

Śrī Brhad-bhāgavatāmṛta

by Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī

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Volume-2

Śrī-goloka-māhātmya

The Glories of Goloka

Chapter-3

Bhajana: Worship

But great devotees do not think their D.S. to be under their own control. But they see it as expressions of Lord's mercy.

2.3.142

mahadbhir bhakti-niṣṭhaiś ca
na svādhīneti manyate
mahā-prasāda-rūpeyaṁ
prabhor ity anubhūyate

But great devotees (**mahadbhir**) fixed in devotional service (**bhakti-niṣṭhaiś ca**) do not think (**na manyate**) the services they do to be actions under their own control (**sva adhīna iti**) but expressions of the Lord's supreme mercy (**iyam prabhor mahā-prasāda-rūpaḥ ity anubhūyate**).

If you are in
a hurry to see
Vaikunṭha then go
to Vraja & it'll fulfill
all your desires

2.3.143

tvarā ced vidyate śrīmad-
vaikunṭhālokane tava
sarvābhīṣṭa-prada-śreṣṭhām
tām śrī-vraja-bhuvam vraja

If you are in a hurry (tvarā ced vidyate) to see the divine world of Vaikunṭha (śrīmad-vaikunṭha ālokane), then go to Śrī Vraja-bhūmi (śrī-vraja-bhuvam vraja), the place (tām) that can best award (prada-śreṣṭhām) the fulfillment of all your ambitions (tava sarva-abhīṣṭa).

Having received the mercy of Lord Maheśvara, Gopa-kumāra is sure to achieve Vaikuṅṭha.

Meanwhile he can proceed to Śivaloka, from which he will be able to approach Vaikuṅṭha in due time.

But as the Vaikuṅṭha messengers know, Gopa-kumāra is anxious to reach Vaikuṅṭha as quickly as possible.

So after describing various related topics, the messengers now give the essence of their instruction: Gopa-kumāra should return to Vraja on earth and there practice pure bhakti to fulfill his ambitions.

Singly practice
D.S. mainly in the
form of nama-saṅkīrtana
with the hope of gaining
eternal contact with the Lord's
lotus feet

2.3.144

param śrīmat-padāmbhoja-
sadāsaṅgaty-apekṣayā
nāma-saṅkīrtana-prāyām
viśuddhām bhaktim ācara

Simply practice pure devotional service (viśuddhām bhaktim ā),
mainly in the form of nāma-saṅkīrtana (nāma-saṅkīrtana-prāyām),
with the hope (apekṣayā) of gaining the eternal contact (sadā
saṅgaty) of the Lord's divine lotus feet (param śrīmat-
padāmbhoja).

Bhagavan-nāma-saṅkīrtana, loud chanting of the holy name of the Lord, is the most effective way to achieve Vaikuṅṭha, or whatever else one may desire.

But the chanting must be practiced in pure devotion, unmixed with motives of karma and jñāna.

By that
Sankirtana-Prayer-Book
→ U will soon attain Kṛṣṇa
& easily see (P) IL (V)

2.3.145

tayāśu tādrśī prema-
sampad utpādayiṣyate
yayā sukhaṁ te bhavitā
vaikuṅṭhe kṛṣṇa-darśanam

By that devotional service (tayā) you will soon realize (āśu utpādayiṣyate) the treasure of prema (tādrśī prema-sampad), and you will easily (yayā sukhaṁ te) see Kṛṣṇa (kṛṣṇa-darśanam bhavitā) in Vaikuṅṭha (vaikuṅṭhe).

