Śrī Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta

by Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī

Volume-2

Śrī-goloka-māhātmya

The Glories of Goloka

Chapter-2

Jñāna: Knowledge

2.2.164-165

mokṣo 'nu bhagavan-mantra-japa-mātrāt su-sidhyati na veti kaiścid āmnāya- purāṇādibhir ulbaṇaḥ

āgamānām vivādo 'bhūt tam asodhvā bahir gatāḥ te purāṇāgamāḥ karṇau pidhāyopaniṣad-yutāḥ

A fierce debate then arose (ulbaṇaḥ vivādah abhūt)—between the Agamas on one side (agamanam) and scriptures like certain śrutis and Puranas on the other (kaiścid āmnāya- purānādibhir)—about whether or not (na vā iti) liberation is achieved (mokṣah su-sidhyati) merely by chanting mantras that worship the Personality of Godhead (anu bhagavan-mantra-japa-mātrāt). Unable to tolerate the debate (tam asodhvā), the Purāṇas, Āgamas, and Upanișads (te purăna ăgamăh upanișad-yutăh) who had been silent covered their ears (karnau pidhāya) and left (bahir gatāh).

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2nd Category (Pursonas, agonas & ulanisade)

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Āmnāya means the original Vedic texts, or śrutis, and in the phrase āmnāya-purāṇādibhiḥ the suffix -ādibhiḥ ("and so on") indicates scriptures such as the Dharma-śāstras and epic histories.

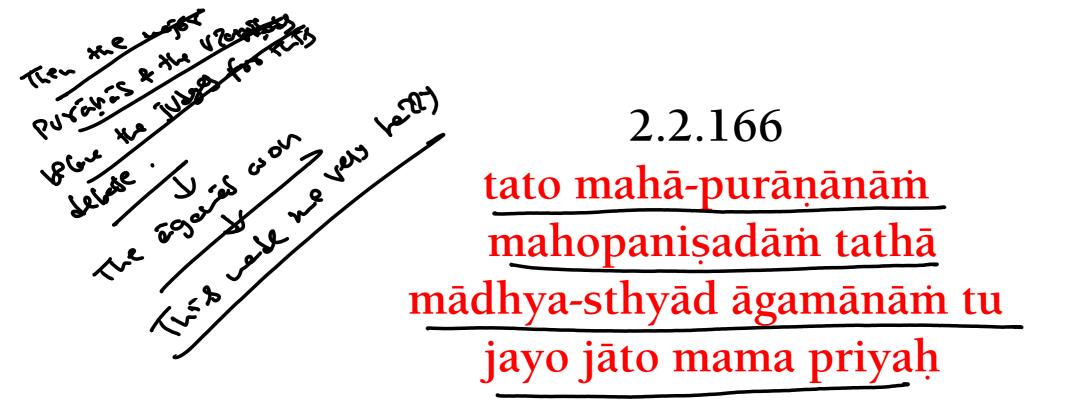
As the previous discussions were left behind and a debate began on a new topic, the śāstras who were unable to tolerate hearing it, or the doubt on which it was based, left the assembly in disgust.

They covered their ears to avoid the offense of even hearing doubts that the Supreme Lord's mantras have the power to give liberation.

These śāstras, in their own pages, never entertain even a hint of doubts of this sort.

Moments before, the confidential Upanisads had taken the lead in keeping quiet, followed by the Bhāgavatam and other confidential Mahā-purāṇas.

Now, in boycotting the debate, the Bhāgavatam and its colleagues took the lead.



Then (tato) the major Purāṇas (mahā-purāṇānām) and Upaniṣads (mahopaniṣadām tathā) became arbitrators (mādhya-sthyād), and so victory went to the Āgamas (āgamānām tu jayo jāto). That pleased me very much (mama priyaḥ).

Now that the most advanced Purānas, Upaniṣads, and Āgamas had walked out on the debate, they were able to give impartial consideration to both sides.

And they deemed correct the claim made by the Āgamas—that liberation is easily achieved simply by chanting mantras worshiping the Personality of Godhead.

