

Lord Narayana reveals different forms to different jivas in Vaikuntha

Following is Q and A with HH Bhanu Swami Maharaja on the above mentioned topic from Brihad Bhagavatamrita Volume 2 chapter 4: Vaikuntha: The Spiritual Kingdom

Q1a. Maharaja, as explained in this section the devotees attain the Vaikuntha after perfection and see the Lord, as per their desire, as Matsya, Kurma etc

It seems that these devotees attain the same Vaikuntha. Is it correct?

Q1b. If they attain the same Vaikuntha where they can see the 4 handed Lord in a form (like Matsya, Kurma etc) they worship then why do multiple Vaikunthas exist and why does Matsya, Kurma etc have separate Vaikuntha planets if all can be accommodated in one?

Ans : Vaikuntha means any of the Vaikuntha planets.

Q2a. Maharaja is there a particular Vaikuntha where the Matsya and Kurma avatar reside in 4 handed form?

Q2b. Does the particular worshiper go and reside in that Vaikuntha where his particular worshipable Lord reside?

Ans:

2a. not mentioned. but they have planets in the material world according to Laghu bhagavatamrta.

2b. yes

Q3. Can the worshiper also attain 2 different Vaikunthas one where the particular form they worship resides in material world (like Matsya or Kurma etc) and other where the Lord Narayana in general resides in Spiritual world?

Ans: dont know.

Q4. Do multiple Vaikunthas exist in Para vyoma or there exists only one Vaikuntha (Maha Vaikuntha) in Paravyoma?

Ans: unlimited.

Q5. Brihad Bhagavatamrita in the 2.4.36-37

Text 36: Some assumed different forms at different times, with all kinds of ornaments, bodily features, and ways of acting, all exceedingly attractive.

Text 37: Some appeared as humans, some as monkeys, demigods, demons, or sages. And some bore the signs of persons initiated into the behavior of the varṇāśrama system

Maharaja, in this context should we understand that they have fully developed Rasa with the Lord but sometimes assume the form of non human beings?

Ans: yes for temporary pastimes

Q6. As explained in SB 2.9.11

The inhabitants of Vaikuntha are dark in complexion and effulgent. They have lotus eyes, yellow cloth, and pleasing demeanor and are youthful. **They all have four arms and wear ornaments of the best shining jewels.** They have all splendors. Some are colored red, yellow or white. They wear glittering earrings, crowns and garlands. (SB 2.9.11)

From this reference we understand that their eternal forms are 4 handed forms.

However,

Brihad Bhagavatamrita 2.4.141 and 142 seems to indicate that such non-human forms are their eternal forms in Vaikuntha -

Text 141 : They have assumed forms with colors and shapes similar to those of the Lord they have worshiped as most dear.

Text 142 : Having each attained sameness with a particular form of the Lord, they have gained the opulences of various kinds of bodies, as sages, demigods, fish, tortoises, human beings, and mystic seers.

Which one of the following is correct Maharaja

1. They eternally have 4 handed forms but manifest non 4 handed forms for pastime purposes

or

2. They eternally have non 4 handed forms with the ability to take on any other forms for the pastime purpose

Ans: if they worship avatara forms they attain them.

Q7. If they worship Matsya form they attain Matsya form eternally.

Is it correct Maharaja?

Ans : yes

Summary of Vaikuntha: The Spiritual Kingdom

Summary in the form of Q and A is focused on the concept of “forms of Lord” and “forms of devotees” in Vaikuntha

Before we proceed with the summary let us know

Q. To what extent can we understand intricacies of Vaikuntha?

Ans : Except by direct experience, no one can rightly understand Vaikuntha. No more than this can I accurately describe (Text 51)

A conditioned soul may discover the transcendental world of Vaikuntha, but only if he sees that higher reality for himself. By hearing from someone who has seen Vaikuntha one may gain only a glimmer of understanding. (Text 51p)

Questions and Answers on eternal and temporary forms of Lord in Vaikuntha

Q. Which eternal forms do the worshippers attain in Vaikuntha?

Ans: They have assumed forms with colors and shapes similar to those of the Lord they have worshiped as most dear. (Text 141)

This verse indicates that Vaikuṅṭha devotees who appear in nonhuman forms, such as those of some animal or plant, have worshiped similar forms of Lord Nārāyaṇa, who by His expansion appeared in those same species. These devotees, each in his own way, have realized the perfection of sārūpya, having attained forms that look just like those of the Supreme Lord. (Text 141p)

These references are in the context of eternal forms only not temporary forms(Ref: Q6 in Q and A with HH Bhanu Swami Maharaja)

Q. What “temporary” forms do the devotees assume in Vaikuntha?

Ans: Some assumed different forms **at different times**, with all kinds of ornaments, bodily features, and ways of acting, all exceedingly attractive. (Text 36)

The Vaikuṅṭha devotees not only acted in many different ways but also assumed many differing forms, including even those of animals, birds, and trees. **Some devotees would show one form for some time and then change into another.** (Text 36p)

...for the Supreme Lord’s pleasure they may **assume or relinquish any form at any time.** (Text 37p)

These references are in the context of temporary forms only not eternal forms(Ref: Q5 in Q and A with HH Bhanu Swami Maharaja)

Q. Some devotee assuming particular form is considered higher in hierarchy as compared to other forms in Vaikuntha?

Ans : Though there seem to be hierarchies in Vaikuntha, its residents all enjoy equality among themselves. In this there is no contradiction(Text 44)

The residents of Vaikuntha are equal because all of them can do anything they want. That some of them appear greater than others is not contradictory, because all these devotees show their natural opulence and power in different degrees by their own free choice. (Text 44p)

Q. Does such appearance of superficial hierarchy cause dissatisfaction or envy in the residents of Vaikuntha?

Ans : The superficial appearance of superior and inferior classes among the residents of Vaikuntha cannot cause dissatisfaction there, because the **Vaikunṭha-vāsīs are all faultless.** (Text 45p)

Q. Why do they have transformations? Is variety present in every Vaikuntha due to such transformations?

Ans: Those devotees have attained the absolute limit of changelessness, yet **they playfully show all kinds of transformations** while taking part in their Lord's pastimes. (Text 47)

In both types of the Supreme Lord's pastimes—those predominated by the mood of opulence and those predominated by sweetness—the devotees who take part pretend to undergo transformations just to create the varieties that give the Lord pleasure(implicit: **there must be variety in every Vaikuntha so as to give pleasure to the Lord in every Vaikuntha**). In Vaikuntha there are no forces of nature to impel anyone to do anything he doesn't want to. The only force impelling the devotees is pure love, which makes them act exclusively for the pleasure of Lord Nārāyana. (Text 47p)

Questions and Answers about the 4 handed form worshipper and their worshippable Lord

Q. Can the worshippers have 4 handed form eternally?

Ans: Yes, if they worship the 4 handed form of the Lord(as per the standard descriptions in scriptures) they will attain the same form as the 4 handed form of the Lord eternally.

Ref: They have assumed forms with colors and shapes similar to those of the Lord they have worshiped as most dear. (Text 141)

(Also, Q7 in Q and A with HH Bhanu Swami Maharaja)

Q. Which Vaikuntha will they reside in?

Ans: There are unlimited* Vaikunthas and they could reside in any of them** since in all the Vaikunthas 4 handed form of the Lord resides. (Ref: Q 4* & 1** in Q and A with HH Bhanu Swami Maharaja)

Q. Can they reside in 2 Vaikunthas simultaneously and eternally?

Ans: Don't know. (Ref: Q3 in Q and A with HH Bhanu Swami Maharaja)

Q. Which form of the Lord do the 4 handed devotees see in Vaikuntha?

Ans : Same form to which they were attracted and worshipped during their sadhana – i.e. 4 handed Visnu form.

Reference : As before, these devotees still see their own worshipable Lord, with all His unique features they found charming—His same entourage and everything else.(Text 148)

Q. Can they assume the non-four handed form also in Vaikuntha?

Ans: Yes, temporarily for the pastime purpose and pleasure of the Lord.

Ref: Some assumed different forms at **different times**, with all kinds of ornaments, bodily features, and ways of acting, all exceedingly attractive. (Text 36)

Q. Which form of the Lord do 4 handed form devotees see when they take to non 4 handed forms?

Ans: Not mentioned (Mostly they will see their worshippable Lord)

Questions and Answers about the non 4 handed form worshipper and their worshippable Lord

Q. Can the worshippers have non 4 handed form(like Matsya, Kurma etc) eternally?

Ans: Yes if they worship the non 4 handed avatar of the Lord(like Matsya, Kurma etc. as per the standard descriptions in scriptures) they will attain the same form as the Lord eternally. In case of worshipping Indra, Surya etc as representatives of the Lord they have similar forms(for the pleasure of Lord) but with different energies in Vaikuntha.

Ref: They have assumed forms with colors and shapes similar to those of the Lord they have worshiped as most dear. (Text 141)

(Also, Q7 in Q and A with HH Bhanu Swami Maharaja)

Q. Which Vaikuntha will they reside in?

Ans: There are unlimited* Vaikunthas and they could reside in any of them** since all the Vaikunthas are filled with variegatedness for the pleasure of the Lord(implied). (Ref: Q 4* & 1** in Q and A with HH Bhanu Swami Maharaja)

Q. Can they reside in 2 Vaikunthas simultaneously and eternally?

Ans: Don't know. (Ref: Q3 in Q and A with HH Bhanu Swami Maharaja)

Q. Which form of the Lord do they see in Vaikuntha?

Ans : Same form to which they were attracted and worshipped during their sadhana.

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Q. Can they assume the four handed form also in Vaikuntha?

Ans: Yes, temporarily for the pastime purpose and pleasure of the Lord.

Ref: Some assumed different forms **at different times**, with all kinds of ornaments, bodily features, and ways of acting, all exceedingly attractive. (Text 36)

Q. Which form of the Lord do non 4 handed form devotees see when they take to 4 handed forms?

Ans: Not mentioned (Mostly they will see their worshippable Lord)

Questions and Answers on which form of the Lord can be perceived and which can't be perceived(constantly) in Vaikuntha

Q. Which form of the Lord do the devotees perceive in Vaikuntha?

Ans: In Vaikuṅṭha each devotee sees the Supreme Lord Śrī Nārāyaṇa manifest as the particular Lord he worships, with a form of suitable complexion and other qualities (Text 147)

The almighty Personality of Godhead is present in Vaikuṅṭha as Nārāyaṇa, seated in His excellent palaces on the best of thrones, but to all His surrendered devotees He displays whatever aspects of Himself they love with special affection. (Text 151p)

Q. But it is well known that Lord has 4 handed form in Vaikuntha from the standard descriptions in the scriptures...?

Ans : Lord Nārāyaṇa has four arms and a dark-blue complexion, but **because devotees are attracted to Him in other forms, the Lord's all-powerful personal energies enable devotees to see Him in whatever forms they like.** Thus in Vaikuṅṭha each devotee can cherish the Supreme Lord in his own way. (Text 147p)

Q. If everyone can perceive the cherished form of the Lord they worshipped then why Gopa Kumar could not constantly see the form of Lord Madan Gopal in Vaikuntha (as he had seen in his meditation earlier)?

Ans: Because in the world where those pastimes go on, the mood of the Lord's devotees differs from the predominant Vaikuṅṭha mood of awe and reverence; in that higher world, the most intimate friendship with the Personality of Godhead prevails. A devotee can attain that world only by knowing the Supreme Lord in loving friendship. (Text 132p)

Q. Then how others are able to see their cherished forms of Matsya, Kurma, Mahapurusa etc in Vaikuntha?

Ans : Because in the world where those pastimes go on, the mood of the Lord's devotees does NOT differ from the predominant Vaikuṅṭha mood of awe and reverence(implied from 132p).

One can experience dasya and santa rasa towards any cherished form of Lord who is an avatara of Narayana in all these Vaikunthas without interruption but not of Lord Krishna(implied)

Q, Why was Gopa Kumara not able to express his pure love and experience satisfaction in Vaikuntha?

Ans: Gopa Kumar says “Even so, because I knew that He was the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and because I remembered that I had come to Vaikuṅṭha-loka, feelings of respect and reverence would arise in me, and these would block my pure love and leave my mind dissatisfied.” (Text 113)

Gopa Kumar says “The special favors I had received from Gopāla-deva in my meditation—His embraces, His kisses, the mercy I had directly obtained—though this is what I desired, oh, here I couldn't have it, and so I felt afflicted.” (Text 114)

Gopa-kumāra expected the object of His devotion to reciprocate with affectionate embraces, kisses, and intimate humorous talks, but these were not forthcoming from Lord Nārāyaṇa. (Text 114p)

Conditioned by the four defects as I am, this summary sheet is certainly subject to correction in the face of proper logic & evidence. However, I do feel that what I have written above are reasonable assertions, based on guru, sadhu & shastra.