

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

ahimsā satyam asteyam
asaṅgo hrīr asaṅcayah
āstikyaṁ brahmacaryaṁ ca
maunaṁ sthairyam kṣamābhayam

śaucaṁ japas tapo homaḥ
śraddhātithyaṁ mad-arcanam
tīrthāṭanam parārthehā
tuṣṭir ācārya-sevanam

ete yamāḥ sa-niyamā
ubhayor dvādaśa smṛtāḥ
pumsām upāsītās tāta
yathā-kāmaṁ duhanti hi

Nonviolence, truthfulness, not stealing the property of others (**ahimsā satyam asteyam**), detachment, humility, freedom from possessiveness (**asaṅgah hrīr asañcayah**), acceptance of scripture, celibacy (**āstikyaṁ brahmacaryaṁ ca**), silence, steadiness, forgiveness and fearlessness (**maunaṁ sthairyam kṣamā abhayaṁ**) are the twelve yamas (**yamāḥ**). Internal cleanliness, external cleanliness, chanting the holy names of the Lord, austerity, sacrifice (**śaucaṁ japas tapo homaḥ**), faith, hospitality, worship of me (**śraddhā ātithyaṁ mad-arcanam**), visiting holy places, acting and desiring only for the supreme interest (**tīrtha aṭanam para artha ihā**), satisfaction, and service to guru (**tuṣṭir ācārya-sevanam**) are the twelve niyamas (**sa-niyamā**). These twenty-four elements (**ete ubhayaor dvādaśa smṛtāḥ**) bestow all desired benedictions (**yathā-kāmaṁ duhanti hi**) upon those persons who devotedly cultivate them (**upāsītāḥ puṁsām**). (Bhāgavatam 11.19.33–35)

~~The company of exalted Vaisnavas counteracts not only material attachment but also attachment to the Supreme Lord's pastimes in Vaikunṭha and abodes other than Goloka.~~

~~What to speak of the power of direct contact with Vaisnavas, even hearing descriptions of their greatness leads to the highest success, as Śrī Vidura states in the Third Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.13.4):~~

śrutasya puṁsām sucira-śramasya
nanv añjasā sūribhir īḍito 'rthah
tat-tad-guṇānuśravaṇam mukunda-
pādāravindam hrdayeṣu yeṣām

The goal (arthah) of a person (puṁsām) engaged in hearing scripture from the guru for a long time (śrutasya sucira-śramasya), elaborately praised by the great devotees (añjasā sūribhir īḍitah), is hearing the glories of those (tat-tad-guṇānuśravaṇam) in whose hearts Mukunda resides (yeṣām hrdayeṣu mukunda-pādāravindam).

In the Fourth Canto (4.9.10) Dhruva Mahārāja makes a similar statement:

yā nirvṛtis tanu-bhrtām tava pāda-padma-
dhyānād bhavaj-jana-kathā-śravanena vā syāt
sā brahmaṇi sva-mahimany api nātha mā bhūt
kiṃ tv antakāsi-lulitāt patatām vimānāt

The bliss for your servant (yā nirvṛtis tanu-bhrtām) that is available from meditating on your lotus feet (tava pāda-padma-dhyānād) or from hearing about your pastimes from the devotees (bhavaj-jana-kathā-śravanena vā syāt) is not available (sā api mā bhūt) in your form of greatness (sva-mahimani) known as Brahman (brahmaṇi), what to speak of (kiṃ tv) the happiness for those who fall from the pleasures of Svarga (antakāsi-lulitāt patatām vimānāt).

And not only is complete success in life guaranteed by any
contact with the Supreme Lord's devotees, but even the
company of the devotee of His devotees is enough to assure
perfection.

Thus Dhruva Mahārāja says:

te na smaranty atitarām priyam īśa martyam
ye cānv adah suta-suhṛd-gr̥ha-vitta-dārāh
ye tv abja-nābha bhavadiya-padāravinda-
saugandhya-lubdha-hṛdayeṣu kṛta-prasaṅgāh

O Lord with lotus navel (abja-nābha īśa)! Those who have taken
association (ye kṛta-prasaṅgāh) with those whose hearts (ye
hṛdayeṣu) have smelled the fragrance of your lotus feet (bhavadiya-
padāravinda-saugandhya-lubdha) do not care (te na smaranty) for
this very dear material body (atitarām priyam martyam) or the
things accompanying it (ye ca anu), such as sons, friends, house,
wealth and wife (adah suta-suhṛd-gr̥ha-vitta-dārāh).

(Bhāgavatam 4.9.12)

Unlike anyone else, including the impersonalist yogī, the advanced devotees who have pure love for the Supreme Lord's lotus feet are completely free from the falsity of identifying themselves with the body.

