

Śrī Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta

by Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī

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

Part 4

Vaikuntha- The Spiritual Kingdom

TEXT 235

tad-bhāvotkarṣa-mādhuryam
vidus tad-rasa-sevinaḥ
tatratyas tvam api jñāsyasy
acirāt tat-prasādataḥ

POJang who serve
the Lord in mahābhāva
Only can understand its
superexcellence & sweetness
Since you also belong to that
place, by His mercy, you
will also understand
it soon.

Persons who serve the transcendental taste of this ecstasy (tad-rasa-sevinaḥ) can realize (viduh) its superexcellence and sweetness (tad-bhāva utkarṣa-mādhuryam). Since you belong to the place where mahā-bhāva is known (tvam api tatratyah), surely by the mercy of the Lord (tat-prasādataḥ) you will understand it (jñāsyasy) very soon (acirāt).

Out of humility Nārada implies that he is unable to understand the ecstasy of prema.

But as an intimate associate of Lord Nārāyaṇa and a witness of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes in Vṛndāvana, Mathūrā, and Dvārakā, he knows much more than he has disclosed.

Gopa-kumāra is also eligible for this privileged/understanding because he was born in Gokula and graced by the mercy of Śrī Gokulanātha.

TEXTS 236–237

śrī-gopa-kumāra uvāca

evam nijeṣṭa-deva-śrī- gopāla-caraṇābjayoḥ

nitarām darśanotkaṇṭhā tad-vācā me vyavardhata

tādr̥g-bhāva-viśeṣāśā- vātyāpy ajani tat-kṣaṇāt

tābhyām śokārṇave kṣiptam mām ālakṣyāha sāntvayan

Heard my
Words Greatly
My eagerness to see
Gopāla's lotus feet.
Quickly I developed a deep urge
& I achieved that kind of ecstasy
NH spoke to Rishy
me.

Śrī Gopa-kumāra said: These words of Nārada (tad-vācā) greatly increased (vyavardhata) my anxious eagerness (me nitarām utkaṇṭhā) to see (darśana) the lotus feet of Śrī Gopāla (śrī- gopāla-caraṇābjayoḥ), my worshipable Lord (nija iṣṭa-deva). Quickly (tat-kṣaṇāt) a powerful stormlike urge (āśā- vātyā) also arose in me (apy ajani)—a hope to achieve the kind of ecstasy that Nārada had just described (tādr̥g-bhāva-viśeṣa āśā). Seeing me (ālakṣya mām) cast (kṣiptam) by this hope and eagerness (tābhyām) into an ocean of sorrow (śokārṇave), Nārada consolingly spoke (āha sāntvayan).

Pure devotees revere Nārada Muni for preaching the glories of the Supreme Lord all over the universe.

gūḍhā vaiṣṇava-siddhānta-
maṇi-mañjuṣikā haṭhāt
sphutam udghāṭitā yena
taṁ prapanno 'smi nāradam

“I take shelter (prapanno 'smi) of Nārada (taṁ nāradam), who forced open (haṭhāt sphutam udghāṭitā yena) the secret treasure chest (gūḍhā mañjuṣikā) in which the jewels of the Vaiṣṇava philosophical conclusions were kept (vaiṣṇava-siddhānta-maṇi).”

TEXT 238

śrī-nārada uvāca

yady apy etan mahā-gopyam

yujyate nātra jalpitem

tathāpi tava kātarya-

bharair mukharito bruve

Even though this
topic is most
& should not be
openly, saying your
anxiety, I am forced to speak
confidentially

Śrī Nārada said: Although this topic is most confidential (yady apy etan mahā-gopyam) and should not be talked about (na jalpitem yujyate) here (atra), by the weight of your anxiety (tathāpi tava kātarya-bharair) I am being forced to speak openly (mukharito bruve).

The secrets Nārada is about to divulge are generally not discussed, even in Vaikunṭha.

TEXT 239

ito dūre 'yodhyā vilasati purī śrī-raghu-pates
tato dūre śrīman-madhura-madhu-puryaiva sadṛśī
purī dvārāvaty ullasati dayitā śrī-yadu-pates
tam evāsyām gatvā nija-dayita-devaṁ bhaja dṛśā

Far from here
lies Ayodhya &
beyond that
shines the city
of Dvārakā
dear to the
divine master
of the Yadus
Dvārakā
resembles
the blessed
and charming
Mathurā
Go to that
Dvārakā
and worship
with your eyes
your beloved
Lord.

Far from here lies (ito dūre) Ayodhyā (ayodhyā), the splendid city (vilasati purī) of Raghupati, the divine master of the Raghu dynasty (śrī-raghu-pateh).
And beyond that (tato dūre) shines (ullasati) the city of Dvārakā (dvārāvaty purī), dear to the divine master of the Yadus (śrī-yadu-pateh dayitā).
Dvārakā resembles the blessed and charming Mathurā (śrīmad-madhura-madhu-puryā iva sadṛśī). Go to that Dvārakā (asyām gatvā) and worship (bhaja) with your eyes (dṛśā) your beloved Lord (tam eva nija-dayita-devaṁ).

Above all the other Vaikuṅṭha planets are the special abodes of Lord Rāmacandra and Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Since Gopa-kumāra is somewhat familiar with Mathurā on earth, Nārada describes Dvārakā as being similar.

As affirmed by Vikadru in Śrī Hari-vaṁśa, Dvārakā is actually a Mathurā subdistrict, and the residents of Dvārakā are mostly Yādavas from Mathurā City.

So when Gopa-kumāra achieves Dvārakā, above Vaikuṅṭha, in effect he will be attaining Mathurā.

TEXT 240

prāg ayodhyābhigamane
sad-upāyam imaṁ śṛṇu
śrī-rāmacandra-pādābja-
sevaika-rasikair matam

But first
hear from me
about an excellent
method for
approaching Ayodhya
A method approved by
exclusive devotees of Rāmacandra

But first hear from me (prāg imaṁ śṛṇu) about an excellent method (sad-upāyam) for approaching Ayodhyā (ayodhyā abhigamane), a method approved (matam) by those whose only taste (eka-rasikair) is for service at Lord Rāmacandra's lotus feet (śrī-rāmacandra-pādābja-sevā).

Nārada recommends that Gopa-kumāra reach Dvārakā by first going to Ayodhyā.

The devotees ~~there worship~~ Lord Rāmacandra almost as intimately as Kṛṣṇa's devotees worship Kṛṣṇa in Dvārakā.

So in Ayodhyā Gopa-kumāra will get good training in the higher practice of personal devotion.

Even though
 He is the original
 person, you can
 still get a special
 taste for the lotus
 feet. (R) (R) (R)
 But still, I shall
 how to get a
 taste for the
 lotus feet. (R)
 Even though
 He is the original
 person, you can
 still get a special
 taste for the lotus
 feet. (R) (R) (R)

sāksād-bhagavatas tasya śrī-kṛṣṇasyāvatāriṇaḥ
upāsanā-viśeṣeṇa sarvaṁ yady api labhyate

tathāpi raghu-vīrasya śrīmat-pāda-sarojayoh
tayo rasa-viśeṣasya lābhāyopadiśāmy aham

Śrī Kṛṣṇa (śrī-kṛṣṇasya) is the original Personality of Godhead (sāksād-bhagavataḥ), the source of all incarnations (avatāriṇaḥ), and simply by worship of Him (yady api tasya upāsanā-viśeṣeṇa), everything can be obtained (sarvaṁ labhyate). Yet (tathāpi) I shall give you teachings (upadiśāmy aham) to help you achieve (lābhāya) a special taste (rasa-viśeṣasya) for the divine lotus feet (śrīmat-pāda-sarojayoh) of Lord Rāma (tayoh), the hero of the Raghus (raghu-vīrasya).

From experience, Gopa-kumāra is fully convinced that anything he desires he can easily obtain by taking shelter of the ten-syllable king of mantras, meant for worship of Śrī Madana-gopāla.

The suggestion that he approach the lotus feet of Śrī Raghunātha does not contradict this.

As stated in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.3.28), Kṛṣṇa is the one source of all expansions of Godhead, including Lord Rāmacandra.

Ete cāmśa-kalāh puṁsah kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam: “All of these incarnations are either plenary portions or portions of the plenary portions of the Lord, but Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the original Personality of Godhead.”

Devotees of Kṛṣṇa see in Lord Rāma many of the all-attractive features of their own Deity.

In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (9.11.19) Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī mentions Lord Rāmacandra’s exceptionally beautiful lotus feet:

smaratām hr̥di vinyasya
viddham daṇḍaka-kantakaiḥ
sva-pāda-pallavam rāma
ātma-jyotir agāt tataḥ

“When Lord Rāmacandra lived in Dandakāranya (**rāmah**), His lotus feet (**sva-pāda-pallavam**) were sometimes pierced by thorns (**viddham daṇḍaka-kantakaiḥ**). After completing the sacrifice, He placed those lotus feet (**vinyasya**) in the hearts of those who always think of Him (**smaratām hr̥di**). Then (**tataḥ**) He entered (**agāt**) His own abode, the Vaikuṅṭha planet beyond the brahma-jyotir (**ātma-jyotih**).”

A unique rasa is to be tasted at those lotus feet, a special mood of ecstatic worship, and Nārada wants to help Gopa-kumāra achieve it.

By devotional service to Śrī Madana-gopāla, the source of all avatāras of Viṣṇu, everything desirable is easily obtained.

Yet Śrī Raghunātha is a special incarnation of the Lord; He has special characteristics that one cannot relish without developing the particular mood of His worship.

Nārada now offers to instruct Gopa-kumāra in the method of worshiping Lord Rāmacandra.

TEXT 243

sītā-pate śrī-raghunātha lakṣmaṇa-
jyeṣṭha prabho śrī-hanumat-priyeśvara
ity-ādikam kīrtaya veda-śāstrataḥ
khyātam smarams tad-guṇa-rūpa-vaibhavam

Practice
Chanting the
various names of
Lord Rāma
↓
Remember His
power His
qualities, beauty
the verses.

Practice chants like this (ity-ādikam kīrtaya): “O husband of Sītā (sītā-pate), Raghunātha (śrī-raghunātha), elder brother of Lakṣmaṇa (lakṣmaṇa-jyeṣṭha)! O Lord (prabho), dear master of Śrī Hanumān (śrī-hanumat-priyeśvara)!” And remember (smaran) the qualities, beauty, and power of Lord Rāmacandra (tad-guṇa-rūpa-vaibhavam), as revealed (khyātam) in the Vedas and other scriptures (veda-śāstrataḥ).

Gopa-kumāra might also worship the Lord of the Raghus by addressing Him as the darling son of Kauśalyā, or the son of Daśaratha, or the younger brother of Bharata, or the friend of Sugrīva.

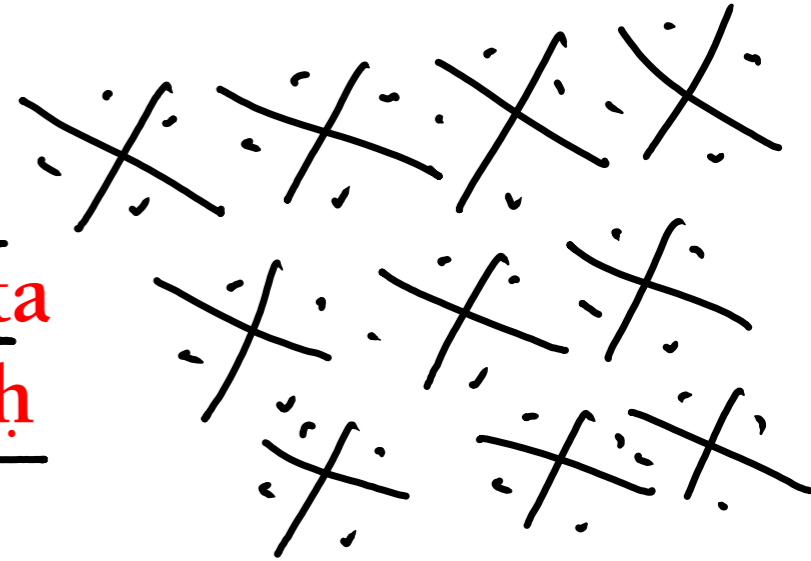
Or he might remember Śrī Raghunātha's transcendental qualities of shyness, humility, and so on, His beautiful appearance as He carries a bow in His hand, and His powerful displays of various opulences.

The original Vedas give some hint of the glories and pastimes of Lord Rāmacandra, which are elaborately described in the Purāṇas and in the Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki Ṛṣi.

TEXT 244

One should follow whatever path that leads to worshipping the deity one own to that is the most intelligent way. It should be very much attracted to any thing which they find even a faint scent of their deity.

yena prakāreṇa niṣṭa-devo
labhyeta tasyānusṛtiḥ kṛtītvam
yatrāsyā gandho 'pi bhavet kriyeta
prītiḥ parā tatra tad-eka-niṣṭhaiḥ



One should follow (anusṛtiḥ) whatever path leads to (yena prakāreṇa) attaining (labhyeta) one's own worshipable Deity (nija iṣṭa-devah). That is the most intelligent way to act (kṛtītvam). Persons exclusively devoted to their object of worship (tad-eka-niṣṭhaiḥ) should be very much attracted to anything (prītiḥ parā kriyeta tatra) in which they find (yatra bhavet) even a faint scent (gandho 'pi) of their Deity's presence (asya).

Gopa-kumāra might hesitate to approach Lord Rāmacandra.

After all, Śrī Madana-gopāladeva has long ago stolen Gopa-kumāra's heart,
and Gopa-kumāra has since then lost interest in everything and everyone
else.

So how can he now be expected to develop love for someone else?

Nārada clears this potential doubt by assuring him that approaching Lord
Rāmacandra is the wisest thing he can do for his own self-interest.

He should follow the logic sva-kāryam uddharet prājñah/ kārya-dhvaṁsena mūrkhataḥ: “An intelligent person should somehow do the needful. One who spoils the business at hand is a fool.”

Gopa-kumāra should therefore approach his destination by stages, going first to Ayodhyā and then to Dvārakā, where he will meet his worshipable Lord.

Gopa-kumāra will achieve Lord Gopāladeva by the special mercy of the Supreme Lord in His form of Śrī Raghunātha, just as he achieved Lord Viṣṇu by the special mercy of Lord Śiva.

But won't this violate Gopa-kumāra's chaste vow to worship only one Deity?

No, because a devotee fixed in exclusive devotion to his iṣṭa-deva will be spontaneously attracted to whatever has even a slight fragrance of his own Lord's presence.

Nārada is confident that meeting Lord Rāmacandra will lead Gopa-kumāra to the perfection of happiness.

TEXT 245

śrī-rāma-pādābja-yuge 'valokite
śāmyen na cet sā tava darśanotkatā
tenaiva kārūṇya-bharārdra-cetasā
praheṣyate dvāravatīm sukhaṁ bhavān

If, after
Seeing Lord Rāma,
If your hankering to see
the Lord is not
settled, then Rāma will
send you to Dvārakā.

If after you have seen (avalokite cet) the two lotus feet of Śrī Rāma (śrī-rāma-pādābja-yuge) your hankering to see your Lord (sā tava darśanotkatā) is unappeased (na śāmyet), then Rāma (tenaiva), whose heart is soft (ārdra-cetasā) from overflowing compassion (kārūṇya-bhara), will happily send you (sukhaṁ bhavān praheṣyate) to Dvārakā (dvāravatīm).

TEXT 246

saṅkīrtanam tasya yathoditam prabhoḥ
kurvan gatas tatra nija-priyeśvaram
śrī-kṛṣṇa-candram yadubhir vṛtaṁ ciraṁ
didṛkṣitam drakṣyasi taṁ mano-haram

While going
to Dwarka → perform
finally see your Lord
whom you have so long desired
to see.

While going there (gataḥ tatra), perform (kurvan) the Lord's saṅkīrtana (tasya prabhoḥ saṅkīrtanam) as it has been described (yathā uditam), and you will finally see (drakṣyasi) your own dear Lord (nija-priya īśvaram), whom you have so long desired to see (ciraṁ didṛkṣitam)—the charming Śrī Kṛṣṇacandra (taṁ mano-haram śrī-kṛṣṇa-candram), surrounded by the Yadus (yadubhir vṛtaṁ).

Nārada now further assures Gopa-kumāra that Kṛṣṇa in Dvārakā is the same Madana-gopāla he has so long been striving to find.

The question is not whether Dvārakā is the place to go, but only how to get there as soon as possible.

That question Nārada also answers here: Gopa-kumāra should perform saṅkīrtana of Śrī Kṛṣṇacandra, loudly and melodiously singing His names, reciting His glories, and offering Him prayers.

How to do all this is presented systematically in the Vedic literature.

And Gopa-kumāra should not wonder how to recognize his worshipable Lord upon seeing Him, because the Lord, the devotee's eternal master, will not keep His glories hidden forever from His dependant.

2nd understanding

Or alternatively it may be that Nārada is advising Gopa-kumāra to follow the rāgānuga method of devotional service by listening to the dictates of his heart, rather than mechanically following the injunctions of scripture.

In any case, the Supreme Lord is all-powerful, so one way or another devotees who perform saṅkīrtana of the Lord's names will easily realize all their ambitions.

TEXT 247

vaikunṭhasyaiva deśās te
kośalā-dvāarakādayaḥ
tat tatra gamanāyājñā
tad-bhartur na hy apekṣyatām

ex. Ayodhya, Dwārakā
only & ... you need not
take permission from (N)
to go there.

Ayodhyā, Dvārakā, and other such abodes (kośalā-dvāarakā ādayaḥ) are all
regions of Vaikuntha (vaikunṭhasyaiva deśāḥ te). Surely, therefore, you need
not take permission (tat na hy ājñāapekṣyatām) from the Lord of Vaikunṭha
(tad-bhartuh) to leave and go there (tatra gamanāya).

Kośalā (Ayodhyā), Dvārakā, and other exalted abodes, like Lord Jagannātha's Puruṣottama-kṣetra, all belong to the greater kingdom of Vaikuṅṭha.

Since Gopa-kumāra is not planning to go outside Vaikuṅṭha, he does not need special permission from Lord Nārāyaṇa.

TEXT 248

tasyājñayāgato 'trāham
sarva-hṛd-vṛtti-darśinaḥ
man-mukhenaiva tasyājñā
sampannety anumanyatām

By His order
Only I have come to
see you.
He knows my
mouth through my
His order.

By His order (tasya ājñayā) I have come here to see you (āgato atra aham). He knows (darśinaḥ) the movements of everyone's heart (sarva-hṛd-vṛtti), and you should know (anumanyatām) that from my mouth (mad-mukhena eva) you have received (sampannā) His order (tasya ājñā ity).

Even though Gopa-kumāra's journey would not take him outside Vaikunṭha, he may have wanted to confirm with Lord Nārāyaṇa that this travel was proper.

Earlier, however, Lord Nārāyaṇa had requested Nārada, "Please meet Gopa-kumāra in a private place and fulfill all his desires."

So Lord Nārāyaṇa knows the inner workings of everyone's heart.

He had known that Gopa-kumāra had been dissatisfied even with living in Vaikunṭha, and so He had sent Nārada to encourage Gopa-kumāra to move on.

TEXT 249

ekam mahā-bhaktam anugrahītum
svayam kutaścīd bhagavān gato 'yam
sodhum vilambam na hi śakṣyasi tvam
tan nirgame te 'vasaro varo 'yam

In any case
to love his devotee / the
You will ↓ anyway not be
to tolerate his separation, able
∴ Now is the
best time
for you
to love

In any case, the Lord (ayam bhagavān) has gone somewhere (svayam kutaścīd gatah) to bestow His favor (anugrahītum) on one of His great devotees (ekam mahā-bhaktam). Since you (tvam) will ~~be unable to tolerate~~ (sodhum na hi śakṣyasi) having to wait for Him (vilambam), now (tan ayam) is the best time (varah avasarah) for you to go (te nirgame).

Gopa-kumāra might accept everything Nārada has told him but still wonder why he shouldn't meet the Lord in person before departing.

Gopa-kumāra's devotional mood might inspire him to ask such a question.

Anticipating this possibility, Nārada informs him that Lord Nārāyaṇa has gone out of Vaikuṅṭha for a while to visit some favorite devotee.

"But I just saw Him here," Gopa-kumāra might contend.

"Yes, but He left just now. You came to this spot before He went away."

“But He should come back soon. I can wait till then.”

“No, I don’t think you have the patience to wait until He returns.”

In other words, it is likely that Lord Nārāyaṇa, out of compassion for the great devotee He is visiting, will agree to stay with that devotee for some time.

And Gopa-kumāra is so eager to achieve his goal that he will be unable to tolerate even a moment’s delay.

Gopa-kumāra need not lament over being unable to take permission from Lord Nārāyaṇa in person.

Since the Lord is absent and has already given His permission, this is the best opportunity to leave Vaikuṅṭha; if Gopa-kumāra waits to consult Him in person, seeing Lord Narayaṇa will destroy the desire to go, and he will not achieve his goal.

The Lord Himself made the current arrangements with all these considerations in mind.

TEXT 250

overjoyed, I
offered my respects
& set out, remembering
his instructions

śrī-gopa-kumāra uvāca
śrutvā tan nitarām hr̥ṣṭo
muhuḥ śrī-nāradaṁ naman
tasyāśīr-vādam ādāya
śikṣām cānusmarann ayām

Śrī Gopa-kumāra said: Overjoyed (nitarām hr̥ṣṭah) at hearing this (tad śrutvā), I bowed down (naman) repeatedly (muhuḥ) to Śrī Nārada (śrī-nāradaṁ), took his blessings (tasya āśīh-vādam ādāya), and set out (ayām), remembering his instructions (śikṣām ca anusmarann).

After leaving for Ayodhyā, Gopa-kumāra followed Nārada's instructions about remembering Lord Rāmacandra's glories by chanting "O husband of Sītā, Raghunātha, elder brother of Lakṣmaṇa! O Lord, dear master of Śrī Hanumān!"
(Text 243)