

Śrī Brhad-bhāgavatāmṛta

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Volume-2

Śrī-goloka-māhātmya

The Glories of Goloka

Chapter-2

Jñāna: Knowledge

Such māyā-Vēdī
theory makers who
challenge the authenticity of
the scriptures by giving their
statements as Charyas & if
they go to hell

2.2.199

athāpy ācaryamāṇā sā
nāstikatvaṃ vitanvatī
kṣipet kalpayitāraṃ taṃ
dustare narakotkare

If a theory-maker (kalpayitāraṃ) acts with such a presumption (ācaryamāṇā sā) nonetheless (athāpy), it will fill him with atheistic delusions (nāstikatvaṃ vitanvatī) and cast him into hells (kṣipet naraka), one after another (utkare), from which he will not be able to escape (taṃ dustare).

If one refuses to take seriously the words and behavior of elevated persons and one acts as if the glories of devotional service were mere exaggerations, he will become an atheist.

He will lose faith in the authority of the Vedic śāstras, become more and more proud of his own scholarship, and concoct theories about artha-vāda that will earn him hellish punishments from which he will long be unable to escape.

As the Nārada Purāṇa warns:

purāṇeṣu dvija-śreṣṭhāḥ
sarva-dharma-pravakṛṣu
pravadanty artha-vādatvaṁ
ye te naraka-bhājanāḥ

“O best of brāhmaṇas (dvija-śreṣṭhāḥ), the Purāṇas (purāṇeṣu) authoritatively teach (pravakṛṣu) all aspects of religious life (sarva-dharma). Those who say (ye pravadanty) that these Purāṇic teachings are mere artha-vāda (artha-vādatvaṁ) are sure to suffer in hell (te naraka-bhājanāḥ).”

Such statements are meant to tell proud logicians they must give up their groundless, arrogant theories and accept that devotional service to the Supreme Lord is even greater than liberation.

Speculators who refuse will fall into the punishments of hell.

The philosophy they should accept has been set forth above, in texts 178 through 181.

To attain liberation by the practices set forth in Vedic scriptures may take many lifetimes.

Most so-called transcendentalists who aim at liberation encounter nothing but frustration.

Therefore, one should understand the endeavor for impersonal liberation to be fruitlessness and put it aside.

How can the
Scriptures glorify
liberation when even the
demons are seen to achieve it?

2.2.200

aho ślāghyaḥ katham mokṣo
daityānām api dr̥śyate
tair eva śāstrair nindyante
ye go-viprādi-ghātinah

Indeed, how can the scriptures glorify liberation, the liberation
outright demons are seen to achieve, demons those same scriptures
condemn, killers even of cows and brāhmaṇas?

Here is another easily understood argument.

Since we see from scriptural histories that demons like Kāmsa and Aghāsura achieved liberation, persons of the opposite nature should not aspire for it.

Even scriptures that promote liberation condemn demons who kill cows and brāhmaṇas and who blaspheme the Vedas and Vedic sacrifices.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.4.40) portrays this demonic mentality in the advice of King Kāmsa's ministers:

tasmat sarvatmanā rājan
brāhmaṇān brahma-vādinah
tapasvino yajña-śilān
gāś ca hanmo havir-dughāḥ

“O king, we your adherents in all respects shall therefore kill the
Vedic brāhmaṇas, the persons engaged in offering sacrifices and
austerities, and the cows that supply milk, which gives clarified
butter for sacrifice.”

Demons perform many such atrocities.

Therefore the destination they attain should also be considered
abominable

Saints & demons
are opposite in all respects
∴ their destinations should also
be opposite

2.2.201

sarvathā pratiyogitvam
yat sādhutvāsuratvayoḥ
tat sādhanēṣu sādhye ca
vaiparītyam kilocitam

Saints and demons are in all respects opposite in nature. It is
therefore only fitting that they be opposite in their disciplines and
goals.

In personal character and behavior, devotees of the Supreme Lord completely differ from His enemies.

And so the goal of their lives and the disciplines they practice to achieve that goal also completely differ.

Devotees practice worshiping the Personality of Godhead and meditating on His lotus feet, and demons practice just the opposite—they cultivate the understanding that their own self is one with the Supreme.

The goal of the devotees is prema-bhakti; the goal of the demons, mukti.

Granted, the bhakti-śāstras sometimes equate devotional service and hatred of the Lord because they both give spiritual results.

For example, we find in the Tenth Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.87.23):

nibhr̥ta-marun-mano-'kṣa-dr̥ḍha-yoga-yujo hr̥di yan
munaya upāsate tad arayo 'pi yayuḥ smaraṇāt
striya uragendra-bhoga-bhuja-daṇḍa-viṣakta-dhiyo
vayam api te samāḥ sama-dr̥śo 'nghri-saroja-sudhāḥ

“Simply by always thinking of the Lord, His enemies attained the
same Supreme Truth whom sages worship, fixed in yoga, by
controlling their breath, mind, and senses. Similarly, we śrutis, who
generally see You as all-pervading, will achieve from Your lotus feet
the same nectar Your consorts relish by their loving attraction to
Your mighty serpentine arms, for You look upon us and Your
consorts in the same way.””

