

Śrī Brhad-bhāgavatāmṛta

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Volume-2

Śrī-goloka-māhātmya

The Glories of Goloka

Chapter-2

Jñāna: Knowledge

Still, @ times
I would feel great
distress. & (L) would
show up great words
affection → than I would feel
Joyful ↓
is this way I (try) to
for a long time

2.2.156

tathāpy antar-mahodvegah
syāt tato vyañjite śriyā
snehe mātrevā hr̥ṣṭah syām
evam tatrāvasam ciram

Still (tathāpy), at times I felt great distress in my mind (antar-mahodvegah syāt). But when the goddess Lakṣmī (tato śriyā) showed me (vyañjite) motherly affection (mātrā iva snehe), I would again become joyful (hr̥ṣṭah syāt). Thus I lived there a long time (evam tatra āvasam ciram).

Although the Lord showed no sign of taking offense, Gopa-kumāra, realizing that he was not serving with the proper attitude, sometimes became disturbed.

↓
Cause of his disturbance
↳ Insight

Embarrassed by his own behavior toward his father, he would be consoled by his mother, Lakṣmī.

Thus he lived happily in Satyaloka, even when facing causes of distress.

once I heard the
Saty-loka-vāsīs glorify a
bhū-loka man who had attained
liberation →
I asked them about it

2.2.157

ekadā muktim atrāptam
ekam tal-loka-vāsibhiḥ
saṁślāghyamānam ākarṇya
tān aprccham tad adbhutam

Once (ekadā), hearing (ākarṇya) the residents of Brahmaloaka (tal-loka-vāsibhiḥ) glorify (saṁślāghyamānam) someone (ekam) who had attained liberation (muktim āptam) here on earth (atra), I asked them (tān aprccham) about that amazing event (tad adbhutam).

In texts 157 through 230, Gopa-kumāra describes in depth the immediate cause for his leaving Satyaloka.

The sages on Satyaloka were talking about someone who had achieved mokṣa—mukti, or liberation—while living in Bhārata-varṣa.

As they were praising that person, and the process of devotional service by which he had gained mokṣa, Gopa-kumāra, who had never heard of mokṣa, asked the sages, “What is this mokṣa?”

Why are you glorifying someone so much for attaining it?”

I heard the glorious
mukti & much that I
states desiring it - I
Then, I asked them the means
to attain mukti

2.2.158

mukteh paramam utkarṣam
daurlabhyam ca niśamya tām
sarva-jñān punar aprākṣam
tad-upāyam tad-īpsayā

I heard from those all-knowing sages (niśamya tām sarva-jñān)
about the superexcellence (paramam utkarṣam) and rareness
(daurlabhyam ca) of liberation (mukteh), and so I desired it myself
(tad-īpsayā). I then asked them (punar aprākṣam) how liberation
could be attained (tad-upāyam).

Among the sages from whom Gopa-kumāra was inquiring were the personified Vedas, who surely were capable of giving him authoritative answers.

And Gopa-kumāra's newly acquired eagerness to become liberated qualified him as a fit candidate to hear from the Vedas about the means of attaining liberation

The presiding deities
of the Upanisads, Śruti & Smṛti
said → "Liberation can be
achieved only by the path of
Jñāna & by no other means"

2.2.159

bahulopaniṣad-devyaḥ
śruti-smṛtibhir anvitāḥ
ūcur ekena sādhyo 'sau
mokṣo jñānena nānyathā

Many of the presiding goddesses of the Upanisads (bahula upaniṣad-
devyaḥ) answered (ūcuḥ), joined by śrutis and smṛtis (śruti-
smṛtibhir anvitāḥ). They said that only by knowledge (ekena
jñānena) is liberation achieved (asau mokṣaḥ sādhyah), and by no
other means (na anyathā).

The Upaniṣads are the essential philosophical portion of the śrutis,
or Vedas.

They are described here as devyah, which means both “presiding
deities” and “brilliantly effulgent.”

Thus the Upaniṣads were present in person in Brahmā’s assembly
along with other revealed scriptures.

The śrutis mentioned separately here are other sections of the Vedas, particularly the Samhitās, Brāhmaṇas, and Āraṇyakas.

The smṛtis are the Dharma-śāstras, Purāṇas, Āgamas, and so on.

The majority of Upaniṣads, śrutis, and smṛtis declared that mokṣa, the most excellent and rarely obtained goal, can be achieved only by knowledge.