Pure love of God is the most sublime wealth. As Lord Brahmā says in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.15.25) while describing his own vision of Vaikuṅṭha:

yac ca vrajanty animiṣām ṛṣabhānuvṛttyā
dūre yamā hy upari naḥ sprhaṇīya-śīlāḥ
bhartur mithaḥ su-yaśasaḥ kathanānurāga-
vaiklavya-bāṣpa-kalayā pulakī-kṛtāṅgāḥ

Those who are far above rules (dūre yamā) by following the Lord of the demigods (animiṣām ṛṣabhānuvṛttyā) with dedication, who are superior to us (upari naḥ), and whose qualities are desirable by us (sprhaṇīya-śīlāḥ), and whose bodies develop goose bumps (pulakī-kṛtāṅgāḥ) and uncontrolled tears of ecstasy (vaiklavya-bāṣpa-kalayā) through attraction to discussions of the Lord (bhartuh kathanā anurāga) possessing most excellent qualities (mithaḥ suyaśasaḥ), enter Vaikuṅṭha (yac ca vrajanty).

premṇo 'ntar-aṅgam kila sādhanottamam
manyeta kaiścit smaranam na kīrtanam
ekendriye vāci vicetane sukham
bhaktiḥ sphuraty āśu hi kīrtanātmikā

Some think
 to smaranam is superior
 to kīrtanam.
 Why?
 1) Kīrtan is very easily
 & quickly achieved.
 2) Only one sense is involved
 (to hear) → which is
 accurate.

Some think (kaiścit manyeta) that remembering (smaranam),
 rather than chanting (na kīrtanam), is the essential means of
devotional practice (kila sadhana uttamam), the means that most
effectively leads to prema (premṇo antar-aṅgam), for bhakti
 (bhaktiḥ) in the form of chanting (kīrtanātmikā) appears
 (sphuraty) quickly (āśu) and easily (sukham), and in only one
 sense (eka indriye), that of speech (vāci), which is not itself alive
 and conscious (vicetane).

This was the opinion expressed by the masters of yoga on Tapoloka, that of all the forms of devotional service the best is smaraṇa, remembering.

Pippalāyana and others insisted that remembering the Lord, rather than chanting His names, is the most essential means of achieving prema.

They reasoned that kīrtana involves only one sense, that of speech, which is one of the karmendriyas, an unconcious material entity.

And since the kīrtana process is perfected very quickly, its result must be less than that of smaraṇa.

2.3.147

bhaktiḥ prakṛṣṭā smaraṇātmikāsmiṇ
sarvendriyāṇām adhiṇe vilole
ghore baliṣṭhe manasi prayāsaḥ
nīte vaśam bhāti viśodhite yā

But, Superior
to Kṛi which is
superior → superior within
the turbulent, frightful mind
when by serious efforts, the
mind is fully purified.

Superior bhakti (prakṛṣṭā bhaktiḥ) in the form of remembering (smaraṇātmikā), they think, appears (bhāti) within the mind (manasi)—that turbulent (vilole), frightful (ghore), and mighty (baliṣṭhe) chief of all the senses (sarva indriyāṇām adhiṇe)—when by serious efforts (prayāsaḥ) the mind has been brought under control (vaśam nīte) and fully purified (viśodhite).

Everyone has experience that the mind is difficult to control.

To subdue and purify it is a great achievement.

Because the mind is the ruler of the senses, when the mind is controlled the functions of the senses, including kīrtana, are also controlled.

In the words of the mendicant from Avantī in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.23.47, 45):

mano-vaśe 'nye hy abhavan sma devā
manaś ca nānyasya vaśam sameti
bhīṣmo hi devaḥ sahasaḥ sahiyān
yuñjyād vaśe taṁ sa hi deva-devaḥ

The senses (anye devā) are under the control of the mind (mano-vaśe hy abhavan sma). The mind is not under the control of anything else (manaś ca na anyasya vaśam sameti). The mind is fearsome (bhīṣmo hi devaḥ), stronger than the strongest (sahasah sahiyān). One who controls the mind is the controller of all the senses (yuñjyād vaśe taṁ sa hi deva-devaḥ).

dānam sva-dharmo niyamo yamaś ca
śrutam ca karmāṇi ca sad-vratāni
sarve mano-nigraha-lakṣaṇāntāḥ
paro hi yogo manasaḥ samādhiḥ

Charity, prescribed duties, niyama and yama (**dānam sva-dharmo niyamo yamaś ca**), hearing from scripture, pious works and purifying vows (**śrutam ca karmāṇi ca sad-vratāni**) all have as their final aim the subduing of the mind (**sarve mano-nigraha-lakṣaṇa antāḥ**), since control of the mind is the best yoga (**paro hi yogo manasaḥ samādhiḥ**).