And in the Seventh Canto [SB 7.1.30] Nārada Muni says:

kāmād dveṣād bhayāt snehād yathā bhaktyeśvare manah
āveśya tad-agmaṁ hitvā bahavas tad-gatiṁ gatāḥ

“Whether by lust, enmity, fear, affection, or devotional service,
many, many persons have attained liberation simply by thinking of
Kṛṣṇa with great attention and giving up sinful acts.”

The real message of these verses, however, is that loving the Supreme Lord and hating Him are equal only in the sense that they both release one from the material cycle of birth and death and they both demonstrate the potency of remembering the Supreme Lord, seeing Him, and receiving His mercy.

At one point in the Seventh Canto (7.1.27) Nārada even seems to glorify hatred of the Lord:

yathā vairānubandhenar
martyas tan-mayatām iyāt
na tathā bhakti-yogena
iti me niścita matiḥ

“By devotional service one cannot achieve such intense absorption in
thought of the Supreme Personality of Godhead as one can through
enmity toward Him. That is my opinion.””

Another explanation of Nārada's peculiar praise of hatred toward the Supreme Lord is that he is subtly ridiculing the impersonal liberation of sāyujya, merging into the existence of the Supreme.

What he is actually saying, then, is that by being inimical to the Lord one achieves only the worthless state of becoming one with the Lord (tan-mayatā).

One becomes
saintly only by devotion
to Kṛṣṇa
This is the means to attain
the highest goal → Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet

2.2.202

(kṛṣṇa-bhaktyaiva sādhutvam)
sādhanaṁ paramaṁ hi sā
tayā sādhyam tad-aṅghry-abja-
yugalam paramaṁ phalam

One becomes saintly only by devotion to Kṛṣṇa. That is the highest
means of spiritual attainment, and it brings one to the highest goal—
Lord Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet.

(Persons who adhere to ^{Karma yogis → followers of VPI} prescribed ritual duties) and ^{Jñāna yogis} (those who cultivate Vedic knowledge) may be considered serious spiritual practitioners by the general public, but confidential devotees know that only devotional service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa is fully spiritual and that all other practices are only of relative value.

Thus the real sādhus are Kṛṣṇa's pure devotees. In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (9.4.63, 68), after Durvāsā Muni suffers embarrassment in his encounter with the great devotee Ambarīṣa Mahārāja, Lord Viṣṇu Himself says to Durvāsā:

aham bhakta-parādhīnor
hy asvatantra iva dvija
sādhubhir grasta-hṛdayor
bhaktair bhakta-jana-priyaḥ

“I am completely under the control of My devotees. Indeed, I am not at all independent. Because My devotees are completely devoid of material desires, I sit only within the cores of their hearts. What to speak of My devotees, even the devotees of My devotees are very dear to Me.”

sādhavo hr̥dayam mahyam
sādhūnām hr̥dayam tv aham
mad-anyat te na jānanti
nāham tebhyo manāg api

“The pure devotee is always within the core of My heart, and I am
always in the heart of the pure devotee. My devotees do not know
anyone but Me, and I do not know anyone but them.”

Devotional service to Kṛṣṇa is the best spiritual practice because it leads to the attainment of Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet.

Other practices, like karma, jñāna, and vairāgya, are of value only when they play a subordinate role by helping one develop pure bhakti. Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet are the supreme goal of life, unequaled by any other achievement, including realization of Brahman.

For the pure devotees
who know the truth that
service to the lotus feet of
is in itself the goal

2.2.203

tad-bhakti-rasikānām tu
mahatām tattva-vedinām
sādhyā tac-caraṇāmbhoja-
makarandātmikaiva sā

And for those great souls who know the truth and have a taste for
the nectar of pure devotional service, that nectar of serving at Lord
Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet is itself the goal

Although one may easily understand that devotional service is greater than impersonal liberation and is therefore the ultimate goal of life, one might still ask how it can also be the means (sādhana) to attain that goal.

This verse points out that the intimate devotees of Kṛṣṇa enjoy the taste of transcendental rasas, loving exchanges, which are described as fragrant, cool honey exuding from His lotus feet.

The rare souls who are greedy to taste such rasas know a pleasure far superior to any other.

Even the ecstasy derived from seeing the Supreme Lord in person seems pale compared to the ecstasy of serving Him in one's eternal relationship with Him.

This will be explained more elaborately later on in Śrī Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta.

Those who aspire to realize the impersonal Brahman may achieve realization in various ways.

They may become ātmārāma (joyful in the self) and jīvan-mukta (liberated even within this life).

Nonetheless, even the most perfect impersonalist actually knows only the cessation of material pain.

But Vaiṣṇava devotees, whether they have attained Vaikuṅṭha or still live in material bodies, by the mercy of the Lord enjoy the most intense and positive spiritual happiness