

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 Srī 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).

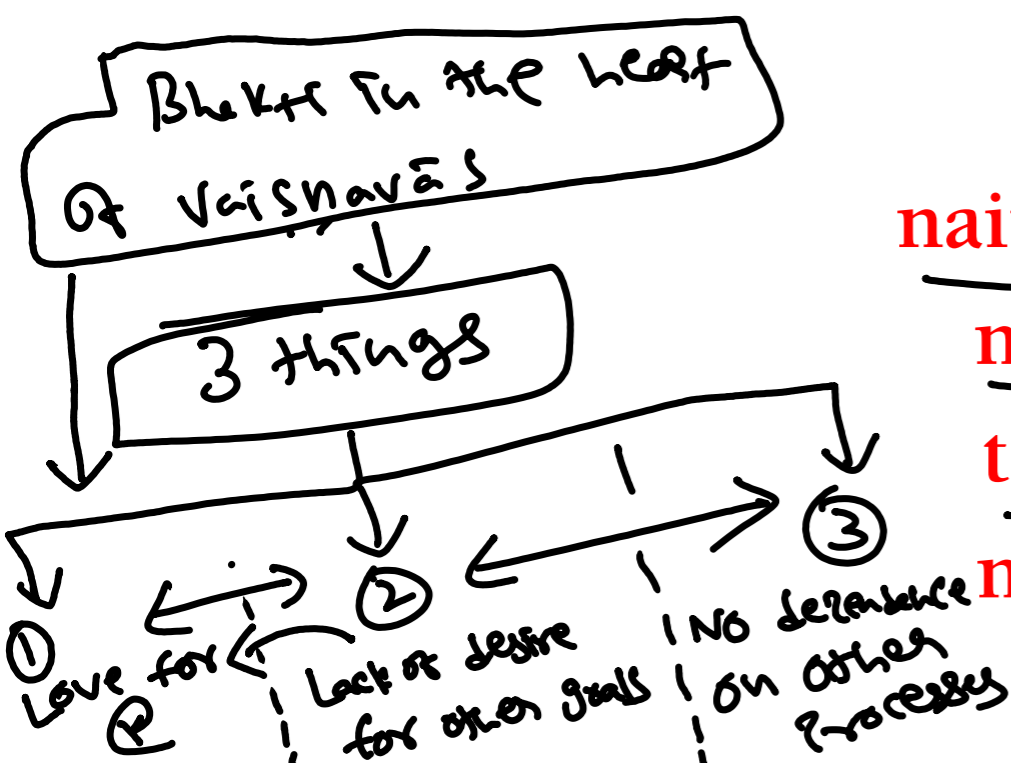
He is also anirukta (beyond the scope of words) and anilayana (independent of any other shelter).

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:

vanḡśbhīrāśīḡā śīḡyā

|| 11.20.35 ||



nairapekṣyaṁ param prāhur

niḥśreyasam analpakam

tasmān nirāśiṣo bhaktir

nirapekṣasya me bhavet

→ jñāna-karmādy anāvṛtā.

It is said that (prāhur) the process which is without dependence on other processes or results (nairapekṣyaṁ) 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

ḥ'uddhe 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).”

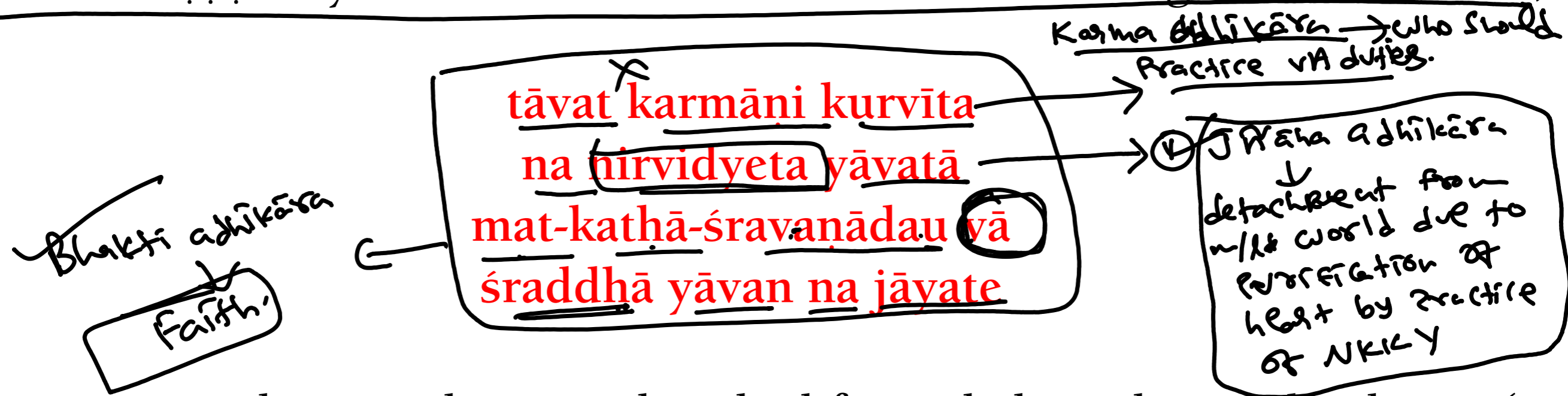
Similarly, in the same Purāṇa, Devadyuti prays:

yasmin jñāte na kurvanti
karma caiva śrutīritam
nireṣaṇā jagan-mitrāḥ
śuddham brahma namāmi tam

“Persons who know this pure Supreme (yasmin śuddham brahma jñāte) cease performing (na kurvanti) the duties enjoined by the śrutis (śruti īritam karma), lose all ambitions (nireṣaṇā), and become friends of the whole world (jagan-mitrāḥ). To Him I bow down (namāmi tam).”

If devotees abandon their karmic duties merely by learning theoretically about the Supreme Lord, what then of those who take full shelter of Him and engage in His personal service?

Thus Lord Kṛṣṇa says in the Eleventh Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.20.9):



As long as one does not become detached from daily and periodic duties (**na nirvidyeta yāvatā**) or has not awakened his faith (**śraddhā yāvan na jāyate**) in hearing topics about me (**mat-kathā-śravaṇādau vā**), one must perform one's prescribed duties of varṇāśrama (**tāvat karmāṇi kurvīta**).

Faith.

This implies that one who does develop a taste for devotional service is no longer bound to the Vedic regulations for mundane karmic life.

As expressed here by the emphatic word ^(ov) vā, devotees attracted to hearing and chanting about the Supreme Lord are not interested in anything else.

mahat-sevām dvāram āhur vimuktes
tamo-dvāram yoṣitām saṅgi-saṅgam
mahāntas te sama-cittāḥ praśāntā
vimanyavaḥ suhṛdaḥ sādhavo ye

It is said that (āhuh) service to saintly persons (mahat-sevām) is the cause (dvāram) of two types of liberation (vi-mukteh), whereas association with men who associate with women (yoṣitām saṅgi-saṅgam) is the cause of bondage (tamo-dvāram). The impersonalist (te mahāntah) sees no differences (sama-cittāḥ) and is peaceful (praśāntā) whereas the devotee (te mahāntah) has a sincere heart (sama-cittāḥ) and his intelligence is fixed in me (praśāntā). Both types of saintly persons (ye) are devoid of anger (vimanyavaḥ), are friendly to all (suhṛdaḥ) and do not see faults in other (sādhavaḥ).

|| 5.5.3 ||

ye vā mayīṣe kṛta-sauhṛdā
janēṣu dehambhara-vārtikeṣu
gṛheṣu jāyātmaja-rātimatsu
na prīti-yuktā yāvad-arthāś ca loke

The devotees (ye) ~~have made their goal of life affection for me~~
(mayā kṛta-sauhṛda arthā), the Lord (īṣe), and ~~do not show~~
affection (na prīti-yuktā) for ~~persons~~ (janēṣu) who ~~enjoy talks about~~
~~people attached to eating and drinking~~ (dehambhara-vārtikeṣu) and
who have houses, wives, sons and wealth (gṛheṣu jāyā ātmaja-
rātimatsu). They remain in their houses simply to spend their
~~money on glorifying the Lord~~ (yāvad-arthāś ca loke).

Vaiṣṇavas are free from the good and bad karmic reactions to obeying or violating the Vedic injunctions:

na mayy ekānta-bhaktānām
guṇa-doṣodbhavā guṇāḥ
sādhūnām sama-cittānām
buddheḥ param upeyusām

They have no Prakṛti
devotion to DGS or
the lots of kṛtyak

The fully dedicated devotees (mayy ekānta-bhaktānām sādhūnām) who see equally everywhere (sama-cittānām) and who have achieved (upeyusām) the Lord who is superior to prakṛti (buddheḥ param) do not have the gunas which give rise to qualities of good and bad (na guṇa-doṣa udbhavā guṇāḥ). (Bhāgavatam 11.20.36)

In the Padma Purāṇa (Uttara 71.100), Lord Śiva has summed up the essence of all Vedic duties in these famous words:

smartavyaḥ satataṁ viṣṇur
vismartavyo na jātu cit
sarve vidhi-niṣedhāḥ syur
etayor api kiṅkarāḥ

“Lord Visnu should always be remembered (smartavyaḥ satataṁ viṣṇur) and never forgotten (vismartavyo na jātu cit). All injunctions and prohibitions (sarve vidhi-niṣedhāḥ) are servants of these two rules (etayor api kiṅkarāḥ syuh).”