Therefore, in the opinion of the residents of Tapoloka, one achieves the highest perfection by controlling one's mind and engaging it in remembrance of the Supreme Lord.

2.3.148

But in our opinion, chanting
is better than smārṇam.
Why?
Best,
a) chanting includes mind, speech & hearing.
b) chanting helps not only the person
practicing it, but others also.

manyāmahe kīrtanam eva sat-tamam
lolātmakaika-sva-hṛdi sphurat-smṛteḥ
vāci sva-yukte manasi śrutau tathā
dīvyat parān apy upakurvad ātmya-vat

But we consider (manyāmahe) chanting to be alone (kīrtanam eva) the most excellent form of bhakti (sat-tamam), better than remembering (smṛteḥ), which appears (sphurat) only in one's own turbulent heart (lolātmakaika-sva-hṛdi). For chanting harnesses not only the faculty of speech (vāci) which it engages directly (sva-yukte), but also the mind (manasi) and sense of hearing (śrutau tathā). And chanting helps (upakurvad) not only the person practicing it (ātmya-vat dīvyat) but others as well (parān apy).

This is the Vaikuntha-dūtas' own opinion. Smarana is purely an internal function, but kīrtana, which actively employs one's power of speech, affects both one's internal and external environments.

Kīrtana also acts on the mind, bringing it subconsciously into contact with all spiritual sensory functions.

If this subtle contact were not established, the spirit soul could not awaken to his real life.

The transcendental sound of kīrtana enters the ears on its own strength, without any effort by the hearer and thus it benefits not only the chanter but everyone who hears it, treating them all as its subservient dependents.

The process of remembrance does not have such power.

In fact, as long as the mind's fickle character has not changed, smarana cannot manifest itself fully.

When we realistically consider the relative value of smaraṇa and kīrtana, we find, therefore, that the difficulty of performing smaraṇa does not make smaraṇa more important.

In the Viṣṇu Purāṇa (6.8.57) the sage Parāśara has said:

yasmin nyasta-matir na yāti narakam svargo 'pi yac-cintane
vighno yatra niveśitātma-manaso brāhmo 'pi loko 'lpakah
muktim cetasi yaḥ sthito 'mala-dhiyām puṁsām dadāty avyayah
kim citraṁ yad aghaḥ prayāti vilayaṁ tatrācyute kīrtite

“One who fixes his mind on Lord Acyuta (yasmin nyasta-matir) will never go to hell (na yāti narakam). Indeed, by thinking about Him (yac-cintane) one will attain heaven (svargah api). For one whose mind is fully absorbed in thought of Him (yatra niveśita ātma-manaso), even the world of Brahmā (brāhmo lokah api) is but an insignificant obstruction on the path (alpakah vighnah). The infallible Lord (avyayah) bestows liberation (dadāty muktim) on those pure souls (yaḥ amala-dhiyām puṁsām) in whose hearts He is present (cetasi sthitah). Is it any wonder (kim citraṁ), then, that when Lord Acyuta’s glories are chanted (tatra acyute kīrtite) all sins are destroyed (yad aghaḥ prayāti vilayaṁ)?”

By the kīrtana of Lord Visnu's names even the sinful Ajāmila, who could not remember the Lord at all, attained liberation.

The beneficial results of meditation, sacrifice, and worship are all automatically obtained in the process of kīrtana, especially in the present age:

dhyāyan kṛte yajan yajñais
tretāyām dvāpare 'rcayan
yad āpnoti tad āpnoti
kalau saṅkīrtya keśavam

“What was accomplished (yad āpnoti) in the Kṛta Age (kṛte) by meditation (dhyāyan), in Tretā (tretāyām) by ritual sacrifices (yajan yajñais), and in Dvāpara by worship of the Deity of the Lord (dvāpare arcayan), in this Kali Age (kalau) is accomplished (tad āpnoti) by loud chanting of the names of Keśava (saṅkīrtya keśavam).” (Viṣṇu Purāṇa 6.2.17)

The claim made in this statement and others about the potency of
hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana is not merely rhetoric; it is proven by the life
histories of many successful Vaiṣṇavas.