

Śrī Brhad-bhāgavatāmṛta

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Volume-2

Śrī-goloka-māhātmya

The Glories of Goloka

Chapter-2

Jñāna: Knowledge

One who depends on
Karma, jñāna & vairāgya
cannot attain P's lotus feet.
↓
Only those who, by P's mercy,
are solely dependent on P's lotus feet.

2.2.204

sā karma-jñāna-vairāgyā-
pekṣakasya na sidhyati
param śrī-kṛṣṇa-kṛpayā
tan-mātrāpekṣakasya hi

By one who cares for knowledge, renunciation, or material success (karma-jñāna-vairāgya-apekṣakasya), that goal cannot be achieved (sā na sidhyati). It is only for one who by Śrī Kṛṣṇa's mercy (śrī-kṛṣṇa-kṛpayā) depends on Kṛṣṇa's devotional service and nothing else (tan-mātra apekṣakasya hi param).

To further clarify how to achieve pure devotional service, in this verse the bhakti-śāstras say that devotees of the Lord are uninterested in karma, jñāna, vairāgya, and other methods of advancement.

Karma here means (acting according) to (one's prescribed duty), jñāna means ~~understanding the difference between spirit and matter (ātma and anātmā),~~ and vairāgya means aloofness from sense gratification and other material attractions.

A person who relies on karma, jñāna, vairāgya, or any other such method cannot achieve bhakti, because bhakti is achieved only by Śrī Kṛṣṇa's mercy.

But then, since Śrī Kṛṣṇa is naturally compassionate to every soul, why doesn't everyone obtain pure devotional service?

The bhakti-śāstras answer that the special mercy of devotional service acts only when a candidate has no interest in karma, jñāna, or anything other than bhakti.

Only such a person will be receptive to Kṛṣṇa's special mercy.

As Lord Brahmā says in the Tenth Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.14.8):

tat te 'nukampām su-samīkṣamāṇo
bhuñjana evātma-kṛtaṁ vipākam
hṛd-vāg-vapurahir vidadhan namas te
jīveta yo mukti-pade sa dāya-bhāk

My dear Lord, one who (yah) earnestly waits for You to bestow Your causeless mercy upon him (te anukampām su-samīkṣamāṇah), all the while patiently suffering the reactions of his past misdeeds (bhuñjana eva ātma-kṛtaṁ vipākam) and offering You respectful obeisances (vidadhan namas te) with his heart, words and body (hṛd-vāg-vapurahir), is surely eligible (sah jīveta) for You, the shelter of liberation (mukti-pade), for that is his rightful claim (yah dāya-bhāk).

In this verse the phrase mukti-pade, which tells the goal for which one is eligible, should be correctly understood.

The phrase can be explained in several ways.

1st meaning of mukti-pade → vaikunṭha

In one sense it indicates the place (pada) where the highest ecstasy is manifest, namely Śrī Vaikuntha.

2nd meaning → mukti-phala → PDS

In another sense pada means “fruit,” so mukti-pada means the ultimate fruit of liberation—in other words, pure devotional service.

In yet another sense, pada means "feet," so mukti-pada means "that which has liberation at its feet"—again, the path of devotional practice, because bhakti conquers and subjugates mukti.

↑ 3rd meaning → mukti-pada → what that @ whose feet mukti resides
→ (re) P-D-S

And in still another sense, according to an established convention, the idea of mukti, cessation of material existence, should be understood to refer directly to bhakti itself.

↑ 4th meaning → Directly refers to bhakti

Following this last meaning, the word apavarga—synonymous with mukti—is used as follows in the Fifth Canto of the Bhāgavatam (5.19.19–20):

|| 5.19.19-20 ||

apavargaś cāpi bhavati.

yo 'sau bhagavati sarva-bhūtātmany anātmye 'nirukte 'nilayane paramātmani
vāsudeve 'nanya-nimitta-bhakti-yoga-lakṣaṇo nānā-gati-nimittāvidyā-granthi-
randhana-dvāreṇa yadā hi mahā-puruṣa-puruṣa-prasaṅgaḥ.

