

Śrī Brhad-bhāgavatāmṛta

by Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī

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Volume-2

Śrī-goloka-māhātmya

The Glories of Goloka

Chapter-3

Bhajana: Worship

When I came
back from BL to
this earth / things look
quite different

2.3.1

śrī-gopa-kumāra uvāca
brahma-lokād imām pṛthvīm
āgacchan dr̥ṣṭavān aham
pūrvam yatra yadāsīt tad-
gandho 'py asti na kutracit

Śrī Gopa-kumāra said: When I came (aham āgacchan) from Brahmaloaka (brahma-lokād) to this earth (imām pṛthvīm), I saw (dr̥ṣṭavān) that nowhere was there (kutracit na asti) even a hint of (tad-gandhah apy) the way things had been before (pūrvam yatra yadāsīt).

In this third chapter, Gopa-kumāra crosses the eight coverings of the universe and enters the abode of mukti, liberation.

There, in the presence of Lord Śiva, servants of the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha explain to him the characteristics of pure devotional service.

Gopa-kumāra first returns to Mathurā-maṇḍala, where the truth of the Supreme Lord's words is shown to him.

The Lord had declared that Śrī Mathurā is never disturbed by the influence of time, and now Gopa-kumāra sees this for himself.

While he had been away on the higher planets, the rest of the earth had completely changed, and not a trace remained of the demigods, humans, and other creatures who had been there before.

Only Mathurā has
not changed.
It had ↓ the same rivers,
mountains, animals etc.

2.3.2

param śrī-mathurā tādrg-
vanādri-sarid-anvitā
virājate yathā-pūrvam
tādṛśair jaṅgamair vṛtā

Only Śrī Mathurā District (param śrī-mathurā) looked (virājate) just
as it had (yathā-pūrvam), with (anvitā) the same forests (tādrg-
vana), mountains (adri), and rivers (sarid), filled with the same
moving creatures (tādṛśair jaṅgamair vṛtā).

The forests of Mathurā appeared as always, with the same kinds of trees, bushes and creepers, the same mountains, such as Śrī Govardhana, the same rivers, like Śrī Kālindī, and the same kinds of moving creatures—birds, animals, and humans beings.

Remembering the
Order of ~~the~~ the Lord
I went to the same place
where I had met my guru.
There I saw him unconscious in love

2.3.3

ājñām bhagavataḥ smṛtvā
bhraman vṛndāvanāntare
anviṣya kuñje 'trāpaśyaṁ
sva-gurum prema-mūrchitam

Remembering the Supreme Lord's order (ājñām bhagavataḥ smṛtvā), I wandered throughout Vṛndāvana (bhraman vṛndāvana antare). When I entered this very same grove (anviṣya kuñje), I saw my spiritual master (atra apaśyaṁ svagurum), unconscious in a trance of ecstatic love (prema-mūrchitam).

Gopa-kumāra remembered what the Personality of Godhead had told him: “Go to Vṛndāvana. There you will find your beloved spiritual master.”

with great endeavor
brought him back
consciousness
he saw me bowing down
he embraced me knowing my heart

2.3.4

prayāsair bahubhiḥ svāsthyam
nīto 'sau vīkṣya mām natam
parirebhe 'tha sarva-jñō
bubudhe man-manoratham

With great endeavor (bahubhiḥ prayāsair) I brought (nītaḥ) that all-knowing sage (sarva-jñāḥ) back to normal (svāsthyam), and when he saw me bowing down before him (asau vīkṣya mām natam) he embraced me (atha parirebhe), at once understanding the desire in my heart (bubudhe mad-manoratham).

By such means as sprinkling him with water, Gopa-kumāra brought
his spiritual master out of trance.

The spiritual master understood, without being told, that Gopa-
kumāra wanted to know how to reach the abode of liberation.

My guru taught
me the rules for
worshipping & meditating on
the Mantra through words &
gestures

2.3.5

snātvā sva-datta-mantrasya
dhyānādi-vidhim uddiśan
kiñcin mukhena kiñcic ca
saṅketenābhyavedayat

He bathed (snātvā), and then taught me (uddiśan) various rules (vidhim) for worshipping and meditating on the mantra (mantrasya dhyana ādi) he had given (sva-datta). Some of these instructions he spoke (kiñcit mukhena), and others (kiñcic ca) he gave me through gestures (saṅketena abhyavedayat).

Because the guru had been in a deep trance of overflowing prema, his face was soiled with saliva, mucus, and tears.

He therefore went to the Yamunā to purify himself.

Then he gave Gopa-kumāra instructions on how to worship the mantra, teachings for which there had not been time in their previous meetings.

Besides the basic method for meditating, the guru also taught Gopa-kumāra how to apply the syllables of the mantra to the parts of one's body by touching the body and chanting, how to use appropriate hand gestures, and other details of worship.

Certain methods he taught verbally, such as touching the body while chanting.

Other methods, such as how to meditate on the Lord's personal form, he taught by pointing and giving indications.

He gave some of the lessons nonverbally because giving explicit descriptions might have evoked a remembrance of the Lord's form so vivid as to again ignite his own prema, thus overwhelming his composure.

→ "flight"

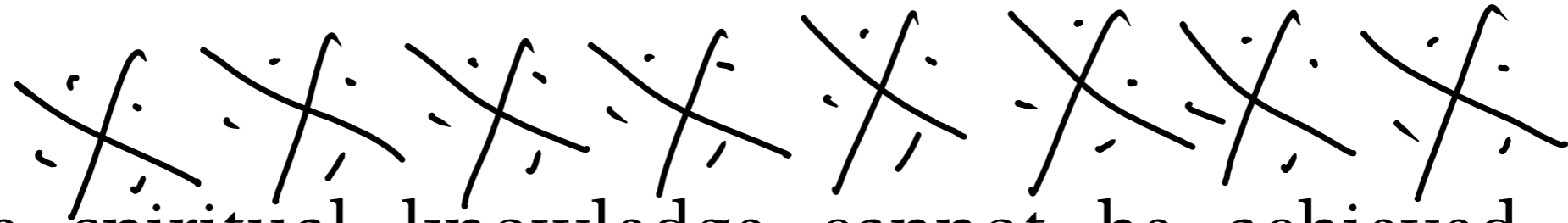
Because you are very
dear to me, I have taught
you everything. + have taught
By the power of this mantra
you will understand & have
everything on your own

2.3.6

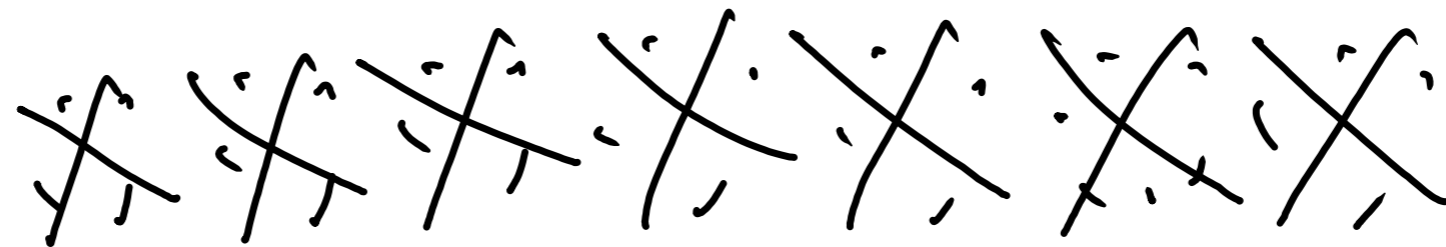
jagāda ca nijaṃ sarvaṃ
idaṃ preṣṭhāya te 'dadāṃ
sarvaṃ etat-prabhāvena
svayaṃ jñāsyasi lapsyase

He then said (jagāda ca), “Because you are very dear to me (preṣṭhāya), I have now given you (te adadāṃ) everything. I possess (nijaṃ sarvaṃ idaṃ). By the power of this mantra (etat-prabhāvena), you will understand (jñāsyasi) and attain (lapsyase) everything (sarvaṃ) on your own (svayaṃ).”

We should not doubt that the guru, simply by a few words and gestures, could teach Gopa-kumāra everything there was to know.



Though true spiritual knowledge cannot be achieved merely by collecting information, it can be gained by the mercy of one's spiritual master, which awakens transcendental knowledge naturally in one's heart.



As the guru indicates here, Gopa-kumāra, by the power of the mantra, will comprehend everything—not only what he has just learned but also things yet to be learned.

