualitative research, this research article discusses in which the characters and circumstances have union among them. The researcher uses the theory of Paul W. Taylor's (2011) to show the union between Nature and humans. The theorist explicates that "We see human life as an integral part of the natural order of the earth's biosphere" (p. 101). In this connection, one corroborates that the union between creatures and Nature is necessary for our existence on the earth. The researcher uses the writings of various scholars in the field of Nature, creatures, and plants. I have addressed some potential problems or complexities that can arise in the union of characters and nature within the context of Śrī Kṛṣṇa *Lila* in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa*.

Results and Discussion

The *Śrīmad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa* interrelates incredible activities of Śrī Kṛṣṇa for the conservation of land, creatures, and vegetation. The maintenance of Nature is necessary by human beings following the activities of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The text stands for mutual relationship between the characters and the objects of Nature. When demons try to create problems in Nature from their selfish activities, Śrī Kṛṣṇa makes harmony by destroying demons and

rescues human beings and other creatures. The role of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is unforgettable to make a union among good human and animal characters.

Nature has its own importance for the union of characters at the beginning of the *Śrimad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa*. Eighty-eight thousand sages gather in the Naimisāraṇya forest for *yajna*. This venue of the forest is the ground for gathering sages. In Nārada's words: "Once, in a holy place in the forest of Naimisāraṇya, great sages headed by the sage Śaunaka assembled to perform great *yajna* for thousand years for the satisfaction of the Lord and His devotees"² (1. 1: 4). The sages thought that the smoke from the *yajna* was useful to make the environment fresh.

The sages select the area of richness in natural beauty as a suitable place for the performance of *yajna*. On the basis of this idea, Devi Dayal Aggarwal (1999) exposes: "The narration starts as usual with the gathering of many *rishis*, then development of a desire to listen to *Bhāgavat* and then finding a suitable and capable narrator" (p.17). The setting of the *yajna* is an appropriate venue and different sages gather there to instruct human beings how the glory of Śrī Kṛṣṇa *līlā* helps for the union of people. In the different way, Nature has a crucial role for the union of humans for different purposes at present either to fulfil their needs or for excursion.

Human civilization depends on the production of the material Nature. The text refers how rain is the basis for the union of people in the time of king Yudhishtira: "During the reign of King Yudhishtira, the clouds showered all the water that people needed, and the earth produced all the necessities of man in profusion. Due to its fatty milk bag and cheerful attitude, the cow used to moisten the grazing ground with milk"³ (1. 10: 4). The rain in the kingdom of Yudhishtira is useful to gather humans for farming. The economic development is possible for farmers from rain. All farmers are happy when it rains and go to their farm making groups. The rain causes the union among farmers and they are grateful with the rain god. Unlike the scenario of the rain, Prabhupāda (2012) further shows: "Material assets are like seasonal flowers only" (p. 7). This analysis points out human nature for the collection of property but their physical objects are transitory. In this regard, one can see the analogy of the material prosperity in rainy time. When the rain stops, the scenario changes. Nowadays, humans gather in the field for farming after the rain thanking Nature for the sake of rain during the time of their needs. In this regard, *paurāṇic* farmers and modern farmers are similar in a sense that both of them gather in the fields after the rain.

When there is the birth of king Parikshīt, there is the union of characters on that occasion. The objects of charity are made from Nature: "Upon the birth of a son, the king, who knew how, where and when charity should be given, gave gold, land villages, elephants, horses and good food grains to the *brāhmaṇas*"⁴ (1. 12: 14). The objects of Nature have been used by the king to the *brāhmaṇas* as gifts. Creatures have possibility to survive in this world using the objects of Nature. An umbilical cord joins the mother and her child in the womb. Likewise,

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people have connection to Nature and their survival is not possible in the absence of Nature. Nature is regarded as a mother for humans, animals, and insects. But humans utilize the objects of Nature unnecessarily for the completion of their necessities. In this relation Bhakti Vedānta Swāmī Prabhupāda (2012) states that Nature is the "well-being of the entire society" (p. 668). The objects of Nature are used for the betterment of society. Thus, Śrī Kṛṣṇa *līlā* is the base in the awareness of Nature and well-being of human society.

The *Śrīmad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa* discusses King Priyavarta and his worship in favor of Nature. In the words of Śūkadeva Goswāmī: "To stop the quarrelling among different peoples, King Priyavarta marked boundaries at rivers and at the edges of mountains and forests so that no one would capture another's property"⁵ (5. 1: 39). King Priyavarta utilizes Nature for peace in his motherland and the civilians do not quarrel among them. With this conditioning, Pushpendra Kumar (2009) argues that king Priyavarta utilizes the objects of Nature to protect citizens from invasion (p. 395). Nowadays, humans use the things of Nature for boundary in the form of canals, hills, mountains, and rivers. Thus, Nature is used to maintain rules in a country.

