

Śrī Brhad-bhāgavatāmṛta

by Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī

Volume-2

Śrī-goloka-māhātmya

The Glories of Goloka

Chapter-1

Vairāgya: Renunciation

Of course, all
these devotees in their
portion of (V) are completely
happy as they have attained
what they desired according to
their nature

2.1.19

tat-pradeśa-viśeṣeṣu
sva-svabhāva-viśeṣataḥ
sva-sva-priya-viśeṣāptyā
sarveṣām astu vā sukham

Of course, all the devotees (sarveṣām) in each distinct region of Vaikunṭha (tat-pradeśa-viśeṣeṣu) are completely happy (sukham astu vā), for they have all achieved (āptyā) what by their own specific natures (sva-svabhāva-viśeṣataḥ) they desire (sva-sva-priya-viśeṣā).

Granting that devotees in select parts of Vaikuṅṭha are empowered to enjoy special privileges according to their unique devotional moods, there may still remain doubt about where the most confidential devotees of the Lord reside.

Within the realm of Vaikuṅṭha a few special places do exist, such as Ayodhyā and Dvārakā, where more intimate forms of pure devotional service are manifest.

For each replica abode of the Lord on earth there is an original abode in Vaikuṅṭha.

As stated in scripture,

yā yathā bhuvī vartante puryo bhagavataḥ priyāḥ
tās tathā santi vaikuṅṭhe tat-tal-līlārtham adṛtāḥ

“On this earth (bhuvi) there are many sacred cities (puryah vartante) dear to the Personality of Godhead (yā yathā bhagavataḥ priyāḥ), and all of them also exist in Vaikuṅṭha (tās tathā santi vaikuṅṭhe), where they are revered (ādṛtāḥ) for their importance in the Lord’s various pastimes (tat-tal-līlā artham).”

Mother Uttarā is speaking as if the liberated devotees of Vaikuṅṭha
represent all five varieties of Vaiṣṇavas—jñāna-bhaktas, śuddha-
bhaktas, prema-bhaktas, prema-para-bhaktas, and premātura-
bhaktas.



In fact, however, she speaks without much conviction, because as far
as she understands, the devotees of Vaikuṅṭha are not divided into
such categories.

2.1.20

parām kāṣṭhām gatam tat-tad-
rasa-jātīyatocitam
athāpi rāsa-kṛt-tādr̥g-
bhaktānām astu kā gatiḥ

Every devotee is
perfectly satisfied in
his/her relationship with K.
BUT
What is the destination of the devotees
of rāsavilāsi?
Devotees of
Valkyrie

(They) have all attained the ultimate limit of happiness (parām kāṣṭhām gatam), each in his own kind of ecstatic reciprocation with the Lord (tat-tad-rasa-jātīyatā ucitam). But (athāpi) what place is destined (kā gatiḥ astu) for the exceptional devotees of the performer of the rāsa dance (rāsa-kṛt-tādr̥g-bhaktānām)?

“Well,” someone might ask, “if there is a hierarchy of greater and lesser devotees in Vaikuntha, then only some of them are fully happy. Is that proper? Aren’t devotees of the Supreme Lord, especially those who have attained Vaikuntha, greater than mere liberated souls? Don’t they enjoy the highest happiness, above that of liberation?”

The current verse clears this doubt.

All the residents of Vaikuntha enjoy incomparable happiness, but some gradation of happiness still exists because each devotee relishes a mixture of ecstasies that make up his individual devotional mood, or rasa.

It is natural, therefore, that according to a devotee's sthāyi-bhāva, the predominating mood of his ecstatic rasa, he receive a particular degree and kind of happiness.

Degree & kind
of happiness

śānta rati
dasya
sakhye
vātsalye
mellāyā

Nonetheless, each devotee thinks that his happiness is perfect and complete, because it exactly suits his personality.

Having acknowledged this, Mother Uttarā next expresses her own doubt about the devotees of Kṛṣṇa, whose spontaneous love for the Lord is greater than all other varieties of prema.

In Vaikuṅṭha is there a special place where those devotees can enjoy the supreme happiness they deserve?

Within Uttarā's question are the following implications: ^① The śuddha-bhaktas, in their worship of the Supreme Lord, enjoy greater ecstasy than the jñāna-bhaktas.

But although the devotees in Vaikuṅṭha find themselves in a hierarchy that would normally cause envy, quarrel, and other kinds of conflict, those devotees are free from jealousy and other faults, which are the root causes of pain and lamentation.

Without this purity they could not reside in Vaikuṅṭha.

Being affectionately attached to one another in sublime prema, they all feel ever-increasing happiness in their worship of the Lord.

As already mentioned, the śuddha-bhaktas, whose devotion to the Lord does not depend on the pleasure of life in Vaikuṅṭha, are higher than the more conditional jñāna-bhaktas.

That being so, what about the status of devotees still more elevated?

What about the Lord's best servants, the prema-bhaktas, who are indifferent to all possible selfish concerns?

What about the Lord's supreme friends, the prema-para-bhaktas, who receive His unconditional special favor?

And what about His closest loved ones, the premātura-bhaktas, who are bound by the most intimate relationships with the Lord and who live only for His satisfaction?