With great joy I fell
@ his feet & then he
was gone unnoticed

2.3.7

harsēṇa mahatā tasya
pādayoḥ patite mayi
so 'ntarhita ivāgacchad
yatra kutrāpy alakṣitam

With great joy (mahatā harsēṇa) I fell (patite mayi) at his feet (tasya pādayoḥ), and then all at once he was gone (sah antarhita iva). He had gone (agacchad) elsewhere (yatra kutrāpy), unnoticed (alakṣitam).

I tried to calm
my mind which was
pained by separation
from
my guru.
↓
I began to chant the mantra
as instructed.

2.3.8

aham ca tad-viyogārtam
mano viṣṭabhya yatnataḥ
yathādeśam sva-mantram tam
pravṛtto japtum ādarāt

I tried hard to calm my mind (aham ca mano viṣṭabhya yatnataḥ),
which was pained by his departure (tad-viyoga ārtam), and I
reverently (ādarāt) began to chant (japtum pravṛttah) my mantra
(sva-mantram tam) as instructed (yathā ādeśam).

I then saw my
body transform into
a transcendental form
I stated traveling upward
I saw Vastav Planets

2.3.9

pāñca-bhautikatātītam
sva-deham kalayan raveḥ
nirbhidyā maṇḍalam gacchann
ūrdhvaṁ lokān vyalokayam

I then saw (kalayan) my body (sva-deham) change into a form transcendental to the five material elements (pāñca-bhautikatā atītam). And as I traveled upward (ūrdhvaṁ gacchann), breaking through the sphere of the sun (nirbhidyā raveḥ maṇḍalam), I saw all the planetary systems (lokān vyalokayam).

Gopa-kumāra saw his own body change from a product of the material elements into a transcendental body.

To achieve this perfection, he was not forced to die, to give up one body in exchange for another.

Rather, his body became refined so that he was able to travel through the coverings of the universe and enter the abode of liberation.

The doorway to liberation is the sun, which accomplished celibates and Vaiṣṇavas pass through on their way out of the material world.

Gopa-kumāra broke through the sphere of the sun and traveled upward, seeing all fourteen worlds as he passed beyond them.

~~I~~ saw that these planets
were tainted with faults &
had only sukha-ābhāsa & were
just by-products of illusion.

2.3.10

dūṣitān bahu-doṣeṇa
sukhābhāseṇa bhūṣitān
māyā-mayān mano-rājya-
svapna-dṛṣṭārtha-sammitān

I saw that these planets, tainted by many faults (dūṣitān bahu-
doṣeṇa), adorned with (bhūṣitān) mere reflections of happiness
(sukha ābhāseṇa), were but products of illusion (māyā-mayān), no
better than (artha-sammitān) what one sees in a flight of fancy or a
dream (mano-rājya-svapna-dṛṣṭa).

Dream vision → ① Private ② brief

The attractions one sees in a day dream or night dream exist only in one's own mind, and even that private existence is brief.

Real vision → ① Shared ② persistent

And the reality one sees while awake is shared and persistent.

Yet within the material universe, all the worlds are dreamlike shadows of spiritual reality, their happiness but a shadow of real happiness.

All those planets which
I earlier attained one by
one I now crossed all at
once → by the power of my mind

2.3.11

pūrvam ye bahu-kālena
samprāptāḥ kramaśo 'dhunā
sarve nimeṣataḥ krāntā
yugapan manaseva te

The planets I had earlier attained (ye pūrvam samprāptāḥ) one by one (kramaśah), over a long period of time (bahu-kālena), I now crossed (te sarve yugapat adhunā krāntā) in the blink of an eye (nimeṣataḥ), as if by the power of my mind alone (manasā eva).

Gopa-kumāra had visited Svarga, Mahar, Tapas, and Satya and stayed for a while on each of these planets.

Now he was passing over these same planets at the speed of the mind.

It might be said that since these planets are nothing more substantial than assemblages of the guṇas of material nature, they no longer appear independently real to someone who has subdued his mind; and so, in this sense, passing out of this universe is but an effort of the mind.

But since Gopa-kumāra physically broke through the sphere the sun,
he did have to exert himself.

Therefore the qualification iva (“as if”) is here added to the word
manasā (“by the mind”).

2.3.12

brahma-lokāt sukhaiḥ koṭi-
guṇitair uttarottaram
vaibhavaiś ca mahiṣṭhāni
prāpto 'smy āvaraṇāny atha

Then I reached
the coverings of the
universe.
Each one rich with enjoyments
& opulences ~ millions of times
greater than Satyaloka

Next (**atha**) I reached (**prāptah asmy**) the coverings of the universe (**āvaraṇāny**). Each of them, more so than the one before (**uttara uttaram**), was rich with enjoyments and opulences (**vaibhavaiś ca mahiṣṭhāni**) millions of times greater (**koṭi-guṇitair**) than on Brahmaloḥkā (**brahma-lokāt sukhaiḥ**).

Each covering of the universe is ten times greater than the one before it and millions of times greater in enjoyment and opulence.

2.3.13-14

kāryopādhim atikrāntaiḥ prāptavya-krama-muktikaiḥ
liṅgākhyam kāraṇopādhim atikramitum ātmabhiḥ

praviśya tat-tad-rūpeṇa bhujyamānāni kāmataḥ
tat-tad-udbhava-niḥśeṣa-sukha-sāra-mayāni hi

(sadyo muktiāḥ) → Ready for immediate liberation

The sadyo muktes of the frame muktes → they of sadyo also. when they enter earl shell they get an appropriate body of enjoy the essence of pleasure of that sadyo fully

Souls (ātmabhiḥ) who have transcended (atikrāntaiḥ) the false attributes of created things (kārya upādhim) and who aspire for gradual liberation strive (prāptavya-krama-muktikaiḥ) also to go beyond (atikramitum) the causative elements of creation, elements found again as false attributes (kāraṇa upādhim), in what is known as the subtle body (liṅgākhyam). To do this they enter the shell formed of each element (praviśya tat-tad-rūpeṇa). They enter in a body composed of that element (tat-tad-udbhava) and enjoy to their full desire (bhujyamānāni kāmataḥ) the essence of the pleasure to be had there (niḥśeṣa-sukha-sāra-mayāni hi).

When a jīva on his way out of the material universe passes through its coverings (āvaraṇas), he is provided a body made of the subtle element he is passing through.

Otherwise, mere proximity to these concentrated masses of elemental energy would destroy his body at once.

In each successive covering the jīva finds wonderful opportunities for more refined material enjoyment.

Since the material creation exists mainly for the jīva's enjoyment, these original reservoirs of the material elements brim with resources for pleasure.

The grosser objects produced from the causal elements—earth, water, fire, and so on—are great sources of sense gratification for conditioned living beings, and the superior, subtle forms of matter afford even better sense enjoyment.

In the covering formed of each element, pleasures from combinations of all the elements are available, just as inside the universe, but in the covering formed of a particular element that element predominates.

In each of the coverings more happiness is found than on Brahmaloaka, and each consecutive covering offers more happiness than the one before.

2.3.15-16

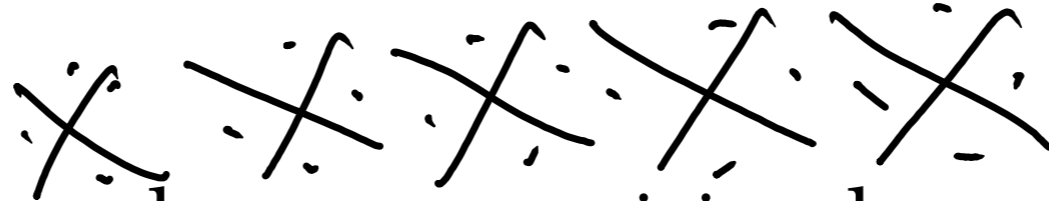
pr̥thivy-āvaraṇam teṣu prathamam gatavān aham
tad-aiśvaryaādhikāriṇyā dharanyā pūjitam prabhum

brahmāṇḍa-durlabhair dravyair mahā-śūkara-rūpiṇam
apaśyam prati-romānta-bhramad-brahmāṇḍa-vaibhavam

The first covering (teṣu prathamam) I entered (aham gatavān) was that of earth (pr̥thivy-āvaraṇam). There I saw (apaśyam) the Supreme Lord (prabhum) in the form of a great boar (mahā-śūkara-rūpiṇam) being worshiped (pūjitam) by the goddess Earth (dharanyā), the deity presiding over that covering and its wealth (tad-aiśvaryaādhikāriṇyā). She worshiped Him with riches not to be obtained within the universe itself (brahmāṇḍa-durlabhair dravyair), while all the opulences of the universe (brahmāṇḍa-vaibhavam) whirled within (anta-bhramad) every pore on His body (prati-roma).