Humans gain knowledge from Śrī Kṛṣṇa *līlā* to love creatures thinking them as the parts of Nature. This type of relation becomes the base for the ecological balance in the world of Nature. In this context, the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa* incorporates: "One should treat animals such as deer, camels, asses, monkeys, mice, snakes, birds, and flies exactly like one's own son. How little differences there actually in between children and these innocent animals"⁶ (7. 14: 9). The alertness of Śrī Kṛṣṇa to Nature indicates sameness between children and animals. In this line of argument, Anna King (2012) postulates that Śrī Kṛṣṇa satisfy the cowherd community with the help of his *yogic* power. He creates cows, calves, and the cowherd boys in the same forms after the loss of Brahmā (p.183). This argument remarks that Śrī Kṛṣṇa regards same between humans and animals. Humans and animals have equal responsibility to retain ecology on this globe. This shows that Śrī Kṛṣṇa has a crucial role to sustain the ecological balance.

The union among gods, demons, humans, and animals are essential for the completion of certain mission. In this context, the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa* discusses a union between gods and demons to churn in the Tshirasāgara. They use the Mandarā Mountain, as *madānī* (churning stick) for churning. In this time, the sea animals get disturbance and remain in crisis. In the words of Śūkadeva Goswāmī:

The fish, sharks, tortoises, and snakes were most agitated and perturbed. The entire ocean became turbulent, and even the large aquatic animals like whales, water elephants, crocodiles and *timinṅgila* fish came to the surface. While the ocean was being churned in this way, it first produced a fiercely dangerous poison called *hālāhala*.⁷ (8. 7: 18)

The union between demons and gods create disturbance for the creatures in the Tshirasāgara. In this time,, *hālāhala* poison appears and starts polluting nature. On the basis of this relation, C. L. Goswāmī (2014) explicates that the *hālāhala* poison is emerged from the ocean and creates problems in the Nature (p. 764). It shows that destruction of Nature was possible even in the *paurānic* era.

Lord Rāmachandra and monkey soldiers have friendship in the *Śrimad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa*. Due to their intimacy between them, they are able to build a bridge on the Indian Ocean. The mission of building the bridge on the ocean becomes ground stone for the union between humans and animals:

After constructing a bridge over the ocean by throwing into the water the peaks of mountains whose trees and other vegetation had been shaken by the hands of great monkeys, Lord Rāmachandra went to Lankā to release Sītādevī from the clutches of Rāvana. With the direction and help of Vibhīṣaṇa, Rāvana's brother, the Lord, along with the monkey soldiers, headed by Sugrīva, Nīla, and Hanumān, entered Rāvana's kingdom, Laṅkā, which had previously been burnt by Hanumān.⁸ (9. 10: 16)

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is connected to cows whereas Rāmachandra has friendship with the monkeys and takes assist from them. In this context, Parbhupāda (2012) postulates: "He can do anything and everything He likes, because He is not under the control of the material nature" (p. 330). Relating to this idea, one argues that humans have been solving different problems from the use of animals from the *paurānic* period.

Rāmachandra and Sītā have reunion in a cottage in the Aśoka forest. In this time, Sita is in different condition. In this relation, the *Śrimad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa* elucidates: "Thereafter, Lord Rāmachandra found Sītādevi sitting in a small cottage beneath the tree named Śimśapā in a forest of Aśoka trees. She was lean and thin, being aggrieved because of separation from Him"⁹ (9. 10: 30). The aforementioned event is a memory of Rukmiṇī *haraṇa* in the *Śrimad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa*. With this conditioning, one analyzes when Śrī Kṛṣṇa goes for abduction to Rukmiṇī, she seems to be attractive but the situation of Sītā is different because of her kidnapping by Rāvaṇa. Sita seems to be thin because of the favor of Nature against her. These negative images of Nature are memorable in her life. In this line of thought, Tagare (2007) analyzes: "She was emaciated and suffering from the agony" (p. 1182). With this conditioning, the union of Rāma with Sītā brings unhappiness for them. If humans are unable to remain happy within them, they are unable to be happy in spite of their presence in beautiful Nature.

