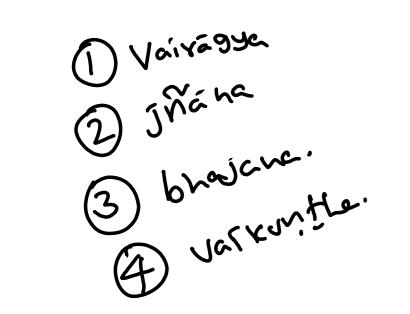
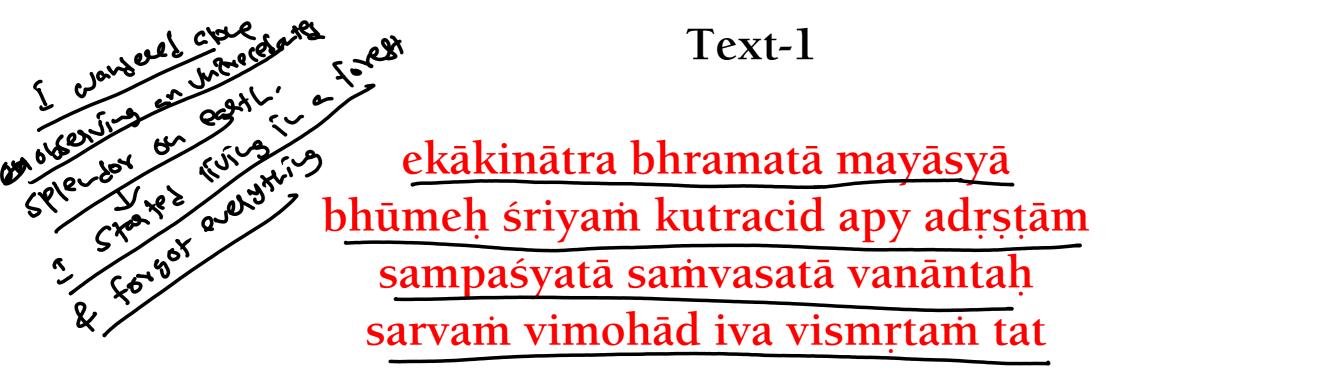
# Śrī Brhad-bhāgavatāmrta

# by Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī



Part 4

# Vaikuntha- The Spiritual Kingdom



I wandered alone (<u>mayā ekākinā bhramatā</u>), observing (<u>sampaśyatā</u>) on the earth (<u>asyāh bhūme</u>ḥ) a splendor (<u>śriyam</u>) I had never seen anywhere (<u>kutracid apy adrstām</u>). Taking up residence in a forest (<u>samvasatā vana antaḥ</u>), as if in a daze (<u>vimohād iva</u>) I forgot everything from before (<u>sarvam tat</u> <u>vismrtam</u>). This Fourth Chapter describes the transcendental reality of Vaikuntha and the appearance and qualities of its inhabitants.

The chapter glorifies the Deity forms of the Supreme Lord and extols the position of Ayodhyā above Vaikuņțha, and of Dvārakā above Ayodhyā.

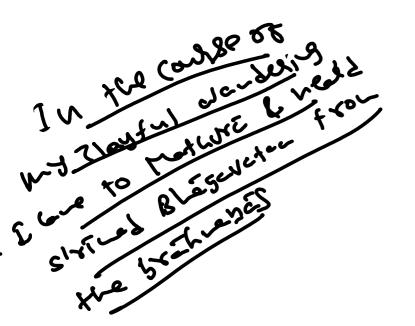
The first part of the chapter shows that Śrī Vraja-bhūmi in Mathurā District is superior to every other place in the material universe and even to the abode of liberation.

When Gopa-kumāra returned to the earth where he was born, he could see with his own eyes the special beauty of Vrndāvana forest and the rest of Vraja-bhūmi. I ne cons seeing unifersioni beyond the notestical veil.

Nowhere else inside or outside this universe had he seen such splendor.