In the 1st category
of Earth, I saw Lord
Vajra being worshipped by
Mother earth.
All the opulences of the universe were
whirling inside the pores of His
body

Even when seeing Lord Mahāpuruṣa on Brahmāloka, Gopa-kumāra
did not see all the opulences of the fourteen worlds in every pore of
the Lord's body, as he was seeing them now.



Each higher world is closer to spiritual perfection, so in each
successive world the Lord reveals more of His infinite glories.

worshippable LORD
विष्णु तत्त्वा

presiding deity
ऋतु तत्त्वा

The presiding ruler of each higher planet is more elevated than the
ruler of the planet below, and still more elevated are the presiding
deities of the subtle coverings, so the goddess Earth in the subtle
covering of earth stands above Lord Brahmā.

I saw the system with
all its ingredients

2.3.17

tasyām kāraṇa-rūpāyām
kārya-rūpam idam jagat
tad-upādānakam sarvaṁ
sphūritam ca vyalokayam

Within the goddess Earth (tasyām), who embodies the subtle
causes of creation (kāraṇa-rūpāyām), I saw (vyalokayam) the
creation itself (kārya-rūpam idam jagat), with all its ingredients
(tad-upādānakam sarvaṁ sphūritam).

U?ādeśa kāraṇa

As clay is the (ingredient cause) of a pot, the elements presided over by the deities of the āvaraṇas are the ingredient causes of the universe.

Classification

Since earth is the most prominent ingredient within the material universe, the goddess Bhūmi (appears) to be the source of all creation.

After she worshipped
the Lord, she received me
& begged me to stay for
a while to enjoy

2.3.18

vidhāya bhagavat-pūjām
tayā tithyena sat-kṛtaḥ
dināni katicit tatra
bhogārtham aham arthitaḥ

After she finished worshipping the Lord (vidhāya bhagavat-pūjām),
the goddess honored me as her guest (tayā ātithyena sat-kṛtaḥ) and
begged me (aham arthitaḥ) to remain there (tatra) to enjoy
(bhogārtham) for a few days (katicit dināni).

But, taking leave
of her I quickly crossed
beyond that layer
pulled by some force
the other 6 layers
as if
I reached

2.3.19

tām anujñāpya kenāpy ā-
kṛṣyamāṇa ivāśu tat
atītyāvaraṇam prāptaḥ
parāṇy āvaraṇāni ṣaṭ

Taking her leave (tām anujñāpya), I quickly crossed beyond (āśu atītya) that covering (tat āvaraṇam), as if pulled by some force (ākṛṣyamāṇa iva), and reached (prāptaḥ) the other six (parāṇy āvaraṇāni ṣaṭ).

Although the goddess Bhūmi, a first-class Vaiṣṇava, encouraged
Gopa-kumāra to stay longer in her domain, he couldn't tarry, because
the force of his sādhana was impelling him toward the abode of
mukti.

mahā-rūpa-dharair vāri-tejo-vāyv-ambarais tathā
ahaṅkāra-mahadbhyām ca sva-svāvaraṇato 'rcitam

kramena matsyaṁ sūryaṁ ca pradyumnam aniruddhakam
saṅkarṣaṇaṁ vāsudevaṁ bhagavantam alokayam

These are the
found by the
the Lord by the
by the presiding deity.

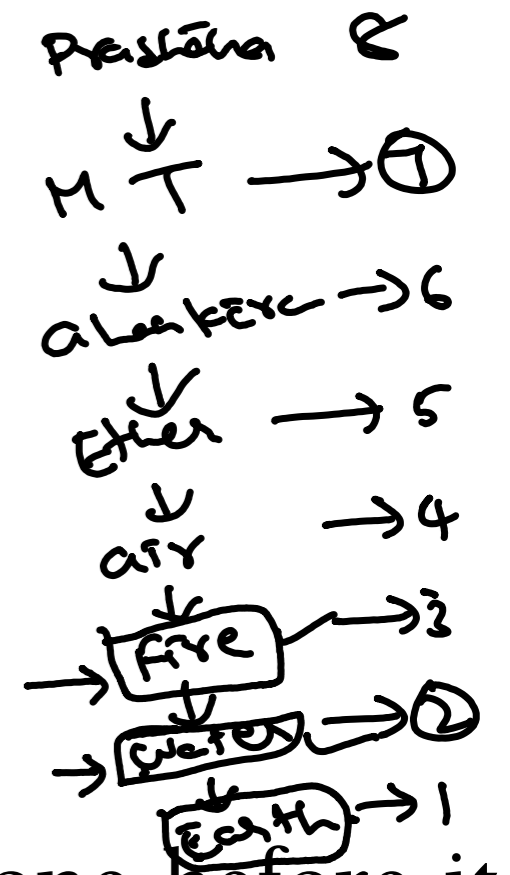
One after another (kramena), I saw (alokayam) Lords (bhagavantam) Matsya, Sūrya (matsyaṁ sūryaṁ ca), Pradyumna, Aniruddha (pradyumnam aniruddhakam), Saṅkarṣaṇa, and Vāsudeva (saṅkarṣaṇaṁ vāsudevaṁ), each with one of the great manifested deities (mahā-rūpa-dharair) of those coverings (sva-sva āvaraṇato) worshipping Him (arcitam) with the element over which that deity presided—water, fire, air, ether, ego, or mahat (vāri-tejo-vāyv-ambarais tathā ahaṅkāra-mahadbhyām ca).

Gopa-kumāra discovered Lord Matsya in the covering of water, Lord Sūrya-nārāyaṇa in the covering of fire, and so on.

With every
 passing covering, the
 later covering had the
 greater:
 a) object of worship
 b) worshiper
 c) sense gratification
 than the previous

2.3.22

sva-kāryāt pūrva-pūrvasmāt
kāraṇam cottarottaram
pūjya-pūjaka-bhoga-śrī-
mahattvenādhikādhikam



Each covering was the subtle cause (kāraṇam) of the one before it (pūrva-pūrvasmāt sva-kāryāt), and had a greater (adhika adhikam) object of worship, a greater worshiper (pūjya-pūjaka), and greater sense gratification, opulence (bhoga-śrī), and importance (mahattvena).

Because the covering made of water is closer to spiritual existence than the previous covering, that of earth, in the watery covering the Supreme Lord manifests Himself more fully, in the form of Matsya-deva.

Thus the demigod presiding over the watery covering is greater than the demigoddess of earth, and the watery enjoyments and opulences surpass the earthly ones.

This hierarchy holds true for all the coverings, one after another.

2.3.23

pūrva-vat tāny atikramya
prakṛty-āvaraṇam gataḥ
mahā-tamo-mayaṁ sāndra-
śyāmikākṣi-manoharam

In this way
of peeling the layers
of prakṛte which was
very attractive

As before (pūrva-vat), I crossed over each of these coverings (tāny atikramya), and finally came to the covering made of primordial nature (prakṛty-āvaraṇam gataḥ). Composed of the most subtle form of ignorance (mahā-tamo-mayaṁ), it was dark blue (sāndra-śyāmikā), and attractive to the eyes and mind (akṣi-manoharam).

→ (Padiāca)

“As before” implies that at each stage of his journey Gopa-kumāra was greeted as a welcome guest by the presiding deity, who requested him to stay and partake of the pleasures of that realm, which Gopa-kumāra politely declined, taking his host’s permission to travel on.

Finally he arrived at the covering of prakṛti, the source from which all the other coverings evolve.

This covering, the original reservoir of tamo-guṇa, appears dark and yet attractive.

As described by Arjuna in Śrī Hari-varṇa (2.113.21–22):

pañka-bhūtaṃ hi timiraṃ
sparśād vijñāyate ghanāḥ

“I perceived (vijñāyate) a darkness (timiraṃ) as dense as mud (pañka-bhūtaṃ), so concentrated that I could feel its touch (sparśād ghanāḥ).

atha parvata-bhūtaṃ tu
timiraṃ samapadyata

“Then (atha) I reached (samapadyata) a darkness (timiraṃ) that was dense like a mountain (parvata-bhūtaṃ tu).”

