

Śrī Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta

by Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī

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

Part 4

Vaikuntha- The Spiritual Kingdom

TEXT 55

gacchad-āgacchato 'ham tām
paśyann idam acintayam
īdrśāḥ sevakā yasya
sa prabhur nāma kīdrśaḥ

As I watched
these persons
thought → "What kind
of Lord He must be to
have such servants"

As I watched those persons (aham tām paśyann) come and go (gacchad-āgacchato), I thought (idam acintayam), "What kind of Lord must it be (kīdrśaḥ nāma prabhuh sah) who has such servants (yasya īdrśāḥ sevakā)!"

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

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

Thus, I was
thrilled with delight
While watching them.
I stood up & sat down.
agafu in excitement
The case & took up
the case.

ittham harṣa-prakarsēnot-tiṣṭhann upaviśan bhr̥śam
gopure vartamāno 'ham tair javenaitya pārśadaiḥ

antaḥ praveśyamāno yat dr̥ṣṭavān adbhutādbhutam
vaktum tad dvi-parārdhena sahasrāsyo 'pi na kṣamaḥ

→ The amazing things that I saw cannot be described even by Ananta Śeṣa 2-headed

Thus (ittham) I (aham) thrilled with delight (harṣa-prakarsena) as I waited in the gateway to Vaikuntha (gopure vartamānah). I excitedly stood up and sat down, stood up and sat down (uttisthann upaviśan bhr̥śam), till the associates of the Lord (tair pārśadaiḥ) returned, rushing back (javena etya), and escorted me inside (antaḥ praveśyamānah). The amazing things I then saw (yat dr̥ṣṭavān), more wonderful than wonderful (adbhuta adbhutam), even the thousand-headed Ananta Śeṣa (sahasrāsyaḥ api) would be unable to describe (tad vaktum na kṣamaḥ), even in a lifetime of Brahmā (dvi-parārdhena api).

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

As soon as Gopa-kumāra entered the actual realm of Vaikuṅṭha, 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 vijñāpya
vijñāpyeva nijādhipam

↓ arrive
several
I
similar door keepers
let me in after they
permission from their
superiors

I arrived (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

As I entered each gate, I saw that the guards were offering obeisances to their superintendent. So, I thought they must be the Lord & I too bowed down & started offering prayers.

prati-dvārāntare gatvā gatvā tat-pratihāribhiḥ
praṇamyamāno yo yo hi tat-pradeśādhikāravān

drśyate sa sa manyeta jagad-īso mayā kila
pūrva-vat sambhramāveśāt namyate stūyate muhuḥ

As I entered each gate (prati-dvāra antare gatvā gatvā), I saw (drśyate) the guards (tat-pratihāribhiḥ) 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 muhuḥ).

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 Nārāyaṇa.

TEXT 61

atha taiḥ pārṣadaiḥ snigdhair
asādhāraṇa-lakṣaṇam
prabhor vijñāpito 'haṁ ca
śikṣitah stavanādikam

Finally the
compassionate guides
told me special signs
to recognize the Lord.
They also taught me prayers
& what etiquette

Finally (**atha**) the Supreme Lord's compassionate men who were
guiding me (**taiḥ snigdhair pārṣadaiḥ**) told me (**ahaṁ vijñāpitaḥ**)
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**).

Gopa-kumāra's escorts informed him of the unique visible signs of Lord Nārāyaṇa, like the Śrīvatsa mark on His chest.

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

Out of genuine sympathy for Gopa-kumāra, his guides taught him how to behave in front of Lord Nārāyaṇa—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