<u>Taking up residence again in the various forests of Vraja, Gopa-kumāra was</u> so enchanted that he forgot everything the associates of Lord Nārāyaṇa had told him about how to attain the spiritual kingdom of Vaikuntha.

<u>The very name of this district, Mathurā, implies that it charms and agitates</u> literally, "churns" (mathnāti)—the mind of everyone who goes there.



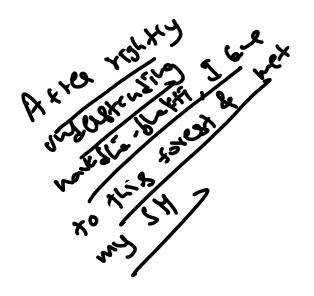
#### TEXT 2

śrīman-madhu-purīm krīdābhramaņa-kramato gataņ tatra māthura-viprebhyo 'śrauṣam bhāgavatādikam

In the course of my playful wandering (krīḍā-bhramaṇa-kramato), I came to Mathurā, Śrī Madhupurī (śrīman-madhu-purīm gataḥ). There (tatra) I heard (aśrauṣam) the Bhāgavatam and other scriptures (bhāgavatādikam) from the local brāhmaṇas (māthuraviprebhyah). By the grace of the Lord of Mathurā, Gopa-kumāra obtained everything he desired.

Following the regular parikrama path, he eventually arrived in Mathurā City.

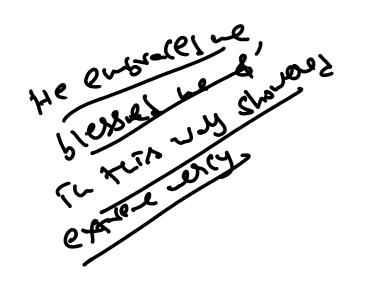
Then the devoted and learned brāhmaņas of Mathurā taught him the essence of the revealed scriptures, primarily as given in Srīmad-Bhāgavatam and a few other texts that faithfully follow the Bhāgavatam on the science of bhagavad-bhakti.



# TEXT 3 bhaktim nava-vidhām samyag jñātvedam vanam āgataḥ apaśyam sahasaivātra śrīmad-guru-varam nijam

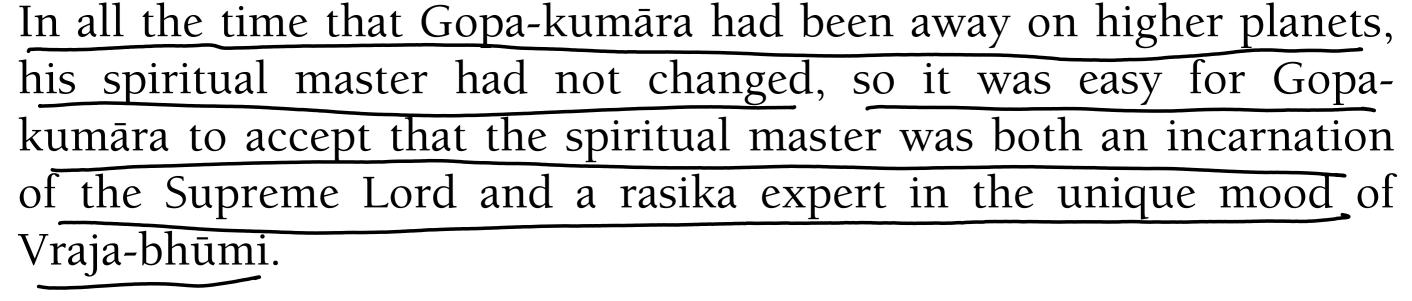
After rightly understanding (<u>samyag</u> j<u>nātvā</u>) the meaning of devotional service in its nine forms (<u>bhaktim nava-vidhām</u>), I came to this forest (<u>idam vanam āgatah</u>). And as soon as I arrived (<u>sahasā</u> <u>eva atra</u>) I met (<u>apaśya</u>ḿ) my divine spiritual master (<u>nijam śrīmad-</u> <u>guru-varam</u>).