And again in the Tenth Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.89.47–49):

sapta dvīpān sa-sindhūmś ca sapta sapta girīn atha
lokālokaṁ tathātīya viveśa su-mahat tamaḥ

tatrāśvāḥ śaibya-sugrīva-meghapuṣpa-balāhakāḥ
tamasi bhraṣṭa-gatayo babhūvur bharatarṣabha

tān dr̥ṣṭvā bhagavān kṛṣṇo mahā-yogeśvareśvaraḥ
sahasrāditya-saṅkāśaṁ sva-cakraṁ prāhiṇot puraḥ

“The Lord’s chariot passed over (atīya) the seven islands of the middle universe (sapta dvīpān), each with its ocean (sa-sindhūmś ca) and its seven principal mountains (sapta sapta girīn). Then it crossed the Lokāloka boundary (lokālokaṁ tathā) and entered the vast region of total darkness (viveśa su-mahat tamaḥ). In that darkness (tatra tamasi) the chariot’s horses (aśvāḥ)—Śaibya, Sugrīva, Meghapuṣpa, and Balāhaka (śaibya-sugrīva-meghapuṣpa-balāhakāḥ)—lost their way (bhraṣṭa-gatayo babhūvuh). O best of the Bhāratas (bharatarṣabha), when Lord Kṛṣṇa, the supreme master of all masters of yoga (bhagavān kṛṣṇo mahā-yogeśvareśvaraḥ), saw the horses in this condition (tān dr̥ṣṭvā), He sent His Sudarśana disc (sva-cakraṁ prāhiṇot) before the chariot (puraḥ). That disc shone like thousands of suns (sahasra āditya-saṅkāśaṁ).”

Seeing my Lord
was very delighted & I had
no desire to go further

2.3.24

tasmin nijesta-devasya
varṇa-sādrśyam ātate
dr̥ṣṭvāham nitarām hr̥ṣṭo
naiccham gantum tato 'grataḥ

Seeing (dr̥ṣṭvā) spread everywhere (ātate) a color like that of my
worshipable Lord (nija iṣṭa-devasya varṇa-sādrśyam), I was very
much delighted (aham nitarām hr̥ṣṭah). I had no desire (na
icchan) to go further (tato agrataḥ gantum).

The beautiful śyāma color of the prakṛti region seemed just like the color of Gopa-kumāra's Deity, Śrī Madana-gopāla.

Since the total dimensions of prakṛti cannot be measured by any material means, this attractive effulgence seemed to extend infinitely.

Gopa-kumāra was so charmed by that color that he felt no impulse to move on.

śrī-mohinī-mūrti-dharasya tatra
vibhrājamānasya nijaśvarasya
pūjām samāpya prakṛtiḥ prakṛṣṭa-
mūrtiḥ sapady eva samabhyayān mām

AS I arrived
 Here - Prakṛti devī
 had just finished worshiping
 Śrī-Mohini Mūrti.
 She approached me

As I arrived, the goddess Prakṛti (prakṛtiḥ) had just finished the worship (pūjām samāpya) of her Lord (nija īśvarasya), the Lord of that region (tatra vibhrājamānasya), the effulgent Śrī Mohinī-mūrti (śrī-mohinī-mūrti-dharasya). The goddess at once (sapady eva) approached me (samabhyayān mām) in her own superlative form (prakṛṣṭa-mūrtiḥ).

Māyā, material nature, was worshiping the Supreme Lord in His female disguise as Mohinī-mūrti, which implies that Śrī Mohinī-mūrti is much more attractive than Māyā herself.

me She offered
various Siddhis
& requested me to stay

2.3.26

upānayan mahā-siddhīr
aṇimādyā mamāgrataḥ
yayāce ca pṛthivy-ādi-
vat tatra mad-avasthitim

She offered me (mama upānayan) gifts such as aṇimā-siddhi (aṇimādyā) and other great yogic powers (mahā-siddhīr). And like the goddess Earth and the other deities (pṛthivy-ādi-vat), she asked (yayāce) me to stay (tatra mad-avasthitim).

She told me
 ↓
 If you want Mukti
 → pls be kind to me
 I am the bestower of
 Mukti

sa-sneham ca jagādedam
yadi tvam muktim icchasi
tadāpy anugrḥāṇemām
mām tasyāḥ pratihāriṇīm

She sweetly told me (sa-sneham ca jagāda idam), “If you want to achieve your goal of liberation (yadi tvam muktim icchasi), then please be kind to me (tadāpy anugrḥāṇa imām), because I am the bestower of liberation (mām tasyāḥ pratihāriṇīm).

✱ ✱ ✱ ✱ ✱ ✱ ✱ ✱

One would normally think that to attain liberation one must reject material nature; but in fact one achieves liberation when material nature chooses to release one.

Or if you
desire bhakti?
कहि तुम्हें भक्ति चाहिए?
हे भक्तियोगी! तुम्हें भक्ति चाहिए?
भक्ति चाहिए? → give

2.3.28

bhaktim icchasi vā viṣṇos
tathāpy etasya ceṭikām
bhaginīm śakti-rūpām mām
kṛpayā bhaja bhakti-dām

“Or (vā) if you want (icchasi) devotion to Viṣṇu (visnoh bhaktim), still (tathāpy) you should be kind (kṛpayā) and worship me (bhaja mām), the giver of devotion (bhakti-dām), for I am His maidservant (etasya ceṭikām), His sister (bhaginīm), and the embodiment of His energy (śakti-rūpām).”

Pure Vaiṣṇavas do not care for liberation, but still they respect Prakṛti for other reasons.

She is Lord's Viṣṇu's humble servant and sister, born as Subhadrā from the womb of Yaśodā, and she helps Lord Viṣṇu's devotees make progress in devotional service.

Although Māyā is not identical with Lord Viṣṇu's internal energy (antaraṅga-śakti), she is the expansion of that energy, embodied in the external elements.

Thus she is nondifferent from the original energy, just as a person's shadow is nondifferent from the person.

2.3.29

śrī-gopa-kumāra uvāca

tad aśeṣam anādr̥tya

viṣṇu-śakti-dhiyā param

tām natvāvaraṇam ramya-

varṇam tad draṣṭum abhramam

Declining all the
enticements
down to her, I bowed
for a while & wandered
to beautiful region
to see that
colored

Śrī Gopa-kumāra said: Declining all these enticements (tad aśeṣam anādr̥tya), understanding them to be the potency of Lord Viṣṇu (viṣṇu-śakti-dhiyā param), I bowed down to the goddess (tām natvā) and then wandered for a while (abhramam) to see (draṣṭum) that beautiful-colored region (tad ramya-varṇam āvaraṇam).

Gopa-kumāra had the discretion to reject the gifts offered by Prakṛti,
and her proposal that he stay in her domain, but the atmosphere of
that place was pleasing to his mind and senses, so he wanted to stay a
little longer to examine its wonders more closely.

That there way
wonderful self-fulfilling
→ of many jīvas were
enjoying these with a body
made of prakṛti

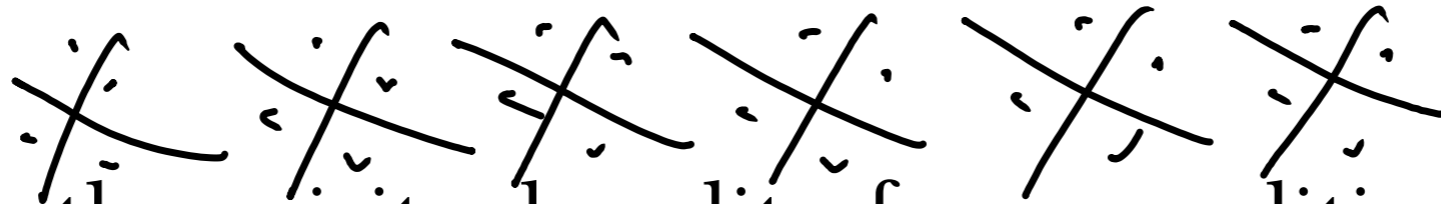
2.3.30

prādhānikair jīva-saṅghair
bhujyamānaṁ mano-ramam
sarvataḥ sarva-māhātmyā-
dhikyena vilasat svayam

Splendid with the most excellent wonders (sarva-māhātmyā
adhikyena), that place was delightful (mano-ramam), shining on
its own (vilasat svayam), multitudes of living entities enjoying it
(jīva-saṅghair bhujyamānaṁ), their bodies made of primordial
matter (prādhānikair).

Pradhāna is the most subtle material energy, from which all other subtle and gross manifestations evolve.

The beings Gopa-kumāra saw had bodies of pradhāna, transcendental to the limited names and forms of manifest creation.



