

Śrī Brhad-bhāgavatāmṛta

by Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī

Volume-2

Śrī-goloka-māhātmya

The Glories of Goloka

Chapter-1

Vairāgya: Renunciation

2.1.30

tac-chiṣya-rūpeṇa ca mat-priyaṃ taṃ
saṃśrāvya śāpaṃ nilayāndha-kūpāt
śrī-vāsudevena vikṛsya nītaḥ
prāyopaveśāya matim dyu-nadyām

7. Gave the form of
curse to ~~me~~ pull
me out of family life
8. Inspired me to
fast till death on
the banks of
Gaṅgā.

When I heard of that curse (taṃ śāpaṃ saṃśrāvya), I took it as most welcome (mat-priyaṃ). Śrī Vāsudeva (śrī-vāsudevena), in the form of a brāhmaṇa's disciple (tac-śiṣya-rūpeṇa), was dragging me out (vikṛsya) of the blind well of family life (nilaya andha-kūpāt) and guiding me to choose to fast till death (prāyopaveśāya matim nītaḥ) on the shore of the celestial Gaṅgā (dyu-nadyām).

When I heard this
curse, I welcomed it &
saw the it was @ the
form of string cursing me to
pull me out of the blind well of
family life & guiding
me to fast till death
on the banks of Gaṅgā

By another fortunate circumstance, someone informed Parīkṣit that he was cursed to die in seven days.

Had Parīkṣit remained unaware of this news, he would never have gone to the bank of the Gaṅgā to fast in preparation for death.

Although Parīkṣit has poetically described the brāhmaṇa's curse as a cause of fear, the truth is that when Parīkṣit learned of the curse he was unfearing and even pleased.

He was already hoping for such a reaction to his offense.

Thus he says here, mat-priyaṁ tam: “I took it as most welcome.”

In the last chapter of the First Canto of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (1.19.2), just before hearing of the curse, Parīksit expressed his mind:

(dhruvaṃ tato me kṛta-deva-helanād)
(duratyayaṃ vyasaṇam) (nāti-dīrghāt)
(tad astu kāmaṃ) hy (agha-niṣkṛtāya me)
(yathā) (na kuryām punar evam addhā)

Because of my disrespect for this godly person (**me kṛta-deva-helanād**) it is certain (**dhruvaṃ**) that unpreventable misfortune (**tato duratyayaṃ vyasaṇam**) will come very soon (**na ati-dīrghāt**). Let that be direct atonement for my sin in full force (**tad astu kāmaṃ hy agha-niṣkṛtāya me**), so that I will not commit (**yathā na kuryām**) such an act again (**punar evam addhā**).

He wanted the reaction to come immediately, without delay (nāti-dīrghāt).

And he wanted the punishment to fall directly on himself (addhā), rather than on one of his sons or someone else.

Here Parīkṣit calls his family life a blind well, a well from which he was incapable of lifting himself.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa very kindly pulled him out of that well and brought him to the shore of the celestial river Gaṅgā.

Kṛṣṇa, as Lord Vāsudeva, the presiding Deity of consciousness, also attracted Parīksit's mind to the idea of fasting from food and drink until death.

Because the Lord personally took control of him, Parīksit did not remain in his palace and try to counteract the curse by performing yajña (sacrifice) and prāyaścitta (atonement for an accidental fall into sinful activity).

Kṛṣṇa is Vāsudeva, the Supersoul of all, and He is the son of Śrī Vasudeva, who is a reservoir of supreme compassion and gentleness.

Therefore it was only natural for Kṛṣṇa to favor His dear devotee Parīkṣit by arranging such a circumstance.

2.1.31

munīndra-goṣṭhyām upadeśya tattvaṁ
śukātmanā yena bhayaṁ nirasya
pramodya ca sva-priya-saṅga-dānāt
kathāmṛtaṁ samprati ca prapāyye

- ⑨ He dispelled my fear by explaining SB through ś'G.
- ⑩ He arranged for wonderful association for me.

In the assembly of most eminent sages (munīndra-goṣṭhyām), the Lord dispelled my fear (yena bhayaṁ nirasya) by explaining the truth (upadeśya tattvaṁ) through Sukadeva (śukātmanā). And the Lord delighted me (pramodya ca) by granting the association of His dear devotees (sva-priya-saṅga-dānāt). Now I shall help you drink (samprati ca prapāyye) the nectar of topics about the Lord (kathāmṛtaṁ).

