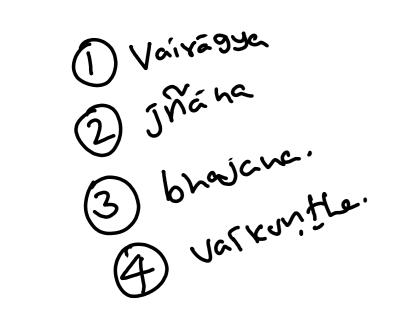
Śrī Brhad-bhāgavatāmrta

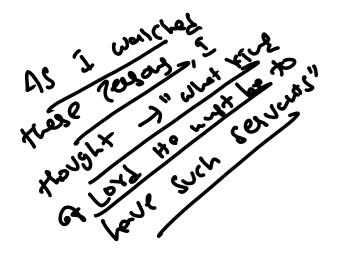
by Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī

11



Part 4

Vaikuntha- The Spiritual Kingdom



TEXT 55 gacchad-āgacchato 'haṁ tān paśyann idam acintayam īdṛśāḥ sevakā yasya sa prabhur nāma kīdrśah

As I watched those persons (aham tān paśyann) come and go (gacchadāgacchato), I thought (idam acintayam), "What kind of Lord must it be (kīdṛśaḥ nāma prabhuh sah) who has such servants (yasya īdṛśāḥ sevakā)!"

After seeing such beautiful and opulent servants of Lord Nārāyaņa come and go through the gateway of Vaikuntha, Gopa-kumāra could not help but imagine how beautiful and opulent must be Lord Nārāyaņa Himself.

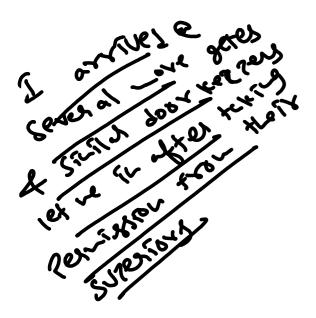
Certainly a proper master should be superior in all respects to his servants.

And I will a garde **TEXTS 56–57** oget ittham harsa-prakarsenot-tisthann upavisan bhrsam While wetchich gopure vartamāno 'ham tair javenaitya pārsadaih HOSTIN J CHAN antah praveśyamāno yat drstavān adbhutādbhutam A STA CA vaktum tad dvi-parārdhena sahasrāsyo 'pi na kṣamah) The amonging this ge that I gave const be described even by know a run 2-port this Thus (ittham) I (aham) thrilled with delight (harsa-prakarsena) as I waited in the gateway to Vaikuntha (gopure vartamanah). I excitedly stood up and sat down, stood up and sat down (uttisthann upavisan bhrsam), till the associates of the Lord (taih pārsadaih) returned, rushing back (javena etya), and escorted me inside (antah pravesyamanah). The amazing things I then saw (yat drstavan), more wonderful than wonderful (adbhuta adbhutam), even the thousand-headed Ananta Śesa (sahasrāsvah api) would be unable to describe (tad vaktum na kṣamah), even in a lifetime of Brahmā (dvi-parārdhena api).

<u>The escorts who had gone inside the city to announce Gopa-kumāra's arrival now came running back, because their Lord did not</u> want him to have to wait outside any longer.

As soon as Gopa-kumāra entered the actual realm of Vaikuņţha, he saw more wonders than he could ever describe to a conditioned soul.

His student would have to be satisfied with a brief outline of this experience.



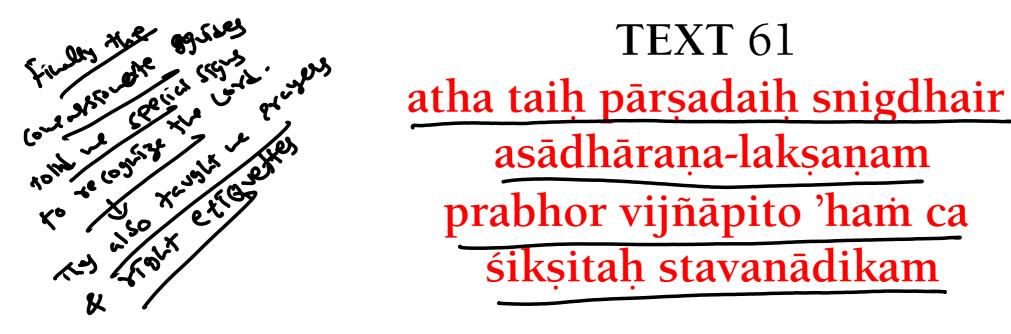
TEXT 58 dvāre dvāre dvāra-pālās tādrśā eva mām gatam praveśayanti vijnāpya vijnāpyeva nijādhipam

I<u>arrived</u> (mām gatam) at several more gates, one after another (dvāre dvāre), and at each I was met by similar doorkeepers (tādrśā eva dvāra-pālāh), who allowed me to enter (praveśayanti) only after announcing my arrival (vijñāpya vijñāpya iva) to their immediate superiors (nija adhipam). TEXTS 59–60 TEXTS

As I entered each gate (prati-dvāra antare gatvā gatvā), I saw (dṛśyate) the guards (tat-pratihāribhih) offer obeisances (praṇamyamānah) to the local superintendent (yah yah hi tat-pradeśa adhikāravān), so I assumed (mayā kila manyeta) that he was the Lord of the universe (sah sah jagad-īśah). Overwhelmed with reverence (sambhrama āveśāt) just as before (pūrva-vat), I repeatedly bowed down and recited prayers (namyate stūyate muhuh). Gopa-kumāra was so eager to see the Lord that he mistook the Lord's glorious devotees for the Lord Himself.

As Gopa-kumāra passed through each gateway with his escorts, they were met by the local manager, whose relatively greater opulence astonished him.

He was becoming more and more eager to see Lord Nārāyaņa.



Finally (atha) the Supreme Lord's compassionate men who were guiding me (taih snigdhair pārṣadaiḥ) told me (aham vijñāpitah) the special signs by which to recognize the Lord (prabhor asādhāraṇa-lakṣaṇam). They also taught me (śikṣitaḥ) what prayers to recite and what etiquette to observe (stavanādikam). <u>Gopa-kumāra's escorts informed him of the unique visible signs of Lord</u> Nārāyaņa, like the Śrīvatsa mark on His chest.

Apart from these few special features, the Lord in Vaikuntha is indistinguishable from His devotees who show the perfection of sārūpya.

<u>Out of genuine sympathy for Gopa-kumāra, his guides taught him how to</u> behave in front of Lord Nārāyaņa—first to bow down and then stand some distance aside, palms joined, look down at the Lord's lotus feet, refrain from moving or displaying bodily transformations, and so on.

TEXTS 62–63

- roha conglate mahā-mahā-citra-vicitra-geha-dvāra-pradeśān atigamya vegāt man-mahalla-pravarasya madhye prāsāda-vargaiķ parisevitānghrim

Gerve?

prāsādam ekam vividhair mahattā-pūrair viśistam para-sīma-yātaiķ prāpto 'ham āditya-sudhāmsu-koți-kāntim mano-locana-vrtti-coram

I passed rapidly (atigamya vegāt) through many districts (pradeśān), wonderfully splendid (mahā-mahā-citra), with all kinds of houses and gates (vicitra-geha-dvāra), and then I entered the most excellent transcendental neighborhood (sriman-mahallapravarasya madhye). There I came (prāpto 'ham) to one palace (prāsādam ekam) at whose feet many others stood in attendance (prāsāda-vargaih parișevitānghrim), a palace distinct (viśistam), overflowing in greatness (mahattā-pūrair), where excellence seemed to reach its highest limit (para-sīma-yātaih). Radiant like millions of suns and moons (āditya-sudhāmśu-koți-kāntim), it captured my mind and my eyes (mano-locanavrtti-coram).

Smaller palaces on all sides faced that grand one, like servants surrounding their master.

That palace, diverse in effulgence like millions of suns and moons, lured Gopa-kumāra's eyes and mind into captivity, enslaving their functions in reverence to the Lord's opulence. TEXTS 64–65

finally Gre <u>tad-antare ratna-varāvalī-lasat-suvarņa-simhāsana-rāja-mūrdhani</u> sujāta-kāntāmala-hamsa-tūliko-pari prasannākṛśa-candra-sundaram

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His mṛdūpadhānam nija-vāma-kaksa-kaphoṇinākramya sukhopaviṣṭam vaikuṇṭha-nātham bhagavantam ārād apaśyam agre nava-yauvaneśam

Within that palace (tad-antare) I saw before me (apasyam agre) at a distance (ārād) the Personality of Godhead, Lord of Vaikuntha (bhagavantam vaikuntha-nātham). He sat at leisure (sukha upavișțam) on the best of royal thrones (rāja-mūrdhani), a golden throne shimmering with the glow of many jewels (ratna-varāvalī-lasat-suvarņa-simhāsana). The cushion on which He sat (tuliko-pari) was of swan-white cotton, fine, attractive, spotlessly clean (sujāta-kāntāmala-hamsa), and the soft, handsome bolster (mrdu upadhānam) on which He leaned His left elbow and upper arm (nija-vāma-kakṣakaphonina ākramya) appeared like the full moon cleansed of its spots (prasannākrśacandra-sundaram). He was the presiding Lord of blossoming youth (nava-yauvana īśam).

Since the entrance hall of Lord Nārāyaņa's palace stretched a long way, Gopakumāra's first glimpse of the Lord was from a distance.

But there the Lord was, sitting happily right in front of him, on a throne with cushions white as a full moon washed of its spots.

Although He is the original person, He seemed ageless, as if in the prime of youth.

He displays His opulences however He chooses and so forever displays a youthful beauty that is among the most attractive of His opulences.



saundarya-mādhurya-mayāṅga-kāntyā nūtnāmbuda-śrī-harayā sphurantyā ratnācita-svarṇa-vibhūṣita-sragvastrānulepādi vibhūṣayantam

The brilliant effulgence (kāntyā) of His sweet, attractive limbs (saundarya-mādhurya-maya-aṅga) defeated (harayā) the splendor of new rain clouds (nūtna-ambuda-śrī). That effulgence lent further grace (sphurantyā vibhūṣayantam) to His garlands (srag), cosmetics (anulepādi), and garments (vastra), already graced by jewelry made of gold (svarņa-vibhūṣita) bedecked with gems (ratnācita).

Every part of Lord Nārāyaņa's body was beautifully formed, with youthful charm that enamored whoever saw Him.

On His head, neck, arms, chest, and ankles He wore golden, gembedecked jewelry, which enhanced the beauty of His vaijayantī flower garland, His yellow dress, and His sandalwood paste and other cosmetics.



kaṅkaṇāṅgada-vibhūṣaṇāyatasthūla-vṛtta-vilasac-catur-bhujam pīta-paṭṭa-vasana-dvayāñcitaṁ cāru-kuṇḍala-kapola-maṇḍalam

His four shining arms (vilasat-catur-bhujam), long and well built (āyatasthūla-vṛtta), enhanced the beauty of His bangles and armlets (kaṅkaṇa aṅgada-vibhūṣaṇa). Two yellow silk garments (pīta-paṭṭa-vasana-dvaya) dressed His body (āñcitaṁ), and charming earrings set off His rounded cheekş (cāru-kuṇḍala-kapola-maṇḍalam).

Lord Nārāyaņa's arms appear like the shining bodies of celestial serpents.

His dhotī and upper cloth are yellow like the rays of the sun.



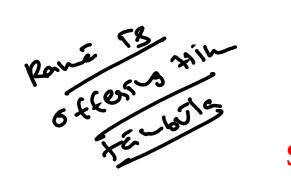
kaustubhābharaṇa-pīna-vakṣasaṃ kambu-kaṇṭha-dhṛta-mauktikāvalim sasmitāmṛta-mukhendum adbhutaprekṣaṇollasita-locanāmbujam

On His broad chest (pīna-vakṣasam) was the Kaustubha jewel (kaustubhābharaṇa), on His conch-shell neck (kambu-kaṇṭha) a string of pearls (dhṛta-mauktikāvalim), and on His moonlike face (mukha indum) a nectarean smile (sasmita amṛta). His lotus eyes (locana ambujam) were alive with playful glances (adbhuta-prekṣaṇa ullasita).

The moon is famous as the source of the heavenly soma nectar, the rare sacrificial offering enjoyed by a few select demigods like Indra.

Lord Nārāyaņa's face is another moon and also full of nectar.

The charming gestures of His lotus eyes are beyond compare.



kṛpā-bharodyad-vara-cilli-nartanam sva-vāma-pārśve sthitayātma-yogyayā nivedyamānam ramayā sa-vibhramam pragṛhya tāmbūlam adantam uttamam

The great compassion He felt (kṛpā-bhara) made (udyad) His beautiful eyebrows (vara-cilli) dance (nartanam). Ramā (ramayā), His ideally matching consort (ātma-yogyayā), standing by His left side (sva-vāma-pārśve sthitayā), reverently offered Him (savibhramam nivedyamānam) excellent pān (uttamam tāmbūlam) to chew (adantam), which He accepted (pragṛhya). The goddess of fortune would personally prepare Lord Nārāyaṇa's betel nut and offer it to Hịm with her own hand.

Pleased with her service and the excellent quality of the pān, Lord Nārāyaņa would gracefully accept it with the tips of His right thumb and first finger, place it in His mouth, and chew it contentedly.

The goddess of fortune Śrī Ramā is the suitable consort for Lord Nārāyaņa because she is the best of all women.

She equals Him in beauty and other good qualities.

We should understand that the Lord's other consort, Bhūmi, was also serving Him, from His right side.

tad-rāga-kāntādhara-bimba-kānti-

sambhinna-kundāmala-danta-panktyoh

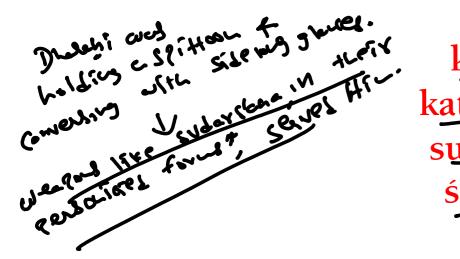
dīpti-prakāśojjvala-hāsa-rāsam

narmokti-bhangī-hṛta-bhakta-cittam

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Th<u>e color of that pān (tad-rāga</u>) m<u>ade His bimba-fruit lips (adhara-bimba</u>) even more attractive (kānta), and their luster (kānti) r<u>eflected on His tee</u>th (sambhinna danta), two rows (panktyoh) of spotless kunda flowers (kunda amala). Illumined by the glow of those flowers (dīpti-prakāśa), His playful smile shone splendidly (ujjvala-hāsa-rāsam). His amusing words and gestures (narmokti-bhangī) stole away the hearts of His devotees (hrta-bhakta-cittam).

The bimba is a bright-red fruit whose brilliant color resembles that of the Supreme Lord's lips. The kunda flower is a small pure-white jasmine.

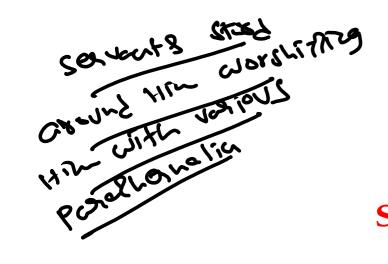


kare patad-grāha-bhṛtā dharaṇyā katāksa-bhaṅgyā muhur arcyamānam sudarśanādyair vara-mūrtimadbhih śira-stha-cihnaiḥ pariṣevyamāṇam

The goddess Dharani (dharanyā), in her hand (kare) a vessel to catch the remnants of betel nut (patad-grāha-bhṛtā), constantly worshiped the Lord (muhur arcyamānam) with messages in sidelong glances (kaṭākṣa-bhaṅgyā). And the Lord's excellent weapons like Sudarśana (sudarśana ādyaih) served Him (pariṣevyamāṇam) in beautiful personified forms (vara-mūrtimadbhiḥ), their identities marked by symbols on their heads (śira-stha-cihnaiḥ).