Pradhāna hides the spiritual reality from conditioned souls, but still she is described here as self-luminous (vilasat svayam) because when the conditioned souls are enlightened by transcendental knowledge her darkness dissolves into spiritual effulgence.

It was inconceivable
enchanting & the
whole material creation dwelt
within it → with all the
elements of creation, gross & subtle

2.3.31

bahu-rūpaṁ durvibhāvyam
mahā-mohana-vaibhavam
kārya-kāraṇa-saṅghātaiḥ
sevyamānam jagan-mayam

It was inconceivable (durvibhāvyam), utterly enchanting in
opulence (mahā-mohana-vaibhavam), and many in its forms all at
once (bahu-rūpaṁ). The whole of material creation (jagan-mayam)
dwelt within it (sevyamānam), with all the elements of creation,
subtle and gross (kārya-kāraṇa-saṅghātaiḥ).

Being the root cause of all material transformations, pradhāna naturally displays countless forms within herself, producing wonders powerfully attractive to the conditioned souls.

How she works cannot be described in words or comprehended by the material mind.

500 million yojanās ,
500 million $\times 10^8$ yojanās

She comprises the entire created world, with its perceivable objects and their unseen causes.

The most subtle of these causes of material existence are the five tan-
mātras, the abstract forms of raw perception.

Though these are not explicitly mentioned here, we can assume that
during Gopa-kumāra's travels in the covering region of prakṛti, he
passed through the sub-regions of each tan-mātra, for without having
crossed them he could not have become fully eligible for liberation.

2.3.32

atheśvarecchayātīya
durantaṁ tad ghaṇaṁ tamaḥ
tejaḥ-puñjam apaśyantam
dr̥ṇ-nimīlana-kāraḥ

By īśvara icchā
I then crossed beyond
that region of ignorance
and came to a place
flooded with unbearable light

By the desire of the Lord (īśvara icchayā), I then crossed beyond (atha atīya) that vast region of dense ignorance (tad durantaṁ ghaṇaṁ tamaḥ) and came to a place flooded with a light so brilliant (tejaḥ-puñjam), so unbearably beyond seeing (apaśyantam), that it forced me to close my eyes (dr̥ṇ-nimīlana-kāraḥ).

Attracted by the beauty of the covering formed of prakṛti, Gopa-kumāra had no desire to leave, but the Personality of Godhead, wanting him to reach the abode of liberation, inspired Gopa-kumāra to journey on.

When I tried
to look ahead with
utmost devotion → I saw
the Supreme Lord, bright like
millions of suns

2.3.33

bhaktyā paramayā yatnād
agre dr̥ṣṭī prasārayan
sūrya-koti-pratīkāśam
apaśyaṁ parameśvaram

With utmost devotion (bhaktyā paramayā) I struggled to look
ahead (yatnād agre dr̥ṣṭī prasārayan). And then I saw (apaśyaṁ)
the Supreme Lord (parameśvaram), effulgent like millions of suns
(sūrya-koti-pratīkāśam).

mano-drg-ānanda-vivardhanam vibhum
vicitra-mādhurya-vibhūṣaṇācitam
samagra-sat-puruṣa-lakṣaṇānvitam
sphurat-para-brahma-mayaṁ mahādbhutam

Increasing the
 ecstasy of mind &
 eyes → the 6th sloka
 His most wonderful form

Ever increasing (vivardhanam) the ecstasy of my mind and eyes
 (mano-drg-ānanda), that all-powerful Lord (vibhum), adorned with
many ornaments and sweet features (vicitra-mādhurya-
vibhūṣaṇācitam) and bearing all the signs of an exalted person
 (samagra-sat-puruṣa-lakṣaṇānvitam), revealed Himself (sphurat) as
 the most wondrous form (mahādbhutam) of the Supreme Truth
 (para-brahma-mayaṁ).

Even though the Supreme Lord's effulgence shone brighter than millions of suns, this appearance of the Lord was delightful to Gopakumāra's mind and eyes.

A most exalted person should have thirty-two special marks of perfection on his body—red palms, red soles, and so on—and Gopākumāra could see all of these in the body of the Lord.

Now that Gopa-kumāra had left behind the covering darkness of prakṛti, the Supreme Lord revealed Himself in all His glory, more completely and vividly than Gopa-kumāra had ever seen.

2.3.35

Though he is:
a) gunātīta → but aśeṣa sad-guṇam
b) nirākṛtīm → loka-manorama-ākṛtīm
c) Prakṛti-sambandha-vihīnam
→ Prakṛtye

sadā guṇātītam aśeṣa-sad-guṇam
nirākṛtīm loka-manoramākṛtīm
prakṛtyādhiṣṭhātṛtayā vilāsinam
tadīya-sambandha-vihīnam acyutam

Though always beyond material qualities (sadā guṇātītam), in spiritual qualities He is full (aśeṣa-sad-guṇam); though formless (nirākṛtīm), in form attractive to all (loka-Manorama ākṛtīm). Though never directly connected with Prakṛti (tadīya-sambandha-vihīnam), that infallible Lord (acyutam) appears resplendent in her company (prakṛtyā) as she performs her pastimes (vilāsinam) under His shelter (adhiṣṭhātṛtayā).

In the paradoxical ways mentioned here, the Personality of Godhead is unique.

Untouched by the qualities of matter, He has His own countless transcendental qualities, beginning with His affectionate concern for His devotees.

He is said to have no form because He never assumes material forms; all material forms, after all, derive from dualities (“this and not that”), with which the Absolute Truth never has any connection.

In the previous chapter Lord Mahāpuruṣa was described as Prakṛti's ruler, but the form of the Lord whom Gopa-kumāra is seeing now is not her ruler but only the shelter in which she acts out her playful pastimes.

He is the Supreme Brahman, the presiding Deity of the abode of liberation, and has no contact with material nature.

Thus He is called Acyuta, the Lord whose spiritual glory is never diminished.

Joy
A flood of reverence, fear &
overwhelmed me.
At that moment → I did not know
what to do!

2.3.36

mahā-sambhrama-santrāsa-
pramoda-bhara-vihvalah
tadā kim karavāṇīti
jñātuṃ neśe kathañcana

A flood of reverence (mahā-sambhrama), fear (santrāsa), and joy (pramoda-bhara) overwhelmed me (vihvalah). At that moment (tadā) I simply didn't know (jñātuṃ na īśe kathañcana) what to do (kim karavāṇīti).

2.3.37

yady api sva-prakāśo 'sāv
atīndriya-vṛttikaḥ
tat-kāruṇya-prabhāveṇa
param sāksāt samikṣyate

That Lord was
beyond the scope of
the senses
But one can see Him only
by His mercy

That self-manifest Lord (yady api asāu sva-prakāśah) is beyond the
scope of the senses (atīta indriya-vṛttikaḥ), but one can see Him
(samikṣyate) directly (sāksāt) by the power of His mercy (tat-
kāruṇya-prabhāveṇa). There is no other way (param).

Only the Lord's grace can empower one to perceive His beauty and
the features of His personality.

I could not understand
whether I was seeing Him
with my eyes (or) mind (or) soul

2.3.38

naitan niścetum īse 'yam
dr̥gbhyām cittaena vekṣyate
kiṁ vātikramya tat sarvam
ātma-bhāvena kenacit

I was unable to understand (na etad niścetum īse) whether I was
seeing Him (kiṁ vā ayam iṅṣyate) with my eyes (dr̥gbhyām), with
my mind (cittaena), or with a power of the soul (vā kenacit ātma-
bhāvena) that transcended both (tat sarvam atikramya).

2.3.39

At one moment
I saw Him
formless & @ next moment
when I remembered the mercy
of LTN, I saw His form
& became joyful

kṣaṇān nirākāram ivāvalokayan
smarāmi nīlādri-pater anugraham
kṣaṇāt ca sākāram udīkṣya pūrva-van
mahā-mahaḥ-puñjam amuṁ labhe mudam

Although at one moment (kṣaṇān) I saw Him (avalokayan) as formless (nirākāram iva), I remembered (smarāmi) the mercy (anugraham) of the Lord of Nīlādri (nīlādri-pateh), and at the next moment (kṣaṇāt ca) I saw Him (amuṁ udīkṣya) again (pūrva-van) in His personal form (sākāram), vastly effulgent (mahā-mahaḥ-puñjam), and I was full of joy (labhe mudam).

The Supreme Lord whom Gopa-kumāra was perceiving did not actually become impersonal, but when His effulgence intensified, Gopa-kumāra could see nothing but that effulgence.