In the words of the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad (3.8):

tam eva viditvāti mṛtyum eti
nānyaḥ panthā vidyate 'yanāya

“Knowing Him (tam eva viditvā), one transcends death (ati mṛtyum eti).
There is no other path (na anyaḥ panthā vidyate) for attaining this goal (ayanāya).”

Gopa-kumāra's narration will later reveal that the knowledge leading to liberation arises only from devotional service; in fact, the cultivation of knowledge of the Supreme Person and His energies is itself a kind of devotional service.

As long as knowledge remains impersonal, it cannot lead to true liberation.

But some Purāṇas & Āgamas
said → "This knowledge is
difficult to obtain, but is easily
acquired by D.S."

2.2.160

kaiścid uktaṁ sa-gāmbhīryam
purāṇair āgamair api
janyate bhagavad-bhaktiā
sukhaṁ jñānaṁ su-durghaṭam

But some Purāṇas and Āgamas (kaiścid purāṇair āgamair api) said gravely (uktaṁ sa-gāmbhīryam) that this knowledge (jñānaṁ), difficult to obtain (su-durghaṭam), is easily acquired (sukhaṁ janyate) by devotional service to the Personality of Godhead (bhagavad-bhaktiā).

The Āgamas are tantras, textbooks on the methods of devotional worship.

Prominent among them are the Pañcarātras.

Some of the Āgamas and Purāṇas teach the methods of pure devotional service very effectively, and these are the scriptures who at this juncture spoke up with unshaking conviction.

Some other śrutis &
smṛtis indirectly
that by D-S only liberation
is easily attained

2.2.161

kiṁ vānuṣṭhitayā samyak
tayaiva su-labho 'sti saḥ
śruti-smṛtīnām kāsāñcit
sammatis tatra lakṣitā

Some other śrutis and smṛtis (śruti-smṛtīnām kāsāñcit) indirectly showed agreement among themselves (lakṣitā sammatis tatra) that by devotional service alone (tayā eva), properly done (samyak anuṣṭhitayā), liberation is easy to attain (saḥ su-labhah asti).

In the opinion of the Vaiṣṇava Purāṇas and Āgamas, liberation is attained with special ease by devotional service that is free from material desires and properly executed in all essential details.

Such pure devotional service by itself (tayaiva) leads to liberation, without help from anything else.

As stated in the Bṛhan-nāradiya Purāṇa (32.6, 4.30):

bhaktir dr̥dhā bhaved yasya
deva-deve janārdane
śreyāmsi tasya sidhyanti
bhakti-manto 'dhikās tatah

“By one whose (yasya) devotion is steadfast (bhaktir dr̥dhā bhaved) in Janārdana (janārdane), the Lord of lords (deva-deve), all superior benefits are gained (śreyāmsi tasya sidhyanti). Such is the excellence (adhikāh tatah) of the Lord’s devotees (bhakti-manto).”

jīvanti jantavaḥ sarve
yathā mātaram āśritāḥ
tathā bhaktim samāśritya
sarvā jivanti siddhayaḥ

“Just as (yathā) all living beings (jantavaḥ sarve) live (jīvanti) under the shelter of their mothers (mātaram āśritāḥ), all perfections (tathā sarvā siddhayaḥ) live (jīvanti) under the complete shelter of devotional service (bhaktim samāśritya).”

The “benefits” and “perfections” mentioned in these verses include liberation; though the verses do not specify this, it is implied.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa also says in the Bhagavad-gītā (11.54):

**bhaktyā tv anyayā śakya
aham evaṁ-vidho 'rjuna
jñātum draṣṭum ca tattvena
praveṣṭum ca parantapa**

Only by ananyā bhakti (**ananyayā bhaktyā tu**) it is possible to know Me, see Me, or even merge with Me (**aham evaṁ-vidho tattvena jñātum draṣṭum praveṣṭum ca śakyah**), O Arjuna (**arjuna**).

“Entering into the existence” of the Personality of Godhead—that is, entering His association—by its very nature includes liberation.

The theistic śrutis and smṛtis (among them some of the Dharma-śāstras) are in agreement about this understanding, and they indicated this by movements of their heads and by other subtle signs.

These scriptures do not promote pure devotional service explicitly, but one may discover the importance of bhakti in their purports.

↓
गुरुकृपा

Thus we read in the Padma Purāṇa (Pātāla-khaṇḍa 92.26):

apatyaṁ draviṇaṁ dārā
hārā harṁyaṁ hayā gajāḥ
sukhāni svarga-mokṣau ca
na dūre hari-bhaktiḥ

“Wife (dārā), children (apatyaṁ), precious necklaces (hārā) and wealth (draviṇaṁ), home (harṁyaṁ), horses (hayā), elephants (gajāḥ)—all happiness (sukhāni), and moreover the attainment of heaven and liberation (svarga-mokṣau ca)—when devotional service to Lord Hari is present (hari-bhaktiḥ), none of these are difficult to obtain (na dūre).”

2.2.162

vyaktam tāsām vaco śrutvā
kruddhāḥ svair āgamādibhiḥ
mahopanisadaḥ kāścid
anvamodanta tat sphuṭam

Angry that these
śrutis were only
indirectly accepting blocks
of the independent cause of
liberation, some of the
great Upaniṣads & āgamas openly
declared it

Angry (kruddhāḥ) at not hearing (aśrutvā) those śrutis and smṛtis speak up (tāsām vacah), some of the great Upaniṣads (kāścid mahopanisadaḥ)—and scriptures like the Āgamas (āgamādibhiḥ) who follow in their footsteps (svaih)—openly affirmed (vyaktam anvamodanta) that devotional service is an independent cause of liberation (tat sphuṭam).

The more devotional of the Upaniṣads were angry at the other devotional scriptures who weren't bold enough to say what they knew, and so were certain Vaiṣṇava Agamas and Purāṇas who took shelter of those Upaniṣads.

Together, therefore, these Upaniṣads, Āgamas, and Purāṇas declared in no uncertain terms that liberation is effortlessly achieved by unalloyed devotional service to the Supreme Lord.

As stated in the Bṛhan-nāradiya Purāṇa (1.79):

dharmārtha-kāma-mokṣākhyā
puruṣārthā dvijottamāḥ
hari-bhakti-parāṇām vai
sampadyante na saṁśayaḥ

“O best of brāhmaṇas (dvijottamāḥ), there is no doubt (na saṁśayaḥ) that those who are dedicated to Lord Hari’s devotional service (hari-bhakti-parāṇām vai) achieve (sampadyante) all the goals of life (puruṣārthā), known as religiosity, economic development, sense gratification, and liberation (dharma-artha-kāma-mokṣa ākhyā).”

And in a prayer to the Personality of Godhead, we read in Śrī Viṣṇu Purāṇa (1.20.27):

dharmārtha-kāmaiḥ kiṁ tasya
muktis tasya kare sthitā
samasta-jagatām mūle
yasya bhaktiḥ sthirā tvayi

“What is the value of religiosity, economic development, and sense gratification (kiṁ tasya dharmā artha-kāmaiḥ) to one who has firm devotion for You (yasya bhaktiḥ sthirā tvayi), the root of all the worlds (samasta-jagatām mūle)? Liberation sits in the palm of his hand (muktiḥ tasya kare sthitā).”

A few confidential
Upaniṣads, Āgamas & Purāṇas
smiled & kept quiet

2.2.163

gūḍhopaniṣadaḥ kāścit
kaiścīd gūḍhair mahāgamaiḥ
samaṁ mahā-purāṇaiś ca
tūṣṇīm āsan kṛta-smitāḥ

A few confidential Upaniṣads (gūḍha upaniṣadaḥ kāścit) smiled (kṛta-smitāḥ) and kept silent (tūṣṇīm āsan), along with (samaṁ) some confidential major Āgamas (kaiścīd gūḍhair mahāgamaiḥ) and Purāṇas (mahā-purāṇaiś ca).

The little-known most confidential Upaniṣads, like the Gopāla-tāpanī, smiled but said nothing, and so did certain Vaiṣṇava Agamas, like the Sātvata-siddhānta, and a few Purāṇas, like Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.

→ Insights → why they smiled & kept quiet
↓
what were they thinking?

Some were thinking, "Just see the power of the Supreme Lord's illusory energy, which makes the essential meaning of scripture, which should be obvious, incomprehensible to vastly learned authorities."

Others were thinking scornfully, "Who are these śāstras to presume that merely bestowing liberation is the true glory of bhakti?"



This second group saw no purpose in arguing with scriptures whose outlook was so dissimilar from their own, and even thought it improper that these intimate topics be discussed in public.

Granted, these scriptures thought, karma, jñāna, and moksa make up the ladder ascending to bhakti, devotional service, and so the glories of Vedic rituals, knowledge, and liberation culminate in the glories of bhakti.

Nonetheless, when the main focus of discussion is on lesser spiritual methods, the importance of bhakti can only be hinted at; in such contexts, its superexcellence cannot be properly revealed.

With these thoughts in mind, the Bhāgavatam and a few other scriptures, following the lead of the confidential Upaniṣads, kept quiet.