

Śrī Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta

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- ① Vairāgye
- ② Jñāna
- ③ bhajane.
- ④ Vaikunthe.

## Part 4

# Vaikuntha- The Spiritual Kingdom

## TEXT 192

na sac-cid-ānanda-ghanātmanām hi  
sv-alpe 'pi saukhye bahu-saukhya-buddhiḥ  
sāmsārikānām iva nāpi tuccha-  
sukhānubhūtir yatinām iva syāt

Bcs the  
affected devotees  
are absorbed in their  
true identity → they  
do not accept the  
inferior material (s)  
superior happiness

Because the Lord's pure devotees are absorbed in their true identity of eternity, knowledge, and bliss (sac-cid-ānanda-ghana ātmanām), they do not accept (na hi buddhiḥ) inferior happiness (sv-alpe 'pi saukhye) as great (bahu-saukhya). Nor do they get involved (na api syāt) with the petty pleasures (tuccha-sukha anubhūtiḥ) of materialists (sāmsārikānām) or of sannyāsīs with impersonalist views (yatinām iva).

Ordinary people may by ignorance consider meager pleasure to be great, but  
Vaiṣṇavas are not fooled.

Because materialists entrapped in the cycle of birth and death are motivated  
by urges for sense gratification, such materialists consider the stimulation of  
sensory contact to be real happiness.

Similarly, impersonalist renunciants cultivating knowledge of their spiritual  
identity hope to find real happiness in liberation.

In most cases, however, the impersonalist sannyāsīs do not reach even the  
petty happiness for which they aspire.

The cause of frustration for both the materialists and the impersonalists is their failure to realize their own true nature as spiritual souls.

A person who actually realizes himself as pure spirit can never consider material happiness complete, nor can he be enticed by trivial sense gratification, nor by the meager happiness of impersonal liberation, because he is immersed in the most intense ecstasy.

## TEXT 193

tāratamyam tu (kalpyeta)  
sva-sva-sevānusārataḥ  
tat-tad-rasa-sajātiya-  
sukha-vaicitry-apekṣayā

The hierarchy among devotees is imagined according to:  
a) their own forms of service  
b) happiness derived by the devotees through their service

The hierarchy among devotees (tāratamyam tu) is only imagined (kalpyeta) according to their own forms of service (sva-sva-sevā anusārataḥ) and according to (sajātiya) the happiness each devotee derives (sukha-vaicitry-apekṣayā) from his own relationship with the Lord (tat-tad-rasa).

Every pure Vaiṣṇava obtains results suitable to his own devotional attitude.

What then is the basis for a hierarchy of greater and lesser devotees?

In truth, no such hierarchy exists. It is only imagined as a device for comparing different kinds of devotional service.

Each devotional relationship, or rasa, and its corresponding varieties of pleasure may for convenience be measured in terms of relative degrees of perfection.

In the nine methods of devotional practice, such as hearing and chanting, and in the various services devotees render to the Lord in Vaikuntha and elsewhere—attending the Lord in person, massaging His feet, dressing His hair, serving Him as a doorkeeper—each devotee relishes the highest possible happiness from his own service to his own worshipable Lord.

By presuming a hierarchy of these services one may also devise a hierarchy of happiness and may accordingly rank devotees.

But even if, as some persons hold, such a hierarchy is factual, no pure Vaiṣṇava thinks himself deprived of anything; all the Lord's devotees feel completely satisfied and happy.



## TEXT 194

vaikunṭha-vāsino hy ete  
kecid vai nitya-pārsadāḥ  
pare kṛṣṇasya kṛpayā  
sādhayitvemam āgatāḥ

194-199  
Distinction between the  
Lord & the devotees  
in the SP-vaik.

Some of (kecid) these (hy ete) residents of Vaikunṭha (vaikunṭha-vāsinaḥ) are eternal associates of Lord Kṛṣṇa (nitya-pārsadāḥ), and others (pare) have come here (imam āgatāḥ) by His mercy (kṛṣṇasya kṛpayā), having gained the privilege to enter (sādhayitvā).

Some of these  
Vaikunṭha vāsīs are  
nitya-pārsadāḥ & others  
are sādhayitvāḥ

Because the servants of the Supreme Lord are by constitution as purely spiritual as He, one may doubt that there can be any difference between the devotees and the Lord, any distinction between servant and served.

Texts 194 through 199 resolve this doubt.

Some residents of Vaikuntha have always been there, like Ananta Śeṣa and Garuda.

Others, like Bharata, Priyavrata, and Jaya and Vijaya, have come to Vaikunṭha from the material world and have become associates of the Lord relatively recently, having gained entrance into Vaikunṭha after successfully practicing devotional service.

## TEXT 195

bhajanānanda-sāmye 'pi  
bhedah kaścit prakalpyate  
bāhyāntarīṇa-bhāvena  
dūra-pārśva-sthatādinā

Although everyone equally enjoys the bliss of worshipping the Lord, certain differences are conceived. Devotees are considered relative outsiders or insiders based on certain activities like categories of their service.

Although everyone equally enjoys the bliss of worshipping the Lord (bhajāna ānanda-sāmye api), certain differences are conceived (kaścit bhedaḥ prakalpyate). Devotees are considered relative outsiders or insiders (bāhyāntarīṇa-bhāvena), depending, for example, on whether they serve the Lord from afar or from nearby (dūra-pārśva-sthatā ādinā).

In the opinion of some Vaiṣṇavas, different qualities of devotional service  
earn their performers different degrees of perfection.

Otherwise in Vaikuṅṭha there would be no meaningful distinction between  
the Lord's eternal servants and newly liberated devotees.

In this verse Nārada agrees that although all devotees enjoy the ecstasy of  
worshiping Lord Nārāyaṇa there are minor differences in what various  
devotees achieve in Vaikuṅṭha.

Some devotees seem to have more intimate relationships with Lord Nārāyaṇa  
than do others.

And when the Lord descends to the earth and other material planets, select devotees are privileged to accompany Him.

The truth is that there are no real differences in devotional achievement, only different individual services.

If some Vaiṣṇavas insist on the idea of different degrees of perfection, that idea may be granted, but the differences are insignificant.

## TEXT 196

yady apy eṣām hi nityatvāt  
sāmyam bhagavato bhavet  
sevya-sevakatāpy āste  
nityā satyā svabhāvataḥ

Even though  
all these devotees  
are equal to the Lord,  
still the  
distinction is  
eternal & real

Though all these devotees (yady apy eṣām) are equal (sāmyam bhavet) to the Supreme Lord (bhagavataḥ) in being eternal (nityatvāt), there is still a natural distinction between the servant and the served (svabhāvataḥ sevya-sevakatā apy āste). This distinction is eternal and real (nityā satyā).

Sādhana-siddha devotees, who have come to Vaikuṅṭha after liberation from the material world, are obviously inferior to the infallible Supreme Lord.

No one should doubt that they are subordinate to Him.

But why should the Lord's eternal associates like Śrī Śeṣa and Garuḍa be considered subordinates?

To remove this doubt, we need to understand that just as the sameness of the Lord and the jīvas is eternal, so also is the difference between them.

The Supreme Lord is always the served, and the jīvas, no matter who they are, are always His servants.

This is a basic fact, and no logical maneuvers will ever be able to refute it.