

Śrī Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta

by Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī

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

Part 4

Vaikuntha- The Spiritual Kingdom

TEXT 21

atrādr̥ṣṭāśrutāścarya-
samudrormi-paramparām
bhagavad-bhakti-dīptābhyām
netrābhyām gaṇaya sthirah

Stay calm
& with your
eyes illumined with
the devotion, obsequy
of Vaikuntha

Stay calm (sthirah), and with your eyes illumined (netrābhyām
dīptābhyām) by devotion for the Lord (bhagavad-bhakti) count
(gaṇaya) the waves (ūrmi) of the vast ocean of wonders (āścarya-
samudra) that flow here (atra), each after the next (paramparām),
wonders you have never seen or heard of before (adr̥ṣṭa aśruta
āścarya).

Gopa-kumāra's escorts could see he was feeling distress from being kept apart from his Lord.

So they gave him this lighthearted advice to console him and keep his mind calm and his eyes busy with the work of counting the wonders that would pass before him.

From the many amazing things he would see during his short wait in the gopura of Vaikuṅṭha, he would learn something about the unique glories of Lord Vaikuṅṭha-nātha, and that would strengthen his eagerness to have the Lord's darśana.

He would learn about the methods of worshiping the Supreme Lord in awe and reverence.

And moreover the experience he would gain while waiting would teach him something about the many benefits of becoming a servant of Lord Nārāyaṇa.

Thus his short time in the gateway would be productive.

Gopa-kumāra's hosts were joking when they told him to count the wonderful things he would see, a task no easier than counting the waves in the ocean.

“How will my eyes have the power to do this?”

Gopa-kumāra might ask.

Anticipating this question, the ~~Vaikunṭha messengers told him that~~
his eyes would be illumined by bhagavad-bhakti.

TEXT 22

śrī-gopa-kumāra uvāca
teṣu cāntaḥ praviṣṭeṣu
dvāra-prānte bahiḥ sthitaḥ
apaśyam ekam āyāntam
praviśantam ca tām purīm

Saying this
they went inside,
After that I saw
someone entering the city

Śrī Gopa-kumāra said: They went in (teṣu ca antaḥ praviṣṭeṣu), and I stood outside (bahiḥ sthitaḥ) in the pavilion of the entrance gate (dvāra-prānte). I then beheld (apaśyam) someone coming (ekam āyāntam) and entering that great city (praviśantam ca tām purīm).

TEXT 23

brahmāṇḍa-śata-bhūty-ādhya-
sad-yānārūḍham adbhutaiḥ
gītādibhir mudāviṣṭam
kāntādyaiḥ sadṛśam prabhoḥ

He rode on
a transcendental
vehicle & he
resembled the Lord
in luster & beauty

He rode on a transcendental vehicle (sad-yānārūḍham adbhutaiḥ)
endowed with the opulence of hundreds of universes (brahmāṇḍa-
śata-bhūty-ādhya). Music and other entertainment (gītādibhir)
filled him with delight (mudāviṣṭam). He resembled the Supreme
Lord (sadṛśam prabhoḥ) in luster and beauty (kāntādyaiḥ).

The person Gopa-kumāra saw entering on a Vaikunṭha airplane was absorbed in ecstasy.

He was surrounded by his own entourage like the Supreme Lord and by riches greater than hundreds of material universes, he was dressed and ornamented just like the Lord, and his companions were chanting his praises as if he were the Lord.

TEXT 24

taṁ matvā śrī-hariṁ nātha
pāhīti muhur ālapan
naman karṇau pidhāyāham
saṁjñayānena vāritah

Lord I thought he was
Hari & Hari & I
But he covered his ears &
gestured me to stop &

I thought (matvā) he was Śrī Hari (taṁ śrī-hariṁ), and I cried out again and again (muhur ālapan), “O Lord (nātha), protect me (pāhīti)!” and bowed down to him (naman). But he covered both his ears (karṇau pidhāya anena) and gestured for me to stop (aham saṁjñaya vāritah).

This returning resident of Vaikuṅṭha was shocked to hear himself addressed as the Lord of Vaikuṅṭha.

Covering his ears with his hands and sticking out his tongue, he waved another hand at Gopa-kumāra to stop him.

TEXT 25

dāso 'smi dāsa-dāso 'smīty
uktvā tasmin gate 'ntaram
anyah ko 'py āgato 'muṣmān
mahīyān vaibhavādibhiḥ

He said?
Am I just a servant
of servant & servant
Then another person with
more power & wealth came

“I am a servant (dāso 'smi),” he told me (uktvā), “a servant of the servants (dāsa-dāso 'smi ity),” and he moved on into the city (tasmin antaram gate). A short while later another person came by (anyah kah apy āgatah), splendid with even more power and opulence (amuṣmān mahīyān vaibhava ādibhiḥ).