Many eminent sages like Vasistha, Parāśara, Vyāsa, and Nārada assembled to witness Parīkṣit's passing away.

The word goṣṭhyām, which sometimes means “in a discussion,” indicates that first there was some debate among the sages, as described in Śrī Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya:

tena te devatā-tattva prṣṭā vādān vitenire
nānā-śāstra-vido viprā mithaḥ sādhana-dūṣaṇaiḥ

harir daivam śivo daivam bhāskaro daivam ity uta
kāla eva svabhāvas tu karmaiveti pṛthag jaguḥ

“Having been asked (tena prṣṭā) the truth about the Supreme Lord (devatā-tattvam), the sages (te viprā), who were expert in many scriptures (nānā-śāstra-vidah), expounded a number of different theories (vādān vitenire). Each sage tried to refute the validity of what the others recommended for spiritual practice (mithaḥ sādhanadūṣaṇaiḥ). They made various opposing claims (pṛthag jaguḥ): ‘Hari is the Supreme Lord.’ ‘Śiva is the Supreme Lord (harir daivam śivo daivam).’ ‘The sun is the Supreme Lord (bhāskaro daivam ity uta).’ ‘Time is the Supreme (kālah eva).’ ‘Man’s nature is supreme (svabhāvas tu).’ ‘Karma is supreme (karma eva iti).’ ”

The word goṣṭhyām can also mean “in the assembly.”

Taken that way, it indicates that what Śukadeva told Parīksit was irrefutably authoritative because the greatest sages of the universe unanimously approved it.

The philosophical disagreements ended with the arrival of Śukadeva. Through Śukadeva, the son of Vyāsa, Kṛṣṇa Himself imparted to Parīksit the essential spiritual instructions of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.

Śukadeva enlightened Parīksit in two ways.

2 ways in which ŚG enlightened PM

① By teaching the factual nature of the body and the soul, he removed Parīksit's fear—his fear of the bite of the snake-bird Takṣaka and of the cycle of birth and death.

② And by teaching about transcendental topics such as the glories of devotional service to the Personality of Godhead, Śukadeva filled Parīksit with joy.

By the time Parīkṣit spoke this verse to his mother, his divine spiritual master had already gone away, and the time for death had arrived.

But Kṛṣṇa continued to favor Parīkṣit by again blessing him with the association of a saintly Vaiṣṇava, namely his own mother.

Parīkṣit therefore says to her, “Now let me serve you hari-kathāmṛta, the excellent nectarean topics of the Lord.”

To be able to drink hari-kathāmṛta in the company of the Lord’s beloved devotees is the most desirable achievement in life.

① has delayed my
time of demise so that
I can describe to
you the essence of
all Vaisnava scriptures

kṛṣṇam praṇamya nirupādhi-kṛpākaram tam
saṁvardhya vipra-vacanādarato grhītam
svasyānta-kālam idam eka-manā bruve te
praśnottaram sakala-vaiṣṇava-śāstra-sāram

11. By delaying his
passing away
& giving him
time to narrate
BBA to (U)

I bow down to Him, Śrī Kṛṣṇa (tam kṛṣṇam praṇamya), the reservoir of causeless mercy (nirupādhi-kṛpākaram). Out of respect for the words of the brāhmaṇa (vipra-vacana ādarato), I have accepted (grhītam) the appointed time for my demise (svasya anta-kālam). That time being momentarily delayed (idam saṁvardhya), I shall answer your question (te praśna uttaram) with one-pointed attention (eka-manā) by describing the essence of all Vaisnava scriptures (sakala-vaiṣṇava-śāstra-sāram bruve).

Someone might suggest it inappropriate for a saintly person like Parīkṣit Mahārāja to advertise his own good qualities.

Anticipating such a doubt, Parīkṣit explains that everything praiseworthy he has said about himself is due only to the causeless mercy of Kṛṣṇa.

Kṛṣṇa is the source of all undeserved mercy; if we see a generous person act kindly to someone undeserving, that kindness is but a small portion from the original, infinite repository of causeless mercy.

“Thus,” Parīksit submits, “even though I am the most fallen and unworthy soul, devoid of good qualities, many excellences have appeared in me, and these are nothing other than excellences of Kṛṣṇa.