Cows and calves share happiness each other in the *Śrimad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa* during the time of reunion. In Govardhan Hillock, the cows run considering their calves in distance:

When the cows saw their own calves from the top of Govardhan Hill, they forgot themselves and their caretakers because of increased affection, and although the path was very rough, they ran towards their calves with great anxiety, each running as if with one pair of legs. Their milk bags full and flowing with milk, their heads and tails raised, and their humps moving with their necks, they ran forcefully until they reached their calves to feed them.¹⁰ (10. 13: 29)

It proves that animals and humans have similar in love and affection to their younger ones. The pasture of Govardhan Hillock is a basis of union between cows and calves. In this context, the view of Anna S. King (2012) is reliable. The critic argues that the union of cows and calves refers to "the fertility represented by the cows' "fatty milkbags"" (p. 183). It shows that cows have better love and affection to their calves than the modern mothers to their children. With the help of this evidence, humans must know to love properly to the family members. Concerning such argument, one explicates that love between parents and a child plays a significant role in a family.

The *Śrīmad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa* discusses the reunion of the cowherd boys and cows with Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The scenario of the reunion is presented as follows: "After granting His son Brahmā permission to leave, the Supreme Personality of Godhead took the calves, who were still where they had been taking His meal and where His cowherd boyfriends remained just as before"¹¹(10. 14: 42). Elaborating the argument, one claims that Nature and Śrī Kṛṣṇa *līlā* have close relation each other. It shows that Śrī Kṛṣṇa has *yogic* power for the performance of impossible works. On this ground stone, J. L. Masson (1974) states: "The idyllic surroundings of Vṛndāvana are just such a world of contentment and physical gratification" (p. 457). Elaborating this logic, we explicate the significance of Nature to complete of human needs. Śrī Kṛṣṇa performs his *līlā* in Vṛndāvana with the help of his *Yogic* Power. Awareness about Nature and its renovation is the task of Śrī Kṛṣṇa *līlā*.

Aghāsura, a large python becomes a means of union among the characters in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa*. Śrī Kṛṣṇa displays the skin of Aghāsura after his death among the cowherd boys: "Kṛṣṇa, smiling, finished His lunch in the company of His cowherd friends. While they were returning from the forest to their homes in Vraja, Lord Kṛṣṇa showed the cowherd boys the skin of the dead serpent Aghāsura"¹² (10. 14: 46). The death of Aghāsura highlights Śrī Kṛṣṇa *līlā* in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa*. The python has swallowed many humans and animals so that Śrī Kṛṣṇa kills the python to rescue his friends. Elaborating this argument, we can corroborate that the skin of the python is the centre of attention for the cowherd community (qtd. in Venugopala p. 63). This analysis shows that humans are interested to see the death of their enemies. In this context, one argues that everybody is Aghāsura for power and property. Like the demonstration of the skin of Aghāsura, people have tendency to display their property.

Likewise, Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* have union in Vṛndāvana. During the time of union, Śrī Kṛṣṇa attracts the *gopīs* and the *gopīs* remain satisfaction with him. To clarify this idea, Śūkadeva Gosvāmī states:

When the young women of Vṛndāvana heard Śrī Kṛṣṇa's flute song, which arouses romantic feelings, their minds were captivated by the Lord. They went to where their lover waited, each known to the others, moving so quickly that their earrings swung back and forth.¹³ (10. 29: 4)

The above mentioned statement indicates that sound of the flute is the centre of attraction for the *gopīs* and they run after the beauty forgetting their duty. In this context, Nature is the ground stone to unite *gopīs* with Śrī Kṛṣṇa. In this connection Viśvanātha Cakravartī writes ahead: "Śrī Kṛṣṇa stole their minds along with the great wealth that is their patience" (qtd. in Filion p. 53). It traces that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is a thief who is able to steal the hearts of *gopīs*. Natural beauty is the base to unite *gopīs* with Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa and *gopīs* go to the bank of the Yamunā River for refreshment. The beauty of the river and forest draw their attention. The scenario changes from forest to river for their union. Keeping it at the centre of attention, Śūkadeva Gosvāmī incorporates: "In that auspicious place the breeze, bearing the fragrance of blooming *kunda* and *mandāra* flowers, attracted many bees, and the abundant rays of the autumn moon, dispelled the darkness of night"¹⁴(10. 32: 11). The eye-catching scenario of the Yamunā River and beautiful forest draw the attention of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs*. With this notion, Charles A. Filion (2018) validates that the location of Vṛndāvana was "fit for the fun of *Rāsa*" (p. 458). Vṛndāvana forest is an appropriate venue to perform Śrī Kṛṣṇa *līlā* in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa*.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa disappears to test the love of the *gopīs* for him. When they sing *gopī-gīta* (songs of *gopīs*), he appears and his reunion makes happy to the cowherd girls. The situation of the *gopīs* is presented as follows in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa*: "When the *gopīs* saw that their dearest Kṛṣṇa had returned to them, they all stood up at once, and out of their affection for Him their eyes bloomed wide. It was as if the air of life had reentered their bodies"¹⁵ (10. 32: 3). The reunion of the *gopīs* with Śrī Kṛṣṇa is a matter of joy for the *gopīs* and they remain with Śrī Kṛṣṇa. This circumstance of meeting is the basis of the *rāsa* dance in natural beauty. In this conditioning, K. R. Srinivasa Lyengar (1992) debunks that "Krishna is a universal favourite" (p. 112). It shows that Śrī Kṛṣṇa attracts the cowherd maidens of Vṛndāvana, creatures and plants.

