Śrī Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta

by Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī

Volume-2

Śrī-goloka-māhātmya

The Glories of Goloka

Chapter-1

Vairāgya: Renunciation

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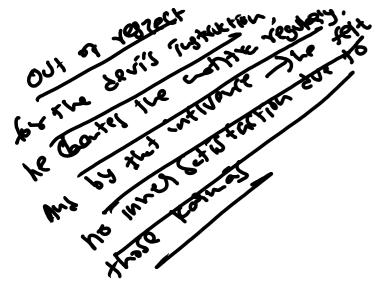
nānā-saṅkalpa-vākyaiś ca tad-anuṣṭhāna-niṣṭhatām dṛṣṭvā tatrodita-śraddhaḥ pravṛttaḥ śikṣitaḥ sa taiḥ

From the various words they spoke to express their determined vows (nānā-sankalpa-vākyaiś ca), he saw (dṛṣṭvā) how firm the brāhmaṇas were in their intentions to perform these duties (tadanuṣṭhāna-niṣṭhatām). His faith aroused (tatra udita-śraddhaḥ), he began to follow (pravṛttaḥ) this process (sah) according to their instructions (taiḥ śikṣitaḥ).

The brāhmana not only heard the glories of dharma in theory but saw exemplars practicing what they preached.

He heard them declare their intentions (sankalpas) to perform such duties as bathing daily in the Gangā and then watched as they diligently carried these duties out.

Although in all his life he had received no useful spiritual education, these brāhmaṇas were now carefully teaching him the principles of dharma according to their understanding.

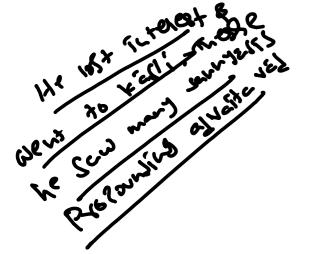


devy-ājñādarato mantram api nityam raho japan tat-prabhāvān na lebhe 'ntaḥ santoṣam teṣu karmasu

2.1.44

Out of respect for the goddess's order (devy-ājñā ādarato), he regularly continued to chant his mantra quietly in private (mantram api nityam aho japan). And by the influence of the mantra (tat-prabhāvāt), he felt no inner satisfaction (ma lebhe antah santoṣam) from those rituals (teṣu karmasu).

Attraction to worshiping the Supreme Lord defeats attraction to lesser religious practices.



2.1.45

sa nirvidya gatah kāśīm dadarśa bahu-deśa-jān yati-prāyān janāms tatrādvaita-vyākhyā-vivādinah

He therefore lost interest (sah nirvidya) and went to Kāśī (gataḥ kāśīṃ), where he saw (tatra dadarśa) people from many different regions (bahu-deśa-jān), especially sannyāsīs (yati-prāyān janān) propounding the theory of monism (advaita-vyākhyā-vivādinaḥ).

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2.1.46

viśveśvaram pranamyādau gatvā prati-maṭham yatīn natvā sambhāṣya viśrāmam teṣām pārśve cakāra saḥ

He first offered his obeisances (saḥ ādau praṇamya) to Lord Viśveśvara (viśveśvaram) and then visited the various āśramas (gatvā prati-maṭham), where he bowed down to the sannyāsīs (yatīn natvā), had discussions with them (sambhāṣya), and rested in their company (teṣām pārśve viśrāmam cakāra).

As the deity Viśveśvara, Lord Śiva presides over his sacred abode of Kāśī, also known in Sanskrit as Vārāṇasī and known popularly as Benares.

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2.1.47

vādeṣu śuddha-buddhīnām teṣām pāṇi-tala-stha-vat mokṣam bodhayatām vākyaiḥ sāram mene sa tan-matam

The intelligence of these sannyāsīs was pure (śuddha-buddhīnām), or at least it seemed so from their philosophical talks (teṣām vādeṣu). Their words described liberation (mokṣam bodhayatām vākyaiḥ) as something readily available, as if held in the palm of one's hand (pāṇi-tala-stha-vat), and this inspired him to accept their opinions as perfect (sāram mene sa tad-matam).

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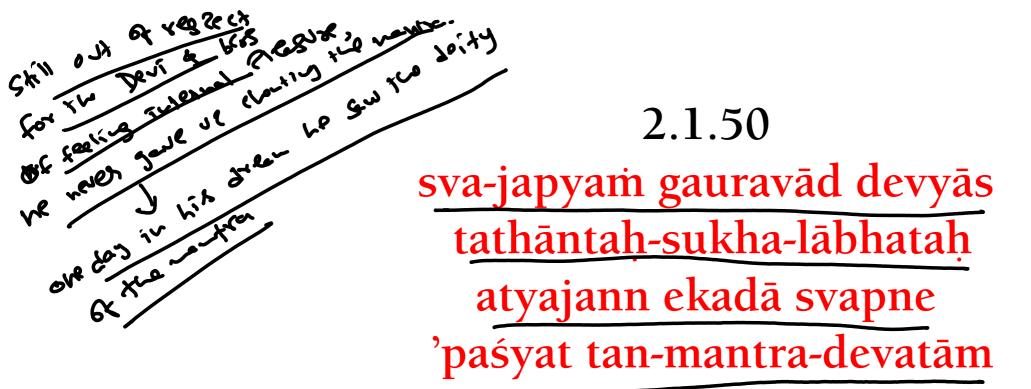
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2.1.48-49

