

Śrī Brhad-bhāgavatāmṛta

by Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī

Volume-2

Śrī-goloka-māhātmya

The Glories of Goloka

Chapter-2

Jñāna: Knowledge

2.2.209

avāntara-phalam bhakter
eva mokṣādi yady api
tathāpi nātmārāmatvaṁ
grāhyaṁ prema-virodhi yat

Even though
moksā & its effects
are natural by-products of
bhakti / devotees do not
satisfy self-satisfaction of
worrying of obstruct Pure bhakti

Even though (yady api) liberation and its effects (mokṣādi) are natural by-products (avāntara-phalam) of devotional service (bhakter eva) devotees do not regard satisfaction in the self as worth taking (tathāpi na grāhyaṁ atmārāmatvaṁ), for it obstructs pure love of God (prema-virodhi yat).

Aren't Vaiṣṇavas also joyful in the self?

Don't they also have full knowledge and the mystic perfections of yoga?

Yes, their practices of hearing and chanting about the Lord and serving Him bring them these benefits automatically as intermediate results, just as a fire lit for cooking will first dispel darkness and cold.

The self-delight of impersonal liberation, however, is not recommended for devotees of the Lord; they should avoid it even though they have it easily available.

Devotees should reject anything that obstructs or slows their progress toward pure love of God.

The final
fruit of D.S. is
prema in which there
is no satisfaction. There
is this self-satisfaction for the
most unwanted 20 fruit of prema

2.2.210

bhakteḥ phalaṁ param̐ prema
tr̥pty-abhāva-svabhāvakaṁ
avāntara-phaleṣv etad
ati-heyam̐ satām̐ matam̐

The final fruit of devotional service (bhakteḥ phalaṁ param̐) is prema (prema), in which, by its nature (svabhāvakaṁ), one will never be satiated (tr̥pty-abhāva). Sainly authorities deem (satām̐ matam̐) self-satisfaction (etad) the most unwanted (ati-heyam̐) secondary fruit of prema (avāntara-phaleṣv).

A devotee who relishes prema is never satisfied with himself but always wants to surrender more and more for the satisfaction of his Lord.

Thus experts in the science of devotional ecstasies condemn self-satisfaction as the most harmful impediment to bhakti.

Of all the secondary fruits available to advancing Vaiṣṇavas, self-satisfaction is the one they should most carefully avoid.

There is room for only very few exceptions.

For example, satisfaction in the self may be all right for some time for a person trying to take shelter of the Supreme Lord but unable to give up hankering for liberation.

↓
EXCEPTION-1



Or the offerings of self-satisfaction and other perfections that come with the attainment of Brahman may entice an ignorant nondevotee to begin devotional service.

↓
EXCEPTION-2

These perfections are in fact opulences of the Supreme Person, and so they can attract certain kinds of persons toward Him.

There is no
reason to be unhappy
if someone attains self-satisfaction
without bhakti

2.2.211

bhaktim vināpi tat-siddhāv
asantoso bhaven na tat
śrīmad-bhāgavatendrānām
mate sa hi guṇo mahān

There is no reason to be unhappy (na tat asantoso bhavet) if
someone attains self-satisfaction (tat-siddhāv) without devotion to
the Supreme Lord (bhaktim vināpi). The leaders of the saintly
Vaisnavas (śrīmad-bhāgavatendrānām) consider (mate) such an
occurrence (sa hi) very good (mahān guṇah).

What is wrong if something so useless and contemptible as ātmārāmatā, satisfaction in the self, arises when devotional service has not been performed?

Bhakti is a precious jewel, ātmārāmatā but a piece of straw.

Wise devotees, therefore, are not bothered if satisfaction in the self is achieved without devotional service.

Compared to the magic touchstone of devotion for the Personality of Godhead's lotus feet, impersonal satisfaction in the self is abominable, a cause of misery only, like life in hell.

The great authorities in the science of devotional service are pleased to see this contrast between the rare treasure of bhakti and the worthless attainment of ātmārāmāṭā because it highlights the superexcellence of pure devotion.

