Śrī Brhad-bhāgavatāmrta

by Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī

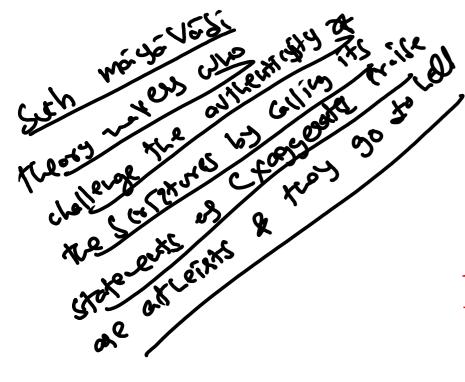
Volume-2

Śrī-goloka-māhātmya

The Glories of Goloka



Jñāna: Knowledge



2.2.199 athāpy ācaryamāņā sā nāstikatvam vitanvatī kṣipet kalpayitāram tam dustare narakotkare

If a theory-maker (kalpayitāram) acts with such a presumption (ācaryamāņā sā) nonetheless (athāpy), it will fill him with atheistic delusions (nāstikatvam vitanvatī) and cast him into hells (ksipet naraka), one after another (utkare), from which he will not be able to escape (tam 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 Purāņa warns:

purāņeșu dvija-śreșțhāh sarva-dharma-pravaktrșu pravadanty artha-vādatvam ye te naraka-bhājanāḥ

"O best of brāhmaņas (dvija-śreṣṭhāḥ), t<u>he Purān</u>as (purāņeṣu) authoritatively teach (pravaktṛṣu) <u>all aspects of religious lif</u>e (sarvadharma). Those who say (ye pravadanty) that these Purāṇic teachings are mere artha-vāda (artha-vādatvam) 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.

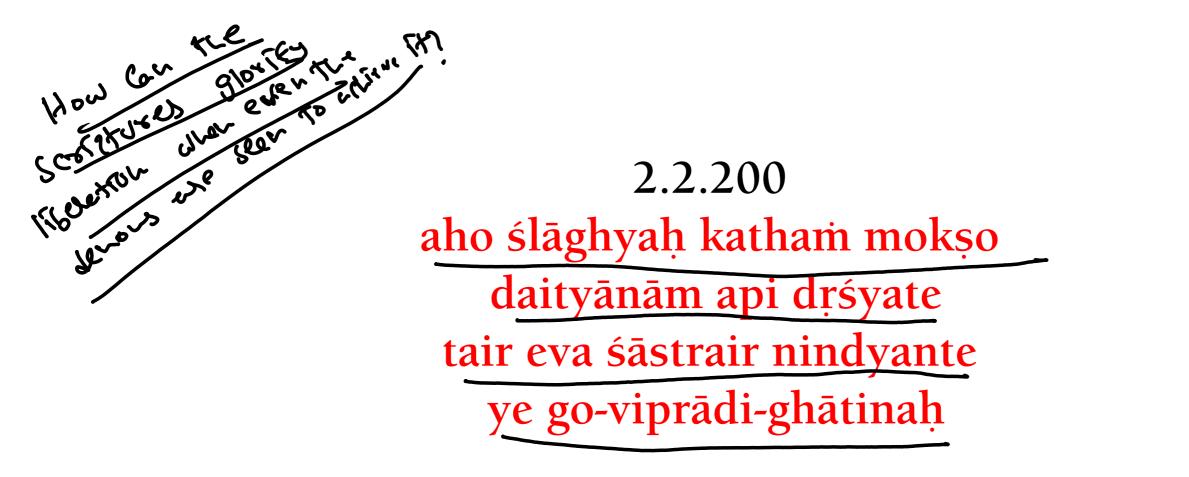
Speculators who refuse will fall into the punishments of hell.

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.



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 brāhmaņas?

Since we see from scriptural histories that demons like Kamsa 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 brāhmaņas and who blaspheme the Vedas and Vedic sacrifices.

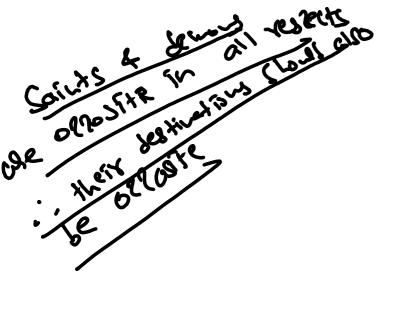
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.4.40) portrays this demonic mentality in the advice of King Kamsa's ministers:

tasmāt sarvātmanā rājan brāhmaņān brahma-vādinaķ tapasvino yajña-śīlān gāś ca hanmo havir-dughāķ

"O king, we your adherents in all respects shall therefore kill the Vedic brāhmaņas, 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



2.2.201 sarvathā pratiyogitvam yat sādhutvāsuratvayoḥ tat sādhaneṣu 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.

