

Śrī Brhad-bhāgavatāmṛta

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Volume-2

Śrī-goloka-māhātmya

The Glories of Goloka

Chapter-2

Jñāna: Knowledge

2.2.171

nirvaktum bhakti-māhātmyam

kathyate 'syāpi tat kvacit

na tu sādhya-phalatvena

sukha-gandho 'pi nāsti yat

Sometimes, to describe the ultimate glories of D.S. we may speak highly of mokṣa.
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But we do not intend to proclaim it as the final goal of these legs in the sense of mokṣa.

To describe (nirvaktum) the ultimate glories of devotional service (bhakti-māhātmyam), we may sometimes speak highly of mokṣa, liberation (kathyate asyāpi kvacit). But we do not intend to acclaim mokṣa the final goal of spiritual discipline (na tu tat sādhyaphalatvena), because in mokṣa (yat) there is not even a trace of real happiness (sukha-gandho api na asti).

In some passages of the bhakti-śāstras, the joy found in liberation is described as being greater than any happiness in material life.

The śāstras provide this information to contrast the joy of liberation with the joy of pure devotional service, which is billions of times more intense.

Other than the joy of liberation, nothing can be meaningfully compared with the joy of bhakti.

Properly speaking, however, the concept of “joy” in liberation is only a theoretical creation of the impersonalists.

As the bhakti-śāstras declare in this verse, in liberation there is not even a trace of real happiness.

2.2.172

yathārogye susuptau ca
sukhaṁ mokṣe 'pi kalpyate
paraṁ tv ajñāna-samjño 'yam
anabhijña-prarocakah

The so-called happiness of liberation (sukhaṁ mokṣe api) may be compared to the happiness of not being sick or the enjoyment of deep sleep (yathā ārogye susuptau ca). In fact, the very term “liberation” is a misnomer created by illusion (paraṁ tv ajñāna-samjño ayam), and it appeals only to the ignorant (anabhijña-prarocakah).

As the scriptures like to do, they here support their proposition with analogies.

Simply being free from the pain of disease is not positive happiness.

Nor is there happiness in deep sleep, which is nothing but a condition of ignorance.

One only imagines that in deep sleep one is happy because in that sleep one is free for a while from the mind's flights of fancy, and from dreams and other agitations.

One thinks, “I slept happily, unaware of anything.”

In the same way, one only imagines that there is happiness in liberation, a state of apparent voidness in which birth, death, and the other pains of material existence are not perceived.

People praise liberation only because they are unaware of the facts.

The very term “liberation” is a misnomer, as Lord Brahmā states in the Tenth Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.14.26):

ajñāna-samjñau bhava-bandha-mokṣau
dvau nāma nānyau sta ṛta-jñā-bhāvāt
ajasra-city ātmani kevale pare
vicāryamāṇe taraṇāv ivāhani

“The conception of material bondage and that of liberation (bhava-bandha-mokṣau) are both signs of ignorance (ajñāna-samjñau). They lie outside the scope of true knowledge (dvau nāma na ṛta-jñā-bhāvāt). They cease to exist (na sta) when one correctly knows that the pure spirit soul is distinct from matter (ātmani kevale pare vicāryamāṇe) and always fully conscious (ajasra-city). Bondage and liberation then no longer have any meaning, just as day and night mean nothing for the sun (taraṇāv iva ahani).”

Īkṣāḥ by nāhāyāḥ
Chanting (or) hearing even
once, liberation is easily
attained

2.2.173 (98)

kathañcid bhagavan-nāmā-
bhāsasyāpi sa sidhyati
sakṛd uccāra-mātreṇa
kiṁ vā karṇa-praveśataḥ

From even a shadow of the Lord's names (bhagavan-nāma-ābhāsasya api)—if one somehow (kathañcid) chants them but once (sakṛd uccāra-mātreṇa), or merely if they enter the ears (kiṁ vā karṇa- praveśataḥ)—liberation is easily attained (sah sidhyati).

If even after hearing how the previous verse defines liberation one still wants to know the means to attain it, from the present statement one can learn that devotees of the Personality of Godhead achieve liberation without separate endeavor, as a mere by-product of the practice of bhakti.

Furthermore, one's service to the holy names of the Lord need not even be pure; simply nāmābhāsa, the "shadow" of chanting the Lord's names, earns one liberation.

Nāmābhāsa resembles the shadow of a real object in the world. It is the unintentional uttering—in jest, contempt, or other moods of neglect—of sounds that contain the same syllables as Lord Viṣṇu’s names.

