

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

As stated in Śrī Padma Purāṇa, **muktaiḥ prārthyā harer bhaktiḥ**:
“Lord Hari’s devotional service is prayed for by those who are
liberated.”

But even in this most unlikely set of fortunate circumstances, the
candidate for spiritual advancement has to go through so much
trouble to aspire after various goals, one after another, and achieve
them.

Therefore the Personality of Godhead prefers to cut short the
involvement of His devotees in dharma, artha, kāma, and mokṣa.

But when the Supreme Lord refuses to give His devotees what they beg, doesn't that spoil His reputation as "the wish-fulfilling cow who can satisfy countless desires"?

The demigods speaking the above verse from the Fifth Canto answer this doubt by referring to the Lord as artha-da, the giver of what is of real value.

In other words, the Lord never gives His devotees what is anartha, or not good for them.

As a good father refuses a son's demand for some unwholesome food or drink, the Supreme Lord refuses to give His devotees anything that will cause them harm.

This behavior only enhances the Lord's reputation as the well-wisher of His servants.

What higher artha, then, does the Lord prefer to give?

And how will this artha satisfy the Lord's devotee in the face of unfulfilled personal desires?

The demigods answer that the Personality of Godhead gives away His own lotus feet—or, in other words, pure devotion to His feet.

He gives this even to those who don't want it or who harbor desires for other things, such as liberation, and therefore don't consider pure devotion their exclusive goal.

By the gift of devotion to His lotus feet, the Lord obliterates those other desires, because in pure devotional service all possible desires are automatically fulfilled.

In devotional service there is such an abundance of pure ecstasy that a devotee loses all interest in inferior pleasures.

Thus even though before attaining prema-bhakti pure devotees may have asked something from Kṛṣṇa and now may not have gotten it, they do not feel at all slighted or dissatisfied.

~~They are too absorbed in the sheer bliss of Kṛṣṇa consciousness to even notice the discrepancy.~~

Kṛṣṇa is so extremely merciful that He shows this kindness even to devotees who don't want it, just as a father entices his child to take a nice sweetball when he sees the child trying to eat dirt.

The child may not want the sweet, but the father forces it on him to take the child's mind away from eating dirt.

Thus the father gives the child real happiness.

This is Kṛṣṇa's way of reciprocating with His devotees for the service they have done at His lotus feet.

As Śrī Śukadeva told Mahārāja Parīkṣit:

rājan patir gurur alam bhavatām yadūnām
daivam priyaḥ kula-patiḥ kva ca kiṅkaro vaḥ
astv evam aṅga bhajatām bhagavān mukundo
muktim dadāti karhicit sma na bhakti-yogam

O King Parīkṣit (**rājan**)! Kṛṣṇa (**bhagavān mukundo**) was the protector, instructor (**patih guruh**), object of worship, giver of affection (**daivam priyah**), and the protector (**kula-patiḥ**) of both the Yadus and Pāṇḍavas (**bhavatām yadūnām**). But he was sometimes your servant (**kva ca kiṅkaro vaḥ**). The Lord gives liberation (**muktim dadāti karhicit**) but not even bhāva-bhakti (**na bhakti-yogam**) to those who worship him (**bhajatām**). (Bhāgavatam 5.6.18)

Paraphrasing this verse and taking the last line in a different way, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī gives this meaning:

“My dear King Parīkṣit, for the Pāṇḍavas and Yadus the Supreme Lord Mukunda is very much absorbed in acting in roles like that of master. And for you, the sons of Pāṇḍu, He sometimes even acts as a menial servant. Even though bestowing bhakti-yoga makes the Lord subordinate to His devotees, He still gives this bhakti-yoga to those who worship Him.”

In the context of this reading, bhakti-yoga means not only perfect love of God but also devotional service in practice, which enables one to achieve that love, mainly through association with pure devotees.

As Kṛṣṇa explained to Śrī Uddhava in the Eleventh Canto (11.3.31), **bhaktyā sañjātayā bhaktyā**: the one kind of bhakti awakens the other.

The Supreme Lord never gives liberation to His surrendered devotees.

Because liberation is achievable by the seekers of impersonal knowledge, He thinks that to give liberation to His pure devotees would devalue their devotional service.

Parīkṣit Mahārāja has glorified the other mothers of Kṛṣṇa in Vraja after Śrī Yaśodā, but this does not mean that they are greater devotees than she.

After all, they fed Kṛṣṇa their milk for only one year, and their love for Kṛṣṇa never equaled hers.

We should understand, therefore, that praise of the other gopīs has been placed here just to underscore the glories of Mother Yaśodā.

If these other gopīs are so great, how great must be Yaśodā's unique motherly affection.

Text 133

gopīnām paramānanda
āsīd govinda-darśane
kṣaṇam yuga-śatam iva
yāsām yena vinābhavat

24

The Gopīs took
the greatest pleasure
in seeing Govinda come home.
Since for them → even a moment
without His association seemed
like a 100 yugas
24-44
Gopīs.

“The young gopīs (gopīnām) took ~~the greatest pleasure~~
(parama-ānandah āsīt) in seeing Govinda come home
(govinda-darśane), since for them (yāsām) even a moment
(kṣaṇam) without (vinā) His association (yena) seemed like a
hundred ages (yuga-śatam iva abhavat).”

In texts 133 through 152, Parīkṣit Mahārāja praises the supremely glorious gopīs.

He begins by quoting this verse from Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.19.16), in which Śrī Bādarāyaṇi describes the gopīs' ecstasy at seeing Kṛṣṇa return home in the evening after saving His friends from a fire in the Muñja forest.

Just to catch a glimpse of Govinda would raise all the gopīs to the highest limit of ecstasy.

Who can describe, then, what they felt later when they
enjoyed talks and various sports with Him?

If for even the shortest time they couldn't see Kṛṣṇa, to them
that small portion of the day would seem like a hundred
yugas.

In their own words:

aṭati yad bhavān ahni kānanam
truṭi yugāyate tvām apaśyatām
kuṭila-kuntalam śrī-mukham ca te
jaḍa udīkṣatām pakṣma-kṛd drśām

“When You go off (aṭati yad bhavān) to the forest (kānanam) during the day (ahni), a tiny fraction of a second (truṭi) becomes like a millennium for us (yugāyate) because we cannot see You (tvām apaśyatām). And even when we can eagerly look upon (udīkṣatām) Your beautiful face (śrī-mukham ca te), so lovely with its adornment of curly locks (kuṭila-kuntalam), our pleasure is hindered by our eyelids, which were fashioned by the foolish creator (jaḍa pakṣma-kṛd drśām).” (Bhāgavatam 10.31.15)

Of course the days spent without Kṛṣṇa didn't literally last hundreds of yugas, but, as indicated by the word iva, such was the gopīs' subjective experience while in the pain and anxiety of separation.

And it makes perfect sense that these same gopīs who would suffer intensely from a moment's separation from Kṛṣṇa would conversely enjoy the topmost bliss from but a moment's sight of Him.

Though the gopīs passed every day with such ecstasies, the description given here is especially appropriate for the day Kṛṣṇa saved His cowherd friends from the fire in the Muñja forest, because on that same day He saved His girlfriends from the forest fire of viraha-bhāva in their hearts.