This is one characteristic of the (abode of liberation), that individual distinctions (tend to become obscured) by the all-pervading divine light from the transcendental body of the Lord.

In this instance, however, Gopa-kumāra remembered Lord Jagannātha, who was similarly effulgent, like a brilliant dark-blue mountain.

Remembering Lord Jagannātha's compassion, Gopa-kumāra thought that no one else could be as merciful as He.

Then, when the Lord's personal form again became visible past His effulgence, Gopa-kumāra's ecstasy increased even more.

The verbs in the Sanskrit text of this verse and the verses that follow are in the present tense even though the verse describes a past event.

This is to indicate that Gopa-kumāra spent a long time in Mahākāla-pura, the abode of liberation.

Something I would
begin to merge into
But he mercifully saved me with
the touch of the rays from His lotus feet

2.3.40

kadāpi tasminn evāham
līyamāno 'nukampayā
rakṣeya nija-pādābja-
nakhāṁśu-sparśato 'munā

Sometimes (kadāpi) I would begin to merge (aham līyamānah)
into the Lord's effulgence (tasminn eva), but He mercifully saved
Me (amunā anukampayā rakṣeya) with the touch (sparśato) of the
rays (aṁśu) from the nails (nakha) of His lotus feet (nija-pādābja).

The reddish nails of Lord Viṣṇu's toes are like brilliant gems.

They are so attractive to His devotees that the devotees never think of giving up their personal relationships with Him to dissolve themselves into oneness.

Of course, everything about the Lord is supremely attractive, not only His toes, but Vaiṣṇavas generally honor the Lord by beginning their worship from His feet.

2.3.41

bhinnābhinnair mahā-siddhaiḥ
sūkṣmaiḥ sūryam ivāmsubhiḥ
vṛtaṁ bhaktair ivālokya
kadāpi prīyate manaḥ

↑ felt special
pleasure in
Him surrounded by
devotees (perfected beings)
the subtle spiritual bodies

Sometimes (kadāpi) my mind felt special pleasure (prīyate manaḥ)
in beholding Him (ālokya) surrounded (vṛtaṁ) by the great
perfected beings (mahā-siddhaiḥ) who were His devotees
(bhaktaiḥ), at once different and nondifferent from Him (bhinna
abhinnaiḥ). They surrounded Him (vṛtaṁ) in subtle spiritual forms
(sūkṣmaiḥ), like beams of light around the sun (sūryam iva
amsubhiḥ).

The Supreme Personality of Godhead always invites His part-and-parcel jīvas to share loving reciprocations with Him, even in the abode of liberation.



He kindly considers the liberated souls who surround Him there His bhaktas but actually they are hardly interested in personal service.

The only bhakti they offer the Lord is to decorate Him as particles of His effulgence.

Although they are eternal, indissolvable individuals, their separate personalities are now dormant and invisible.

Like all other jīvas, they are both different and nondifferent from the Supreme, like the rays of light shining from the sun.

In spiritual substance they are one with the Lord, but they have autonomous identities, with their own consciousness, their own bodies, and their own small capacity to control.

When I observe
this treasure I become
like an ātmarāma
like a man whose ambitions
has all been fulfilled

2.3.42

ittham ānanda-sandoham
anuvindan nimagna-dhīḥ
ātmārāma ivābhūvaṁ
pūrṇa-kāma ivātha vā

The huge treasure of ecstasy (ānanda-sandoham) I in this way
obtained (ittham anuvindan) inundated my mind (nimagna-dhīḥ).
I became like a self-contented sage (ātmārāma iva abhūvan) or
(atha vā) like a man whose ambitions have all been fulfilled
(pūrṇa-kāma iva).

Gopa-kumāra became “like” a self-contented sage or a materialist, not one in fact.

Had he actually been contented with himself and his situation, he would no longer have been driven by the urge to seek his worshipable Lord.

This made up
conclude that I must
have reached the highest
destination of perfection of life

2.3.43

tarkārcita-vicāraughair
idam eva param padam
parām kāṣṭhām gataṁ caitad
amaṁsi paramam phalam

A flood of thoughts (vicāra oghaih), upheld by logic (tarka arcita),
made me conclude (amaṁsi) I had reached the supreme
destination (gataṁ ca etad paramam phalam), the highest
perfection of life (idam eva parām kāṣṭhām param padam).

Overwhelmed by
that ecstasy
as if the awareness of my
goal had vanished

2.3.44

pada-svābhāvikananda-
taraṅga-kṣobha-vihvale
citte tad-anya-sva-prāpya-
jñānam antardadhāv iva

Tossed by the waves of ecstasy (ānanda-taraṅga-kṣobha) intrinsic
to that abode (pada-svābhāvika), my mind was overwhelmed
(vihvale citte), as if the awareness of my goal (tad-anya-sva-prāpya-
jñānam) had vanished (antardadhāv iva).

Having worshiped Śrī Madana-gopāla for a long time, in all sorts of places, Gopa-kumāra was familiar with Lord Madana-gopāla's unique beauty.

Why did Gopa-kumāra now think that Mahākāla-pura and its Lord were the final goal of his life?

As explained here, the powerful influence of that realm confused him, temporarily diverting to another form of the Lord his determination to worship Madana-gopāla.

2.3.45

śrīman-mahā-bhāgavatopadeśatah
san-mantra-sevā-balato na kevalam
līnā kadācin nija-pūjya-devatā-
pādābja-sākṣād-avaloka-lālasā

But -
a) by the path of following the instructions of my super, my service to the guru of my hankering to see the Lotus feet of Mahāgaurī fully disappeared

Yet because of following the divine instructions of the great saintly devotee (śrīman-mahā-bhāgavata upadeśatah), and because of the strength of my service to the transcendental mantra (sad-mantra-sevā-balato), my hankering to see with my own eyes (sākṣād-avaloka-lālasā) the lotus feet of my worshipable Deity (nija-pūjya-devatā-pādābja) never fully disappeared (kadācid na kevalam līnā).

By the mercy of his divine spiritual master, Gopa-kumāra never lost his eagerness to see with his own eyes the lotus feet of Śrī Madana-gopāla.

And this eagerness was what impelled him to travel higher and higher in search of his Lord, never wanting to stay in any place where Madana-gopāla was absent.

2.3.46

utāsyā tejo-maya-pūruṣasya
cirāvalokena vivardhito 'bhūt
nijeṣṭa-sandarśana-dīrgha-lobhaḥ
smṛteḥ sṛtiṁ nīta iva prakarṣāt

In fact →
The more I looked
@ Lord Mahākāla
The more my greed to
see the fragrance

Rather (uta), the more I looked (cira avalokena) at the effulgent Lord Mahākāla (asya tejo-maya-pūruṣasya), the stronger rose (vivardhito abhūt) my long-standing greed (dīrgha-lobhaḥ) to see the object of my worship (nija iṣṭa-sandarśana). The Deity I worshiped seemed pulled by force (nīta iva prakarṣāt) onto the path of my remembrance (smṛteḥ sṛtiṁ).

If Gopa-kumāra were truly interested only in Śrī Madana-gopāla,
what was the value of being in a place more exalted than
Brahmaloka?

The answer given here is that his vivid and extended darśana of Lord
Mahākāla intensified his remembrance of Madana-gopāla and his
hankering to see the Lord in person, not just in his heart.

In other words, Gopa-kumāra was not satisfied to worship his Lord
only by passive meditation.

Beas of that greed
for MG → the love I have
@ Lord Mahākāla, the love I
felt felt that I might merge

2.3.47

tena tam prakāṭam paśyann
api priye na pūrva-vat
sīdāmy atha layam svasya
śaṅkamānaḥ svayam-bhavam

Because of that greed (tena), even though I beheld (paśyann api) the Supreme Lord (tam) right before me (prakāṭam), I could not feel as satisfied as before (priye na pūrva-vat). I was disturbed (atha sīdāmy) by the fear (śaṅkamānaḥ) that I might merge into Him (svasya layam), as was likely to happen in that abode (svayam-bhavam).

Even though the presence of Lord Mahākāla greatly intensified Gopa-
kumāra's greed to see Lord Madana-gopāla, Gopa-kumāra did not feel
as happy here as on the other planets he had visited.

The various forms of the Supreme Lord he had seen elsewhere had
not inspired a remembrance of Madana-gopāla as intense as in
Mahākāla-pura, but at least on those other planets Gopa-kumāra had
been in no danger of merging into the object of his meditation.

If he were to merge and forget his separate existence, he would also
forget his desire to join Śrī Madana-gopāla's pastimes.