Chanting or hearing nāmābhāsa even once results in liberation. This is stated in the Sixth Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (6.3.24):

etāvatālam agha-nirharaṇāya puṁsām
saṅkīrtanam bhagavato guṇa-karma-nāmnām
vikruśya putram aghavān yad ajāmilo 'pi
nārāyaṇeti mriyamāṇa iyāya muktim

The attentive chanting (**saṅkīrtanam**) of the names, pastimes and qualities of the Lord (**bhagavato guṇa-karma-nāmnām**) destroys the sins of man (**puṁsām agha-nirharaṇāya**). But even attentive chanting is not necessary (**etāvatā alam**). Sinful Ajāmila (**aghavān ajāmilah api**), crying out for his son (**putram vikruśya**), uttered "Nārāyaṇa" (**nārāyaṇa iti**) while dying (**mriyamāṇa**) and still attained liberation (**muktim iyāya**).

Ajāmila, for example, was extremely sinful, but while dying he merely chanted the holy name, and although calling his son, he achieved complete liberation because he remembered the name of Nārāyaṇa.”

Also, at the beginning of the history of Satyatapā, Śrī Varāha Purāṇa (38.20) tells of a tiger that once approached a brāhmaṇa who was busy chanting japa while standing in water.

The tiger wanted to eat the brāhmaṇa, but at that very moment the tiger was killed by a hunter.

And because of hearing the names of the Supreme Lord from the mouth of the brāhmaṇa, the tiger was liberated.

Even from the opinion of the which story the mokṣa is quite evident that liberation is attractive any to those who lack discrimination

2.2.174

vicārācāturī-ramyo
mokṣo 'yam avadhāryatām
teṣām veda-purāṇādi-
śāstrāṇām hi yathā-matam

Liberation (ayam mokṣah), please understand (avadhāryatām), is attractive (ramyah) to those whose discrimination is poor (vicāra acāturī). This is evident even from the opinions (yathā-matam) of the same Vedas, Purāṇas, and other scriptures (veda-purāṇādi-śāstrāṇām) that the proponents of liberation accept as authorities (teṣām).

In philosophical debates, opposing sides from different schools of thought unavoidably base their opinions on their own assumptions.

Buddhists, for example, assume that everything is but momentary and thus unreal, while the logicians of the Gautama school assume that whatever has perceivable qualities is real.

A debate is effective when each side, rather than fight over these assumptions, accepts for the sake of argument the assumptions of the other side and works out their own arguments from that starting point.

It is in this sense that the bhakti-śāstras accept the scriptural statements yogīs cite in support of their conviction that impersonal liberation is the final goal of life.

3 definitions of mokṣa
 a) aśeṣa-duḥkha-dhvamso
 b) avidyā-karma-kṣaya
 c) māyā-kṛtā-
 svānubhavo

2.2.175

so 'śeṣa-duḥkha-dhvamso vā-
vidyā-karma-kṣayo 'tha vā
māyā-kṛtānyathā-rūpa-
tyāgāt svānubhavo 'pi vā

Mokṣa, liberation (**sah**), is the removal of all misery (aśeṣa-duḥkha-dhvamsah), or (**vā**) the stopping of illusory activities (avidyā-karma-kṣayah), or (**atha vā**) the self-realization (svānubhavaḥ) that comes from abandoning (tyāgāt) the false identities (anyathā-rūpa) created by Māyā (**māyā-kṛta**).

These three alternative definitions of mokṣa, taken from various śāstras, are adhered to by those who strive for liberation.

The logicians of Gautama's Nyāya school hold that liberation is the removal of all kinds of misery, which they count as twenty-one.

As the followers of Gautama say, ātyantikī duḥkha-nivṛttir muktiḥ: "Liberation is the complete stoppage of suffering."

A section of the Vedānta school says that liberation is the ceasing of illusion and thus of activity.

And another party of impersonal Vedāntists, the “illusionists” (Vivarta-vādīs), define liberation as rejecting the false identity produced by the power of illusion and thus realizing oneself to be one with Brahman.

The Vivarta-vādīs further describe the false identity of the illusioned soul in terms of dualities and the cycle of life and death.

These impersonalists sometimes cite Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (2.10.6) as the source of their definition.

Muktir hitvānyathā-rūpaṁ svarūpena vyavasthiḥ: “Liberation means to give up other identities and assume one’s true essential identity.”