In the words of Lord Viṣṇu's Haṁsa incarnation (Bhāgavatam 11.13.36):

deham ca naśvaram avasthitam utthitam vā
siddho na paśyati yato 'dhyagamat svarūpam
daivād apetam atha daiva-vaśād upetaṁ
vāso yathā parihitam madirā-madāndhaḥ

The perfected sage (**siddhah**) is not aware (**na paśyati**) whether
he is seated or standing (**utthitam vā**) while situated
(**avasthitam**) in the temporary body (**deham ca naśvaram**), since
he has realized Brahman (**yato adhyagamat svarūpam**). He is like
a drunken man (**yathā madirā-madāndhaḥ**) who is not aware of
(**na paśyati**) receiving (**daivād apetam**), putting on (**atha daiva-**
vaśād upetaṁ) or taking off (**yathā parihitam**) his clothing
(**vāsaḥ**).

Lord Rṣabhadeva describes the characteristics of great devotees:

mahāntas te sama-cittāḥ praśāntā
vimanyavaḥ suhrdaḥ sādhave ye

“The impersonalist (te mahāntaḥ) sees no differences (sama-cittāḥ) and is peaceful (praśāntā) whereas the devotee (te mahāntaḥ) has a sincere heart (sama-cittāḥ) and his intelligence is fixed in me (praśāntā). Both types of saintly persons (ye) are devoid of anger (vimanyavaḥ), are friendly to all (suhrdaḥ) and do not see faults in other (sādhavaḥ).

ye vā mayīse kṛta-sauhrdārthā
janeṣu deham-bhara-vārtikeṣu
grheṣu jāyātmaja-rātimatsu
na prīti-yuktā yāvad-arthāś ca loke

The devotees (ye) have made their goal of life affection for me (mayā kṛta-sauhrda arthā), the Lord (īse), and do not show affection (na prīti-yuktā) for persons (janeṣu) who enjoy talks about people attached to eating and drinking (dehambhara-vārtikeṣu) and who have houses, wives, sons and wealth (grheṣu jāyā ātmaja-rātimatsu). They remain in their houses simply to spend their money on glorifying the Lord (yāvad-arthāś ca loke).

(Bhāgavatam 5.5.2–3)

Because mahātmās are free from the material agitations of love and hate, they maintain an equal disposition toward friends, enemies, and neutral parties.

In other words, the great souls are peaceful.

Saintly behavior → benefactors of everyone → freedom from anger
↓
peace.

This peacefulness is due to their being free from anger, this freedom is due to their being causeless benefactors of everyone, and this benefaction is due to their being firmly committed to saintly behavior.

Their aim in life is to become trustworthy friends of the Personality of Godhead.

Concentrating exclusively on that goal, they take no pleasure in being with persons who, instead of pursuing the higher interests of spiritual life, are interested only in maintaining their bodies.

The mahātmās, rather, expend as little energy as possible working to sustain their material bodies.

Lord Kṛṣṇa gives His own appraisal of the mahātmā Vaiṣṇavas to Uddhava in the Eleventh Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.14.17):

niṣkiñcanā mayy anurakta-cetasah
śāntā mahānto 'khila-jīva-vatsalāḥ
kāmair anālabdha-dhiyo juṣanti te
yan nairapekṣyam na viduḥ sukhaṁ mama

Those who are without any desire for personal gratification (niṣkiñcanā), whose minds are always attached to me (mayy anurakta-cetasah), whose intelligence is fixed in me (śāntā), who are great in the estimation of the public (mahāntah) because of affection for all beings (akhila-jīva-vatsalāḥ), and whose consciousness is never affected (anālabdha-dhiyah) by opportunities for sense gratification (kāmair)—such persons enjoy in me (juṣanti te mama) a happiness (sukhaṁ) available only for those without desire for liberation or material happiness (yan nairapekṣyam). Others cannot know this happiness (na viduḥ).

Devotees whose hearts are fully dedicated to the Supreme Person are the only real mahātmās.

There are certain external symptoms by which such great souls can be known: they avoid acquisitiveness, they are beyond attraction and repulsion, they are affectionately concerned for all living beings, and they are pure in heart, untouched by the spirit of selfish enjoyment.

Their internal characteristic is the happiness they taste from a relationship with the Personality of Godhead, a happiness no one but the pure Vaiṣṇavas can know.

The Lord's own happiness is also nothing like the brahmānanda of self-satisfied impersonalists.

Because Kṛṣṇa is the servant of His own servants, He is always eager to share with His devotees the ecstatic tastes of bhakti-rasa: