

Śrī Brhad-bhāgavatāmṛta

by Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī

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Volume-2

Śrī-goloka-māhātmya

The Glories of Goloka

Chapter-3

Bhajana: Worship

nityāparicchinna-mahā-sukhāntya- kāṣṭhāvatas tādrśa-vaibhavasya
sākṣād-ramā-nātha-padāravinda- krīḍā-bharājasra-vibhūṣitasya

tat-prema-bhaktaiḥ su-labhasya vaktum vaikunṭha-lokasya param kim iṣe
advaita-durvāsanayā mumukṣā-viddhātmanām hr̥dy api durlabhasya

What more can I say (kim vaktum iṣe) about Vaikuntha-loka (vaikunṭha-lokasya)? With its opulence (tādrśa-vaibhavasya) it displays the final limit (antya- kāṣṭhāvataḥ) of eternal unlimited joy (nitya-aparicchinna-mahā-sukha). It is blessed abundantly (bhara-vibhūṣitasya) by the ever-visible (ājasra) pastimes (krīḍā) of the lotus feet of the Lord, the husband of the goddess of fortune (sākṣād-ramā-nātha-padāravinda). The Lord's loving devotees (tat-prema-bhaktaiḥ) easily gain that Vaikunṭha (su-labhasya), but persons with minds (ātmanām) tarnished by the blunder of complete oneness (advaita-durvāsanayā) and the yearning for liberation (mumukṣā-viddha) can hardly hope to achieve it even in their dreams (hr̥dy api durlabhasya).

What more can I tell about this Vaikunṭha?

① It displays the final limit of eternal joy.

② It is blessed with the eternal richness.

③ Loving devotees can easily attain ④ not those Advaita-durvāsanayā ātmānām.

Returning from his digression about why the four Kumāras are present, Śrī Gaṇeśa here summarizes his glorification of Vaikuṅṭha.

He feels he has now said enough, since his words are not capable of adequately describing the greatness of Lord Nārāyaṇa's abode.

Vaiṣṇavas who have pure love for the Lord can easily enter Vaikuṅṭha, but the impersonalists who prefer the oneness of mukti to the reciprocations of devotional service have little hope of being admitted.

Many śāstras confirm this. For example the Yoga-vāsiṣṭha-rāmāyaṇa states:

ajñasyārdha-prabuddhasya
sarvaṁ brahmeti yo vadet
mahā-naraka-jāleṣu
tenaiva viniyojitaḥ

“An ignorant (ajñasya), half-awake person (ardha-prabuddhasya) who likes to say (yah vadet) ‘Everything is Brahman (sarvaṁ brahma iti)’ earns, by this (tena eva), entanglement (viniyojitaḥ) in a network of terrible hells (mahā-naraka-jāleṣu).”

The Brahma-vaiivarta Purāṇa also says:

viṣaya-sneha-saṁyukto
brahmāham iti yo vadet
kalpa-koṭi-sahasrāṇi
narake sa tu pacyate

“A person full of attachment for sense gratification (viṣaya-sneha-saṁyukto) who likes to say ‘I am Brahman’ (brahmāham iti yah vadet) will burn in hell (narake sa tu pacyate) for billions of kalpas (kalpa-koṭi-sahasrāṇi).”

And in another Purāna:

samsāra-sukha-samyuktam
brahmāham iti vādinam
karma-brahma-paribhraṣṭam
tam tyajed antyajam yathā

“A person stuck in worldly enjoyment (samsāra-sukha-samyuktam) who says ‘I am Brahman (brahmāham iti vādinam)’ has fallen both from Vedic duties and from Brahman realization (karma-brahma-paribhraṣṭam). He should be rejected (tam tyajed) like an outcaste (antyajam yathā).”

Since materialists who identify themselves with Brahman are said to fall into hell, surely those who imagine themselves identical with Para-brahman, the Personality of Godhead, are even more condemned.

If you receive the
full mercy of my father,
you will hear the glories of
Vaikuntha & go there yourself

2.3.98

yady asya mat-pituh samyak
karuṇā syān tadā tvayā
śroṣyate mahimā tasya
gatvā cānubhaviṣyate

If you receive (yady syāt) the full mercy of my father (mat-pituh samyak karuṇā), you will hear (tadā tvayā śroṣyate) the glories of Vaikuntha (tasya mahimā) and go there to see them for yourself (gatvā ca anubhaviṣyate).

Rather than try to present more of the glories of Vaikunṭha in his own words, Gaṇeśa here directs Gopa-kumāra to see them for himself.

Since Gopa-kumāra has already been granted Lord Śiva's personal audience, Lord Śiva's complete mercy should not be difficult for him to obtain.

Receiving the full mercy of Lord Śiva results not in attaining Śivaloka but in reaching Vaikunṭha to serve Lord Viṣṇu in pure devotional service.

2.3.99

śrī-gopa-kumāra uvāca
brahmaṁs tat-prāptaye jāta-
mahā-lālasayā bhr̥śam
aham cintārṇavāpāra-
bhaṅga-raṅge pranartitaḥ

I quickly became
ready to attach feeling
Vaikuṇṭha & that
made me very anxious

Śrī Gopa-kumāra said: O brāhmaṇa (**brahman**), I quickly became ardent (**jāta-mahā-lālasayā**) to reach that place (**tat-prāptaye**). And that feeling made me dance wildly (**aham pranartitaḥ**) on a stage made of waves (**bhaṅga-raṅge**) of a vast ocean of anxiety (**apāra cintārṇava**).

Gopa-kumāra's eagerness made him anxious about whether he would reach
Vaikuṇṭha.

But I concluded
That I was unqualified
to go there;
This sorrow made me faint

2.3.100

vicāra-jātataḥ svasya
sambhāvya tad-ayogyatām
prarudan śoka-vegena
mohaṁ prāpyāpatam kṣaṇāt

From the many thoughts flashing (vicāra-jātataḥ) through my mind (svasya) I concluded (sambhāvya) I was unfit to go (tad-ayogyatām). I cried profusely (prarudan), and the force of my sorrow (śoka-vegena) made me faint (mohaṁ prāpya) and suddenly fall to the ground (āpatam kṣaṇāt).

From the many thoughts flashing through my mind I concluded I was unfit to go.

I cried profusely, and the force of my sorrow made me faint and suddenly fall to the ground.

2.3.101

mahā-dayālunānena
para-duḥkhāsaḥiṣṇunā
vaiṣṇavaika-priyeṇāham
utthāpyāśvāsya bhāṣitaḥ

Then the best
of the Vaiṣṇavas, para-duḥkha
spoke to, picked me up
to console me.

That most merciful of great souls (anena mahā-dayālunā), the one
best friend of the Vaisnavas (vaiṣṇava eka-priyeṇa), Lord Śiva, who
cannot tolerate the distress of others (para-duḥkha asaḥiṣṇunā),
picked me up (aham utthāpya) and spoke to console me (āśvāsya
bhāṣitaḥ).

Lord Śiva Mahādeva was ready to give his full mercy to Gopa-
kumāra.

Oh dear Vaiṣṇava!
Just like you both, Pārvatī
& I have a desire to reside
eternally in Vaiṣṇava-loka.

2.3.102

śrī-mahādeva uvāca
he śrī-vaiṣṇava pārvatya
sahāham api kāmaye
tasmin vaikuṅṭha-loke tu
sadā vāsam bhavān iva

Śrī Mahādeva said: My dear Vaiṣṇava (he śrī-vaiṣṇava), both Pārvatī and I (pārvatya saha aham api), just like you (bhavān iva), want to live forever (sadā vāsam kāmaye) in that Vaiṣṇava-loka (vaikuṅṭha-loke).

Lord Śiva notes that the same desire harbored by him and his wife
has developed in Gopa-kumāra.

Because Lord Śiva and Gopa-kumāra share the same interest, it is
implied, perhaps Gopa-kumāra should come to Lord Śiva's planet and
stay happily with him there for some time.

This is very difficult to attain.
Even liberated souls, Brahmā & I strive for it.

2.3.103

so 'tīva-durlabho lokah
prārthyo muktair api dhruvam
sādhyo brahma-sutānām hi
brahmaṇas ca mamāpi saḥ

But that world (saḥ lokah) is exceedingly difficult to attain (atīva-durlabhah). Indeed (dhruvam), even liberated souls (muktair api) pray to achieve it (prārthyah). Brahmā's sons (brahma-sutānām hi) and yet again Brahmā himself (brahmaṇas ca) strive for it (saḥ sādhyah), and so even do I (mama api).

For the liberated impersonalists and for demigods such as Śiva, Brahmā, and sons of Brahmā like Bhṛgu, the spiritual world Vaikuṅṭha is sādhyā, the goal to be attained, but not yet sādhitā, actually obtained.

only one
who has perfectly
perfected his VA duties
selfless → Gu. attet. tle
mercy of Hari

2.3.104

niṣkāmeṣu viśuddheṣu
sva-dharmeṣu hi yaḥ pumān
parām niṣṭhām gatas tasmin
yā kṛpā śrī-harer bhavet

Only one (**yaḥ pumān**) who has completely perfected (**parām niṣṭhām gatah**) his religious duties (**sva-dharmeṣu**), who is pure (**viśuddheṣu**), who is done with selfish motives (**niṣkāmeṣu**), can achieve (**tasmin bhavet**) the mercy of Śrī Hari (**śrī-harer yā kṛpā**).

If that mercy
is multiplied 100 times
→ one attains the post of
Brahmā

If the 100
→ are multiplied 100 times
→ one becomes like me

2.3.105

tasyāḥ śata-guṇā cet syād
brahmatvaṁ labhate tadā
tasyāḥ śata-guṇāyām ca
satyām mad-bhāvam ṛcchati

If that mercy is multiplied a hundred times (**tasyāḥ śata-guṇā cet syād**), one attains the post of Brahmā (**brahmatvaṁ labhate tadā**). And if a hundred times again (**tasyāḥ śata-guṇāyām ca**), one can become like me (**satyām mad-bhāvam ṛcchati**).

if one attains
more mercy than I
→ one can go to Vaikunṭha

2.3.106

śrīmad-bhagavatas tasya
mayi yāvān anugrahaḥ
tasmāc chata-guṇottāne
jāte vaikuṇṭham eti tam

And if (**yāvād**) one obtains from the divine Personality of Godhead (**tasya śrīmad-bhagavataḥ**) more mercy than I (**mayi anugrahaḥ**)—a hundred times more (**tasmād śata-guṇottāne jāte**)—one can go to Vaikuṇṭha (**vaikuṇṭham eti tam**).

This is how difficult it is to achieve entrance into *Vaikunṭha*.

Lord Śiva also described this in his instructions to the *Pracetās* in the Fourth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (4.24.29):

sva-dharma-niṣṭhaḥ śata-janmabhiḥ pumān
virīñcatām eti tataḥ param hi mām
avyākṛtaṁ bhāgavato 'tha vaiṣṇavaṁ
padam yathāham vibudhāḥ kalātyaye

A person fixed in dharma (**sva-dharma-niṣṭhaḥ pumān**) attains the post of Brahmā (**virīñcatām eti**) after a hundred births (**śata-janmabhiḥ**), and by more pious acts than that a person attains me, Śiva (**tataḥ param hi mām**). But the devotee (**bhāgavataḥ**) attains the abode of Vaikuṅṭha (**vaiṣṇavaṁ padam**) beyond the material world (**avyākṛtaṁ**) after leaving the body (**kalātyaye**). Similarly I in another form reside there (**yathā aham**), and the devatās who are qualified go there (**vibudhāḥ**) after destroying their subtle bodies (**kalātyaye**).

Some demigods, including Lord Śiva, are qualified for promotion to Vaikuṅṭha, but only after they complete their long appointments as universal rulers and after their subtle bodies are dissolved by the attainment of liberation.

But pure devotees graced with a sufficient portion of Lord Viṣṇu's mercy need not serve such long terms as demigods; they can achieve Vaikuṅṭha much more quickly.

We read in the Itihāsa-sammucaya, in the narration about Mudgala:

**brahmaṇaḥ sadanād ūrdhvaṁ tad viṣṇoḥ paramaṁ padam
śuddhaṁ sanātanam jyotiḥ para-brahmeti yad viduḥ**

**nirmamā nirahaṅkāṛā nirdvandvā ye jitendriyāḥ
dhyāna-yoga-parāś caiva tatra gacchanti sādhaḥ**

**ye 'rcayanti harim viṣṇum kṛṣṇam jiṣṇum sanātanam
nārāyaṇam ajaṁ kṛṣṇam viṣvaksenam catur-bhujam**

**dhyāyanti puruṣam divyam acyutaṁ ca smaranti ye
labhante te 'cyutaṁ sthānam śrutir eṣā sanātani**

“Above the domain of impersonal Brahman (**brahmaṇaḥ sadanād ūrdhvaṁ**) is that supreme abode of Lord Viṣṇu (**tad viṣṇoḥ paramaṁ padam**). It is the pure, eternal sky (**śuddhaṁ sanātanam jyotiḥ**) known as Para-brahma (**para-brahmeti yad viduḥ**). Sainly persons (**ye sādhaḥ**) who are free from possessiveness and ego (**nirmamā nirahaṅkāṛā**), who are beyond dualities, who have controlled their senses (**nirdvandvā ye jitendriyāḥ**), and who are fixed in meditational yoga (**dhyāna-yoga-parāś caiva**) go to that abode (**tatra gacchanti**). The eternal unborn Lord Hari (**sanātanam ajaṁ harim**), or Kṛṣṇa (**kṛṣṇam**), is variously known as Viṣṇu, Kṛṣṇa, Jiṣṇu, Viṣvaksena (**viṣṇum kṛṣṇam jiṣṇum viṣvaksenam**), and the four-armed Lord Nārāyaṇa (**nārāyaṇam catur-bhujam**). Those who worship that Supreme Lord (**ye 'rcayanti**), meditating on Him as the supreme transcendental person (**dhyāyanti puruṣam divyam**), remembering Him as the infallible Lord (**acyutaṁ ca smaranti ye**), achieve His infallible abode (**labhante te acyutaṁ sthānam**). Such is the eternal proclamation of revealed scripture (**śrutir eṣā sanātani**).”

In the context of this verse of the Itihāsa-sammucaya, the words brahmaṇaḥ sadanād ūrdhvam should be understood to refer not to Lord Brahmā's planet but to Mahākāla-pura, the abode of liberation.

~~In that mukti-pada, liberated souls merge into sāyujya in intense meditation on Brahman.~~

Vaikuṅṭha is superior both to this mukti-pada and to Maheśa-dhāma, the abode of Lord Śiva.

Because Lord Śiva, though an incarnation of the Supreme Lord, plays the role of a devotee, he humbly compares himself unfavorably with the residents of Vaikuṅṭha, but in reality even the personal associates of Lord Nārāyaṇa worship Lord Siva as an incarnation of Nārāyaṇa.

Those associates have similar respect for all of Lord Nārāyaṇa's incarnations, even the jīvas who are śakty-āveśa avatāras.

The apparent hierarchy among these expansions of Godhead rests not on their actual relative superiority but merely on how each avatāra shows himself, either as a portion of God or as God's devotee.

This will be explained more clearly later on, in the instructions given by Nārada Muni.