<u>Granted</u>, 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):

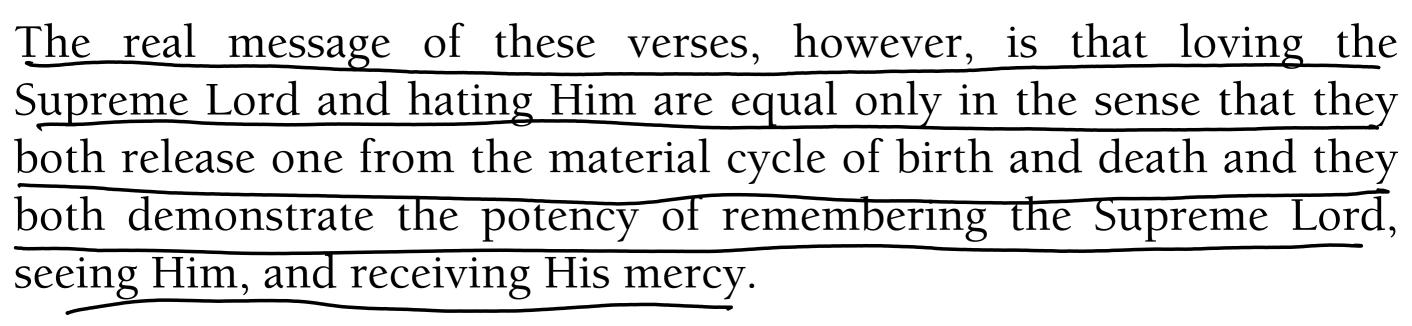
nibhṛta-marun-mano-'kṣa-dṛḍha-yoga-yujo hṛdi yan munaya upāsate tad arayo 'pi yayuḥ smaraṇāt striya uragendra-bhoga-bhuja-daṇḍa-viṣakta-dhiyo vayam api te samāḥ sama-dṛśo 'ṅghri-saroja-sudhāḥ

"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-agham hitvā bahavas tad-gatim 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."

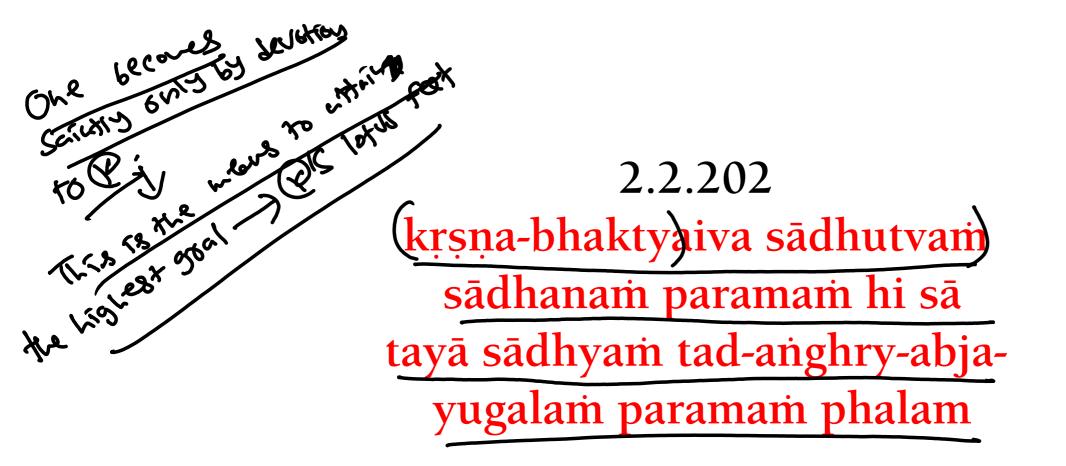


At one point in the Seventh Canto (7.1.27) Nārada even seems to glorify hatred of the Lord:

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. T<u>hat is the highest</u> means of spiritual attainment, and it brings one to the highest goal— Lord Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet. (Persons who adhere to prescribed ritual duties) and those who cultivate Vedic knowledge) may be considered serious spiritual practitioners by the general public, but confidential devotees know that only devotional service to Srī Kṛṣṇa is fully spiritual and that all other practices are only of relative value.

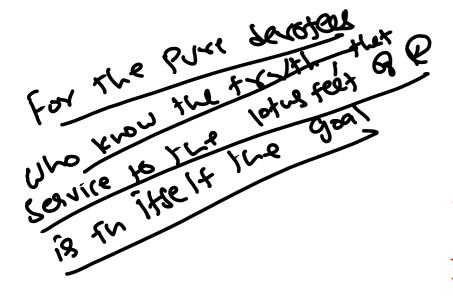
Thus the real sādhus are Kṛṣṇa's pure devotees. In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (9.4.63, 68), after Durvāsā Muni suffers embarrassment in his encounter with the great devotee Ambarīṣa Mahārāja, Lord Viṣṇu Himself says to Durvāsā: aham bhakta-parādhīnor hy asvatantra iva dvija sādhubhir grasta-hṛdayor bhaktair bhakta-jana-priyaḥ

"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 hṛdayaṁ mahyaṁ sādhūnāṁ hṛdayaṁ tv aham mad-anyat te na jānanti nāhaṁ 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.



2.2.203 tad-bhakti-rasikānām tu mahatām tattva-vedinām sādhyā tac-caraņāmbhojamakarandātmikaiva 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 Bṛhadbhāgavatāmṛta.

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

T<u>hey may become ātmārāma (joyful in the self)</u> 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 Vaikuntha or still live in material bodies, by the mercy of the Lord enjoy the most intense and positive spiritual happiness