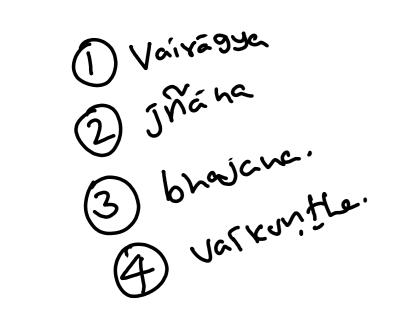
Śrī Brhad-bhāgavatāmrta

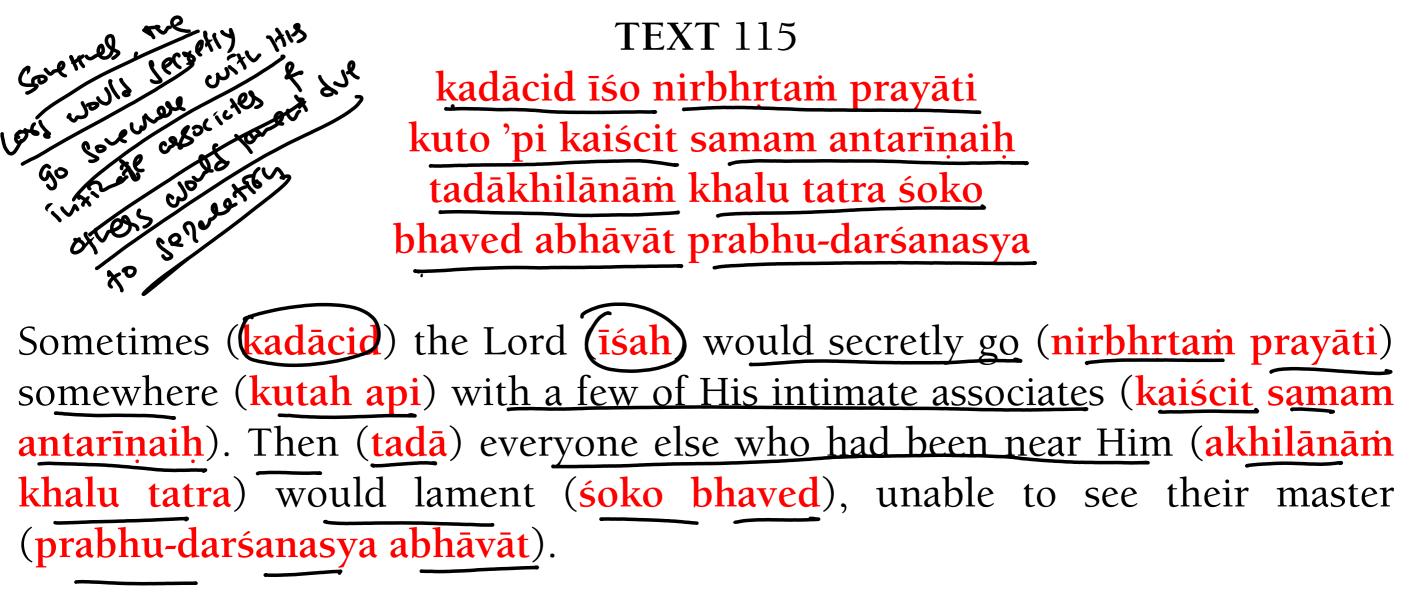
by Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī

11



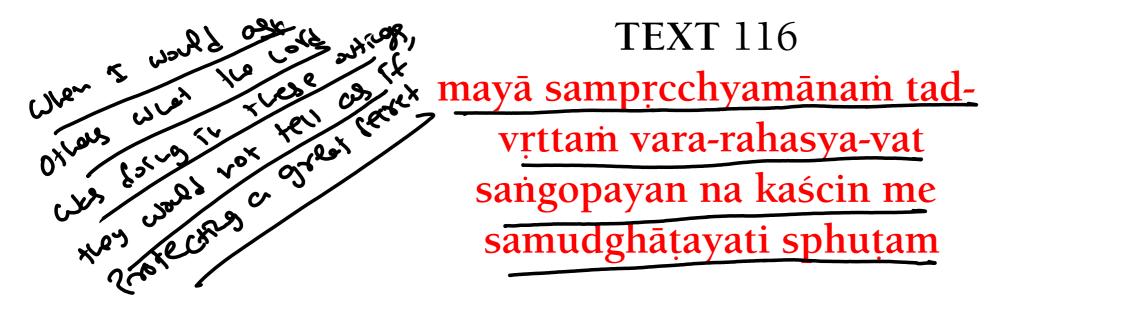
Part 4

Vaikuntha- The Spiritual Kingdom



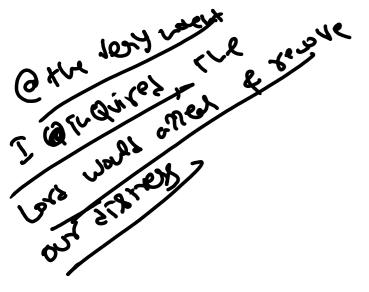
Couldn't Gopa-kumāra feel assured that by the magical influence of life in Vaikuntha even his hopes for reciprocation might eventually be fulfilled?

Perhaps, but he had other reasons to feel unhappy.



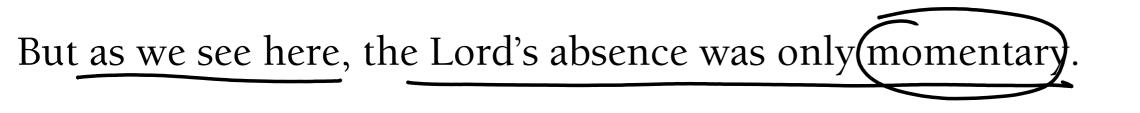
When I would ask (mayā samprcchyamānam) what the Lord was doing on these outings (tad-vṛttam), everyone would keep the facts from me (me sangopayan) like privileged secrets (vara-rahasya-vat). No one would disclose anything (na kaścin samudghāṭayati) clearly (sphuṭam). Despite his earnest inquiries, no one told Gopa-kumāra where Lord Nārāyaņa had gone or why.

Anyone who knew was unwilling to discuss the subject openly, because making public news of the private pastimes of the Supreme Lord could disrupt the reverential mood of Vaikuntha.



TEXT 117 tasminn eva kṣaṇe tatrodite śrī-jagad-īśvare dṛśyamāne sa santāpo naśyed dharṣābdhir edhate

Then, at the very moment I inquired (tasminn eva ksane), the Lord of the universe (śrī-jagad-īśvare) would reappear before us (tatraudite drśyamāne), putting our distress to an end (sah santāpo naśyed) and enlarging our joy to an ocean (harṣa abdhih edhate). From Gopa-kumāra's description it might seem that Vaikuntha has unhappiness just like everywhere else.



As soon as the devotees felt distress, the Lord returned.

Time is subtler in Vaikuntha than in the mortal realm; an instant in Vaikuntha equals the largest span of time in the mundane world.

Śrī Maitreya describes this in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.11.38):

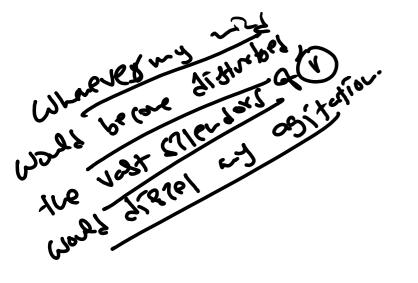
kālo 'yam dvi-parārdhākhyo nimeṣa upacaryate avyākṛtasyānantasya hy anāder jagad-ātmanaḥ

The span of two parardhas (kālo ayam dvi-parārdhākhyo), the life time of Brahmā, is represented by a moment of time for the Supreme Lord (nimeşa upacaryate) who is beyond change (avyākṛtasya), without end (anantasya) or beginning (anāder), and the cause of the universe (jagad-ātmanaḥ).

This scale of comparative time is only metaphorical, yet such a figurative sense of spiritual time contributes to the charm of the Supreme Lord's līlās in Vaikuntha.

In reality, time in Vaikuntha is not the kind of force it is in the material world; time does not delimit the lifespan of residents in Vaikuntha, because everything there is eternal and infallible.

Lord Nārāyaņa's return from His excursions relieved His devotees from their anxiety and expanded the ocean of their ecstasy, just as the moonrise expands the ecstasy of poets.

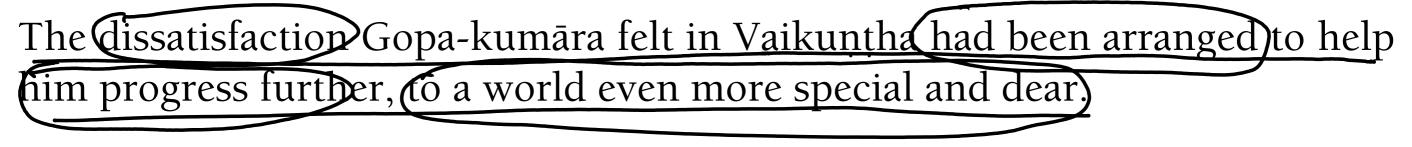


TEXT 118 <u>yāvat</u> tāvac ca vaikalyam manaso 'stu svabhāva-jam t<u>al-loka-mahimodrekāt</u> kṣīyate 'rkād yathā tamaḥ

Whenever my mind (yāvat manasah), by its own nature (svabhāva-jam), would become disturbed (vaikalyam astu), the vast splendors of the Vaikuntha (tāvad tal-loka-mahimā udrekāt) world would dispel my agitation (kṣīyate), as the sun dispels darkness (yathā arkād tamah).

Gopa-kumāra's mind remained restless because in Vaikuņțha he was unable to find the object of his desire.

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achiever and tadā tadīyāparipūrņatā-rujām
cente verse
a the avery the Pain.
Whenever (yadā kadācit) it seemed that I had not achieved (anāptya iva) the
object of my desire (nija-labhya-vastunah), and when my heart would
therefore suffer (hrt sīdati), like many times before (pūrva-pūrva-vat), I
would remember (tada) ajñaya) the root cause (nidanam) of my
incompleteness (tadīyāparipūrņatā-rujām), and that understanding itself
would drive away the pain (nirasyate svayam).



There he would discover the final success of his worship of Śrī Madanagopāla's lotus feet.

Meanwhile, the powerful influence of Vaikuntha kept him from feeling much distress, even though he had not yet attained his goal.

By his intelligence he could discern that the cause of his suffering was his desire to reach a special place beyond even Vaikuntha, and this understanding was enough to pacify him for the time being.

He knew that now that he had reached Vaikuntha he would surely feel fully satisfied, if not at once then after only a short while.