Liberation is then achieved (apavargah cāpi bhavati). That liberation (yah), whose essential nature is unmotivated bhakti-yoga (ananya-nimitta-bhakti-yoga-lakṣaṇah) to the Lord full of qualities (bhagavati), who attracts the minds of all beings (sarva-bhūta ātmany), who is not the object of merging (anātmye), who is not described by material words (anirukte), who remains beyond destruction of the universe (anilayane), who is the most excellent ātmā (paramātmani), who is the son of Vasudeva (vāsudeve), takes place by destruction of the knot of ignorance (avidyā-granthi-randhana-dvāreṇa) which causes various material goals (nānā-gati-nimitta), when there is association with devotees of the Lord (yadā hi mahā-puruṣa-puruṣa-prasaṅgaḥ).

Lord Vāsudeva is anātmya (devoid of the attachment and other faults that arise in the conditioned self).

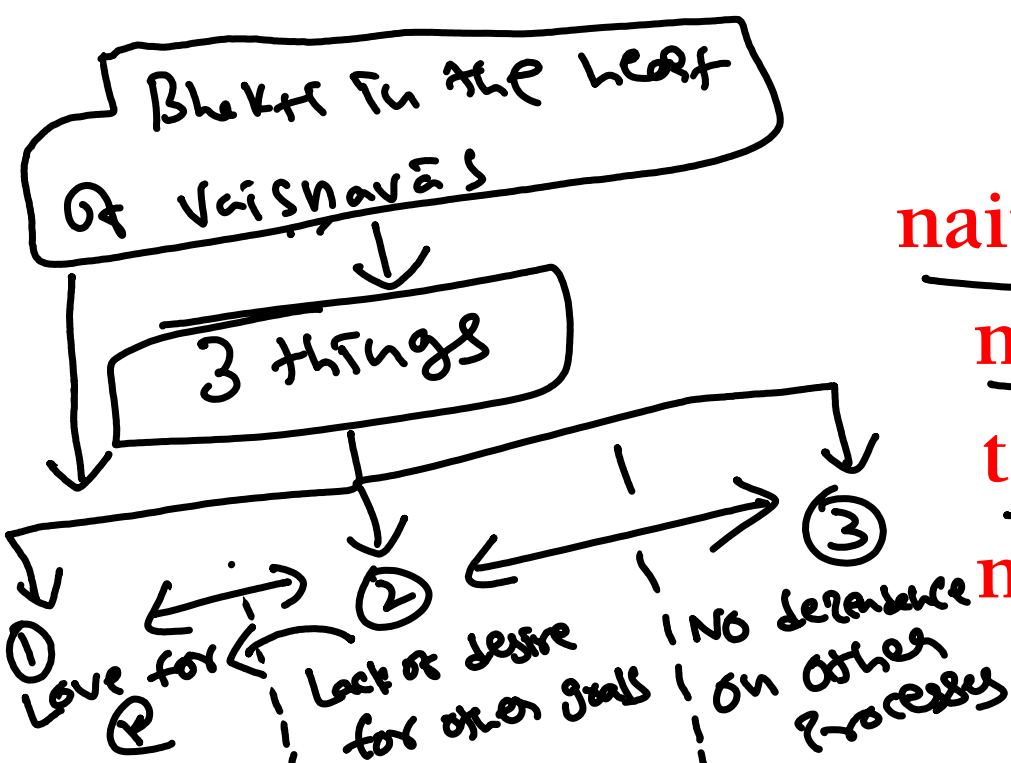
He is also anirukta (beyond the scope of words) and anilayana (independent of any other shelter).

Pure devotion for Him without ulterior motives is true mukti.

In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.20.35) Lord Kṛṣṇa confirms in His own words that renunciation of material motives is a prerequisite for bhakti:

vanya-bhakti-sikṣā śiṅgā

|| 11.20.35 ||



nairapekṣyam param prāhur

niḥśreyasam analpakam

tasmān nirāśiṣo bhaktir

nirapekṣasya me bhavet

→ jñāna-karmādy anāvṛtta.

