

Śrī Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta

by Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī

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

Part 4

Vaikuntha- The Spiritual Kingdom

TEXT 95

tathāpi pūrvābhyāsasya
balena mahatā prabhoh
bhajanam khalu manye 'ham
dīna-vṛttyā sadā sukham

By the strong
influence of my prior
practice → I continued to
seriously worship the SG &
happily behaved like an
insignificant person

In any case (**tathāpi**), by the strong influence of my previous practice (**pūrvābhyāsasya balena**) I continued to pay serious attention (**aham mahatā manye**) to my worship of the Supreme Lord (**prabhoh bhajanam**) and always happily (**sadā sukham**) behaved like an insignificant person (**dīna-vṛttyā**).

Although Gopa-kumāra could have felt proud to know himself equal in quality with Lord Nārāyaṇa, he preferred to retain the genuine advantage of remaining humble.

✕

He was convinced that his only real happiness lay in satisfying the Lord.

From the beginning of his devotional practice, he had always been unpretentious.

Now even among the devotees of Vaikuṅṭha he had a special destiny, and so he had to follow his nature.

TEXT 96

tadā hṛdīdam pariniścitam mayā
dhruvam svakīyākhila-janma-karmanām
phalasya labhyasya kilādhunā parā
sīmā samāptā bhagavat-kṛpā-bharāt

In my heart
I have concluded that
the ultimate fruit
I have now attained

In my heart (**hṛdi**) I then (**tadā**) concluded (**idam pariniścitam**) that
by the great mercy of the Lord (**bhagavat-kṛpā-bharāt**) I had now
surely gained (**mayā dhruvam adhunā samāptā**) the ultimate fruit
(**parā sīmā phalasya**) to be acquired (**labhyasya**) from all my prior
births and endeavors (**svakīya akhila-janma-karmanām**).

Having described something of what had happened to him and what he had done in Vaikuṅṭha, Gopa-kumāra now hints at what had been going on in his mind.

He had been thinking that he had attained the complete perfection of his life.

TEXT 97

What unimaginable happiness!
Exalted abode!
Wonderful master!
What a wonderful mercy!

aho sukham kīḍṛg idaṁ durūham
aho padaṁ kīḍṛg idaṁ mahiṣṭham
aho mahāścarya-taraḥ prabhuś ca
kīḍṛk tathāścarya-tarā kṛpāsyā

Oh (**aho**), what unimaginable happiness (**kīḍṛg idaṁ durūham sukham**)! What an exalted abode (**aho kīḍṛg idaṁ mahiṣṭham padaṁ**)! What a wonderful master (**aho mahāścarya-taraḥ prabhuś ca**)! And how greatly wonderful His mercy (**tathā kīḍṛg āścarya-tarā asyā kṛpā**)!

Gopa-kumāra uses the word idam (“this”) to express that he perceived these wonders directly.

But he does little more than show his astonishment—(aho)—because these glories of Vaikuṅṭha cannot be compared with anything else.

To persons who have yet to see them, very little can be said.

These glories cannot even be imagined, so they surely cannot be described.

TEXT 98

After some time
I got the flute
cāmara-sevā & thus
I got the chance to see
the Lord & play for Him

atha prabhoś cāmara-vījanātmikām
samīpa-sevām kṛpayadhilambhitāḥ
nijām ca vaṁśīm raṇayan samāpnavām
tad-īkṣaṇānanda-bharam nirantaram

After some time (atha), by the Lord's kindness (prabhoh kṛpayā), I obtained (adhilambhitāḥ) the intimate personal service (samīpa-sevām) of fanning Him with a cāmara (cāmara-vījana ātmikām), and I constantly felt (nirantaram samapnavām) the bliss of seeing the Lord (tad-īkṣaṇa ānanda-bharam) as I played for Him on my flute (nijām ca vaṁśīm raṇayan).

At first Gopa-kumāra could see Lord Nārāyaṇa only in brief audiences.

After this initial training, however, he was allowed a regular service at the Lord's side.

He earned this privilege not by his own qualifications but by the Lord's causeless mercy (kṛpayā).

In addition, by virtue of being a naturally expert flute player, Gopa-kumāra had the rare privilege of entertaining Lord Nārāyaṇa.

Bros of my
past practice → I
would sometimes loudly
chant the HṚṢ

TEXT 99

pūrvābhyāsa-vaśenānu-
kīrtayāmi kadāpy aham
bahudhoccāir aye kṛṣṇa
gopāleti muhur muhuḥ

By the habit of my past practice (pūrvābhyāsa-vaśena), over and again (muhur muhuḥ) I would sometimes (kadāpy aham) loudly chant in various ways (bahudhā uccāih anu-kīrtayāmi), “O Kṛṣṇa! Gopāla (aye kṛṣṇa gopāla iti)!”

These two names of the Lord—Kṛṣṇa and Gopāla—were so dear to Gopa-kumāra that he found innumerable ways to chant them.

And so as he enjoyed life in Vaikuṅṭha he was also being prepared to move on to his higher destination.

The seed of discontent with living in Vaikuntha was beginning to take root in his heart.

॥ always sang
openly of His title
in Vrindavan

TEXT 100

gokulācaritaṁ cāsyā
mahā-māhātmya-darśakam
parama-stotra-rūpeṇa
sākṣād gāyāmi sarvadā

I always sang (gāyāmi sarvadā) openly (sākṣād), in excellent prayers (parama-stotra-rūpeṇa), of His activities in Gokula (asya gokula ācaritaṁ), which reveal His greatest glories (mahā-māhātmya-darśakam).