Readers realize the union between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Rukmiṇī during the time of elopement before the time of Rukmiṇī's wedding with Śishupāla. This setting is the centre thought for the academicians. In this context, Śūkadeva Gosvāmī manipulates to King Parikshīt:

With the fingernails of her left hand, she pushed some strands of hair away from her face and shyly looked from the corners of her eyes at her kings standing before her. At that moment she saw Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Then, while His enemies looked on, the Lord seized the princess, who was eager to mount his chariot.¹⁶ (10. 53: 54-55)

The venue of the temple of the Goddess Ambikā is an appropriate place for elopement. Explaining this statement, Devdutt Pattanaik (2016) incorporates: "Kṛṣṇa entered the royal garden and carried Rukmiṇī away, right from under the noses of her kinsmen" (p. 154). It shows that fearless character of Śrī Kṛṣṇa draws the attention of people during the time of elopement in Kundinpur.

Likewise, Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna unite each other in Dvārakā for searching the lost sons of a *brāhmaṇa*. Their union pleases the *brāhmaṇa* because Śrī Kṛṣṇa solves his problem. In the words of Śūkadeva Gosvāmī:

Thus, instructed by the Supreme Lord of the topmost planet, Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna assented by chanting *om*, and they bowed down to almighty Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu. Taking the *brāhmaṇa*'s sons with them, they returned with great delight to Dvārakā by the same path along which they had come. There they presented the *brāhmaṇa* with his sons, who were in the same infant bodies in which they had been lost.¹⁷ (10. 89: 60-61)

The narrator appraises that greatness of Śrī Kṛṣṇa *līlā* is realized by the *brāhmaṇa* and Arjuna when they know that Śrī Kṛṣṇa has brought the dead son of the *brāhmaṇa*. In this line of thought, Tagare (2007) contemplates: "They restored to the Brāhmaṇa his sons grown up according to their age" (p. 1840). The analysis of the text discussed in this context shows that Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna use *yogic* power to restore the dead son (Punardutta) of the *brāhmaṇa*.

We conclude that Śrī Kṛṣṇa *līlā* is the centre of attention for the union of characters and the union solves various problems such as for the pleasure of the *gopīs* and Rukmiṇī. The union of characters is the basis of pleasure from the friendship of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. He is able to assemble cows from his flute in Vṛndāvana. Nature has the pivotal role for characters, other creatures, and plants to remain happy from company of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Both human and non-human characters unite among them in the world of Nature. Thus, Nature plays the role of the focal point to make a union among the characters in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa*.

Conclusion

The depiction of Śrī Kṛṣṇa *līlā* is more than just a collection of stories in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa*; it is a profound exploration of the divine interactions between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and various characters, both human and divine. The stories not only present the captivating adventures of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's childhood, youth, and adulthood but also carry deep symbolic meanings that convey spiritual truths and moral lessons. Nature plays a significant role in the playful activities of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The pastoral setting of Vrindavan, where Śrī Kṛṣṇa

spends his childhood, is often described as an idyllic environment of lush meadows, flowing rivers, and serene forests. This natural scenery mirrors the innocence, purity, and harmony that Śrī Kṛṣṇa embodies. The interactions between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Nature, such as his playful interactions with animals and his flute melodies that captivate the elements, symbolize his divine mastery over creation.

The union of characters in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa* serves to highlight the diverse relationships Śrī Kṛṣṇa has with different individuals. He is a mischievous child with his playmates, a devoted friend to Sudama, a compassionate lover to the *gopīs*, a loyal friend and advisor to Arjuna, and a respected leader to his followers. Each interaction illustrates a unique facet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's character and his ability to connect with beings on various emotional and spiritual levels. The ultimate conclusion of the "Śrī Kṛṣṇa Lila" and its portrayal in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa* centers on the concept of divine love, devotion, and the transcendence of worldly attachments. The stories reveal Śrī Kṛṣṇa's status as both a human-like figure with relatable emotions and a divine incarnation with the power to guide humanity towards spiritual enlightenment. Through his interactions with Nature and characters, Śrī Kṛṣṇa teaches profound lessons about the nature of reality.

