

Śrī Brhad-bhāgavatāmṛta

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Volume - 2

Śrī-goloka-māhātmya

The Glories of Goloka

Part 7

Jagad-ānanda

The Bliss of the Worlds

Text 14

mahat-saṅgama-māhātmyam
evaitat paramādbhutam
kṛtārtho yena vipro 'sau
sadyo 'bhūt tat-svarūpa-vat

Such are
the most amazing
glories of contact
with a great saint.
By that contact → the Brāhmaṇa
achieved perfection → the Brāhmaṇa
realizing his
eternal identity.

Such are (eva etat) the most amazing glories (parama-
adbhutam māhātmyam) of contact (saṅgama) with a great
saint (mahat). By that contact (yena), this brāhmaṇa (asau
viprah) suddenly (sadyah) achieved perfection (kṛta-arthah
abhūt), realizing his eternal identity (tat svarūpa-vat).

Sustained association with other qualified devotees

Usually, only the Lord's most qualified devotees attain pure love of God, after long endeavor for the Lord's special mercy.

↓
Sādhanā

How then could this brāhmaṇa have achieved prema so quickly?

Only by coming into contact with a powerful saint.

The brāhmaṇa's own efforts alone would have been of no avail.

His success was possible by the unique glories of Vaiṣṇava association, incomprehensible to material minds.

In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.23.55) Śrī Devahūti remarks:

saṅgo yaḥ saṁsrter hetur
asatsu vihito 'dhiyā
sa eva sādhuṣu kṛto
niḥsaṅgatvāya kalpate

Association with materialists (asatsu saṅgah) done in
ignorance (yaḥ adhiyā vihitaḥ) is a cause of bondage
(saṁsrter hetur) and association with devotees done in
ignorance (sa eva sādhuṣu kṛto) leads to liberation
(niḥsaṅgatvāya kalpate).

When an ignorant person mixes with other degraded persons,
the result is entanglement in material existence, in the
enjoyment of food, drink, sex, and so on.

But the company of pure souls, even if entered into with the
same ignorance, enables one to become niḥsaṅga, free in two
ways: detached from matter and uplifted to pure love of God.

Prema is a form of detachment because it shuns all pursuits other than the attempt to please the Personality of Godhead.

Therefore, as stated in the Yoga-vāsiṣṭha-rāmāyaṇa:

sadā santo 'bhigantavyā yady apy upadiśanti na
yā hi svaira-kathās teṣām upadeśā bhavanti te

śūnyam āpūrṇatām eti mṛtir apy amṛtāyate
āpat sampad ivābhāti vidvaj-jana-samāgamāt

“In all circumstances (sadā), one should approach (abhigantavyā) saintly persons (santah). Even if (yady apy) one receives no teachings (na upadiśanti), spontaneous dialogue (yā hi svaira-kathāh) with them (teṣām) imparts valuable lessons (upadeśā bhavanti te). When one approaches persons who have real knowledge (vidvaj-jana-samāgamāt), emptiness (śūnyam) overflows with fullness (āpūrṇatām eti), death (mṛtir apy) becomes immortal nectar, (amṛtāyate) and disasters (āpat) can seem like good fortune (sampad iva ābhāti).”

In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.7.19) Śrī Vidura says:

yat-sevayā bhagavataḥ
kūṭa-sthasya madhu-dviṣaḥ
rati-rāso bhavet tīvraḥ
pādayor vyasanārdanaḥ

By service to the devotees (yat-sevayā), intense rasa of bhāva-
bhakti (tīvraḥ rati-rāsaḥ) to the Lord (bhagavataḥ) who is
fixed in one form (kūṭa-sthasya) and destroys obstacles for
the devotee (madhu-dviṣaḥ) appears (bhavet), and
~~destruction of material suffering then takes place~~ (pādayor
vyasana ardanaḥ).

Vidura here speaks to his śikṣā-guru, Maitreya Muni.

By serving Maitreya, Vidura expects to obtain the service of the Supreme Lord, who is difficult to understand but whom one can approach by serving His pure devotees.

The Supreme Person is kūṭa-stha, which means both “unchanging” and “inconceivable.”

He is also kūta-stha in the sense that He is famous for being offered anna-kūta, a mountain of food, while standing on a special peak—that of Govardhana.

At the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, the enemy of the demon Madhu, a sincere servant of the Vaiṣṇavas can obtain rati-rāsa, a never-ending festival of prema, from which comes an enjoyment so intense (tīvra) that nothing can impede or interrupt it.

Material existence is full of various miseries, but devotional service at Lord Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet (pādayoḥ) eradicates them all (vyasanārdanaḥ).

Or if we take pādayoḥ to modify vyasanārdanaḥ, the meaning of the two words together is “that which destroys the pain felt by the feet.”

Kṛṣṇa's rāsa-līlā is mostly a festival of dancing, and dancing
means moving the feet.

By entering the rāsa dance one's feet will be relieved of the
distress they feel from doing other things.