I rapidly
passed through
many districts etc.
& finally came to
great gate which a
captured my
mind & eyes

mahā-mahā-citra-vicitra-geha-dvāra-pradeśān atigamya vegāt
śrīman-mahalla-pravarasya madhye prāsāda-vargaiḥ pariṣevitānghrim

prāsādam ekam vividhair mahattā-pūrain viśiṣṭam para-sīma-yātaiḥ
prāpto 'ham āditya-sudhāmsu-koṭi-kāntim mano-locana-vṛtti-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 (śrīman-mahalla-pravarasya madhye). There I came (prāpto 'ham) to one palace (prāsādam ekam) at whose feet many others stood in attendance (prāsāda-vargaiḥ pariṣevitānghrim), a palace distinct (viśiṣṭam), overflowing in greatness (mahattā-pūrain), where excellence seemed to reach its highest limit (para-sīma-yātaiḥ). Radiant like millions of suns and moons (āditya-sudhāmsu-koṭi-kāntim), it captured my mind and my eyes (mano-locana-vṛtti-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

tad-antare ratna-varāvalī-lasat-suvarṇa-simhāsana-rāja-mūrdhani
sujāta-kāntāmala-haṁsa-tūliko-pari prasannākṛṣa-candra-sundaram

mṛdūpadhānaṁ nija-vāma-kakṣa-kaphoṇinākramya sukhopaviṣṭam
vaikuṅṭha-nātham bhagavantam ārād apaśyam agre nava-yauvaneśam

finally I
 had desire of the
 Lord of Vaikuṅṭha
 ↓
 Description of His
 beauty.

Within that palace (**tad-antare**) I saw before me (**apaśyam agre**) at a distance (**ārād**) the Personality of Godhead, Lord of Vaikuṅṭha (**bhagavantam vaikuṅṭha-nātham**). He sat at leisure (**sukha upaviṣṭam**) on the best of royal thrones (**rāja-mūrdhani**), a golden throne shimmering with the glow of many jewels (**ratna-varāvalī-lasat-suvarṇa-simhāsana**). The cushion on which He sat (**tūliko-pari**) was of swan-white cotton, fine, attractive, spotlessly clean (**sujāta-kāntāmala-haṁsa**), and the soft, handsome bolster (**mṛdu upadhānaṁ**) on which He leaned His left elbow and upper arm (**nija-vāma-kakṣa-kaphoṇina ākramya**) appeared like the full moon cleansed of its spots (**prasannākṛṣa-candra-sundaram**). He was the presiding Lord of blossoming youth (**nava-yauvana īśam**).

Since the entrance hall of Lord Nārāyaṇa's palace stretched a long way, Gopa-
kumāra'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.

Further description
of His beauty

TEXT 66

saundarya-mādhurya-mayāṅga-kāntyā
nūtnāmbuda-śrī-harayā sphurantyā
ratnācita-svarṇa-vibhūṣita-srag-
vastrānulepādi 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 (**svarṇa-vibhūṣita**) bedecked with gems (**ratnācita**).

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

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

Further beauty
described

TEXT 67

kaṅkaṅāṅgada-vibhūṣaṅāyata-
sthūla-vṛtta-vilasac-catur-bhujam
pīta-paṭṭa-vasana-dvayāñcitam
cāru-kuṇḍala-kapola-maṇḍalam

His four shining arms (**vilasat-catur-bhujam**), long and well built (**āyata-sthūla-vṛtta**), enhanced the beauty of His bangles and armlets (**kaṅkaṅa aṅgada-vibhūṣaṅa**). Two yellow silk garments (**pīta-paṭṭa-vasana-dvaya**) dressed His body (**āñcitam**), and charming earrings set off His rounded cheeks (**cāru-kuṇḍala-kapola-maṇḍalam**).

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

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

Fuller
description

TEXT 68

kaustubhābharāṇa-pīna-vakṣasam
kambu-kaṇṭha-dhṛta-mauktikāvalim
sasmitāmṛta-mukhendum adbhuta-
prekṣaṇollasita-locanāmbujam

On His broad chest (**pīna-vakṣasam**) was the Kaustubha jewel (**kaustubhābharāṇa**), 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 Nārāyaṇa's face is another moon and also full of nectar.

The charming gestures of His lotus eyes are beyond compare.

TEXT 69

Ramē १३
offerings Him
Tāmbūla

kṛpā-bharodyad-vara-cilli-nartanam
sva-vāma-pārśve sthitayātma-yogyayā
nivedyamānam ramayā sa-vibhramam
pragrhya 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 (**sa-vibhramam nivedyamānam**) excellent pān (**uttamam tāmbūlam**) to chew (**adantam**), which He accepted (**pragrhya**).

