

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

→ 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):

yathopaśrayamānasya
bhagavantam vibhāvasum
śītam bhayam tamo 'pyeti
sādhūn samsevatas tathā

Just as (yathā) cold, fear and darkness (śītam bhayam tamah) are eradicated (apyeti) for one who has approached (upaśrayamānasya) a fire (bhagavantam) (vibhāvasum), so (tathā) apathy, fear and ignorance (śītam bhayam tamah) are destroyed (apyeti) for one engaged in serving (samsevatah) the devotees of the Lord (sādhūn).

nimajjyonmajjatām ghore
bhavābdhau paramāyaṇam
santo brahma-vidah śāntā
naur dr̥dhevāpsu majjatām

The devotees of the Lord (santah), peacefully fixed in absolute knowledge (brahma-vidah śāntā), are the ultimate shelter (paramāyaṇam) for those who are repeatedly rising and falling (nimajjya unmajjatām) within the fearful (ghore) ocean of material life (bhavābdhau). Such devotees are just like a strong boat (dr̥dhā nauh iva) for drowning persons (apsu majjatam).

annam hi prāṇinām prāṇa
ārtānām śaraṇam tv aham
dharmo vittam nr̥ṇām pretya
santo 'rvāg bibhyato 'raṇam

Just as food (annam hi) is the life of all creatures (prāṇinām prāṇa),
devotees (santah) are the bhakti for those desiring bhakti (implied).
Just as I am (aham) the ultimate shelter (śaraṇam) for the distressed
(ārtānām), devotees (santah) are the shelter of those desiring bhakti
(implied). Just as religion (dharmah) is the shelter (vittam) for those
desiring help after dying (pretya nr̥ṇām), so my devotees (santah)
are the only refuge (araṇam) for persons fearful of falling into
saṃsāra (arvāg bibhyatah) after having attained bhakti (implied).

santo diśanti caksūmsi
bahir arkaḥ samutthitaḥ
devatā bāndhavāḥ santah
santa ātmāham eva ca

My devotees (santah) bestow (diśanti) eyes to others (caksūmsi) so they can see me and ~~are~~ also give illumination to the eye (implied), like the sun (arkaḥ) when it has risen in the sky (bahir samutthitaḥ). My devotees (santah) are the deities (devatā), the real friends (bāndhavāḥ), and the object of love (ātmā). They are nondifferent from me (aham eva ca).

Just as by approaching fire one can get relief from darkness
and fear of snakes and wild animals, by approaching pure
Vaisnavas one can be freed from the darkness of materialistic
life, from fear of what will happen in the future, and from
forgetfulness of blissful service to the Lord, a forgetfulness
that underlies all material ignorance and fear.

The prefix upa- in the verse beginning yathopaśrayamāṇasya
(that is, yathā upa-śrayamāṇasya) indicates the idea of
approaching from a distance.

- ⑤ By not mistaking & mistaking them.
- ⑥ Praying for them.

- ① Following their words
- ② Hear their words
- ③ Feeling grateful
- ④ Inspiring others to gain the same benefit.

This implies that one can gain the blessings of Vaiṣṇavas by
serving them even in separation.

- ⑦ Serving their will.

Saintly Vaiṣṇavas who understand the Absolute Truth as He
appears in Vraja-dhāma can deliver persons entrapped in the
cycle of higher and lower births.

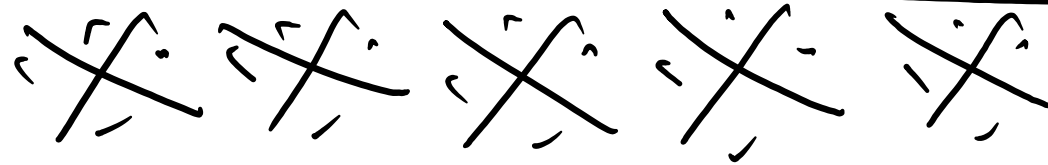
The Vaiṣṇavas are qualified to give such a priceless gift because they have realized the glories of Kṛṣṇa's devotional service, which is the confidential essence of the Vedic teachings.

→ Illustrations & explanations of the śiddhānta.

Such devotees, peaceful and unagitated even by the prospect of being liberated, bestow upon fortunate souls various types of spiritual vision—realization of the impersonal and personal features of the Absolute Truth and discernment of the many different modes of bhagavad-bhakti.

The external sun, in contrast, gives light, but only in a limited way.

Rather than attempt to enumerate all the glories of Vaisṇavas—an impossible task—we should know that a single saintly devotee equals all the demigods combined.



Pure devotees are our real friends and our own dear soul, the source of our life.

In fact, in Kṛṣṇa's opinion the Vaiṣṇavas are nondifferent from Himself.

Earlier in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.11.49) Kṛṣṇa said to Uddhava, "Now I will tell you something especially confidential because you are My servant, well-wisher, and companion."

Kṛṣṇa then said:

na rodhayati mām yogo
na sāṅkhyam dharmā eva ca
na svādhyāyas tapas tyāgo
neṣṭā-pūrtam na dakṣiṇā

vratāni yajñas chandāmsi
tīrthāni niyamā yamāḥ
yathāvarundhe sat-saṅgaḥ
sarva-saṅgāpaho hi mām

O Uddhava! Only by associating with my pure devotees (sat-saṅgaḥ) one can destroy material attachment (sarva-saṅgāpaho) and attain me (yathā mām avarundhe). One cannot attain me (na mām rodhayati) by aṣṭāṅga-yoga (yogo), distinction of ātmā from body (na sāṅkhyam), practice of nonviolence (dharmā eva ca), study of the Vedas (na svādhyāyah), austerity, sannyasa (tapas tyāgo), sacrifices, charitable projects, donations (neṣṭā-pūrtam na dakṣiṇā), vows, worship of devatās, secret mantras (vratāni yajñas chandāmsi), holy places, or observing prohibitions and rules (tīrthāni niyamā yamāḥ).

The first and second steps of Patañjali Rṣi's aṣṭāṅga-yoga
method are the twelve niyamas (“minor regulations”) and
twelve yamas (“major regulations”).

Śrī Kṛṣṇa lists these for Uddhava: