

Śrī Brhad-bhāgavatāmṛta

by Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī

Volume-2

Śrī-goloka-māhātmya

The Glories of Goloka

Chapter-1

Vairāgya: Renunciation

"A mere glimpse of
Him awards ~~small~~ goals
of life" → such wonders
I heard from Him, which
I had never heard before

2.1.164

praphulla-puṇḍarīkākṣe
tasminn eva iksite janeḥ
phalaṁ syād evaṁ aśrauṣaṁ
āścaryaṁ pūrvam aśrutam

Jaganāte

“A mere glimpse of Him (tasminn eva iksite), whose eyes are like lotuses in full bloom (praphulla-puṇḍarīkākṣe), grants the ultimate goal of life (janeḥ phalaṁ syād).” Such wonders I heard (evam āścaryaṁ aśrauṣaṁ), which I had never heard before (pūrvam aśrutam).

The Personality of Godhead may be visible elsewhere in other Deity forms, as indeed He is on the shore of the Gaṅgā in the kingdom where Gopa-kumāra was now living.

But the beauty of Lord Jagannātha is unique.

So exquisitely charming is His beauty that by seeing Him merely once one feels relief from all miseries.

That a glimpse of Lord Jagannātha is enough to perfect one's life is stated by Śrī Nārada in his talks with Śrī Prahlāda in the Padma Purāṇa:

śravaṇādyair upāyair yaḥ kathañcid drśyate mahah
nīlādri-śikhare bhāti sarva-cākṣuṣa-gocarah

tam eva paramātmānam ye prapaśyanti mānavāḥ
te yānti bhavanam viṣṇoḥ kim punar ye bhavādrśah

“The glories of the Lord (mahah), which are partly perceived (yaḥ kathañcid drśyate) by methods like hearing (śravaṇādyair upāyair), are openly visible (bhāti sarva-cākṣuṣa-gocarah) on the peak of the blue mountain (nīlādri-śikhare). Any human being (ye mānavāḥ) who sees (prapaśyanti) that Supreme Being (tam eva paramātmānam) will go to the abode of Viṣṇu (te yānti bhavanam viṣṇoḥ), what to speak of a great soul like you (kim punar ye bhavādrśah).”

As Gopa-kumāra heard from his visitors these glories of Puruṣottama-kṣetra, and more, wonder arose in his heart because he had never before heard anything like those glories.

Although the form of the Lord that Gopa-kumāra was worshiping was the same Personality of Godhead, Lord Śrī Jagannātha is the origin of all such incarnations of the Lord.

From seeing the source of all incarnations, especially at such an exceptional place as Puruṣottama-kṣetra, one can gain greater benefit than from seeing a mere incarnation.

Gopa-kumāra had not heard such facts about the Lord in all the days he had been worshiping Lord Viṣṇu on the shore of the Gaṅgā, nor had he developed firm attachment to worshiping the Lord's Deity.

Lack of attachment to the deity:
① Influence of his SM ② SPG → MG

That this was the combined influence of his divine spiritual master and the divine Personality of Godhead will be explained more clearly later in this narration.

We shall see how Gopa-kumāra's guru and Gopa-kumāra's worshipable Lord continually exert their influence on his step-by-step spiritual progress.

Overcome by desire to see LTN,
In a moment I gave up everything
& went towards puri

2.1.165

tad-didrksābhibhūto 'ham
sarvaṁ santyajya tat-kṣaṇe
saṅkīrtayan jagannātham
auḍhra-deśa-diśam śritah

Overcome by desire to see Lord Jagannātha (tad-didrksa
abhibhūtah), in a moment (tat-kṣaṇe) I abandoned everything
(aham sarvaṁ santyajya) and set off in the direction of Orissa
(auḍhra-deśa-diśam śritah), chanting Lord Jagannātha's glories
(saṅkīrtayan jagannātham).

Gopa-kumāra was so inspired by the glories of Lord Jagannātha and the Lord's kṣetra that he gave up all external and internal affinity to the kingdom and everything related to it.

He at once began his journey to Jagannātha Purī, heading off in the general direction of Orissa.

While on the road he constantly chanted the four syllables of Lord Jagannātha's name.

I quickly reached puri
all & offered obeisances to
enter the temple

2.1.166

tat kṣetram acirāt prāptas
tatratyān daṇḍa-van naman
antaḥ-puraṁ praviṣṭo 'ham
teṣāṁ karuṇayā satām

I quickly reached that holy district of the Lord (tat kṣetram acirāt prāptas). Bowing down to all the residents (tatratyān daṇḍa-vat naman), by the mercy of those saintly persons (teṣāṁ satām karuṇayā) I was able to enter the temple grounds (antaḥ-puraṁ praviṣṭas aham).

Since Gopa-kumāra was a foreigner and no one knew what his business was, his sudden appearance on the temple ground might have aroused suspicion.

The pure Vaiṣṇavas of Puruṣottama-kṣetra, however, welcomed him kindly; they recognized that he had come to receive Lord Jagannātha's mercy.

Beauty of Jagannāṭh
described

2.1.167

dūrād adarśi puruṣottama-vaktra-candro
bhrājad-viśāla-nayano mani-pundra-bhālah
snigdhabhra-kāntir aruṇādhara-dīpti-ramyo
'śeṣa-prasāda-vikusat-smita-candrikādhyah

From a distance (dūrād) I saw (adarśi) the moonlike face (vaktra-candrah) of Lord Puruṣottama (puruṣottama), His broad eyes shining brilliantly (bhrājad-viśāla-nayano), His forehead decorated with tilaka made of gems (mani-pundra-bhālah). His complexion glowed like a cloud full of rain (snigdhabhra-kāntih), and the effulgence (dīpti) of His dawn-colored lips (aruṇadhara) was all-attractive (ramyah). Moonbeams (candrikā) of unlimited satisfaction (aśeṣa-prasāda) emanated (vikusat) from His smile (smita), adding to His beauty (ādhyah).

The round face of Lord Jagannātha is easily recognizable, even from a distance.

It gives joy to everyone, just like the full moon.

Gopa-kumāra had been meditating on the general features of the Lord's face even before seeing Him and now could see the details of the Lord's beauty for the first time.

Struck by the ecstasy of
pure love → I could not
go forward even though my
heart was calling me.
↓
I somehow managed to reach the
Garuda stambha

2.1.168

tatrāgrato gantu-manāś ca neśe
premnā hato vepathubhir niruddhah
romāñca-bhinno 'śru-vilupta-drṣṭih
stambham suparnasya kathañcid āptah

Struck by the ecstasy of pure love (premnā hatah) and impeded by trembling in my body (vepathubhir niruddhah), I was unable to go forward (tatra agrato neśe) despite my desire (gantu-manāh). But somehow I reached (kathañcid āptah) Garuḍa's column (suparnasya stambham), my hair standing on end (romāñca-bhinna), my vision clouded by tears (aśru-vilupta-drṣṭih).

Gopa-kumāra was eager to enter Lord Jagannātha's temple but had difficulty proceeding, because his mind was overwhelmed by love and his body by the ecstasy of jāḍya, being stunned.

Unconscious of his own movements, only by the Lord's mercy did Gopa-kumāra reach the column on which Garuda sits before Lord Jagannātha's altar.