My speaking praise of myself, therefore, is faultless.”

These moments are supposed to be the last of King Parīksit’s life, but somehow they are being extended so that he has time to satisfy his mother, who wants to hear the essence of the nectar of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.

Parīkṣit thus intends to give full attention to his answer, even at the cost of the yogic meditation he should perform while preparing for death.

Parīkṣit thus intends to give full attention to his answer, even at the cost of the yogic meditation he should perform while preparing for death.

I. Could satisfy you
by quoting śrutis &
smṛtis both directly &
by giving purport

2.1.33

śruti-smṛtīnām vākyāni
sākṣāt tātparyato 'py aham
vyākhyāya bodhayitvatat
tvām santoṣayitum kṣamaḥ

I could satisfy your request (aham tvām etat santoṣayitum kṣamaḥ)
by explaining to you (vyākhyāya bodhayitvā) the statements of the
śrutis and smṛtis (śruti-smṛtīnām vākyāni), both in their literal
meaning and in their implications (sākṣāt tātparyato apy).

One way to answer his mother's inquiry would be to systematically explain the authoritative philosophical statements of revealed scriptures.

To do this, he would carefully have to discern which scriptural passages should be accepted literally and which need to be interpreted conditionally or figuratively to agree with what has already been established as real.

But I prefer to
clarify this subject by
quoting a history that
I got from my SM. This
history will dispel your doubts

2.1.34

tathāpi sva-guroḥ prāptam
prasādāt saṁśaya-cchidam
atretihāsam ādau te
vyaktārtham kathayāmy amum

But (tathāpi) I prefer to clarify this subject for you (atra te
vyaktārtham) by first (ādau) relating a history (kathayāmy ihāsam) I
learned (prāptam) by the mercy of my spiritual master (sva-guroḥ
prasādāt). This narration (amum) will dispel your doubts (te
saṁśaya-cchidam).

Vyāsa never formally initiated his son Śukadeva Gosvāmī, and Śukadeva never formally initiated his student Parīkṣit.

Nonetheless, the entire tradition of hearing Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam in the transcendental bhāgavata line of disciplic succession rests on the foundation of the relationship between Śukadeva and Parīkṣit as guru and disciple.

Parīksit will recount in his own words the essence of what he heard from his guru, taking care to present the literal facts in the most straightforward way.

He does not want his mother to suffer any confusion or doubt.

Long ago these lived
a poor brāhmaṇa, who was
ignorant of scriptures & who
hankered after abundant wealth

2.1.35

vipro niṣkiñcanaḥ kaścit
purā prāgjyotiṣe pure
vasann ajñāta-śāstrārtho
bahu-draviṇa-kāmyayā

Long ago (purā) in the city of Prāgjyotiṣa (prāgjyotiṣe pure) there lived (vasann) a poor brāhmaṇa (kaścit niṣkiñcanaḥ viprah). He was ignorant of the teachings of scripture (ajñāta-śāstrārtho), and he hankered after abundant wealth (bahu-draviṇa-kāmyayā).

2.1.36 -37

tatratya-devīm kāmākhyām śraddhayānu-dinaṁ bhajan

tasyāḥ sakāśāt tuṣṭāyāḥ svapne mantram daśākṣaram

lebhe madana-gopāla- caranāmbhoja-daivatam

tad-dhyānādi-vidhānādhyam sākṣād iva mahā-nidhim

Every day (anu-dinaṁ) he would faithfully worship Kāmākhyā (kāmākhyām śraddhayā bhajan), the goddess of that place (tatratya-devīm). And when she became satisfied (tuṣṭāyāḥ) he received from her (tasyāḥ sakāśāt lebhe) in a dream (svapne) the ten-syllable mantra (daśākṣaram mantram) for worshiping the lotus feet of Madana-gopāla (madana-gopāla- caranāmbhoja-daivatam). The goddess also gave him instructions on how to meditate upon the mantra and perform various details of practice (tad-dhyānādi-vidhāna ādhyam). The mantra manifested itself before him like a valuable treasure-chest opened right before his eyes (sākṣād iva mahā-nidhim).

Everybody he used
to worship Kāmākhyā devi &
one day she gave him a 10 syllabled
mantra to worship Lord Madana Gopāla
She also instructed in
on how to meditate &
details of practice
↳ Mantra manifested
before his eyes

This brāhmaṇa lived in the northeast of India, in what is now the state of Assam.

His city, Prāgjyotiṣa, had been the capital of Bhaumāsura during the time of the advent of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

The brāhmaṇa had never studied the scriptures properly and had never heard a basic explanation of their message from authorized teachers.

That such an unfortunate fool achieved all his ambitions is proof of the potency of the mantra he received.

The ten-syllable gopāla-mantra is defined in esoteric terms in the book Krama-dīpikā, an old Vaiṣṇava tantra by Keśava Ācārya.

Vedic and tantric mantras should be chanted only by qualified persons who have received them through proper initiation.

Therefore, when books discuss these mantras, special efforts are made to disguise the exact syllables of the mantra.

Sometimes a few syllables are changed or inverted in the description, or sometimes, as in the Krama-dīpikā's presentation of this gopāla-mantra, the explanation is impossible to understand by those who are unfamiliar with the cryptic code being used.

Thus Krama-dīpikā describes the ten-syllable gopāla-mantra as follows: śārṅgī sottara-dantaḥ śūro vāmākṣi-yug-dvitiyo 'rṇaḥ, śūlī śaurir bālo balānuja-dvayam athākṣara-catuṣkam.

“The holder of the bow Śarṅga, the upper teeth, then Śūra, and the second letter conjoined with the goddess Vānākṣī, then the bearer of the trident, and Śauri, and Bāla, and twice the younger brother of Bala, and four more syllables.”

The Deity worshiped by this mantra is Śrī Madana-gopāla, who happens to be the worshipable Deity of Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī.

Kāmākhyā Devī gave the brāhmaṇa not only the mantra but also the method for meditating on the mantra's Deity; and, as implied by the word ādi ("and so on"), she also told him how to touch one's body to sanctify it with the syllables of the mantra and how to worship the Deity through various means, including appropriate hand gestures.

How was the brāhmaṇa's attention attracted away from his worship of Devī?

The gopāla-mantra made such a vivid impression on him that he completely forgot his other religious activities.

On the order of the
devī he chanted the mantra
& gradually lost all interest
for wealth & he became satisfied

2.1.38

devy-ādeśena taṁ mantraṁ
vivikte satataṁ japan
dhaneccchāyā nivṛtto 'bhūl
lebhe ca hr̥di nirvṛtim

On the order of the goddess (devy-ādeśena), he chanted the mantra (taṁ mantra japan) constantly (satataṁ) to himself in a secluded place (vivikte). Gradually he gave up his desire for wealth (dhana icchāyā nivṛttah abhūt), and his heart became satisfied (lebhe ca hr̥di nirvṛtim).

The brāhmaṇa was ^{insight} so foolish that he ignored the advice of the goddess and dismissed the mantra as the false creation of a dream.

She then appeared to him in a second dream to repeat her instructions.

He could not
understand the relevance
of this mantra
↓
He thought that there must be
some other sādhana to achieve some
other sādhya


2.1.39

vastu-tattvānabhijño 'nyat
sa kiñcit pāra-laukikam
sādhanam kila sādhyam ca
vartamānam amanyata

Ignorant of the real facts (vastu-tattva anabhijñah), he thought (sah amanyata) that something other than this mantra (anyat kiñcit), something in the next life (pāra-laukikam), must be his means of success and the goal of his endeavors (sādhanam kila sādhyam ca vartamānam).

Lacking discrimination, the brāhmaṇa was unable to recognize the value of the mantra relative to other things in his life; his judgment of what to accept and what to reject was impaired.

But by the grace of the mantra, his mind, previously uninterested in the next life, now began to turn in that direction.

 → *kāṁkṣyē devāḥ vitthēd from the Brāhmaṇa the knowledge of the full power of the mantra.*

The goddess had withheld from him knowledge about the full power of this mantra, and so he was imagining other goals and means of success.

But as we shall see later in this narration, the effectiveness of the gopāla-mantra, even when knowledge about it is lacking, is evidence of its great potency.

The mantra bestows all benefits even when chanted without faith or understanding.

He left home &
went to holy places
maintaining himself by begging.
He finally reached Gaṅgā saṅgamam

2.1.40

grhādikaṃ parityajya
bhramams tīrtheṣu bhikṣayā
gato nirvāhayan dehaṃ
gaṅgā-sāgara-saṅgamam

He left his home and other connections (grhādikaṃ parityajya) and began wandering among pilgrimage places (bhramams tīrtheṣu), maintaining his bodily needs by begging (bhikṣayā nirvāhayan dehaṃ). And thus he traveled to the place where the Gaṅgā meets the ocean (gatah gaṅgā-sāgara-saṅgamam).

The brāhmaṇa's chanting gradually increasing its effect, he soon gave up sinful activities and needless sense gratification and took up a renounced life.

There, he saw
many brahmins expert
to the part of knowledge

2.1.41

viprān gaṅgā-taṭe 'paśyat
sarva-vidyā-viśāradān
sva-dharmācāra-niratān
prāyaśo grhiṇo bahūn

There on the shore of the Gaṅgā (gaṅgā-taṭe) he saw many
brāhmaṇas (apaśyat bahūn viprān), mostly family men (prāyaśo
grhiṇah), who were expert in all fields of knowledge (sarva-vidyā-
viśāradān) and devoted to performing their prescribed duties (sva-
dharmācāra-niratān).

Since the tīrtha he was visiting, Gaṅgā-sāgara, was in southern Bengal at the confluence of the Gaṅgā and the sea, the brāhmaṇas he met were Bengalis.

They were expert in the fourteen Vedic departments of learning enumerated in the Viṣṇu Purāṇa (3.6.27):

aṅgāni vedāś catvāro
mīmāṃsā nyāya-vistarahaḥ
dharma-śāstram purāṇam ca
vidyā hy etāś caturdaśa

“The four ^④ Vedas (vedāś catvāro), their six supplements, ^⑤ the ^① Purāṇas, the ^② Dharma-śāstras (dharma-śāstram purāṇam ca), the ^③ Mīmāṃsā interpretation of the Vedas (mīmāṃsā), and the elaborate ^④ science of Nyāya logic (nyāya-vistarahaḥ)—these are the fourteen departments of learning (etāh hy caturdaśa vidyā aṅgāni).”

He heard from
them about the
subject of kosha &
Kosha-phala

2.1.42

tair varṇyamānam ācāram
nitya-naimittikādikam
āvaśyakam tathā kāmyam
svargam śuśrāva tat-phalam

He heard (śuśrāva) them describe (tair varṇyamānam) regular and occasional duties (nitya-naimittikādikam ācāram) one is obliged to perform (āvaśyakam), optional duties for particular desires (tathā kāmyam), and the fruit of these acts (tat-phalam)—attainment of heaven (svargam).

Brāhmanas initiated into the Vedic rituals are expected to perform certain sacrifices regularly as a matter of duty, sacrifices like the Agnihotra yajña, which must be done twice every day, at sunrise and sunset.

↓ Nitya Karma

Such brāhmanas may also be obliged to execute other rituals because of special circumstances in their lives, when, for example, they must perform the śrāddha memorial on the anniversary of an elder's death.

↓ Naimittika

Besides these obligatory nitya (and naimittika) duties, a brāhmaṇa may also elect to undertake certain sacrifices and vows, called kāmya rituals, to fulfill personal ambitions.

→ Kāmya Karma

Thus there are three kinds of duties for Vedic brāhmaṇas

The brāhmaṇa from Prāgjyotiṣa-pura (may have heard) the local brāhmaṇas of Gaṅgā-sāgara thus glorify the principles of dharma:

ācāra-prabhavo dharmo
dharmasya prabhur acyutaḥ

“Dharma arises from proper behavior (ācāra-prabhavo dharmo),
and the Lord of dharma is the infallible Personality of Godhead
(dharmasya prabhur acyutaḥ).”

sad-ācāravatā puṁsā
jitau lokāṁ ubhāv api

“A person who possesses good behavior (sad-ācāravatā puṁsā) has
conquered both this world and the next (jitau lokāṁ ubhāv api).”

The local brāhmaṇas may have also glorified heaven as the fruit of dharma with such words as these:

yan na duḥkhena sambhinnaṃ
na ca grastam anantaram
abhilāṣopanītaṃ ca
sukhaṃ tat svar

“The happiness of the residents of heaven (sukhaṃ tat svar) is untainted (na ca grastam anantaram), never consumed by misery (yan na duḥkhena sambhinnaṃ), and it comes to them just as they desire (abhilāṣopanītaṃ ca).” (Vādārtha of Gadādhara Bhaṭṭa)