What special place can be found in Vaikuṅṭha for those superexcellent devotees?

The Skanda Purāṇa explains that exceptional regions do exist in Vaikuṅṭha.

Vaikuṅṭha has transcendental cities such as Ayodhyā and Dvārakā, which, like their counterparts on earth, are filled with the Supreme Lord's personal associates and paraphernalia.

In those supreme places the Lord is always present in His most attractive forms.

Thus, for example, ^{योग भक्ता} in the Ayodhyā region of Vaikuntha devotees of the standard of Hanumān constantly see the Lord of the Raghus, Lord Rāmacandra, attended by Śrī Sītā, Lakṣmaṇa, and the rest of His entourage.

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2.1.21

ye sarva-nairapekṣyena
rādhā-dāsyecchavaḥ param
saṅkīrtayanti tan-nāma
tādṛśa-priyatā-mayāḥ

They chant His names (saṅkīrtayanti tan-nāma) and are full of unique love for Him (tādṛśa-priyatā-mayāḥ). Indifferent to everything else (sarva-nairapekṣyena), they want only to become servants of Śrī Rādhā (ye rādhā-dāsyā icchavaḥ param).

They chant His
names & have unique
love for Him. They are
indifferent to everything else
& they want only rādhā-dāsyam

The devotees of Śrī Rādhā, who is the dearmost beloved of Lord Madana-gopāla, are not impersonalists void of desires.

They are fully confident that if Śrī Rādhikā accepts them as Her servants, everything they desire will be achieved, and more.

The privilege of serving Śrī Rādhā is the rarest goal of life, and it is fitting that this privilege be attainable only by executing the most excellent of sādhanas.

That is to say, one can please Her Divine Grace only by the sacrifice of purely chanting the names of Śrī Rāsa-rasika, the hero of the rāsa dance. In sweet voices the servants of Śrī Rādhā always melodiously and loudly chant Kṛṣṇa's names.

Such devotees are worthy to engage in such elevated service because their hearts are filled with the supreme variety of spontaneous ecstatic love for Kṛṣṇa.

2.1.22

anyeṣām iva teṣām ca
prāpyam ced hṛn na tṛpyati
aho nanda-yaśodāder
na sahe tādrśīm gatim

I cannot tolerate
if you tell me that
these special devotees would
also attain the same perfection
as the vaikunthasīs

If those special devotees (teṣām ced) attain (prāpyam) only the same perfection as others (anyeṣām iva), my heart will be left discontent (hṛd na tṛpyati). For such devotees as Nanda and Yaśodā (nanda-yaśodā ādeh) to reach only the same destination (tādrśīm gatim)—to me the very thought is intolerable (aho na sahe).

Someone might propose that Śrī Mathurā-purī, like Ayodhyā and Dvārakā,
may be located in Vaikuṅṭha.

↓
वृन्दापुर

The devotees of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa may thus have their Vaikuṅṭha Gokula
where they can enjoy pastimes with the Lord and feel happiness greater than
that of the Yādavas, just as the Yādavas enjoy happiness greater than that of
the Pāṇḍavas.

Uttarā, however, is not satisfied with this proposal.

She cannot tolerate having the devotees of Gokula categorized with other,
ordinary Vaiṣṇavas.

These devotees
are unlicently super
excellent

2.1.23

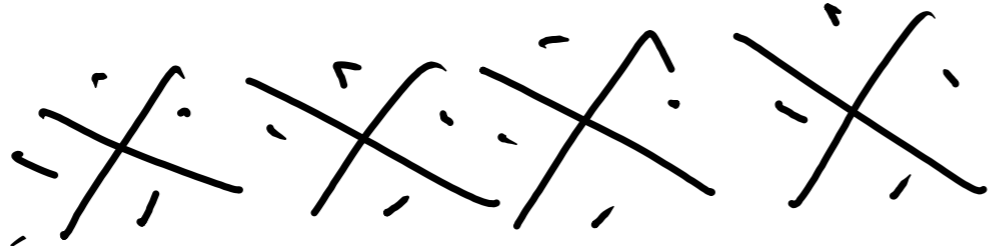
vividhānām mahimnām hi
yatra kāṣṭhāḥ parāḥ parāḥ
koṭīnām paryavasyanti
samudre sarito yathā

Varied (vividhānām) and countless (koṭīnām parāḥ parāḥ kāṣṭhāḥ)
excellences (mahimnām) flow (paryavasyanti) into those devotees
(yatra), like rivers into the ocean (samudre sarito yathā).

All varieties of perfection are fully manifest in the devotees of Gokula.

Those devotees are perfectly beautiful, charming, and graceful, and they are endowed with the valuable assets of religious duty, economic development, sense gratification, renunciation, knowledge, realization, devotion, and pure love of God.

All these perfections are present within them to the utmost degree possible for finite living beings.



Whenever Śrī Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta depicts the glories of devotees lesser than the residents of Gokula, its purpose is to highlight the greater glories of the Gokula-vāsīs and demonstrate that all varieties of excellence flow ultimately into the residents of Gokula, just as the waters of all rivers flow at last into the ocean.