

Śrī Brhad-bhāgavatāmṛta

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Volume-2

Śrī-goloka-māhātmya

The Glories of Goloka

Chapter-2

Jñāna: Knowledge

It is said that
darśan of the Lord
gives joy only to devotees
but gives fear etc to
disbelievers & others such
as Kamsa & Duryodhan

2.2.97

sākṣād darśanam apy asya
bhaktānām eva harṣa-dam
kaṁsa-duryodhanādīnām
bhaya-doṣādinocyate

It is said (ucyate) that seeing the Lord in person (asya sākṣād darśanam) gives joy to His devotees (bhaktānām eva harṣa-dam) but causes fear and other hard emotions (bhaya-doṣādinā) for others, like Duryodhana and Kamsa (kaṁsa-Duryodhana ādīnām).

Argument

Isn't seeing the Lord in person the most ecstatic form of His mercy, and isn't it the perfection of devotional meditation?

Answer

Yes, but only for the Lord's surrendered devotees, not for His enemies.

As the historical accounts of scripture tell us, when demons saw Him they felt only troublesome emotions like anger, envy, remorse, and sorrow.

The beautiful form
of the Lord is
blissful.
↓
BU, demons even after
seeing the Lord did not lose
their evil disposition

2.2.98-99

parānanda-ghanam śrīmat
sarvendriya-guṇāñjanam
nārāyaṇasya rūpaṁ tat
sākṣāt sampaśyatām api

madhu-kaiṭabha-mukhyānām
asurāṇām durātmanām
na līno duṣṭa-bhāvo 'pi
sarva-pīḍā-karo hi yaḥ

The beautiful, all-opulent form of Lord Nārāyaṇa (śrīmat nārāyaṇasya rūpaṁ), the concentrated essence of supreme bliss (parānanda-ghanam), refines the functions of all the senses (sarvendriya-guṇa añjanam). Yet demons like Madhu and Kaiṭabha (madhu-kaiṭabha-mukhyānām asurāṇām durātmanām), even after seeing the Lord in person (sākṣāt sampaśyatām api), did not lose their evil disposition (na līno duṣṭa-bhāvah), distressing to all (yaḥ sarva-pīḍā-karo hi).

Kaṁsa and Duryodhana were mentioned by name in the previous verse, and other enemies of the Supreme Lord were indicated by the word ādi (“and so on”).

Here Kaṁsa and Duryodhana are left out, and instead the names of two other demons, Madhu and Kaiṭabha, are cited.

As Gopa-kumāra narrates his own history, he does not want to introduce the glories of Śrī Kṛṣṇa until his student is properly prepared to hear them.

→ [Handwritten note]

Therefore he does not follow up the mention of Kaṁsa and Duryodhana with further details of Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes; that will come later.

In the ancient past, millions of years before Kṛṣṇa's appearance, great demons like Madhu, Kaitābha, Maya, Tāraka, and Kālanemi had ample opportunities to see the Personality of Godhead in person and without obstruction.

Yet those demons did not achieve bliss from seeing the Lord, and their wicked mentality never changed.

They were durātmās, meaning that their intelligence (ātmā) remained always impure, either because they had no devotion for the Supreme Lord or because, by their demonic nature (ātmā), they were inimical rivals of the Lord.

The Lord's beauty is the concentrated essence of all divine ecstasy (parānanda-ghanam).

It is endowed with all splendor and opulence (śrīmat), and therefore by manifesting His charm, sweetness, and other unique characteristics, it gives pleasure to all the senses (sarvendriya-guṇāñjanam).

His beauty also pleases the senses by encouraging them to indulge in transcendental gratification.

Yet despite the all-attractive qualities of His beautiful form, demons continue to hate the Lord even after they see Him.

Gopa-kumāra does not elaborate here on what Kāmsa and Duryodhana felt when they saw Kṛṣṇa, but we do have information about this from Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and other sources.