By hearing Srīmad-Bhāgavatam from the qualified Mathurā brāhmaņas, at last Gopa-kumāra systematically learned the science of devotional service. He learned what is favorable and unfavorable to bhakti, or in other words what a devotee should accept and what he should reject. To proteinly value the association of unistated duter To proteinly value the association of unistated duter duter. I we need to be chabled by provided of biggeret a duter. This knowledge of bhagavata-dharma enabled him to properly value the association of Śrī Vrndāvana-dhāma and of that special resident of Vrndāvana his spiritual master.



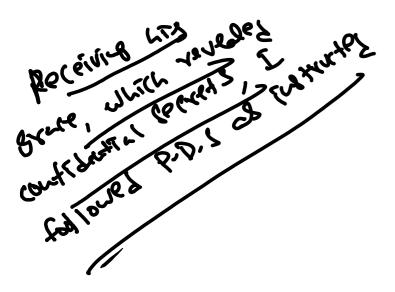
# TEXT 4 pūrva-vad rājamāno 'sau dṛṣṭvā māṁ praṇataṁ mudā sāśīr-vādaṁ samāliṅgya sarva-jño 'kṛpayat-tarām

He appeared splendid (asau rājamānah) just as before (pūrva-vad). And when he saw me lying prostrate before him (dṛṣṭvā mām praṇatam), he joyfully embraced me (mudā samālingya) and offered his blessings (sa āśīr-vādam). Thus my all-knowing master (sarvajño) showed me his extreme mercy (akṛpayat-tarām).



The spiritual master showed Gopa-kumāra complete mercy by teaching him enough about devotional service to lead him through the entire process, up to the stage of full realization.

Being omniscient, the spiritual master was competent to perform this service.



#### TEXT 5

tasya prasādam āsādya mahā-gūḍha-prakāśakam anvatiṣṭhaṁ yathādiṣṭaṁ bhakti-yogam anāratam

Receiving his grace (tasya prasādam āsādya), which revealed to me the most confidential secrets (mahā-gūḍha-prakāśakam), I followed (anvatiṣṭhaṁ) his instructions (yathā ādiṣṭaṁ) by practicing bhaktiyoga without interruption (bhakti-yogam anāratam). Devotional service is the highest form of yoga because it is the means for attaining the world of Vaikuntha and, even more important, reestablishing one's own connection with the Personality of Godhead's lotus feet.

Gopa-kumāra now endeavored with all sincerity to follow this process systematically, according to his guru's instructions.

#### TEXTS 6–7

sañjātenācirāt prema- pūreņa vivaśo 'bhavam

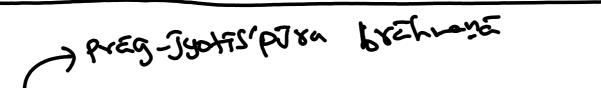
a kartum aśakam kiñcit param tam samakīrtayam