The goddess of fortune would personally prepare Lord Nārāyaṇa's betel nut and offer it to Him with her own hand.

Pleased with her service and the excellent quality of the pān, Lord Nārāyaṇa 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 Nārāyaṇa 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.

TEXT 70

The color of the
pān ~~made~~ made His
reflect lips even more
attractive
& its luster reflected from
the bimba kunda like teeth
when He smiled.
& gestures stole
the hearts
of devotees

tad-rāga-kāntādhara-bimba-kānti-
sambhinna-kundāmala-danta-paṅktyoḥ
dīpti-prakāśojjala-hāsa-rāsaṁ
narmokti-bhaṅgī-hṛta-bhakta-cittam

The color of that pān (tad-rāga) made His bimba-fruit lips (adhara-bimba) even more attractive (kānta), and their luster (kānti) reflected on His teeth (sambhinna danta), two rows (paṅktyoḥ) of spotless kunda flowers (kunda amala). Illumined by the glow of those flowers (dīpti-prakāśa), His playful smile shone splendidly (ujjvala-hāsa-rasaṁ). His amusing words and gestures (narmokti-bhaṅgī) stole away the hearts of His devotees (hṛta-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.

TEXT 71

kare patad-grāha-bhṛtā dharanyā
kaṭākṣa-bhaṅgyā muhur arcyamānam
sudarśanādyair vara-mūrtimadbhiḥ
śira-stha-cihnaiḥ pariṣevyamāṇam

Dharani was holding a spittoon & covering with sidelong glances. Weapons like Sudarśana in their personified forms, served Him.

The goddess Dharanī (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 ādyaiḥ) 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 Nārāyaṇa His pān, Dharanī stood by to receive the remnants He would spit into a vessel meant for that purpose.

TEXT 72

cāmara-vyajana-pādukādika-
śrī-paricchada-gaṇollasat-karaiḥ
sevakaiḥ sva-sadṛśair avasthitair
āvṛtaṁ paricaradbhir ādarāt

Servants stood
around Him worshipping
Him with various
peripherals

Servants stood about Him (**sevakaiḥ avasthitaiḥ**), surrounding Him (**āvṛtaṁ**) and worshiping Him (**paricaradbhir**) with great respect (**ādarāt**), their appearance like His (**sva-sadṛśair**), their hands (**karaiḥ**) beautified by transcendental items for His service (**śrī-paricchada-gaṇa ullasat**), like slippers and yak-tail fans (**cāmara-vyajana-pādukādika**).

TEXT 73

Śeṣa Garuḍa
Other bow down
with devotion
to Him
poetically

bhaktyā nataiḥ śeṣa-suparṇa-
viṣvak-
ksenādibhiḥ pārṣada-varga-mukhyaiḥ
kṛtvāñjalim mūrdhny avatiṣṭhamānair
agre vicitroktibhir īḍyamānam

Śeṣa, Garuḍa, Viṣvaksena (śeṣa-suparṇa-viṣvak-
ksenādibhiḥ), and the
other leaders of His many groups of attendants (pārṣada-varga-
mukhyaiḥ) bowed down before Him with devotion (bhaktyā
nataiḥ), stood before Him (agre avatiṣṭhamānair) with palms joined
above their heads (kṛtvāñjalim mūrdhny), and praised Him
(īḍyamānam) in wonderful poetic language (vicitra uktibhiḥ).

Along with Śeṣa, Garuḍa, and Viṣvaksena, other main servants of Nārāyaṇa were present, such as Nanda and Sunanda, Jaya and Vijaya, and Bala and Prabala.

All of them together, Śeṣa and the others, are called the gaṇādhyakṣas, 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 balah
kumudaḥ kumudākṣaś ca
viṣvaksenaḥ patattrirāt
jayantaḥ śrutadevaś ca
puṣpadanto 'tha sātvataḥ

“Nanda and Sunanda, Jaya and Vijaya, Bala and Prabala, Kumuda and Kumudākṣa are all associates of Lord Viṣnu, and so also are Viṣvaksena, Patattrirāt [Garuḍa], Jayanta, Śrutadeva, Puṣpadanta, and Sātvata.”