

Śrī Brhad-bhāgavatāmṛta

by Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī

Volume - 2

Śrī-goloka-māhātmya

The Glories of Goloka

Part 7

Jagad-ānanda

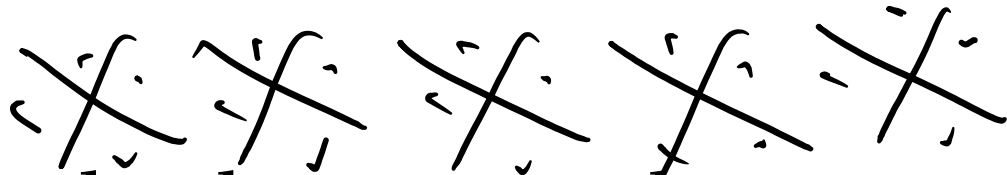
The Bliss of the Worlds

aham bhakta-parādhīno
hy asvatantra iva dvija
sādhubhir grasta-hṛdayo
bhaktair bhakta-jana-priyaḥ

“O brāhmaṇa (dvija)! I am completely under the control of my devotees (aham bhakta-parādhīno). I am not at all independent (hy asvatantra). My heart is controlled by the pure devotees (sādhubhir grasta-hṛdayo). What to speak of my devotee (bhaktair), even those who are devotees of my devotee are very dear to me (bhakta-jana-priyaḥ).”
(Bhāgavatam 9.4.63)

A devotee with strong faith engages sincerely in worshiping the Lord.

And when, by that worship, he develops transcendental attraction, he becomes a true mahātmā.



Thus faith that leads to attachment is the principal inner symptom of an advanced Vaiṣṇava.

Śrī Havis, one of the nine Yogendras, has described this most essential characteristic of pure devotees:

visṛjati hr̥dayam na yasya sākṣād
dharir avaśābhihito 'py aghaughā-nāśah
praṇaya-raśanayā dhṛtāṅghri-padmaḥ
sa bhavati bhāgavata-pradhāna uktaḥ

He who binds the lotus feet of the Lord (dhṛta aṅghri-padmaḥ) by ropes of love (praṇaya-raśanayā), and whose heart (yasya hr̥dayam) the Lord, destroyer of heaps of sin (harīh agha ogha-nāśah), does not leave (na visṛjati), even if beckoned accidentally (avaśā abhihito apy), is called the best of devotees (sah bhavati bhāgavata-pradhāna uktaḥ). (Bhāgavatam 11.2.55)

The most elevated Vaiṣṇavas worship Lord Hari in His original form of Kṛṣṇa, **kr̥ṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam**. (Bhāgavatam 1.3.28)

The holy names of Kṛṣṇa, being nondifferent from Him (sākṣād dhariḥ), are so potent that even when uttered unintentionally they destroy heaps of sins.

Kṛṣṇa, in His inconceivably wonderful Vṛndāvana pastimes, nullifies the threat of many demons, such as Aghāśura, by killing them and awarding them liberation.

In Vrndāvana, Kṛṣṇa's loving devotees have bound Him
within their hearts so that He can never escape.

The statement above describes these most intimate devotees
by using the word bhāgavata-pradhānaḥ, a word
grammatically singular in form, because they are relatively
few in number.

evam sal-lakṣaṇā loke
durlabhā mānavāḥ kalau
na hi simha-samūhā vai
drśyante yatra kutracit

“During Kali-yuga (kalau), human beings (mānavāḥ) with such saintly qualities (evam sal-lakṣaṇā) are rarely found (durlabhā) in this world (loke). Certainly we never see (na hi kutracit drśyante) many lions together (simha-samūhā) in one place (yatra).”

Or as the goddess Earth says in Śrī Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya
(13.2), su-durlabhā bhāgavatā hi loke: “Pure devotees are
very rare in this world.”

And in the words of Mahārāja Nimi:

durlabho mānuṣo deho
dehinām kṣaṇa-bhaṅguraḥ
tatrāpi durlabham manye
vaikuṅṭha-priya-darśanam

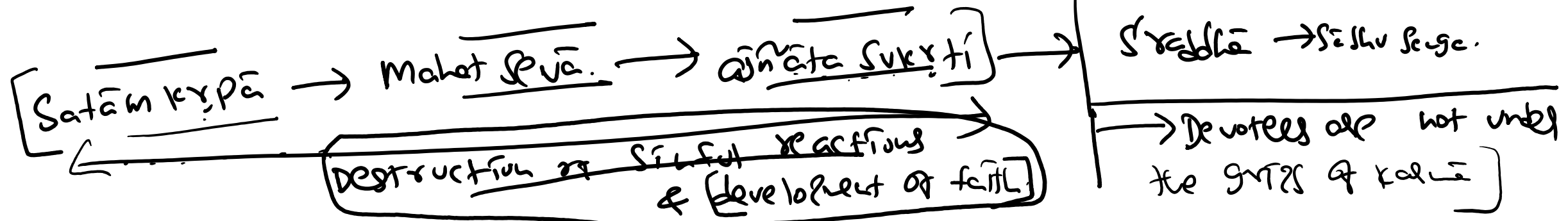
For the conditioned souls (dehinām), the human body (mānuṣo dehah) which can be lost at any moment (ksana-bhaṅguraḥ) is a rare opportunity for gaining liberation (durlabhah). But I think that even rarer than liberation (tatrāpi durlabham manye) is the association of devotees who are dear to the Lord (vaikuṅṭha-priya-darśanam).
(Bhāgavatam 11.2.29)

Freedom from Sin is a pre requisite for Bhakti

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Pure Vaisnavas are rarely found in the material world because devotion for Śrī Kṛṣṇa arises only in a person who has been relieved of all traces of sinful reactions and has properly carried out all pious duties.