hā śrī-yaśodā-tanaya prasīda śrī-ballavī-jīvana rādhikeśa

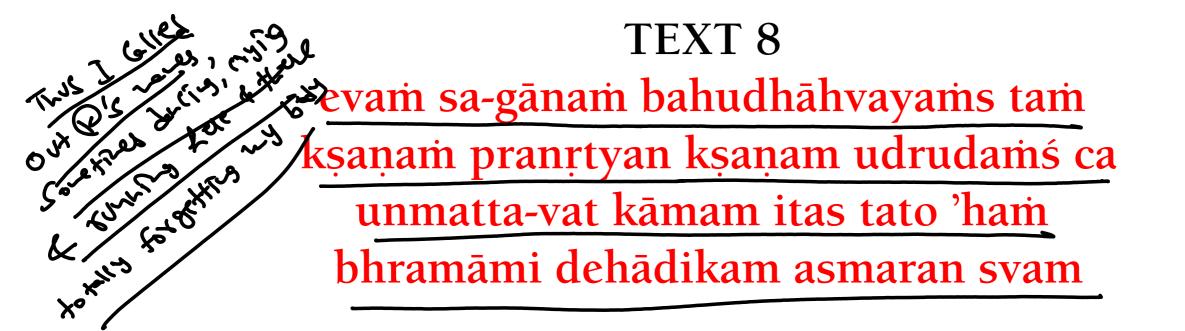
Such a flood of pure love of God (prema-pūreņa) so quickly awakened within me (acirāt sañjātena) that I lost control of myself (vivaso abhavam). I was unable to do anything (na kiñcit kartum aśakam) but chant the Lord's glories (param tam samakīrtavam): "O Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Gopāla, Hari, Mukunda (śrī-kṛṣṇa gopāla har<u>e mukunda</u>)! Govinda! O Nanda-kiśora! Kṛṣṇa (govinda he nanda-kiśora krsna)! O darling son of Śrī Yaśodā (hā śrīyaśodā-tanaya), please show me Your favor (prasīda)! O life of the divine cowherd girls (śrī-ballavī-jīvana), O Lord of Rādhikā (rādhikeśa)!"

On this visit to Vraja-bhūmi, Gopa-kumāra quickly achieved the perfection of prema-bhakti.

This prema so overwhelmed him that he was unable to do anything but sing the Lord's glories; he could not even perform proper worship.

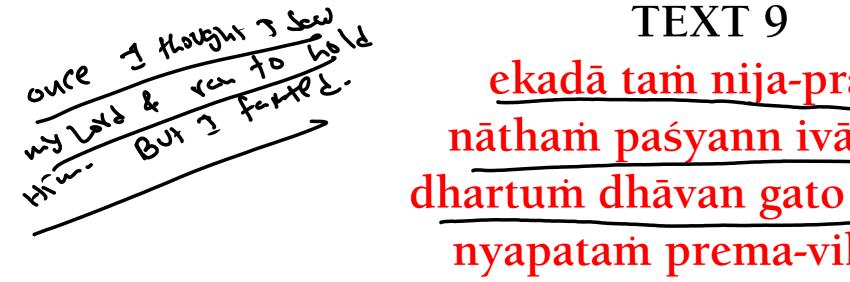


To show his student how he was performing nāma-saṅkīrtana, Gopa-kumāra here chants a few of the Supreme Lord's favorite names.



Th<u>us (evam</u>) I called out to Kṛṣṇa (āḥvayams tam) and sang His glories in various ways (sa-gānam bahudhā). At one moment (kṣaṇam) I danced exuberantly (pranṛtyan), at another sobbed out loud (kṣaṇam udrudamś ca). Like a madman (unmatta-vat) I wandered here and there (aham itas tato bhramāmi) according to my whims (kāmam), forgetting my own body and everything else (svam dehādikam asmaran). Caught up in this state of pure love, Gopa-kumāra completely disregarded external conditions.

He wandered aimlessly like a madman, expressing his transcendental agitation by calling out such things as "Where are You, where are You, O mighty-armed one?"



ekadā tam nija-prāņanātham paśyann ivāgratah dhartum dhāvan gato moham nyapatam prema-vihvalah

Once (ekadā) I thought I saw (paśyann iva) the Lord of my life (tam) nija-prāna-nātham) standing before me (agratah), and I ran (dhāvan) to take hold of Him (hartum). Overwhelmed by love (prema-vihvalah), I fainted (gato moham) and fell to the ground (nyapatam).

The phrase prema-vihvalah, "overwhelmed by love," explains why Gopa-kumāra was behaving so strangely.