When Śrī Nanda-nandana was present in the tournament arena in Mathurā, His moonlike face increased the love of His dear devotees, headed by Nanda Mahārāja, to the size of a vast ocean.

But King Kāmsa, although born in the same Yadu dynasty as the cowherds of Vraja, did not become joyful when he saw Kṛṣṇa in the arena; rather, as his heart filled with fear, anger, and other painful emotions, it burned with agony

Again, in the assembly of the Kurus, when Srī Kṛṣṇa's devotees like Vidura and Bhīṣma heard Kṛṣṇa's nectarean words they were delighted.

But although Duryodhana and his friends of the Pūru dynasty were all relatives of Kṛṣṇa who talked and sat with Him and had connections with Him by marriage, they felt no pleasure from His presence;

in fact, they were unable to give up their offensive hatred of Kṛṣṇa's dear devotees. In the minds of those demons, there was a conflagration of anguish, kindled by perpetual anger, envy, pride, and hundreds of other faults, and not for an instant did that fire cease to burn.

The Lord, the
bestower of ecstasy,
creates such unlikely situations,
to delight His devotees by
showing them the greatness of
D-S

2.2.100

ānandaka-svabhāvo 'pi
bhakti-māhātmya-darśanāt
bhaktān harṣayitum kuryād
durghaṭam ca sa īśvaraḥ

The Supreme Lord (sah īśvaraḥ), by nature the bestower of ecstasy (ānandaka-svabhāvo 'pi), creates such unlikely situations (durghaṭam kuryād) to delight His devotees (bhaktān harṣayitum) by showing them the greatness of devotional service (bhakti-māhātmya-darśanāt).

When the finite self has been perceived in its true form, someone may argue, there remains no opportunity for mistakes and suffering.

Argument

So when the concentrated embodiment of the Supreme Truth, the infinite Personality of Godhead, has been perceived, how can faults and unhappiness possibly continue unabated?

Response

In the current verse the sage Pippalāyana clears this doubt. The Supreme Lord Nārāyaṇa can do what is supposed to be impossible.

Just as He can perform such a miracle as causing fire to give up its nature of emanating heat, He can hide His nature of giving joy to the entire universe.

His reason for doing this is to demonstrate a particular feature of the glories of devotional service: Although bhakti, like the Lord Himself, naturally emanates ecstasy without fail, only the Lord's devotees relish bliss; the nondevotees taste the opposite feelings.

When the Lord reveals this aspect of the glory of devotional service, those who are dedicated to Him become enlivened, because they know that such examples will ultimately attract everyone to the bhakti process.

How can the Lord make the essential character of His devotional service disappear? After all, fire can never stop giving heat. That may be true, but the Personality of Godhead has manifold, inconceivable energies. And by their arrangement, even when the Supreme Lord becomes visible, only persons endowed with pure devotion taste ecstasy. Others cannot perceive it.

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Thus we find that sometimes very advanced devotees express their approval of the fear, pain, and other such emotions suffered by nondevotees.

As Śrī Yudhiṣṭhira said in connection with Śiśupāla and Dantavakra:

|| 7.1.19 ||

śapator asakṛd viṣṇum
yad brahma param avyayam
śvitro na jāto jihvāyām
nāndham viviśatus tamaḥ

Although these two men—Śiśupāla and Dantavakra—repeatedly blasphemed (śapatoḥ asakṛd) the indestructible Supreme Brahman (avyayam brahma param) called Kṛṣṇa (yad viṣṇum), their tongues were not attacked by white leprosy (jihvāyām na śvitro jātaḥ), nor did they enter the darkest region of hell (na andham tamaḥ viviśatuh).

Devotees like Yudhishthira approve of severe punishment for enemies of the Lord who indulge in criticizing and abusing the Lord, because the terrible fear and agony the offenders suffer in reaction serve as effective counteraction (prāyaścitta) for their egregious sins and in the end the offenders gain the highest benefit by becoming devotees.

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