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Appendix

1. क्वचिद्वनाशायमनोदधद्रज्जात्प्रातः
समुत्थायवयस्यवत्सपान्
प्रबोधयञ्छृङ्गारवेणचारुणा
विनिर्गतोवत्सपुरःसरोहरिः॥१॥ (10.12:1)
2. नैमिषेऽनिमिषक्षेत्रे ;यःशौनकादयः।
सत्रंस्वर्गायलोकायसहस्रसममासता॥४॥ (1.1:4)
3. कामं ववर्षपर्जन्यः सर्वकामदुधामही।
सिषिचुःस्मन्नजान्नावःपयसोधस्वतीर्मुदा॥४॥ (1.10:4)
4. हिरण्यं गाम्हीग्रामान्हस्त्यश्चान्नुपतिर्वरान्।
प्रादात्स्वन्नंचविप्रेभ्यःप्रजातीर्थसतीर्थवित्॥१४॥ (1.12:14)
5. भूसंस्थानं कृतं तेन सरिद्विरिवनादिभिः।
सीमाचभूतनिर्वृत्यैद्वीपेद्वीपेविभागशः॥३९॥ (5.1:39)
6. मृगोष्ट्रखरमर्काखुसरीसृपखगमक्षिकाः।
आत्मनःपुत्रवत्पश्येत्तैरैषामन्तरं कियत्॥९॥ (7.14:9)
7. निर्मथ्यमानादुदधेरभूद्विषं
महोल्बणंहालहलाह्वमप्रतः।
सम्भ्रान्तमीनोन्मकराहिकच्छपा
त्तिमिद्विपग्राहतिमिङ्गिलाकुलात्॥१८॥ (८.7:1८)
8. बद्ध्वोदधौरघुपतिर्विधाद्रिकूटैः
सेतुंकपीन्द्रकरकम्पितभूरुहाङ्गैः।
सुग्रीवनीलहनुमत्प्रमुखैरनीकैर्लङ्कां
विभीषणदृशाः॥१६॥ (9.10:16)
9. ततोददर्शभगवानशोकवनिकाश्रमे।
क्षामांस्वविरहव्याधिंशिशापामूलमास्थिताम्॥३०॥ (9.10:30)
10. दृष्ट्वाथतस्नेहवशोऽस्मृतात्मा
सगोत्रजोऽत्यात्मपदुर्गमार्गः।
द्विपात्कुकुद्वीवउदास्यपुच्छो -

ऽगाद्भुङ्कृतैरासुपयाजवेना॥३०॥(10.13:30)

11. ततोऽनुज्ञाप्यभगवान्स्वभुवंप्रागवस्थितान्।

वत्सान्पुलिनमानिन्येयथापूर्वसखंस्वकम्॥४२॥ (10.14:42)

12. ततोहसन्हृषीकेशोऽभ्यवहृत्यसहाभकैः।

दर्शयंश्चर्माजगरंन्यवर्ततवनाद्ब्रजम्॥४६॥ (10.14:46)

13. निशम्यगीतंतदनड्गवर्धनं

ब्रजस्त्रियःकृष्णगृहीतमानसाः।

आजगुरन्त्योन्यमलक्षितोद्यमाःसयत्रकान्तोजवलोलकुण्डलाः॥४८॥ (10.29:4)

14. ताःसमादायकालिन्द्यानिर्विश्यपुलिनंविभुः।

विकसत्कुन्दमन्दारसुरभ्यनिलषट्पदम्॥११॥ (10.32:11)

15. विलोक्यागतंप्रेष्ठंप्रीत्युत्फुल्लदृशोऽबलाः।

उत्तस्थुर्युगपत्सर्वास्तन्वःप्राणमिवागतम्॥३॥ (10.32:3)

16. प्रासान्ह्यैक्षतनूपान्ददृशेऽच्युतंसा॥५४॥ (10.53:54-55)

ताराजकन्यारथमारुरुक्षतीं

जहारकृष्णोद्विषतांसमीक्षताम्।

17. इत्यादिष्टौभगवतातौकृष्णौपरमेष्ठिना।

ओमित्यानम्यभूमानमादायद्विजदारकान्॥६०॥

न्यवर्ततांस्वकंधामसम्प्रहृष्टौयथागतम्।

विप्रायददतुःपुत्रान्यथारूपंयथावयः॥६१॥ (10.६9:60-61)