As Śrī Kapiladeva tells His mother:

satām prasaṅgān mama vīrya-saṁvido
bhavanti hṛt-karṇa-rasāyanāḥ kathāḥ
tad-joṣaṇād āśv apavarga-vartmani
śraddhā ratir bhaktir anukramisyati

From association with the best devotees (satām prasaṅgān), topics of my glorious pastimes become directly realized (mama vīrya-saṁvido), bringing the devotee to niṣṭhā (implied). Then the topics become an elixir for the heart and ears at the stage of ruci (kathāḥ hṛt-karṇa-rasāyanāḥ bhavanti). By taste (tad-joṣaṇād) for these topics, *āsakti*, *bhāva* and then *prema* for the Lord (śraddhā ratih bhaktih) who is the destroyer of material life (apavarga-vartmani), quickly develop in sequence (āśu anukramisyati). (Bhāgavatam 3.25.25)

Here Lord Kapiladeva mentions three symptoms of the gradual development of prema: firm conviction (śraddhā), love for the Lord (rati), and unswerving dedication to His service (bhakti).

In the course of devotional advancement, each of these symptoms becomes manifest naturally, without separate endeavor.

Lord Kapiladeva does not intend to say that the sequence of development is literally śraddhā, then rati, and then bhakti.

Rather, we should understand that first a new devotee acquires faith (śraddhā), then takes up the process of bhakti by hearing, chanting, and serving, and later achieves rati.

Because bhakti means both the practice of devotional service and the mature stage of spontaneous love, to say that rati (prema) is the fruit of bhakti is correct.

With this same concept of bhakti in mind, Śrī Dhruva prays to Lord Viṣṇu:

bhaktim muhuḥ pravahatām tvayi me prasaṅgo
bhūyād ananta mahatām amalāśayānām
yenāñjasolbanam uru-vyasanam bhavābdhim
neṣye bhavad-guṇa-kathāmṛta-pāna-mattaḥ

O unlimited Lord (ananta)! May I always have the association (bhūyād me prasaṅgaḥ) of great devotees (mahatām) with pure hearts (amala āśayānām) who constantly perform bhakti to you (bhaktim muhuḥ pravahatām tvayi)! By this association (yena), intoxicated from drinking the nectar of your pastimes and qualities (bhavad-guṇa-kathāmṛta-pāna-mattaḥ), I shall easily combat (añjasā neṣye) the ocean of material existence (bhavābdhim) full of terrible suffering (ulbanam uru-vyasanam). (Bhāgavatam 4.9.11)

Because the devotees of Viṣṇu serve Him constantly (bhaktim muhuḥ pravahatām), their hearts are completely pure (amalāśayānām), and for that reason they are exalted souls (mahatām).

bhaktim muhuḥ pravahatām → amalāśayānām → mahatām

The association of such Vaiṣṇavas is extremely desirable.

One who achieves it need not bother aspiring for the fourth goal of life, liberation, for liberation comes automatically as a byproduct of pure devotion.

Dhruva anticipates that in the company of Vaisnavas he will drink the nectar of topics about the Supreme Lord, which will intoxicate him and empower him to cross effortlessly the dangerous ocean of saṁsāra.

Drunkards are mainly interested in the taste of their liquor; they have only a superficial interest in the secondary effects of alcohol, such as its ability to ease the discomfort of cold weather.

In the same way, devotees who have a taste for drinking the nectar of bhagavad-bhakti consider relishing that elixir forever their principal goal.

They accept liberation and other secondary benefits only when such boons do not obstruct that eternal delight.

In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (4.24.57–58) Lord Śiva gives this opinion:

kṣanārdhenāpi tulaye
na svargaṁ nāpunar-bhavam
bhagavat-saṅgi-saṅgasya
martyānāṁ kim utāśiṣaḥ

athānaghānghres tava kīrti-tīrthayor
antar-bahiḥ-snāna-vidhūta-pāpmanām
bhūteṣv anukrośa-susattva-śīlinām
syāt saṅgamo 'nugraha eṣa nas tava

What to speak of any blessings on this earth (martyānāṁ kim uta āśiṣaḥ), or on Svarga, even the blessing of liberation (svargaṁ apunar-bhavam) cannot compare (na tulaye) with even half a moment's association with the devotee of the Lord (kṣaṇa ardhena api bhagavat-saṅgi-saṅgasya). From this (atha), we will attain association (saṅgamaḥ syāt) with persons who have been purified externally and internally (antar-bahiḥ-snāna-vidhūta-pāpmanām) by the famous Gaṅgā (kīrti-tīrthayoh) arising from your lotus foot which destroys sin (tava anagha aṅghreh), and with person who have proper conduct, pure hearts (susattva-śīlinām) and show mercy to all beings (bhūteṣu anukrośa). This is your mercy to us (eṣa nah tava anugraha).

Rather than liberation, what to speak of royal power and the other kinds of success that ordinary people value, Lord Śiva would prefer even a moment's association with those who keep company with the Personality of Godhead.

In other words, the company of the Supreme Lord's devotees dances on the heads of all other goals of life.

The lotus feet of the Supreme Lord, who killed the demon Agha, remove all sin.

The Lord's fame is the source of all holy tīrthas, including the river Gaṅgā and also the river Yamunā, whose bathing ghāṭas the gopīs approach to fetch water.

Lord Śiva takes two purifying baths—one externally in the Gaṅgā and the other internally in the Yamunā.

discussing K-karte
Similarly, a bath in the Supreme Lord's fame purifies His devotees in two ways, externally by absolving them from hellish punishment and internally by cleansing their hearts of desires for material enjoyment.

Persons dedicated to the fame of the Supreme Lord, and to His lotus feet, are merciful to all creatures.

Such devotees always live purely, devoid of lust and other contaminations of the heart, and they have simplicity and all other exemplary qualities.

Lord Śiva prays that Lord Viṣṇu's greatest mercy on him would be simply to let him come in touch with the Supreme Lord's devotees.