

Droṇa and Dhārā

Q: How to reconcile the contradiction between our standard understanding that Nanda Maharaja and Yasoda are *nitya-siddha* devotees, eternally situated as the father and mother of Kṛṣṇa in his eternal unmanifest pastimes, or *aprakata-lila* in Goloka – while SB 10.8.48-50 indicate that Droṇa and Dhārā ‘became’ Nanda and Yaśodā?

Answer:

It is correct that Kṛṣṇa’s relationship with Nanda and Yaśodā is eternal. The scriptural references below explain this apparent contradiction - namely Chapter 8 of Canto 10 making reference to Droṇa and Dhārā becoming Nanda and Yaśodā. Read slowly, and carefully.

Note: At the very end of these scriptural quotes regarding Droṇa and Dhārā, you will find Laghu Bhagavatamrita’s explanation of how the order of Brahma given to the devas (in Chapter 1 of Canto 10) resulted in other ‘partial expansions’ of devas entering into the bodies of associates of Kṛṣṇa, for the purpose of assisting in His pastimes.

1.

Kṛṣṇa Sandarbha 151-153

“Droṇa and Dhārā were *aṁśas* (partial expansions) of Nanda and Yaśodā, and merged into them when they appeared on earth with Kṛṣṇa.”

“It is correctly said that his relationship with Nanda and Yaśodā is eternal. Thus the verses in chapter nine until verse 20 negate the story of Droṇa and Dharā of the previous chapter--since it is not proper to insist on a previous statement which is contradictory to a later statement.”

“The description of the eternal parenthood of Nanda and Yaśodā (Chapter 9) is given after the description of their previous birth as Droṇa and Dharā (Chapter 8). If there are two contradictory statements in the scriptures, the second statement should be accepted, and the previous statement should be interpreted so that it does not contradict the later statement. This rule of interpretation is expressed in the Vedānta-sūtra.”

“The truth is that Droṇa and Dharā are partial expansions (*aṁśa-avatāra*) of Nanda and Yaśodā, Kṛṣṇa’s eternal parents in the spiritual world. They descended to this material world, just as the Lord Himself did in order to display His pastimes on earth.”

2.

Garga-saṁhitā 1.15.6–10

“Once, the partial expansions of Nanda and Yaśodā appeared in Svarga as the demigods Droṇa and Dharā. Droṇa was one of the eight Vasus, and, as a great devotee of Lord Viṣṇu, he ruled a kingdom in heaven. Because they were childless, Droṇa and Dharā went to Mount Mandara and implored Lord Brahmā to give them the Supreme Lord as their son. Lord Brahmā smiled and assured them that their desire would be fulfilled.

“When the time came for Kṛṣṇa’s prakāṣa-līlā on earth, Droṇa and Dharā appeared in Gokula in accordance with their previous desire. However, Kṛṣṇa’s eternal parents, Nanda Mahārāja and Mother Yaśodā, who were the original counter-wholes of Droṇa and Dharā, had also appeared in prakāṣa Vraja, as they always do upon Kṛṣṇa’s descent. Thus, Droṇa entered the body of Nanda Mahārāja and Dharā entered the body of Yaśodā-devī. In this way, when Kṛṣṇa was finally born, Droṇa and Dharā were able to share the bliss of being his parents.”

Summary: Nanda Mahārāja and Yaśodā-devī, who were fortunate enough to enjoy the childhood pastimes of Kṛṣṇa in his *prakāṣa-līlā*, were the combined form of two sets of personalities: the eternal parents of Kṛṣṇa within Goloka, Nanda and Yaśodā, as well as the partial expansions of those same personalities from Svarga, Droṇa and Dharā.

3.

Gopal Campu

58. "Accompanied by his wife, Parjanya came to Vrndavana. Then, standing in Nanda's assembly as Bhisma stood in the assembly of wonderful fighters, Upananda affirmed that his own name meant 'the follower of Nanda'. Accepting Upananda's words, Nanda accepted everyone there as his eternal subjects. He ruled over them and protected them.