That I was thinking
Vraja if I return to
be fulfilled.
Then I heard some beautiful music

2.3.48

vraja-bhūmāv ihāgatya
sādhaye 'ham sva-vāñchitam
vimṛśann evam aśrauṣaṁ
gīta-vādyādbhuta-dhvanim

I was thinking (evam vimṛśann) that if I returned (aham āgatya) to this Vraja-bhūmi (iha vraja-bhūmāv) I would fulfill (sādhaye aham) my desires (sva-vāñchitam). And then I heard (aśrauṣaṁ) some wonderful singing and music (gīta-vādyā adbhuta-dhvanim).

//

When I look
around I saw
a bull riding on
higher region

2.3.49

hr̥ṣṭo 'ham paritaḥ paśyan
vṛṣārūḍham vyalokayam
kam apy ūrdhva-padāt tatrā-
yāntam sarva-vilakṣaṇam

Enlivened (hr̥ṣṭah), looking all around (paritaḥ paśyan), I saw (aham vyalokayam) someone (kam apy) riding on a bull (vṛṣārūḍham)—a unique person (sarva-vilakṣanam), arriving (tatra āyāntam) from a higher region (ūrdhva-padāt).

The beautiful
form of Lord Śiva

karpūra-gauram tri-drśam dig-ambaram
candrārdha-maulim lalitam tri-śūlinam
gaṅgā-jalāmlāna-jaṭāvalī-dharam
bhasmāṅga-rāgam rucirāsthi-mālinam

Three-eyed (tri-drśam), white like camphor (karpūra-gauram), dressed only by the sky (dig-ambaram), that exquisitely beautiful person (lalitam) carried a trident (tri-śūlinam) and bore the half moon on his head (candra ardha-maulim), his matted locks (jaṭāvalī) brilliantly (amlāna) adorned (dharam) by the Gaṅgā (gaṅgā-jala). His body was smeared with ashes (bhasmāṅga-rāgam) and graced by a charming garland of bones (rucira asthi-mālinam).



Lord Śiva's garland of bones was in fact auspicious and beautiful because it was made from the bones of departed Vaiṣṇavas.

2.3.51

gauryā nijānkāśritayānurañjitaṁ
divyāti-divyaiḥ kalitaṁ paricchadaiḥ
ātmānurūpaiḥ parivāra-sañcayaiḥ
saṁsevyamānaṁ rucirākṛtīhitaiḥ

Sitting on his
lap, mother & servant
serves him.
Many followers also serves him

Sitting on his lap (nija anka āśritayā), a woman of fair complexion (gauryā) affectionately served him (anurañjitaṁ kalitaṁ). Divine regalia surrounded him (paricchadaiḥ), more heavenly than the riches of heaven (divya ati-divyaiḥ). And many followers (parivāra-sañcayaiḥ) attended him (saṁsevyamānaṁ), their attractive (rucira) forms (ākṛti) and behavior (īhitaiḥ) just fitting for his service (ātmānurūpaiḥ).

Upon first seeing him, Gopa-kumāra was unaware of who Lord Śiva was and so describes him as kam api, “someone.”

And although Gopa-kumāra knew nothing about Lord Śiva’s transcendental relationship with his wife, he describes her as gaurī, since he could see with his own eyes her beautiful golden complexion.

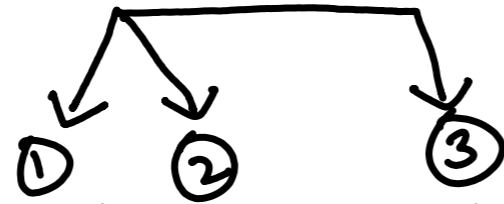
At first sight Gopa-kumāra could recognize that the royal umbrella, cāmara fans, and other personal accoutrements of Lord Śiva were more excellent than those of the demigods.

And suitably exalted attendants, with great devotion, carried that umbrella, fanned Lord Śiva with the cāmaras, and performed other services for him and his consort.

The associates of Lord Śiva appeared very handsome, including Śrī Gaṇeśa, with his large abdomen and elephant's head.

And they all conducted themselves in an attractive manner.

By worship of Gaṇeśa or other demigods one may attain a form with, for example, a protuberant belly and an elephant's head.



① Those who worship him, considering him superior to ⑤

② Those who worship him, considering him to be non-different from ⑤

But those who worship Lord Śiva understanding that he is nondifferent from Śrī Kṛṣṇa attain beautiful bodily forms on Lord Śiva's planet.

③ Those who worship him as a Vaiṣṇava.

This is affirmed in the narration of Lord Śiva's battle with Andhaka in Śrī Vāmana Purāṇa, Chapter Fifty-nine.

Astonished, I thought
"Who is he? He certainly
seems to be free on a level
above liberation"

2.3.52

paramam vismayam prāpto
harṣam caitad acintayam
ko nv ayam pārivārādhyo
bhāti mukti-padopari

Feeling (prāptah) the greatest surprise (paramam vismayam) and
delight (harṣam ca), I thought (etad acintayam), "Who is this (ka-
nu ayam), accompanied by such an entourage (pārivāra ādhyah),
and appearing (bhāti) from above the abode of liberation (mukti-
pada upari)?"

He looks
a) more powerful than anyone of this world.
b) more excellent than the liberated souls
yet seems to violate the civilized behavior.

2.3.53

jagad-vilakṣaṇaiśvāryo
mukta-vargādhiko 'pi san
lakṣyate 'ti-sad-ācāro
mahā-viṣayavān iva

“He looks (lakṣyate) more powerful than anyone in the material world (jagad-vilakṣaṇa aiśvāryo), more excellent than all liberated souls (mukta-varga adhikah api san), yet he seems to violate the rules of civilized behavior (ati-sad-ācāro), like a great sense-gratifier (mahā-viṣayavān iva).”

It struck Gopa-kumāra as strange that even though this unique person appeared to be the supreme ruler of the material world, the defender of religious principles, he was ignoring the rules of proper behavior—by traveling naked, embracing his wife in public, and so on—enjoying all kinds of sense gratification even though he seemed a fully liberated transcendentalist.

↓ felt ecstatic
See him & ↓ bowed
↓
He heartily glanced @ me

2.3.54

parānanda-bharākrānta-
cetās tad-darśanād aham
naman sa-parivāram tam
kr̥payālokito 'munā

My mind (cetāh) was overcome by the weight of the supreme
ecstasy I felt (parānanda-bhara (ākrānta)) from seeing him (tad-
darśanād). I bowed down to him (aham tam naman) and those
who stay with him (sa-parivāram), and he gave me a
compassionate glance (amunā kr̥payā ālokita).

I joyfully approached
Nandiśvara and inquired
about that personality

2.3.55

harṣa-vegād upavrajya
śrīman-nandiśvarāhvayam
apṛccham tad-gaṇādhyakṣam
tad-vṛttāntam viśesataḥ

Impelled by joy (harṣa-vegād), I approached (upavrajya) the leader of his companions (tad-gaṇādhyakṣam), named Śrī Nandiśvara (śrīman-nandiśvarāhvayam), and asked him in detail about this person (viśeṣataḥ apṛccham) and what he was doing (tad-vṛttāntam).

Altogether unfamiliar with Lord Śiva, Gopa-kumāra asked Śrī Nandiśvara,
“Who is this? Where is his residence? Where is he going now?”

Nandīśvara kuglaḥ ṣ
तद्वि ह.
↓
" Don't you recognize Lord
Śiva → oh! worshiper of Gopāla "

2.3.56

sa sa-hāsam avocan mām
gopālopāsanā-para
gopa-bāla na jāniṣe
śrī-śivam jagad-īśvaram

Nandīśvara laughed and said to me (sa sa-hāsam avocan mām),
“O cowherd boy (gopa-bāla), devoted worshiper of Gopāla (gopāla
upāsanā-para), don't you recognize (na jāniṣe) Lord Śiva (śrī-
śivam), the lord of the universe (jagad-īśvaram)?”

Nandīśvara found it amusing that a devotee of Lord Gopāla could be ignorant of the identity of Lord Śiva.

But since Gopa-kumāra was a simple cowherd boy, Nandīśvara thought, “He might be so poorly informed.”

By calling Lord Śiva the lord of the universe, Nandīśvara tactfully told Gopa-kumāra that since Lord Śiva is independent he can apparently violate the laws of civilized behavior without blame.