Gokula is Vraja-bhūmi, the land of Mathurā.

With the all-attractive performance of saṅkīrtana, Gopa-kumāra described for Lord Nārāyaṇa the Lord's own childhood pastimes in Gokula.

TEXT 101

tatratyair bahir āgatyā
tair hasadbhir ahaṁ muhuḥ
snehārdra-hṛdayair uktaḥ
śikṣayadbhir iva sphuṭam

Vāṣiṣṭi affectionately
tushing → Give to me
& tested instructing

The residents of that place (tatratyair), laughing (hasadbhir) with hearts melted by affection (snehārdra-hṛdayair), often (muḥ) came to me (ahaṁ āgatyā) when I was outside the Lord's presence (bahir) and spoke to me in no uncertain terms (sphuṭam uktaḥ), like teachers instructing a student (śikṣayadbhir iva).

TEXT 102

śrī-vaikuṅṭha-vāsina ūcuḥ
maivaṁ sambodhayeśeśaṁ
mā ca saṅkīrtayes tathā
upaślokaya māhātmyam
anantaṁ tv adbhutādbhutam

Do not address
the Lord in this
way.
Also, do not praise Him the
way you did. → JUST CHANT
the standard prayers.

The residents of Śrī Vaikuṅṭha said: “You should not address (mā sambodhaya) the Lord of lords (īśa-īśaṁ) like this (evaṁ)! And don’t sing His praises that way (mā ca saṅkīrtayet tathā). Just recite the standard prayers (upaślokaya) about His unlimited (anantaṁ), most amazing glories (adbhuta adbhutam māhātmyam).

The Vaikuṅṭha devotees disliked hearing Lord Nārāyaṇa addressed in such familiar ways as “My dear Kṛṣṇa!” and “Hey Gopala!” In fact, they disapproved of addressing Him by name at all.

They felt uncomfortable hearing songs that focused on the Lord’s childhood pastimes in Gokula.

They wanted to hear the Lord glorified in the Vaikuṅṭha style.

TEXT 103

To annihilate the
wicked & to protect
the civilized & to cheat
Kamsa & to cheat
disguised, out lord
cowherd himself of c
outlord by His illusory
energy.

samhārāyaiva duṣṭānām
śiṣṭānām pālanāya ca
kaṁsam vañcayatānena
gopatvaṁ māyayā kṛtam

“To annihilate the wicked (samhārāyaiva duṣṭānām) and protect the civilized (śiṣṭānām pālanāya ca), and to cheat Kamsa (kaṁsam vañcayatā), the Lord disguised Himself as a cowherd (anena gopatvaṁ kṛtam), by His illusory energy (māyayā).

As far as these Vaikuntha-vāsīs are concerned, the Lord only pretends to be a cowherd boy in order to deceive the evil King Kāmsa of Mathurā.

Kṛṣṇa had to cheat Kāmsa to get rid of wicked demons like Pūtanā and protect decent persons like Śrī Vasudeva.

But Gopa-kumāra's advisors honestly believe that the Supreme Lord of all lords is never actually such a degraded creature as a cowherd.

TEXT 104

Devotees have
little regard for such
illusory tales
↓
Such narrations may be
suitable in the beginning of bhakti
↓
But, this is not factual
glorification of Lord

māyāyā varṇanam cāsyā
na bhaktair bahu manyate
bhakty-ārambhe hi tad yuktaṁ
tena na stūyate prabhuḥ

“Devotees of the Lord (bhaktaiḥ) have little regard (na bahu manyate) for tales of His illusory affairs (asya māyāyā varṇanam). Such narrations may be suitable (tad yuktaṁ) in the beginning of devotional practice (bhakty-ārambhe hi), but they do not factually glorify the Lord (tena na stūyate prabhuḥ).”

Māyā means “illusion,” “magic,” or “deception.”

The Supreme Lord may sometimes play tricks by pretending to assume forms that are not actually His eternal forms (svarūpas).

For example, Lord Visnu showed Himself disguised as Mohinī, the most attractive woman, but in fact the Personality of Godhead is always male, never female.

His real feminine counterpart has her own identity.

Well-informed Vaiṣṇavas, therefore, do not take the Lord's illusory shows very seriously.

A person dissatisfied with this argument might counter that the descriptions of the Lord's "illusory" activities are indeed heard and appreciated by knowledgeable Vaiṣṇavas.

He might even quote a statement by the first spiritual master of all Vaiṣṇavas in the material world, Lord Brahmā:

māyām varṇayato 'muṣya
īśvarasyānumodatah
śrṇvataḥ śraddhayā nityam
māyayātmā na muhyati

Lord's activities in this material realm
→
Purificatory
structure
life

If the jīva (ātmā) constantly describes māyā (nityam māyām varṇayataḥ) in relation to the Lord (amuṣya īśvarasya), remembers māyā (anumodataḥ) or hears about māyā with proper faith (śrṇvataḥ śraddhayā), he will not be bewildered by māyā (māyayā na muhyati). (Bhāgavatam 2.7.53)

In reply to this objection, the Vaikuṅṭha-vāsīs argue that accounts of the Lord's illusory activities are suitable only for beginners in devotional practice.

Such narrations about the Lord's Māyā, including His pastimes in Gokula on earth, are not fit for glorifying the almighty Lord of Vaikuṅṭha.