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yeṣām tv anta-gataṁ pāpaṁ
janānām puṇya-karmaṇām
te dvandva-moha-nirmuktā
bhajante mām dṛḍha-vratāḥ

But those whose sins have been destroyed (yeṣām janānām tv anta-gataṁ pāpaṁ) by pious acts (puṇya-karmaṇām), being free of the ignorance arising from duality by worshipping Me (te dvandva-moha-nirmuktā), then worship Me with determination (bhajante mām dṛḍha-vratāḥ).

(Bhagavad-gītā 7.28)

dāna-vrata-tapo-homa-
japa-svādhyāya-saṁyamaiḥ
śreyobhir vividhaiś cānyaiḥ
kṛṣṇe bhaktir hi sādhyate

“To attain (sādhyate) devotional service unto Lord Kṛṣṇa (kṛṣṇe bhaktir) one must perform charity, follow strict vows, perform austerities and fire sacrifices (dāna-vrata-tapo-homa), chant japa, study Vedic texts, observe regulative principles (japa-svādhyāya-saṁyamaiḥ), and follow many other auspicious practices (śreyobhir vividhaiś ca anyaiḥ).”
(Bhāgavatam 10.47.24)

janmāntara-sahasreṣu
tapo-jñāna-samādhibhiḥ
narāṇām kṣīṇa-pāpānām
kṛṣṇe bhaktiḥ prajāyate

“Human beings whose sins have been completely eradicated—by thousands of lifetimes cultivating austerities, knowledge, and meditative trance—can develop devotion for Kṛṣṇa.” (Yoga-vāsiṣṭha-rāmāyaṇa)

From these statements we can infer that a person with no devotion for the Supreme Lord must be sinful.

Nor can the knowledge gained by seekers of impersonal liberation be called bhakti, because even texts like the Yoga-vāsiṣṭha, which are tinged with impersonalism, indicate that tapas, jñāna, and samādhi are means toward the end of bhagavad-bhakti.

As Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī writes at the end of his commentary on the Bhagavad-gītā, **jñānasya bhakty-avāntara-vyāpāratvam eva**: “Jñāna is but a secondary activity, subordinate to bhakti.”

And in the Bhagavad-gītā itself (10.10, 18.54–55) Kṛṣṇa clearly describes knowledge (buddhi-yoga) as but a means to achieve the ultimate goal, pure devotion to Him:

teṣām satata-yuktānām
bhajatām prīti-pūrvakam
dadāmi buddhi-yogaṁ taṁ
yena mām upayānti te

I give the intelligence (**dadāmi buddhi-yogaṁ**) to those who
constantly desire to be with Me (**teṣām satata-yuktānām**) and
worship Me with great love (**bhajatām prīti-pūrvakam**), by
which they attain My direct association (**yena mām upayānti**
te).

brahma-bhūtaḥ prasannātmā
na śocati na kāṅkṣati
samaḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu
mad-bhaktim labhate parām

Having attained realization of ātmā (**brahma-bhūtaḥ**), being a pure soul (**prasannātmā**), he does not lament for or desire anything except Me (**na śocati na kāṅkṣati**), and looks upon all beings as equal (**samaḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu**). He then realizes Me (**mad-bhaktim labhate parām**).

bhaktyā mām abhijānāti
yāvān yaś cāsmi tattvataḥ
tato mām tattvato jñātvā
viśate tad-anantaram

Only by bhakti can a person know Me as Brahman (bhaktyā mām abhijānāti yāvān yaś cāsmi tattvataḥ). Then, knowing Me as Brahman by that bhakti (tato mām tattvato jñātvā), he merges with Me (viśate tad-anantaram).

Thus Kṛṣṇa always makes a distinction between jñāna and bhakti, and so do His faithful devotees.

This means, of course, that the impersonal worshipers of the Absolute are not as spiritually advanced as the devotees of the Supreme Person.

In the Fourth Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (4.22.39) Sanat-kumāra tells Mahārāja Pṛthu:

yat-pāda-paṅkaja-palāśa-vilāsa-bhaktyā
karmāśayaṃ grathitam udgrathayanti santah
tadvan na rikta-matayo yatayo 'pi ruddha-
sroto-gaṇās tam aranam bhaja vāsudevam

Worship Vāsudeva (tam vāsudevam bhaja), the shelter (aranam). By devotion to his lotus toes (yat-pāda-paṅkaja-palāśa-bhaktyā) possessing ever-increasing beauty (vilāsa), the devotees (santah) untie (udgrathayanti) the knot of false ego filled with impressions of karma (karma āśayaṃ grathitam), which the foolish sannyāsīs (tadvat rikta-matayo yatayah) who try to stop the senses flowing like a river (sroto-gaṇāh) cannot untie (na ruddha).

The unlimited ways the Supreme Lord employs His energies are all His vilāsa (“expansions for play”).

But pure Vaiṣṇavas are especially attracted to serving Him by hearing and chanting about His vilāsa in Śrī Vṛndāvana and His other spiritual abodes.

Thus Lord Kapiladeva, after instructing His mother at length about several varieties of progressive discipline, advised her that, of all sādhanas, recitation of the pastimes of the Lord of Vaikuṅṭha is the most important.