#### TEXTS 10–11

yānam āropitaḥ sadyo vyutthāyācālayam dṛśau

visarvam anyādrsam drstvā vismitah svasthatām gatah pārsve 'pasyam purā drstāms tān evātma-priyam-karān

At that moment (tavat) the associates of the Lord (taih parsadair) arrived in an airplane (etya) to take me to Vaikuntha (ātmanah vaikuntham netum). They at once put me on that plane (sadyah yānam āropitah) and carried me away (vyutthāya), and when I opened my eyes (acālayam drśau) I saw that everything was different (sarvam anyādrśam drstvā). Shocked (vismitah), I returned to full consciousness (svasthatām gatah) and saw them beside me (pārśve apaśyam), the same benefactors (tān eva ātma-priyam-karān) I had met before (pura drstams).

Just as Gopa-kumāra's pure love reached its peak, the messengers of Vaikuntha came to bring him to their Lord's kingdom.

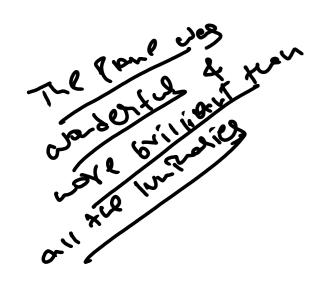
They took Gopa-kumāra unconscious onto their Vaikuņțha vehicle, and while in flight he woke up.

Opening his eyes and looking around, he was astonished to find himself in unfamiliar surroundings.

He was certainly no longer in Vraja-bhūmi.

The Vaikuntha-dūtas, Gopa-kumāra's instructors, had previously evoked in him the desire to see Vaikuntha and had taught him the specific methods for approaching Vaikuntha.

Now, by carrying him there, they were personally awarding him the success of his endeavors.



## **TEXT 12**

mahā-tejasvinām tejo muṣṇato 'nupamam varam vimānam yogyam ārūḍhān anirūpyam su-rūpa-vat

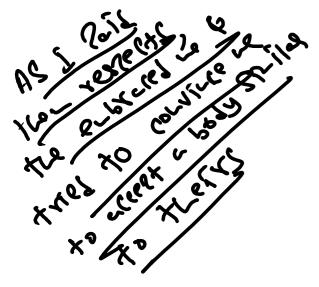
Th<u>e plane upon which they rod</u>e (vi<u>mānam ārūdhān)</u> was wonderful (yogyam), incomparable (a<u>nupama</u>m), in<u>describably beautiful</u> (anirūpyam su-rūpa-vat), excelling in brilliance (<u>muṣṇatah tejo</u>) the most powerful luminaries (<u>mahā-tejasvinām</u>). The airplane from Vaikuntha glowed more brilliantly than the sun.

In the material world, airplanes (vimānas) also transport the demigods through outer space, but those material airplanes are nothing like the one Gopa-kumāra and his escorts were riding.

It was certainly yogya, a suitable conveyance for Gopa-kumāra.

Words could not describe how elegantly it was built, since it was manifested from the pure substance of the spiritual world.

### **TEXT 13**



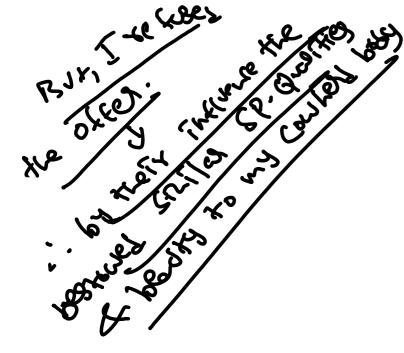
sambhramāt praņamantam mām āśliṣyāśvāsayan muhuh aicchan sva-sadṛśam rūpam dātum yukti-śatena te

As I reverently offered obeisances (sambhramāt praņamantam mām), those associates of the Lord embraced me (āśliṣya) and reassured me again and again (āśvāsayan muhuḥ). Putting forward hundreds of arguments (dātum yukti-śatena), they wished (te aicchan) to give me a bodily form like theirs (sva-sadṛśam rūpam dātum). The associates of Nārāyaņa assured Gopa-kumāra that he need not be so surprised and should not treat them with such reverence.

They were his friends, they told him, and were now bringing him to Vaikuntha.