It is said that (prāhur) the process which is without dependence on other processes or results (nairapekṣyam) is the best process (param). It gives more quantity of auspiciousness than other processes (analpakam niḥśreyasam). Therefore (tasmād) a person who does not desire any rewards (nirāśiṣah) and does not depend on other processes (nirapekṣasya) develops bhakti for me (me bhaktir bhavet).

Here Kṛṣṇa indicates that the highest goal, or the only real goal of life, is indifference to sense gratification and everything else material.

Or, to put it another way, the highest good can be achieved by the person who becomes indifferent to material things.

That highest good is called liberation.

complete detachment means → detachment from liberation & the means to attain liberation.

But a person who is completely detached is indifferent even to liberation and the means of achieving it—knowledge, detachment, and so on.

↓
ज्ञान

↓
वैराग्य

Therefore, such a person can achieve pure devotional service to Kṛṣṇa.

In Śrī Viṣṇu Purāṇa (3.8.9), Aurva Ṛṣi tells King Sagara:

varṇāśramācāra-vatār
puruṣeṇa paraḥ pumān
viṣṇur ārādhyate panthār
nānyat tat-toṣa-kāraṇam

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Viṣṇu, is worshiped by the proper execution of prescribed duties in the system of varṇa and āśrama. There is no other way to satisfy the Lord.”

One who adheres to this varṇāśrama-dharma does not cease from all activity, thinking his life's work complete.

Yet he does nothing else (nānyat) than worship Lord Viṣṇu.

This statement from the Viṣṇu Purāṇa clearly implies that worship of Lord Viṣṇu is the summit of all varṇāśrama duties.

Other than worship of Lord Viṣṇu, no path (panthāḥ)—neither karma, nor jñāna, nor any other process—is a cause of the Lord's satisfaction (tat-toṣa-kāraṇam).

These other methods have no independent power to satisfy Lord Viṣṇu.

Therefore unless they are engaged in the service of bhakti they are useless.

Nevertheless, the Lord enjoins that varṇāśrama duties should not be given up:

Vaṣe which seemingly
suggests that VA duties
cannot be given up?

śruti-smṛtī mamaivājñer
yas te ullāṅghya vartate
ājñā-cchedī mama dveṣī
mad-bhakto 'pi na vaiṣṇavaḥ

Whoever disregards the śruti and smṛti scriptures (yah śruti-smṛtī
ullāṅghya vartate) that are mine (mama eva ajñe yas te) is a breaker
of My order (ājñā-cchedī), a hater of Me (mama dveṣī). Even if he is
My devotee he is not a Vaiṣṇava (mad-bhakto'pi na vaiṣṇavaḥ).

The Lord says this because performing varṇāśrama duties can help one progress toward the path of [devotional service].

At least in the lower stages of spiritual development, one should not abandon one's prescribed duties.

The duties of varṇāśrama must be maintained, especially by persons who are on the pravṛtti-mārga, the path of material development, and who lack faith in the transcendental process of bhakti.

The Supreme Lord makes statements like these to encourage people to adhere strictly to their prescribed religious duties.

→ Scope of VA duties is limited

However, many other statements throughout the revealed scriptures also say that the scope of obligatory material duties is limited.

Such duties, limited also in their benefits, may be ignored without harm when they conflict with (more important spiritual responsibilities.)

↓ Devotional service.

Thus devotees dedicated to the path of bhakti are not considered fallen if they fail to carry out some of their karmic commitments

As declared by the Personality of Godhead in Śrī Padma Purāṇa:

mat-karma kurvatām puṁsām
kriyā-lopo bhaved yadi
teṣām karmāṇi kurvanti
tisraḥ koṭyo maharṣayaḥ

ḍ'udde bhakti

“If (yadi) persons doing My work (mat-karma kurvatām puṁsām) fail to execute some other karmic duties (kriyā-lopo bhaved), thirty million exalted sages (tisraḥ koṭyo maharṣayaḥ) carry out those commitments on their behalf (teṣām karmāṇi kurvanti).”