59. "Nanda's actions were wonderful:

"Nanda was always respectful to his father. In his country religion was never in distress. In his country prosperity was never crippled. In his country propensity always grew more and more.

60. "Everyone in Vraja lived at the height of propensity. Still, one worry gradually blossomed amongst them. "Our king, who is more dear to us than life, has no children," they thought. In the course of time this worry troubled Upananda and everyone else. Then Nanda and Yasoda, the rulers of Vraja, became overwhelmed with the desire for a child. As time passed that desire grew stronger and stronger."

61. Snigdhakanta said, "Why did Nanda's friends and kinsmen not perform a yajna to give Nanda children? Why were intelligent Nanda and Yasoda so upset that they had no children? They were already king and queen of Vraja. Why did they yearn for children? Why did that desire become stronger and stronger as time passed?"

62. Madhukantha said, "A yajnas was performed, but it brought no result."

63. Snigdhanakanta said, "Why? Why was there no result?"

64. Madhukantha said, "In private, glorious Nanda and Yasoda spoke about this. Nanda said, 'Dear wife, why do my grief-stricken relatives perform yajnas and other ceremonies so I may have children? My heart yearns to have a glorious son. Why is that desire not fulfilled? My heart cannot say. If merciful Lord Narayana, who is attained by the followers of the Vedas, is kind to me, then I will certainly have a glorious child. Perhaps my desire is like a parijata flower, which fools imagine to float in the sky.'"

65. Then Snigdhakanta thought, "Krsna is more sweet and charming than Lord Narayana Himself. It is not wrong to say this. This truth is confirmed by Srimad-Bhagavatam (3.2.12) in these words: "The Lord appeared in the mortal world by His internal potency, Yogamaya. He came in His eternal form, which is just suitable for His pastimes. These pastimes are wonderful for everyone, even for those proud of their own opulence, including the Lord Himself in His form as the Lord of Vaikuntha. Thus His (Sri Krsna's) transcendental body is the ornament of all ornaments."

66. Then Snigdhantha openly said, "Then? Then?"

67. Madhukantha said, "Then Yasoda, Nanda's beautiful wife, said, "What reply can I give?"

68. "Then Nanda said: " 'I see a dark boy with large restless eyes. I see Him playing, and I see him sitting on your lap, and I see Him drinking milk from your breast. When I see Him am I dreaming or am I awake? I do not know. O saintly wife, please tell me the truth: Do you also see Him in your heart?'

69. "Yasoda said, 'O glorious husband, I have also seen this child in my thoughts, but I was too shy to tell you. This desire can never be attained. We should not keep it in our hearts.'

70. "Nanda said, 'Although it is my destiny to be childless, I will take shelter of Glorious Lord Narayana, the controller of the worlds. With His help my desire will be fulfilled. This I know. What has never been seen or heard of before He can place before everyone's eyes. He can do any impossible deed.'

71. "Yasoda said, O master, we should serve Lord Narayana."

72. "Nanda said, 'Good. What service shall we perform?'

73. "Yasoda said, "We could follow the dvadasi vow.'

74. "Nanda happily said, 'What you say is good. The desire to follow this vow has now sprouted in my heart. We will follow it.'

75. "When the two of them decided in this way, the demigods made a great sound of dundubhi drums, a sound that filled all directions."

76. Hearing this description of his thoughts and desires, Nanda felt his heart melt. To the young poet he gave a gift of his own glistening ornaments. His wife, glorious Yasoda, gave the poet a great necklace of sapphires.

77. Snigdhantha earnestly said, "What happened then?"

78. Madhukantha said, "When Nanda and Yasoda had passed a year of following this vow, the Supreme Personality of Godhead appeared before them both in their dreams. He said, 'O devotees very attached to Me, why are you so troubled? A delicate boy dark and glorious like an *atasi* flower will become your son. You will be able to gaze on Him always. To increase your love for Him, this boy becomes your son *kalpa* after *kalpa*. **Following My order, you appeared in your *amsa-kala* forms as Drona and Dhara in the world of the demigods. To fulfill that which others cannot attain, you took birth on the earth in this place, a place glorified in Srimad-Bhagavatam (10.14.34). Please know that your glorious desire will soon be fulfilled.'**

79. "After speaking these words, the glorious Supreme Personality of Godhead at once disappeared. Suddenly awakening, Nanda and Yasoda became as if plunged in an ocean of nectar. Telling each other what they had seen, they were filled with wonder."