They furthermore tried to convince him to accept a Vaikuntha body like theirs, with four arms.

His human body, they argued, was not suitable for living in Vaikuntha: it would not be adequate for fully enjoying Vaikuntha life.



## TEXT 14

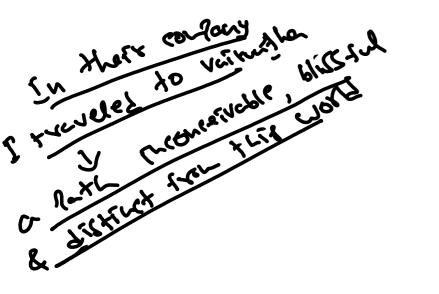
tad asvī-krtya tu svīyam govardhana-bhuvam vapuh teṣām prabhāvatas tādrgguṇa-rūpādy alambhayam

But I refused their offer (tad asvī-kṛtya), and instead (tu), by their influence (teṣām prabhāvatah), my own body (svīyam vapuḥ) born in Govardhana (govardhana-bhuvam) assumed (alambhayam) qualities and beauty like theirs (tādṛg-guṇa-rūpādy). <u>Gopa-kumāra did not want to accept sārūpya-mukti, the form of liberation</u> in which one's body is virtually indistinguishable from that of Lord Nārāyaņa.

He was satisfied with the body of a resident of Govardhana.

Nonetheless, his hosts blessed his body with qualities like theirs, making it eternal, purely spiritual, and effulgent\_

In addition, Gopa-kumāra gained the mystic powers to do whatever he might want, powers that all residents of Vaikuntha naturally possess.



## **TEXT 15**

paramānanda-yuktena durvitarkyeņa vartmanā jagad-vilakṣaṇenāhaṁ vaikuņṭhaṁ taiḥ saha vrajan

In their company (taih saha) I traveled along the path to Vaikuntha (aham vaikuntham vrajan), a path inconceivable (durvitarkyena vartmanā), supremely blissful (paramānanda-yuktena), and distinct from everything in this world (jagad-vilakṣaṇena). TEXTS 16–17 <u>tesu lokesv alokesvā- varaņesv api sarvatah</u> <u>drsti-pāte 'pi lajjeyam pūjye tad-adhikāribhiķ</u> <u>drsti-pāte 'pi lajjeyam pūjye tad-adhikāribhiķ</u> <u>vegād utksipyamānābhi</u>ķ puspa-lājādi-vrstibhiķ

My eyes fell upon (drsti-pāte) all those worlds, cosmic regions (tesu lokesv alokesu sarvatah), and coverings of the universe I had visited before (āvaraņesv api), and I felt ashamed (lajjā iyam). The residents and presiding rulers of those places (tad-adhikāribhih loka-pāla ādibhih ca) were honoring me (pūjye). Faces upraised, palms joined above their heads (ūrdhvamukhaih sāñjali-mastakaih), they vigorously showered (vegād utksipyamānābhih) flowers, parched rice, and other auspicious offerings upwards toward me (puspa-lāja ādi vrstibhih).

Gopa-kumāra had previously traveled to the abode of liberation by passing through the sphere of the sun, but the path of the present journey to Vaikuņțha was even more exceptional.

This was the path the pure devotees traverse when they leave this material world for the spiritual world.

Unlike tiresome material roads, this path is supremely blissful, and it leads to the realm of Vaikuntha, a realm superior even to the abode of liberation.

The same worlds Gopa-kumāra had previously reached with great labor within the fourteen planetary systems and beyond, he now easily passed through one after another.

He passed the planets encircled by the Lokaloka Mountain and entered the part of the universe where sunlight cannot reach.

Then he went again through each of the eight covering shells of the universe.

On his first trip to Mahākāla-pura, the abode of liberation, Gopa-kumāra had known well that the regions through which he was passing were all creations of material illusion. On the present journey, however, his realization was more advanced; he now understood that liberation itself is of little value, so he was ashamed even to look at the material attractions he had once found of interest.