When one remembers Lord Visnu one has fulfilled all Vedic injunctions, because remembering Him awakens all auspiciousness.

And when one forgets Him one has violated all prohibitions, because all sins are born from that forgetfulness.

Thus, rather than strive for anything else, everyone should endeavor to follow these two rules.

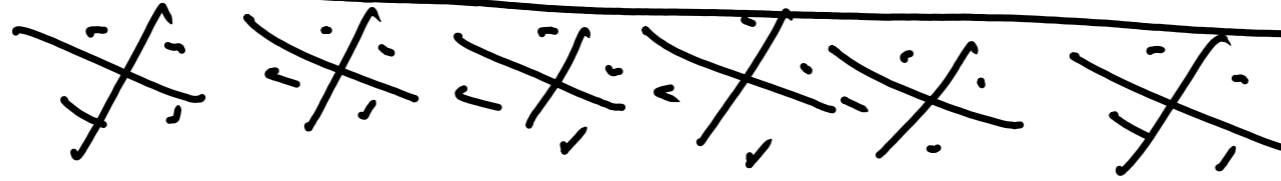
Karma distracts one
 from bhakti
 Vairāgyam ↓
~~Jñānam~~ ↓ → rasa-śoṣakam
~~Vairāgyam~~ ↓ → hāni-karam
 But these three when purified
 → they faithfully serve her.

2.2.205

karma vikṣepakam tasyā
vairāgyam rasa-śoṣakam
jñānam hāni-karam tat tac
chodhitam tv anuyāti tām

Ritual duties (karma) distract one (vikṣepakam) from devotional
service (tasyā), renunciation (vairāgyam) dries up one's
transcendental taste for her (rasa-śoṣakam), and knowledge
(jñānam) can do her harm (tat hāni-karam). But these three (tat tu),
when purified (śodhitam), faithfully serve her (tām anuyāti).

Serious Vaisnavas should give up whatever does not serve the purpose of pure devotional service.



The karma-kāṇḍa injunctions of the Vedas obscure the path of devotion with hundreds of obligatory rituals, and practicing detachment from all worldly things dries up the attractive taste of devotional practice.

The indifference recommended in devotional service, however, is distinct from the renunciation undertaken by impersonalists, because devotional renunciation selectively turns away only those things that cannot be used in the Lord's service.

This is described in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.2.42).

bhaktiḥ pareśānubhavo viraktir/ anyatra caiṣa trika eka-kālah:

“Devotion (bhaktiḥ), direct experience of the Supreme Lord (pareśānubhavo), and detachment from other things (viraktir)—these three occur (anyatra ca eṣa trika) simultaneously (eka-kālah) for one who has taken shelter of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.”

The pursuit of knowledge weakens bhakti because realizing such truths as the divine nature of the self gives one a feeling of self-satisfaction that quells the strong urge needed to enter the Supreme Lord’s service.

|| 11.20.31 ||

tasmān mad-bhakti-yuktasya
yogino vai mad-ātmanah
na jñānaṁ na ca vairāgyaṁ
prāyaḥ śreyo bhaved iha

Therefore (**tasmād**), for a devotee engaged in bhakti (**mad-bhakti-yuktasya yoginah**), with mind fixed on me (**mad-ātmanah**), the cultivation of knowledge and renunciation (**jñānaṁ ca vairāgyaṁ**) is generally not beneficial for bhakti (**na prāyaḥ śreyo bhaved iha**).

|| 11.20.32-33 ||

yat karmabhir yat tapasā jñāna-vairāgyataś ca yat
yogena dāna-dharmeṇa śreyobhir itarair api

sarvaṁ mad-bhakti-yogena mad-bhaktō labhate 'ñjasā
svargāpavargaṁ mad-dhāma kathañcid yadi vāñchati

Everything that can be achieved by fruitive activities, penance (**yat karmabhir yat tapasā**), knowledge, detachment (**jñāna-vairāgyataś ca yat**), mystic yoga, charity, religious duties (**yogena dāna dharmeṇa**) and all other means of perfecting life (**śreyobhir itarair api**) is easily achieved by My devotee (**sarvaṁ mad-bhaktah labhate 'ñjasā**) through loving service unto Me (**mad-bhakti-yogena**). If somehow or other My devotee desires (**kathañcid mad-bhaktah yadi vāñchati**) promotion to heaven, liberation, or residence in My abode (for service) (**svargāpavargaṁ mad-dhāma**), he easily achieves such benedictions (**sarvaṁ anjasā labhate**).