

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

In the Fifth Canto (5.12.12–13) Śrī Jaḍa Bharata speaks likewise:

rahūgaṇaitat tapasā na yāti
na cejyayā nirvapaṇād grhād vā
na cchandasā naiva jalāgni-sūryair
vinā mahat-pāda-rajo-'bhiṣekam

Without bathing in the dust from the feet of great devotees (vinā mahat-pāda-rajo-abhiṣekam), one cannot realize the Lord (na etad yāti) through concentration of the mind (tapasā), performance of sacrifices (ijyayā), distributing food (nirvapaṇād), building shelters for the destitute (grhād vā), studying the Vedas (cchandasā), or performing austerities in the water, fire or the sun (jala-agni-sūryair).

yatrottamaḥ-śloka-guṇānuvādaḥ
prastūyate grāmya-kathā-vighātaḥ
niṣevyamāṇo 'nu-dinaṁ mumukṣor
matim satim yacchati vāsudeve

Where there are great devotees (yatra), talks concerning the qualities of the Lord (uttamaśloka-guṇa anuvādaḥ), which destroy material topics (grāmya-kathā-vighātaḥ), are sung (prastūyate). Heard constantly (niṣevyamāṇo anudinaṁ) even by those desiring liberation (mumukṣor), those topics produce (yacchati) pure thoughts of Vāsudeva (vāsudeve satim matim).

In the verse just before the two quoted here, Jada Bharata identified the Absolute Truth as Bhagavān, the Personality of Godhead, and as Vāsudeva, the darling son of Vasudeva.

Now he tells King Rahūgana that this Supreme Person is impossible to achieve by any of the usual methods of spiritual advancement unless, along with those methods, one bathes in dust from the feet of pure Vaiṣṇavas.

It is not enough to follow the prescribed duties of one's varṇa and āśrama, concentrate one's mind in one-pointed tapas, execute Vedic sacrifices, distribute food and other charity, work piously as a householder, study the Vedas, or worship water, fire, the other elements of nature, and their presiding deities—Varuṇa, Agni, and so on.

These efforts may help one achieve the favor of Lord Vāsudeva only when the sādḥaka has also pleased the Lord's devotees.

And by satisfying the devotees one can win the mercy of the Supreme Lord even if one has not performed any of these purifying acts.

Lord Kṛṣṇa is known as Uttama-śloka, He whose spotless fame drives away all ignorance.

When one has bathed in the dust of the feet of His devotees, one can enter the company of those devotees and hear from them about Kṛṣṇa's transcendental qualities, beginning with His incessant kindness toward His devotees.

Hearing day after day this pure kṛṣṇa-kathā raises a
materialist to the level of an aspirant for liberation, and such
an aspirant to the level of sincere interest in devotional
service to Kṛṣṇa.

In the same narration, Rahūgaṇa replies to Jaḍa Bharata:

aho nr-janmākhila-janma-śobhanam
kiṁ janmabhis tv aparair apy amuṣmin
na yad dhṛṣikeśa-yaśaḥ-kṛtātmanām
mahātmanām vaḥ pracuraḥ samāgamah

Human birth is the most splendid (aho nr-janmākhila-janma-śobhanam). What use is any other birth (kiṁ janmabhis tv aparair apy amuṣmin) in which there is no abundant, intimate association of great devotees (na mahātmanām vaḥ pracuraḥ samāgamah) whose whole being (yad ātmanām) is composed of glorification of the Lord (dhṛṣikeśa-yaśaḥ-kṛta)? (Bhāgavatam 5.13.21)

Human life is the most congenial situation for becoming attracted to bhagavad-bhakti.



Demigod life may be desirable to foolish people, but great saints like Jaḍa Bharata rarely even visit the heavenly planets.

The demigods, being too much absorbed in sense gratification, generally do not deserve the company of such pure Vaiṣṇavas.

Rather than travel to heaven, saintly Vaiṣṇavas who keep their hearts cleansed by contemplating the glories of Lord Hṛṣīkeśa usually prefer to wander among the holy places on earth.

In the opinion of Śrī Prahlāda Mahārāja:

naiṣām matis tāvad urukramāṅghrim
spr̥śaty anarthāpagamo yad-arthah
mahīyasām pāda-rajo-'bhiṣekam
niṣkiñcanānām na vṛṇīta yāvat

As long as their intelligence (yāvat matic) does not accept (na vṛṇīta) the dust from the feet (pāda-rajo-abhiṣekam) of devotees (mahīyasām) having no material desires (niṣkiñcanānām), the intelligence of these people (eṣām matic) will not realize the lotus feet of the Lord (spr̥śaty tāvad urukrama aṅghrim), whose secondary goal (yad-arthah) is destruction of saṁsāra (anartha apagamah).
(Bhāgavatam 7.5.32)

Just before Prahlāda made this statement, he expressed concern for the ignorant materialists of this world, who are unable to recognize that the best goal for their own self-interest is Lord Viṣṇu.

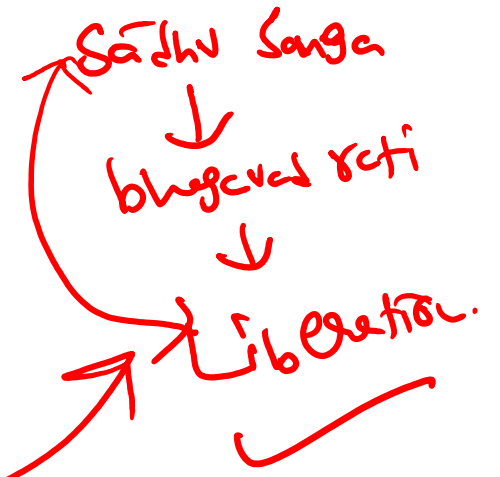
Until they bathe in the foot-dust of pure Vaiṣṇavas who reject all forms of selfish enjoyment and care about nothing but bhagavad-bhakti, the minds of such gross materialists can never shift toward devotional service to the Lord.

Without the mercy of great devotees, foolish materialists
cannot ascertain spiritual truth even theoretically, what to
speak of reap its tangible fruits.

In the words of King Mucukunda:



bhavāpavargo bhramato yadā bhavaj
janasya tarhy acyuta sat-samāgamah
sat-saṅgamo yarhi tadaiva sad-gatau
parāvareṣe tvayi jāyate ratiḥ



“When the material life (yadā bhavah) of a wandering soul (bhramatah janasya) has come to an end (apavargo bhavet), O Acyuta (acyuta), he may attain the association of Your devotees (tarhy sat-samāgamah). And when he associates with them (sat-saṅgamo yarhi), there awakens within him (tadaiva jāyate) devotion (ratiḥ) unto You (tvayi), who are the goal of the devotees (sad-gatau) and the Lord of all causes and effects (para avara iṣe).” (Bhāgavatam 10.51.53)

Conditioned souls wander aimlessly in the cycle of birth and death, and only after they have become fed up with this wandering are they allowed to come in touch with pure Vaiṣṇavas.



Then, by the company of saintly Vaiṣṇavas, a few of those fortunate souls are not only released from the cycle of birth and death (saṁsāra) but also given something much more precious—pure love for the supreme controller of all causes and effects.

→ bhagavad mādhurye ratiḥ
→ bhagavad aiśvorye ratiḥ

And if they are not fortunate enough to achieve intimate love for the Supreme Lord, at least they learn how to reverentially serve Him, the ruler of all great demigods and ordinary creatures.

These opinions are confirmed by Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself in the Eleventh Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.26.31–34):