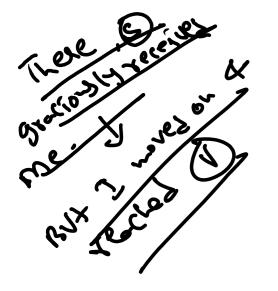
As he passed by all the planets, he had to tolerate the respectful greetings of Indra and the other rulers.

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#### **TEXT** 18

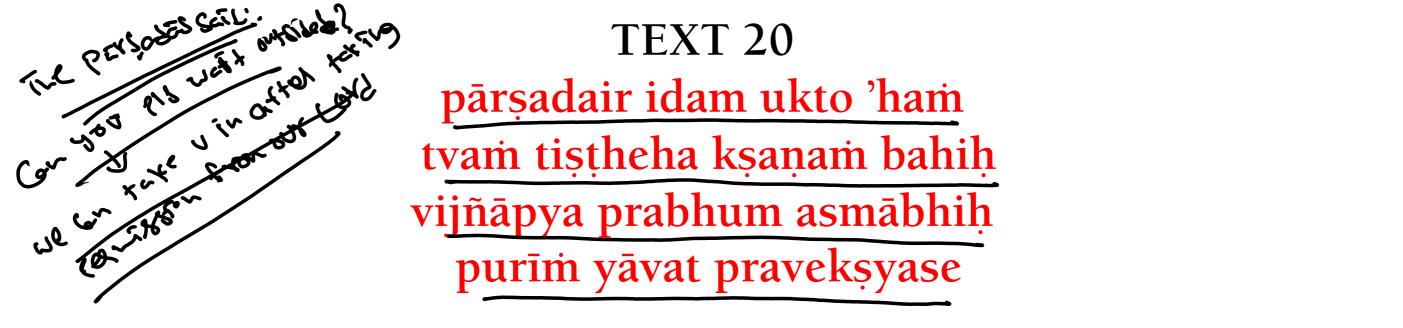
taiḥ stūyamāno jaya-śabda-pūrvakam praṇamyamānaś ca pade pade calan tuccham puro mukti-padam ca locayan ūrdhvam tataḥ śrī-śiva-lokam avrajam

Pr<u>aised by cries of "Victory!</u>" (taih jaya-śabda-pūrvakam stūyamāno) and offered obeisances at every step (praņamyamānaś ca pade pade), I moved on (calan), and before my eyes (purah) I saw (locayan) the abode of liberation (mukti-padam) and how trifling it was (tuccham). And traveling upward from there (ūrdhvam tatah), I came to the world of Lord Śiva (śrī-śiva-lokam avrajam).



# TEXT 19 somam śivam tatra mudā praņamya tenādara-prema-sad-ukti-jālaiḥ ānandito vākya-mano-durāpamāhātmya-mālam tam agām vikuņțham

There (tatra) I bowed down (pranamya) to Lord Siva (sivam) and Umā (sa umam) with great pleasure (mudā), and he made me feel blissful (tena ananditah) with a flood of gracious words (sad-uktijālaih), filled with love and respect (ādara-prema). And then I went on (agām), to that place (tam) whose garland of glories (māhātmyamālam) cannot be touched by words or by the mind (vākya-manodurāpa)—Vaikuņțha (vikuņțham).



The associates of the Lord (pārṣadaih) told me (idam uktah aham): You please wait here for a moment outside (tvam tiṣṭheha kṣanam bahih). We should take permission from our Lord (vijñāpya prabhum asmābhih) before bringing you into His city (purīm yāvat pravekṣyase). The Vaikuntha-dūtas asked Gopa-kumāra to stay behind in the gateway while they went inside Vaikuntha to secure permission for his entrance.

This is the standard etiquette for introducing someone to the supreme opulence of Vaikuntha: specific permission should be obtained for him either from Lord Vaikunthanātha directly or from a proper deputized authority.