80. In his heart Snigdhantha thought, "Now my questions are answered. When He said, 'You two will attain Him as your son', that is what the Supreme Lord meant. That is what Garga Muni meant when he said (Srimad-Bhagavatam 10.8.14): " 'For many reasons, this beautiful son of yours sometimes appeared previously as son of Vasudeva. Therefore, those who are learned call this child Vasudeva.'

Additional Quotes:

Laghu Bhagavatamrta 1.5.441

When the portions of the *devatās* through the order of Brahmā appeared on earth, the portions of Vasudeva and others (*amśa*) such as Kaśyapa who were residing in Svarga, merged with Vasudeva and others (who were their *amśi*) of the eternal pastimes and took birth from Śūrasena {father of Vasudeva} and others.

VCT's COMMENTARY

This verse explains how the manifested pastimes take place. Brahmā gave the following order, according to Bhāgavatam:

“While in trance, Lord Brahmā heard the words of Lord Viṣṇu vibrating in the sky. Thus he told the demigods: ‘O demigods, hear from me the order of Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, the Supreme Person, and execute it attentively without delay. Before we submitted our petition to the Lord, He was already aware of the distress on earth. Consequently, for as long as the Lord moves on earth to diminish its burden by His own potency in the form of time, all of you demigods should appear **through plenary portions** as sons and grandsons in the family of the Yadus.” SB 10.1.21-22

When portions of the *devatās* appeared on earth, **the portions** of **the eternal associates such as Vasudeva***, Nanda and others – namely, **secondary forms** such as Kaśyapa and Droṇa – merged with **the eternal associates Vasudeva*** and Nanda, when Vasudeva and Nanda took birth on earth from Śūrasena*, Parjanya and others.

*{Śūrasena was the father of Vasudeva, while Parjanya was the father of Nanda. Both brothers, Śūrasena and Parjanya, were sons of Devamīḍha. Śūrasena had ten sons, of whom Vasudeva was the chief. Śūrasena gave one of his five daughters, Pṛthā, to his friend King Kuntibhoja to raise as his daughter, and therefore she was also named Kuntī.}

Gopal Campu 2.3.19: “Devamīḍha, who personified all the best qualities of the Yadu dynasty, whose is praised in all the śrutis and Purāṇas, lived in Mathurā. The best of kṣatriyas had two wives. One was of a kṣatriya family and the other was of a vaiśya family. They bore two children named Śūra and Parjanya. Śūra produced Vasudeva and others. Parjanya, because of his mixed parentage became a vaiśya and worked with cows. He lived in Mahāvana. From his childhood Parjanya would worship the brāhmaṇas just on seeing them and gave them everything to fulfill their desires. He was affectionate to them as Vaiṣṇavas. He carried out activities to the best of his knowledge and worshiped Viṣṇu his whole life. His mother’s family was the praiseworthy ornament of the vaiśya community. The wise glorified the mother’s family by calling them *abhīra* and because of that her family line had attained excellence.”

{Devamīḍha, a kṣatriya, had one wife of *abhīra* descent (*brāhmaṇa* and *vaiśya*). Her child was Parjanya. Parjanya had five sons including Nanda.}

*Sri Krishna Caitanya – Nishikant Sanya, Vol. 1, Introductory Section: “As the different gods prepare to descend into this world through the medium of the series of their respective subjective portions (*amsas*), the heavenly plenary portions of Vasudeva, etc., such as Kasyapa, etc., merging with their original sources (*amsis*), viz., Vasudeva, etc., who belong to the eternal Divine Leela, appear in Mathura.”