And if someone foolishly strives for mukti but fails, that also is very good.

to be pure
of thinking
one needs
one needs Purity of
which is a type of
the result of 20 bhakti
the result of 20 bhakti is
sublime.

tad-dhetuś citta-śuddhir vā
sva-dharmācāra-bhaktitah
bāhyāyās tv alpakaṁ bhakter
āntaryāḥ su-mahat phalam

JAKKY
Purification of heart
Qualified to meditate
on the self
Intelligence

Or, from another point of view (vā): Purity of heart (citta-śuddhir), which is the cause of satisfaction in the self (tad-dhetuh), may come about from performing one's prescribed duties (sva-dharmācāra)—and this, after all, is a kind of devotional service (bhaktitah). Thus, the result (phalam) that comes from the external form of devotional service (bāhyāyās bhakter) is paltry (tv alpakaṁ), and from the internal form (āntaryāḥ) sublime (su-mahat).

After all this discussion, some Vaisnavas may still insist on the principle that nothing at all can be achieved without at least a touch of bhakti.

To satisfy them, the bhakti-śāstras here look at the topic from another angle, as indicated by the word vā (“or else”).

The self-satisfaction aspired for by impersonalists arises from purified consciousness, which one may achieve by fulfilling one’s duties within the varṇāśrama system.

And since performing such duties is a type of devotional service mixed with karma, it is true that even for an impersonalist success depends on bhakti.

In case someone objects that the fruit of devotional service cannot be satisfaction in the self but only love of God and nothing else, the bhakti-śāstras further say that following one's Vedic obligations is only devotional service in an external form.

As such it results in mere self-satisfaction, whereas the essential form of devotional service—through hearing and chanting about the Lord, remembering Him, and so on—bears the most desirable fruit, that of prema.

A few achieving
the state of atman
Some begin worshipping the
Lord's lotus feet & quickly
obtain they quickly
Bhakti-niṣṭhā-mahā-sukham

2.2.213

nijātmārāmatā-pāścād
bhajatām tat-padāmbujam
nirvighnam acirāt sidhyed
bhakti-niṣṭhā-mahā-sukham

After achieving impersonal self-satisfaction (nija ātmārāmatā-pāścād), some begin worshipping the Lord's lotus feet (bhajatām tat-padāmbujam), and without hardship (nirvighnam) they quickly obtain (acirāt sidhyed) the abundant happiness (mahā-sukham) of being fixed in devotional service (bhakti-niṣṭhā).

Of those who achieve satisfaction in the self, a rare few somehow particularly favored by the Supreme Lord give up their self-satisfaction to worship Him.

↓
bhagavad-kṛpā
&
bhakta-śeṅga

They quickly reach the highest perfection.

Ordinary people, entangled in various miseries of material life, cannot at once succeed in devotional practice.

But self-satisfied impersonalists have already transcended the small-minded miserable existence of material life, so they can progress to joyful bhakti without delay.

↓ because anarth-nivṛtti is already accomplished

They quickly comprehend that what they knew before as the unnameable essence of liberated life—the reality of full eternity, knowledge, and bliss—is actually the all-attractive Personality of Godhead.

Some philosophers even hold that self-contented impersonalists are excellent candidates (uttama-adhikārīs) for bhakti.

Indeed, no one is disallowed from entering devotional service.

As the saying goes, gaṅgā-snāna iva bhagavad-bhaktau sarve 'py adhikāriṇaḥ:
“Just as for bathing in the Gaṅgā, everyone is a fit candidate for the Supreme
Lord’s devotional service.”

Nonetheless, in the opinion of Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī and his sampradāya, no
material opulence, such as the ability to follow all the rules of varṇāśrama, can
qualify one for beginning the process of pure bhakti. In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam
(10.14.8) Lord Brahmā confirms that pure devotion is easily attained simply
by depending on the mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead (tat te
'nukampām su-samīkṣamāṇaḥ).

There is no other means to attain it. By the Supreme Lord's mercy, one who practices bhakti, depending only on Him, will surely achieve complete happiness.

Devotion in practice gives birth to devotion in perfection.