śṛṇvann aviratam nyāsa- moksotkarṣa-parāṇi saḥ tebhyo vedānta-vākyāni maṇikarṇyām samācaran

snānam viśveśvaram paśyams teṣām saṅge 'prayāsatah miṣṭeṣṭa-bhogān bhuñjānaḥ sannyāsam kartum iṣṭavān

He would constantly hear (saḥ śṛṇvann aviratan) from them (tebhyo) descriptions of the Vedānta doctrine (vedānta-vākyāni), glorifying renunciation and liberation (nyāsa-mokṣotkarṣa-parāṇi). He would bathe at Maṇikarṇikā-ghāṭa (maṇikarṇyām snānaṃ samācaran) and have darśana of Lord Viśveśvara (viśveśvaram paśyan), and, without having to work for his meals (aprayāsataḥ), he would enjoy tasty food to his liking (miṣṭa iṣṭa-bhogān bhuñjānaḥ) in the company of the sannyāsīs (teṣām saṅge). He thus developed the desire to become a sannyāsī himself (sannyāsam kartum iṣṭavān).



Still, out of respect for the goddess (gauravād devyāh), and because it gave him pleasure within (tathā antaḥ-sukha-lābhataḥ), he never gave up chanting his mantra (sva-japyam atyajann). And one day (ekadā) he saw (apaśyat) the Deity of his mantra (tan-mantra-devatām) in a dream (svapne).

The Prāgjyotisa-pura brāhmana's faith was damaged by the impersonal propaganda he heard in Kāśī, by which his hope to meet the Lord of the universe was replaced with a false hope to merge into oneness.

Nonetheless, he went on with his mantra-japa because he held the goddess Kāmākhyā in awe and was unwilling to violate her order.

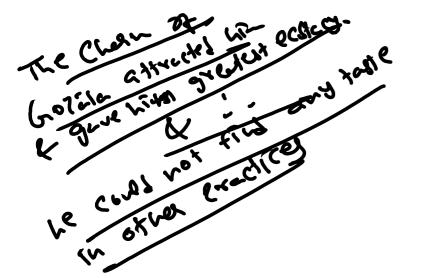
Despite his weakened faith in the mantra, it continued to exert its transcendental influence.

His heart could derive no substantial contentment from the promises of the Vedānta texts, because he spontaneously felt more gratification from chanting Lord Gopāla's mantra.

Perhaps the brāhmaṇa's attraction to liberation could never have been dispelled had Śrī Gopāla, the Deity of his mantra, not personally appeared in his dream.

Or perhaps his hope for liberation would have dissipated anyway by the power of the mantra.

In any case, his heart changed.



tan-mahā-ramyatākṛṣṭaḥ paramānanda-gocaraḥ taj-japānya-pravṛttau hi na lebhe sa mano-balam

The charm of Śrī Gopāla attracted him (tad-mahā-ramyatā ākṛṣṭaḥ) and gave him the greatest ecstasy (paramānanda-gocaraḥ). And thereafter he could no longer find the mental strength (na lebhe sa mano-balam) to engage in anything other than chanting his mantra (taj-japā anya-pravṛttau hi).

He no longer felt any enthusiasm for sannyāsa or liberation, what to speak of sacred baths and other rituals.

2.1.52

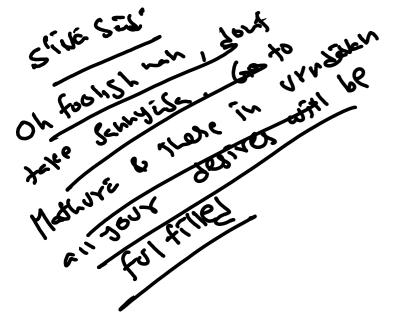
iti-kartavyatā-mūḍho
dīnaḥ san svapnam āgataḥ
tayā devyā sahāgatya
tatrādistah śivena sah

Confused about what he should do (iti-kartavyatā-mūḍho), he became depressed (dīnaḥ san). Then, in another dream (svapnam āgataḥ), Lord Śiva came to him, along with the goddess (śivena tayā devyā sahāgatya), to instruct him (saḥ tatra ādiṣṭaḥ).

His heart was drawn to Lord Gopāla, but his mind was in a dilemma: "Should I take sannyāsa and strive for liberation, or should I just chant my mantra?"

Such is the likely result of fellowship with impersonalists: one's determination becomes fickle, and one cannot choose the right thing to do.

In this third appearance in the brāhmana's dreams, the goddess Kāmākhyā brought along her husband, the lord of Kāśī, to make her presentation more convincing.



2.1.53

mā mūrkha kuru sannyāsam drutam śrī-mathurām vraja tatra vṛndāvane 'vaśyam pūrṇārthas tvam bhaviṣyasi

[Lord Śiva said:] Fo<u>olish man</u> (<u>mūrkha</u>), don't take sannyasa (<u>mākuru sannyāsam</u>)! Go at once to Śrī Mathurā (<u>drutam śrī-mathurām vraja</u>). There in the Vṛndāvana forest (<u>tatra vṛndāvane</u>) you will surely (<u>avaśyam tvam</u>) fulfill all your desires (<u>pūrṇārthah bhaviṣyasi</u>)."

sotkantho mathurām gantum muhus tām kīrtayams tatah sa tad-deśa-diśam gacchan prayāgam prāpa vartmani

Eager to go to Mathurā (mathurām gantum utkanthah), the brāhmana set off toward that district (sah tad-deśa-diśam gacchan tatah), all the while chanting its glories (muhuh tām kīrtayams). On the way he came to Prayāga (prayāgam prāpa vartmani).

The brāhmaṇa headed west, repeatedly chanting, "Mathurā! Mathurā!"