TEXT 26

tam dr̥ṣtvā sarvathāmaṁsi
jagad-īśam ahaṁ purīm
praviśantaṁ nijāṁ etya
gatvā kutrāpi līlayā

I looked at him (ahaṁ tam dr̥ṣtvā) and thought (amaṁsi), “Surely this must be the Lord of the universe (sarvathā jagad-īśam). He must have gone somewhere (gatvā kutrāpi) as a pastime (līlayā), and now He is entering His own abode (etya nijāṁ purīm praviśantaṁ).”

I looked @ him
& thought → This
must be the Supreme God
referring to His abode.”

Gopa-kumāra was awestruck and not thinking clearly.

He should have known that because his escorts had gone inside to inform Lord Nārāyaṇa of his arrival, the Lord must be in Vaikuṅṭha, not returning from elsewhere.

But perhaps Gopa-kumāra's escorts were simply unaware that the Lord had gone out on a short excursion.

TEXT 27

EW When the person
& offering bowing down
offered prayers → he
Saw way & spoke the
the city →

sambhramaiḥ praṇamantaṁ mām
pūrva-vat stuti-pūrvakam
dr̥ṣṭvā so 'pi tathaiyoktvā
sa-snehaṁ prāviśat purīm

When the person saw me (dr̥ṣṭvā mām) bowing down with gestures of reverence (sambhramaiḥ praṇamantaṁ) and offering him prayers (stuti-pūrvakam), as I had honored the one before (pūrva-vat), he affectionately spoke to me the same way (sah api tathā eva sa-snehaṁ uktvā), and entered the city (prāviśat purīm).

TEXT 28

ke 'py ekaśo dvandvaśo 'nye
yugapad bahuśo 'pare
pūrva-pūrvādhika-śrīkāh
praviśanti purīm prabhoḥ

Many were
came alone, i.e. etc.
in large groups → each
who were more than the last
entered the city

Many others came—some alone (ke apy ekaśo), others in pairs (dvandvaśo anye), and yet others together in larger groups (yugapad bahuśo apare)—and all of them, each more splendid than the last (pūrva-pūrvādhika-śrīkāh), entered the city of the Lord (praviśanti purīm prabhoḥ).

TEXT 29

tāmś ca paśyan purevāham
majjan sambhrama-sāgare
naman stuvan nivārye taih
snigdha-vāg-amṛtais tathā

Every time
they passed, I
bowed & offered prayers
But each time they stopped
me with nectarean words

Seeing them as they passed by (tāmś ca paśyan), I was immersed (aham majjan), as before (purā iva), in an ocean of awe (sambhrama-sāgare). Again and again I bowed down and offered prayers (naman stuvan), and each time again they stopped me (nivārye taih) with nectarean affectionate words (snigdha-vāg-amṛtais).

These Vaikunṭha residents whom Gopa-kumāra saw entering the gateway last
were army commanders and other important authorities, returning late
because they had been busy with various responsibilities outside.

The residents who had first passed Gopa-kumāra had been in a hurry, so
intent on their business that their opulence had little chance to show.

So the residents he now saw going by seemed more and more opulent, one
after another.

Gopa-kumāra, submerged in an ocean of reverence, failed to reason that
these different persons could not all be Lord Nārāyaṇa.

Each of them was in fact supremely attractive, so even when Gopa-kumāra
finally realized that these were servants of God, not God Himself, they still
impressed him as such great personages that he spontaneously wanted to
worship them.

TEXT 30

Some of them
carried their seva-items
& others simply moved
forward intoxicated by
bhakti-rasa

teṣu sva-sevā-sāmagrīm
grhītvā ke 'pi kām api
dhāvanti purataḥ kecin
mattā bhakti-sudhā-rasaiḥ

Some of them (ke api) carried (grhītvā) various items for performing their service (teṣu sva-sevā-sāmagrīm), and others simply hurried forward (dhāvanti purataḥ kecin), intoxicated (mattā) by the tastes of the nectar of devotion (bhakti-sudhā-rasaiḥ).

Some of these servants of Lord Nārāyaṇa were carrying paraphernalia for His worship—cāmara fans and other objects—apparently for their individual services.

Others weren't carrying anything, but were simply running in a frenzy of devotion, as if their only service was to be mad in love of God.

In the following verses, Gopa-kumāra elaborates on how these Vaikuṅṭha-vāsīs were engaged in various kinds of service.

TEXT 31

evam ātmātma-sevāsu
vyagrāntaḥ-karaṇendriyāḥ
vicitra-bhajanānanda-
vinoda-bhara-bhūṣitāḥ

All had their
minds & senses
in their own service.
& they were ~~decorated~~ decorated with esthetic
decorations

All had their minds and senses (antaḥ-karaṇa indriyāḥ) busily absorbed (vyagrāntaḥ), each in his own service (evam ātma ātma-sevāsu), and all were decorated (bhūṣitāḥ) with a myriad of pleasures from ecstatic worship of the Lord (vicitra-bhajana-ānanda-vinoda-bhara).

TEXT 32

bhūṣa-bhūṣaṇa-sarvāṅgā
nija-prabhu-varocitāḥ
praṇamantaḥ stuvantaś ca
kurvāṇāś citram īhitam

The residents
were doing all sorts of
things in devotion
looked perfectly fit
to appear before their
Lord

Offering obeisances (praṇamantaḥ), reciting prayers (stuvantaś ca),
and doing all sorts of wonderful things (kurvāṇāś citram īhitam),
those devotees, their every limb lending grace to their ornaments
(bhūṣa-bhūṣaṇa-sarvāṅgā), looked fit (ucitāḥ) to appear before their
worshipable Lord (nija-prabhu-vara).

TEXT 33

vitanvato mahā-līlā-
kautukam cakravarti-vat
lakṣmī-pater bhagavataś
caraṇābja-didr̥kṣavaḥ

They were gloriously
the Lord of the
were glorifying in
(and & revering) a king

They extolled (**vitanvataḥ**) the wonder (**kautukam**) of the great pastimes (**mahā-līlā**) of the Lord, the husband of Lakṣmī (**lakṣmī-pateḥ**), as if His pastimes were those of some all-victorious king (**lakṣmī-pateḥ**). And they were eager to see (**didr̥kṣavaḥ**) the Lord's lotus feet (**bhagavataḥ caraṇābja**).

Gopa-kumāra was amazed at how these persons conducted themselves.

They sang and danced without inhibition, expressing the glories of their victorious Lord.

They told one another how their Lord favored His responsible servants by providing suitable homes and fine food and drink.

Indeed, because Lord Nārāyaṇa is the husband of the goddess Lakṣmī, it is only fitting that He display His sovereignty with such opulence, and that His servants share in it.

TEXT 34

kecit sa-parivārās te
kecic ca sa-paricchadāḥ
kecid bahir-dhṛta-svīya-
parivāra-paricchadāḥ

Some were with their families
Some with an array
of things
& others left to fit their family
& things outside

Some were with their families (kecit sa-parivārāḥ te), some with an array of things (kecic ca sa-paricchadāḥ), and others (kecid) had left their families and things outside (bahir-dhṛta-svīya-parivāra-paricchadāḥ).

Some Vaikuntha-vāsīs were entering the Lord's kingdom with their children, wives, and servants.

Some rode in their own vehicles and carried their own umbrellas, cāmaras, and weapons.

Others chose to keep their families and baggage outside the gate of Vaikuṅṭha.

TEXT 35

Some came
alone like beggars
immersed in the mood
of devotional meditation

svasminn eva vilāpyaike
kṛtsnam parikaram nijam
akiñcanā ivaikāki-
tayā dhyāna-rasāplutāḥ

Some (eke) had absorbed (vilāpya) all that they had (kṛtsnam nijam parikaram) into themselves (svasminn eva), and like beggars without possessions (akiñcanā iva) they came alone (ekāki tayā), immersed in the moods of devotional meditation (dhyāna-rasāplutāḥ).

The Vaikuntha devotees who preferred a more meditative mood of service hid, within their own transcendental bodies, (the families and property Lord Nārāyaṇa had awarded them)

So the devotees arriving in Vaikuṅṭha were full in all powers and showed the full range of devotional variegatedness in their pastimes of worshiping the Supreme Lord in perfect ecstasy.

TEXT 36

kecid vicitra-rūpāṇi
dhṛtvā dhṛtvā muhur muhuḥ
vicitra-bhūṣaṇākāra-
vihārādhyā mano-harāḥ

Some (kecid) assumed (dhṛtvā dhṛtvā) different forms at different times (vicitra-rūpāṇi muhur muhuḥ), with (ādhyāḥ) all kinds of ornaments (vicitra-bhūṣaṇa), bodily features (ākāra), and ways of acting (vihāra), all exceedingly attractive (mano-harāḥ).

Some assumed
@ different times
with all kinds of
attractive ornaments

The Vaikunṭha 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 37

kecin narā vānarās ca
devā daityās tatharṣayah
pare varnāśramācāra-
dīkṣā-lakṣaṇa-dhāriṇah

Some appeared
as humans
DGR, devas, sage
Some looked like
demons or like keyhole

Some appeared as humans, some as monkeys (kecin narā vānarās ca), demigods, demons, or sages (devā daityās tathā rṣayah). And some (pare) bore the signs (lakṣaṇa-dhāriṇah) of persons initiated into the behavior of the varṇāśrama system (varṇāśrama ācāra-dīkṣā).

The residents of Vaikuṅṭha are in fact purely transcendental persons.

The substance of their bodies is unalloyed sac-cid-ānanda, so these residents never belong to the human or any other material species, nor to the limited designations of varṇas and āśramas.

Still, for the Supreme Lord's pleasure they may assume or relinquish any form at any time.

Some of them, therefore, appeared before Gopa-kumāra like members of Vedic society, wearing the signs of particular āśramas and varṇas.

Some wore sacred threads like initiated brāhmanas, indicating that they chanted mantras for worshiping the Lord, and they carried kuśa grass and kamaṇḍalus in their hands, wore tulasī-mālās on their necks, and had tilaka on their foreheads.