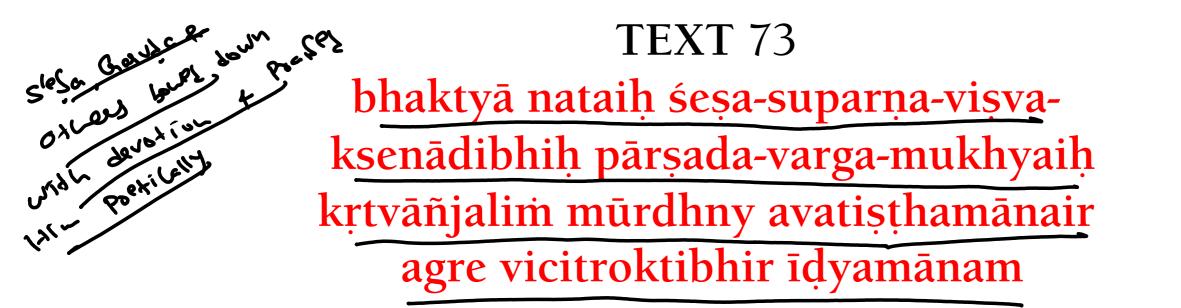
Dharanī, or Bhūmi, is the second goddess of fortune, whose expansion is the presiding deity of the earth.

While Ramā served Lord Nārāyaņa His pān, Dharaņī stood by to receive the remnants He would spit into a vessel meant for that purpose.



TEXT 72 cāmara-vyajana-pādukādikaśrī-paricchada-gaņollasat-karaiḥ sevakaiḥ sva-sadṛśair avasthitair āvṛtaṁ paricaradbhir ādarāt

Servants stood about Him (sevakaih avasthitaih), surrounding Him (āvṛtaṁ) and worshiping Him (paricaradbhir) with great respect (ādarāt), their appearance like His (sva-sadṛśair), their hands (karaih) beautified by transcendental items for His service (śrīparicchada-gaṇa ullasat), like slippers and yak-tail fans (cāmara-vyajana-pādukādīka).



Śeṣa, Garuḍa, Viṣvaksena (śeṣa-suparṇa-viṣvaksenādibhiḥ), and the other leaders of His many groups of attendants (pārṣada-vargamukhyaiḥ) bowed down before Him with devotion (bhaktyā nataiḥ), stood before Him (agre avatiṣṭhamānaih) with palms joined above their heads (kṛtvāñjalim mūrdhny), and pṛaised Him (īḍyamānam) in wonderful poetic language (vicitra uktibhih). Along with Śesa, Garuda, and Visvaksena, other main servants of Nārāyaņa were present, such as Nanda and Sunanda, Jaya and Vijaya, and Bala and Prabala.

Al<u>l of them together</u>, <u>Sesa and the others</u>, are <u>called the ganadhyaks</u>, or leaders of the various groups of the Lord's servants.

The Eighth Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (8.21.16–17) confirms:

nandaḥ sunando 'tha jayo vijayaḥ prabalo balaḥ kumudaḥ kumudākṣaś ca viṣvaksenaḥ patattrirāṭ jayantaḥ śrutadevaś ca puṣpadanto 'tha sātvataḥ

"Nanda and Sunanda, Jaya and Vijaya, Bala and Prabala, Kumuda and Kumudāksa are all associates of Lord Vișnu, and so also are Vișvaksena, Patattrirăt [Garuda], Jayanta, Śrutadeva, Pușpadanta, and Sātvata."