As stated in Śrī Viṣṇu Purāṇa (1.6.40):

gatvā gatvā nivartante candra-sūryādayo grahāḥ adyāpi na nivartante dvādaśākṣara-cintakāḥ

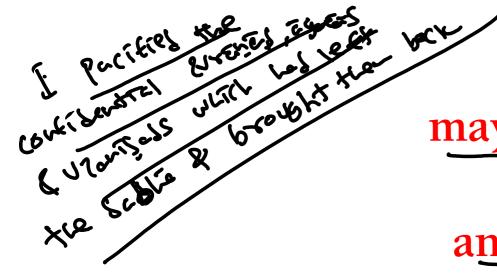
"Even the moon, sun, and other planets (candra-sūryādayo grahāh) are created and destroyed again and again (gatvā gatvā nivartante). But persons who have meditated on the twelve-syllable viṣṇu-mantra (dvādaśākṣara-cintakāh) have never had to return (na nivartante), even till the present day (adyāpi)."

And Śrī Padma Purāṇa gives this opinion:

japena devatā nityam stūyamānā prasīdati prasannā vipulān bhogān dadyān muktim ca śāśvatīm

"The Supreme Lord (devatā) is always satisfied (nityam prasīdati) when praised by the chanting of His mantras (japena stūyamānā). And so He awards (dadyān) abundant enjoyment (prasannā vipulān bhogān), as well as eternal liberation (muktim ca śāśvatīm)."

Because Gopa-kumāra was absorbed in chanting a mantra addressed to the Supreme Lord and had no interest in other spiritual practices, he was extremely pleased by the conclusion of the debate.



2.2.167

mayābhipretya tad-bhāvam te purāṇāgamādayaḥ anunīya sabhā-madhyam ānītāh stuti-pāṭavaiḥ

Discerning (abhipretya) the inner mood (tad-bhāvam) of the Purāṇas, Āgamas, and other scriptures who had left the debate (te purāṇa āgamādayaḥ), I pacified them (mayā anunīya) with tactful praise (stuti-pātavaiḥ) and brought them back (ānītāḥ) to the assembly (sabhā-madhyam).

Gopa-kumāra had noted the grave smiles on the faces of the Bhāgavatam, Sātvata-siddhānta, and other scriptures who left the assembly.

Those signs led him to believe that these few śāstras, among all the others, best understood the truth.

With humility and adroit praise he managed to bring them back.

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2.2.168

tat tattvam sādaram pṛṣtās te śrī-bhāgavatādayaḥ ūcuḥ sātvata-siddhāntādyāgamāḥ śruti-maulibhiḥ

From those scriptures —the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (śrī-bhagavata ādayaḥ), the Sātvata-siddhānta (sātvata-siddhānta ādy) and other Āgamas (āgamāḥ), and the foremost śrutis (śruti-maulibhiḥ)—I respectfully asked (sādaram pṛṣṭāh) about the truth of the matter (tat tattvam), and they replied (te ūcuḥ).

With great respect, Gopa-kumāra asked the Bhāgavatam and other devotional scriptures about the true nature of liberation.

He also inquired why they had responded to the discussion the way they had—first by smiling silently, then by covering their ears and leaving the assembly.

The devotional scriptures said (śrī-bhakti-śāstrāny ūcuḥ): O dear one who have achieved the post of Brahmā (labdha-brahma adhikārah), this topic (idam) is more secret (mahā-gopyam) than a rare treasure (nidher api). But we shall explain it to you (ākhyāmo), because your abundant good qualities (bhavat-sad-guṇa-sandohaih) inspire us to speak freely (mukharī-krtāh).

In texts 169 through 230, the bhakti-śāstras answer.

Since Gopa-kumāra holds the post of Lord Brahmā, he is worthy of the privilege to hear such elevated topics.

One might argue that the secrets of devotional service should not be freely divulged to anyone, not even the lord of an entire universe, unless he is fully surrendered to the Supreme Lord and His devotees.

But then Gopa-kumāra's personal qualifications should be taken into account, especially his eagerness to engage in the Supreme Lord's service.

2.2.170

kvacit prastūyate 'smābhir bhagavad-bhakti-tatparaih mokṣas tyājayitum samyag vinindya sa-paricchadaḥ

We (asmābhir) who are dedicated to the Personality of Godhead's devotional service (bhagavad-bhakti-tatparaih) may sometimes discuss liberation (kvacit mokṣah prastūyate), but only to encourage people to reject it completely (samyag tyājayitum). When we speak of liberation we condemn it (vinindya), and everything that goes with it (sa-paricchadaḥ).

The bhakti-śāstras have no business promoting liberation.

But sometimes they do describe it, because people generally cannot give up attachment to something unless scientifically taught why it is undesirable.

When the bhakti-śāstras speak of liberation, they criticize attachment to liberation for its own sake, and attachment to jñāna and the other impersonal means of striving for liberation.