

Śrī Brhad-bhāgavatāmṛta

by Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī

Volume - 2

Śrī-goloka-māhātmya

The Glories of Goloka

Part 5

Prema- Love of God

Text 216

Just as a generous donor may give food & other things to others, one may receive food either spontaneously or through regulative sadhana.

yathodārān milaty annam
pakvaṁ vā pāka-sādhanaṁ
sādhakasyocyate śāstra-
gatyāyaṁ sādhana-kramah

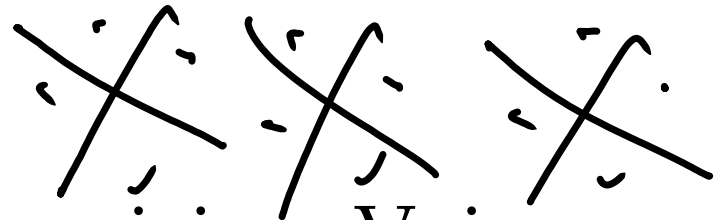
Just as (yathā) from a generous donor (udārāt) one might receive (milaty) food (annam) already cooked (pakvaṁ) or the means and ingredients for cooking food oneself (vā pāka-sādhanaṁ), so according to the opinions of scripture (śāstra-gatyā) one receives Kṛṣṇa's mercy (sādhakasya ayam ucyate) through a method of devotional practice [either regulative or spontaneous] (sādhana-kramah).

Though all perfection in bhakti comes only by Kṛṣṇa's mercy,
there is still a need for different methods of sādhana.

To illustrate the point, we may consider the hungry people
who should receive charity.

Some should be given food already cooked and offered to the
Supreme Lord.

Others, like strict brāhmaṇas who eat only what they have cooked themselves and offered to their own Deities, should be given rice, other ingredients, and pots and fuel for cooking.



Similarly, most aspiring Vaiṣṇavas need to be purified from material contamination by regulative devotional practice; only a few souls, already pure, can enter directly into spontaneous loving service.

Text 217

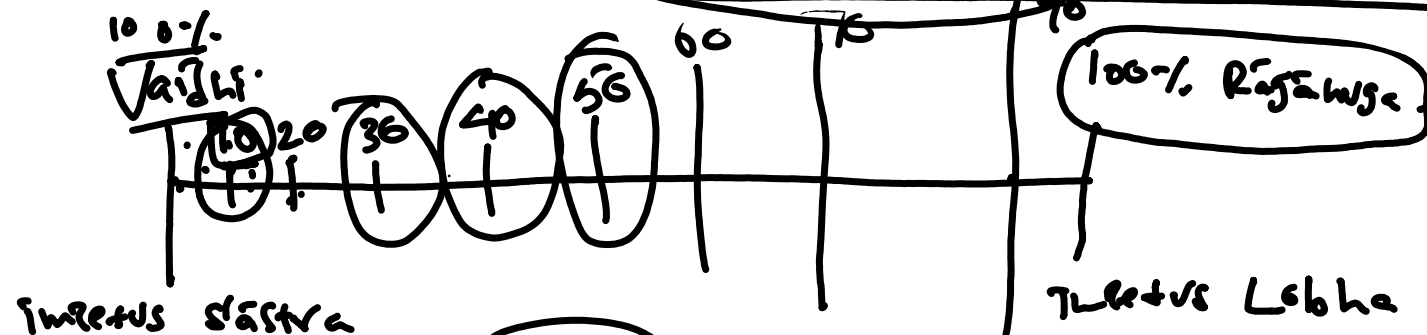
Once one has overcome the obstacles on the path of fear & other frailties, one can then achieve pure love for this Lord. One must have a strong desire to serve the Lord in the way of His gopis.

tat tu laukika-sad-bandhu-
buddhyā prema bhayādi-jam
vighnam nirasya tad-gopa-
gopī-dāsyepsayārjayet

Once one has overcome (nirasya) the obstacles on the path (vighnam) that arise from frailties like fear (bhayādi-jam), one can then achieve (arjayet) pure love (tat prema) in which one thinks of the Lord (buddhyā) like a close friend in the ordinary world (laukika-sad-bandhu). For this (tad) one must have a strong desire (īpsayā) to serve the Lord (dāsyē) in the manner of His gopas and gopīs (tad-gopa-gopī).

When a serious devotee first sets his aim on following in the footsteps of the Goloka-vāsīs, the goal may seem far away.

He may begin his endeavor still encumbered by many material desires.



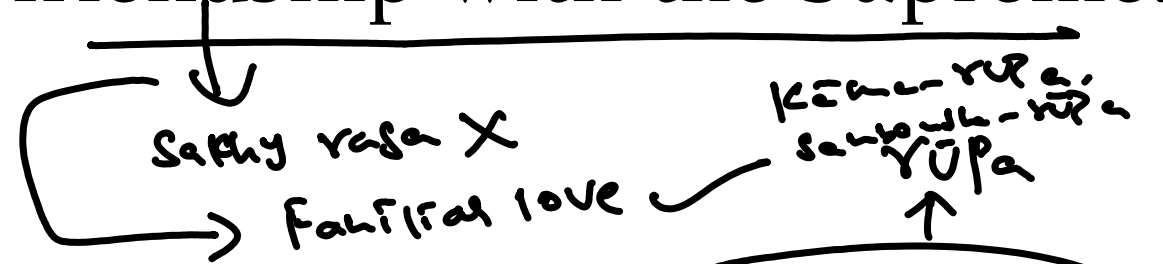
But the more he carefully studies the transcendental reality, the more he renounces his unsuitable desires.

He then rises above the misgivings born of fear, reverence, distrust, and shame.

The real beginning of spiritual life, therefore, is to become free from material desires.

Until the obstacles are overcome, the devotee sees the object of his devotion only as the supreme powerful and so remains too fearful and respectful to have any real love for Him.

But later, when the devotee swims in the vast ocean of bhakti,
the superficial waves of contrary impulses recede, and he is
granted the superintelligence for friendship with the Supreme.



The devotee then approaches the Lord with such (apparently)
worldly moods as that of a consort or a son and serves His
lotus feet accordingly.

He renders pure devotional service, as defined in the Padma
Purāna:

ananya-mamatā viṣṇau
mamatā prema-saṁyutā
bhaktir ity ucyate bhīṣma-
prahlādoddhava-nāradaih

“When one develops an unflinching sense of ownership or possessiveness (prema-saṁyutā mamatā) in relation to Lord Viṣṇu (viṣṇau), or, in other words, when one thinks Viṣṇu and no one else to be the only object of love (ananya-mamatā), such an awakening is called bhakti (bhaktir ity ucyate) by exalted persons like Bhīṣma, Prahlāda, Uddhava, and Nārada (bhīṣma-prahlāda-uddhava-nāradaih).”