Śrī Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta

by Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī

Volume-2

Śrī-goloka-māhātmya

The Glories of Goloka

Chapter-3

Bhajana: Worship

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2.3.39

kṣaṇān nirākāram ivāvalokayan smarāmi nīlādri-pater anugraham kṣaṇāc ca sākāram udīkṣya pūrva-van mahā-mahaḥ-puñjam amum labhe mudam

Although at one moment (kṣaṇān) I saw Him (avalokayan) as formless (nirākāram iva), I remembered (smarāmi) the mercy (anugraham) of the Lord of Nīlādri (nīlādri-pateh), and at the next moment (kṣaṇāt ca) I saw Him (amum udīkṣya) again (pūrva-vat) in His personal form (sākarām), vastly effulgent (mahā-mahaḥ-puñjam), and I was full of joy (labhe mudam).

The Supreme Lord whom Gopa-kumāra was perceiving did not actually become impersonal, but when His effulgence intensified, Gopa-kumāra could see nothing but that effulgence.

This is one characteristic of the abode of liberation, that individual distinctions (tend) to become obscured by the all-pervading divine light from the transcendental body of the Lord.

In this instance, however, Gopa-kumāra remembered Lord Jagannātha, who was similarly effulgent, like a brilliant dark-blue mountain.

Remembering Lord Jagannātha's compassion, Gopa-kumāra thought that no one else could be as merciful as He.

Then, when the Lord's personal form again became visible past His effulgence, Gopa-kumāra's ecstasy increased even more.

The verbs in the Sanskrit text of this verse and the verses that follow are in the present tense even though the verse describes a past event.

This is to indicate that Gopa-kumāra spent a long time in Mahākāla-pura, the abode of liberation.

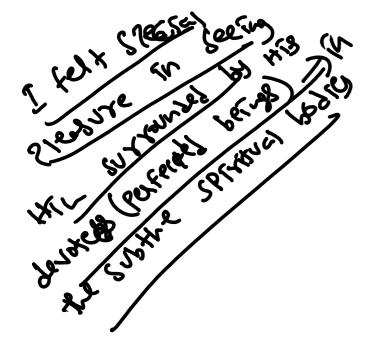
With the House of the root to the total to 2.3.40 kadāpi tasminn evāham līyamāno 'nukampayā rakseya nija-pādābjanakhāmśu-sparśato 'munā

Sometimes (kadāpi) I would begin to merge (aḥaṁ līyamānah) into the Lord's effulgence (tasminn eya), but He mercifully saved Me (amunā anukampayā rakṣeya) with the touch (sparśato) of the rays (aṁśu) from the nails (nakha) of His lotus feet (nija-pādābja).

The reddish nails of Lord Viṣṇu's toes are like brilliant gems.

They are so attractive to His devotees that the devotees never think of giving up their personal relationships with Him to dissolve themselves into oneness.

Of course, everything about the Lord is supremely attractive, not only His toes, but Vaiṣṇavas generally honor the Lord by beginning their worship from His feet.



2.3.41

<u>bhinnābhinnair mahā-siddhaiḥ</u>
<u>sūkṣmaiḥ sūryam ivāṁśubhiḥ</u>
vrtaṁ bhaktair ivālokya

kadāpi prīyate manaḥ

Sometimes (kadāpi) my mind felt special pleasure (prīyate manaḥ) in beholding Him (ālokya) surrounded (vrtaṃ) by the great perfected beings (mahā-siddhaiḥ) who were His devotees (bhaktaih), at once different and nondifferent from Him (bhinna abhinnaih). They surrounded Him (vrtaṃ) in subtle spiritual forms (sūkṣmaiḥ), like beams of light around the sun (sūryam iva amśubhih).

The Supreme Personality of Godhead always invites His part-and-parcel jīvas to share loving reciprocations with Him, even in the abode of liberation.

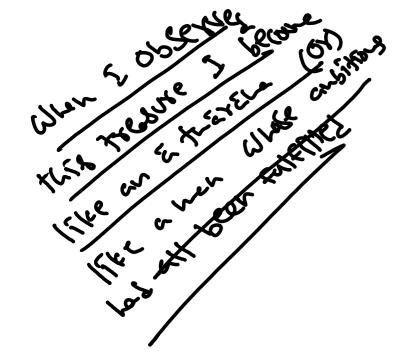
Helkindly considers the liberated souls who surround Him there His bhaktas but actually they are hardly interested in personal service.

The only bhakti they offer the Lord is to decorate Him as particles of His effulgence.

Although they are eternal, indissolvable individuals, their separate personalities are now dormant and invisible.

Like all other jīvas, they are both different and nondifferent from the Supreme, like the rays of light shining from the sun.

In spiritual substance they are one with the Lord, but they have autonomous identities, with their own consciousness, their own bodies, and their own small capacity to control.

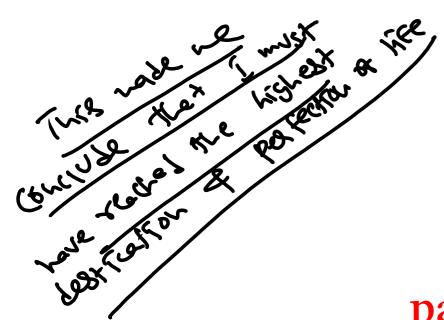


2.3.42
ittham ānanda-sandoham
anuvindan nimagna-dhīḥ
ātmārāma ivābhūvam
pūrna-kāma ivātha vā

The huge treasure of ecstasy (ānanda-sandoham) I in this way obtained (ittham anuvindan) inundated my mind (nimagna-dhīḥ). I became like a self-contented sage (ātmārāma iva abhūvan) or (atha vā) like a man whose ambitions have all been fulfilled (pūrṇa-kāma iva).

Gopa-kumāra became "like" a self-contented sage or a materialist, not one in fact.

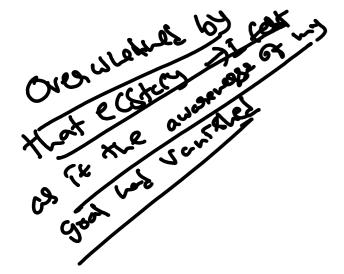
Had he actually been contented with himself and his situation, he would no longer have been driven by the urge to seek his worshipable Lord.



2.3.43

tarkārcita-vicāraughair idam eva param padam parām kāṣṭhām gatam caitad amamsi paramam phalam

A flood of thoughts (vicāra oghaih), upheld by logic (tarka arcita), made me conclude (amamsi) I had reached the supreme destination (gatam ca etad paramam phalam), the highest perfection of life (idam eva parām kāṣṭhām param padam).



2.3.44

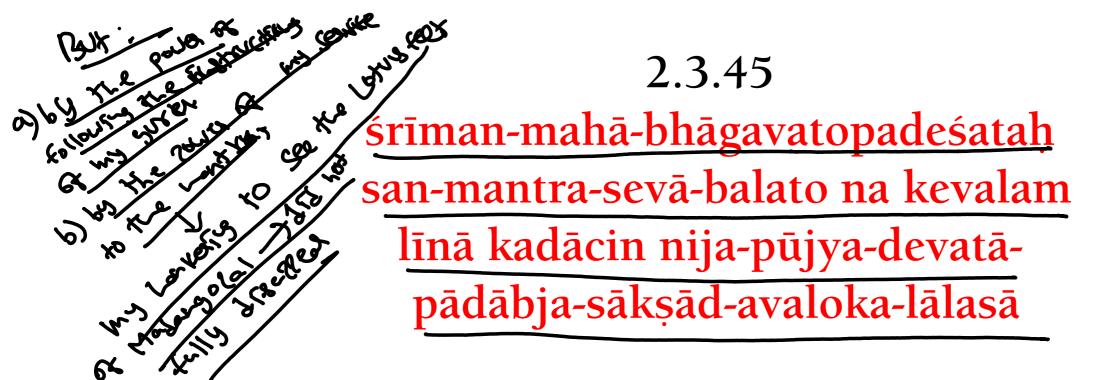
pada-svābhāvikānandataraṅga-kṣobha-vihvale citte tad-anya-sva-prāpyajñānam antardadhāv iva

Tossed by the waves of ecstasy (ānanda-taraṅga-ksobha) intrinsic to that abode (pada-svābhāvika), my mind was overwhelmed (vihvale citte), as if the awareness of my goal (tad-anya-sva-prāpya-jñānam) had vanished (antardadhāv iva).

Having worshiped Śrī Madana-gopāla for a long time, in all sorts of places, Gopa-kumāra was familiar with Lord Madana-gopāla's unique beauty.

Why did Gopa-kumāra now think that Mahākāla-pura and its Lord were the final goal of his life?

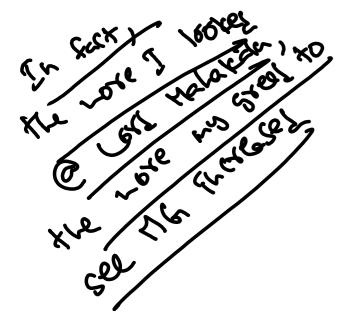
As explained here, the powerful influence of that realm confused him, temporarily diverting to another form of the Lord his determination to worship Madana-gopāla.



Yet because of following the divine instructions of the great saintly devotee (śrīman-mahā-bhagavata upadeśataḥ), and because of the strength of my service to the transcendental mantra (sad-mantra-sevā-balato), my hankering to see with my own eyes (sākṣād-avaloka-lālasā) the lotus feet of my worshipable Deity (nija-pūjya-devatā-pādābja) never fully disappeared (kadācid na kevalam līnā).

By the mercy of his divine spiritual master, Gopa-kumāra never lost his eagerness to see with his own eyes the lotus feet of Śrī Madanagopāla.

And this eagerness was what impelled him to travel higher and higher in search of his Lord, never wanting to stay in any place where Madana-gopāla was absent.



2.3.46

utāsya tejo-maya-pūruṣasya cirāvalokena vivardhito 'bhūt nijeṣṭa-sandarśana-dīrgha-lobhaḥ smṛteḥ sṛtim nīta iva prakarṣāt

Rather (uta), the more I looked (cira avalokena) at the effulgent Lord Mahākāla (asya tejo-maya-pūruṣasya), the stronger rose (vivardhito abhūt) my long-standing greed (dīrgha-lobhaḥ) to see the object of my worship (nija iṣṭa-sandarśana). The Deity I worshiped seemed pulled by force (nīta iva prakarṣāt) onto the path of my remembrance (smṛteḥ sṛtiṃ).

If Gopa-kumāra were truly interested only in Śrī Madana-gopāla, what was the value of being in a place more exalted than Brahmaloka?

The answer given here is that his vivid and extended darśana of Lord Mahākāla intensified his remembrance of Madana-gopāla and his hankering to see the Lord in person, not just in his heart.

In other words, Gopa-kumāra was not satisfied to worship his Lord only by passive meditation.