He is the giver
of bhukti & mukti
He expands bhagavad-bhakti
He is worshiped by even muktes
He is dear to the vaiṣṇavas

2.3.57

bhukter mukteś ca dātāyam
bhagavad-bhakti-varḍhanah
muktānām api sampūjyo
vaiṣṇavānām ca vallabhah

“He is the giver (ayam dātā) of material enjoyment and liberation (bhukter mukteś ca), and he expands devotion to the Personality of Godhead (bhagavad-bhakti-varḍhanah). He is worshiped even by the liberated (muktānām api sampūjyah) and is dear to the Vaiṣṇavas (vaiṣṇavānām ca vallabhah).

Lord Śiva is bhagavad-bhakti-var dhana in more than one sense.

By showing a loving attitude toward the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Lord Śiva increases the Supreme Lord's reciprocal love for him.

And apart from this, Lord Śiva is himself a great lord (bhagavān) who promotes the process of devotional service to Viṣṇu.

He teaches his own devotees that bhagavad-bhakti is the supreme goal of life, greater than all others.

The essential meaning of Lord Śiva's being bhagavad-bhakti-varadhana
is that by his very words and behavior he increases for the inhabitants
of the universe their devotion for the Supreme Personality of
Godhead.

And so he is very dear to the devotees of Lord Viṣṇu, who aspire for
his association.

2.3.58-59

śiva-kṛṣṇāpṛthag-dṛṣṭi-bhakti-labhyāt sva-lokataḥ
svānurūpāt kuverasya sakhyur bhakti-vaśī-kṛtaḥ

kailāsādrim alaṅkartum pārvatyaḥ priyayānayaḥ
samaṁ parimitair yāti priyaiḥ parivṛtair vṛtaḥ

“Drawn by the devotion (bhakti-vaśī-kṛtaḥ) of his friend Kuvera (sakhyur kuverasya), he is traveling (yāti) with his beloved Pārvatī (anayā priyayā pārvatyaḥ samaṁ) and dear gentle companions (parimitair priyaiḥ parivṛtair vṛtaḥ) to grace Mount Kailāsa with his presence (kailāsādrim alaṅkartum). He came from his own planet (sva-lokataḥ), as transcendental as he (svānurūpāt), an abode reached through devotion (bhakti-labhyāt) by those who see him and Lord Kṛṣṇa as nondifferent (śiva-kṛṣṇa apṛthag-dṛṣṭi).”

Drawn by devotion of
Kuvera, he is going to Kailāsa
He is calling from his own
transcendental planet
which is offered by
devotion to those who
see him to be non-different

Here Nandiśvara explains where Lord Śiva comes from and where he is going.

Lord Śiva's own planet, beyond the coverings of the material universe, is attainable by those who worship him and Lord Viṣṇu on the same level.

That transcendental world is suitable for Lord Śiva's pleasure, equipped as it is with all kinds of eternal and unlimited opulence.

Yet Lord Śiva gracefully accepts the friendship of the demigod Kuvera, the original proprietor of Mount Kailāsa, and submits himself to Kuvera's devotion.

And so Lord Śiva is on his way to visit Kailāsa in the company of Pārvatī, his consort.

Since Pārvatī, the mother of the universe, is Lord Śiva's supreme energy, Gopa-kumāra should not be shocked to see her sitting on his lap in public.

But why is Lord Śiva traveling with such a small entourage?

Although on his own planet he has many more devotees, for this trip he has chosen only his dearest associates because the Kailāsa within the material world can accommodate only some of his opulence and entourage.

→ I became eager to
obtain Śiva's grace
After I heard this

2.3.60

śrī-gopa-kumāra uvāca
tad ākarṇya prahr̥ṣṭo 'ham
aiccham̐ tasmān maheśvarāt
prasādam̐ kam api prāptum
ātmano hr̥dayaṅ-gamma

Śrī Gopa-kumāra said: Delighted to hear this (**tad ākarṇya prahr̥ṣṭah**), I was eager (**aham aiccham̐**) to obtain (**prāptum**) Lord Śiva's grace (**tasmād maheśvarāt kam api prasādam̐**) and fulfill a long-cherished desire (**ātmano hr̥dayaṅ-gamma**).

Gopa-kumāra was eager to understand how Lord Śiva is nondifferent from Śrī Madana-gopāla-deva.

Although Gopa-kumāra's natural inclination was toward the lotus feet of Madana-gopāla, he also found himself unavoidably attracted to this amazing person Lord Śiva, whom he was seeing for the first time.

Gopa-kumāra would be grateful if Lord Śiva were to enlighten him about how Lord Śiva and Lord Kṛṣṇa are nondifferent.

⑤, Reading
my thoughts, instructs
Nandīśvara to instruct me
By that the facts became known to me

2.3.61

jñātvā bhagavatā tena
dr̥ṣṭyādiṣṭasya nandinaḥ
upadeśena śuddhena
svayaṁ me 'sphurad añjasā

Lord Śiva (**bhagavatā**), reading my thoughts (**tena jñātvā**), ordered Nandīśvara with a knowing glance (**dr̥ṣṭyā nandinaḥ ādiṣṭasya**), and through Nandīśvara's pure guidance (**śuddhena upadeśena**) the facts easily revealed themselves to me (**svayaṁ me añjasā asphurad**).

Lord Śiva, the best of mystics, knew at once what Gopa-kumāra was thinking and simply by glancing at Nandīśvara conveyed his desire that Nandīśvara explain the matter.

Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī says in his commentary to this verse that nandinaḥ can refer to Nandīśvara, the principal attendant of Lord Śiva, or else to the bull Nandī, Lord Śiva's carrier, who was born from a partial expansion of the Supreme Lord.

⑤ IS non different
From Mh.
He serves the cause of my
love for Mh. by promoting it everywhere

2.3.62

śrīman-madana-gopālān
nija-prāṇeṣṭa-daivatāt
abhinnah śrī-maheśo 'yam
uta tad-bhāva-vardhanah

This Lord Śiva (**ayam śrī-maheśah**), I realized, is nondifferent (**uta abhinnah**) from Madana-gopāla (**śrīmad-madana-gopālāt**), the Deity I worship, the Lord more dear to me than life itself (**nija-prāṇa iṣṭa-daivatāt**). Lord Śiva serves the cause of love for my Lord by promoting it everywhere (**tad-bhāva-vardhanah**).

There is nothing wrong with being attracted to Lord Śiva.

Since he is nondifferent from Lord Kṛṣṇa, devotion offered to him is also devotion to Kṛṣṇa.

More precisely, when one satisfies Lord Śiva by pure devotion to him, Lord Śiva helps one become more devoted to Kṛṣṇa.

Who? → Out
They group? → I
Treated with affection
From Śrī Nandīśvara I heard
These unique facts

2.3.63

tad-gaṇa-madhye 'ham
praviṣṭaḥ prīṇito 'khilaiḥ
śaivaiḥ śrī-nandino 'śrauṣam
vṛttam etad vilakṣaṇam

I happily entered (**aham sukham praviṣṭaḥ**) among Lord Śiva's companions (**tad-gaṇa-madhye**) and was treated with affection (**prīṇitaḥ**) by all his devotees (**akhilaiḥ śaivaiḥ**). From Śrī Nandīśvara (**śrī-nandino**) I heard (**aśrauṣam**) these unique facts (**etad vilakṣaṇam vṛttam**):

⑤ he is always visible to his exclusive worshipers in his abode

2.3.64

sadaika-rūpo bhagavān śivo 'yam
vasan sva-loke prakāṭaḥ sadaiva
vilokyate tatra nivāsa-tustais
tad-eka-niṣṭhaiḥ satataṁ niṣṭaiḥ

The great Lord Śiva (**ayam bhagavān śivah**) has one eternal transcendental form (**sadā eka-rūpaḥ**). Dwelling in his own abode (**vasan sva-loke**), he is always visible (**sadaiva prakāṭaḥ vilokyate**) to his exclusive worshipers (**satataṁ nija iṣṭaiḥ tad-eka-niṣṭhaiḥ**), who are pleased to live there (**tatra nivāsa-tuṣṭaiḥ**).

According to Śrī Nandīśvara, Lord Śiva remains always in one form, meaning that he is not like Lord Mahākāla, sometimes formless and sometimes having a personal form, nor does he expand himself as Lord Viṣṇu does, into the different forms of a fish, a tortoise, and so on.

In the pastimes Lord Śiva performs for the pleasure of his devotees, he sometimes appears disguised as a hunter or a fisherman, but he does not transform into different species of life.

Because Lord Śiva's followers can rest assured he is not going to change his appearance, they are always satisfied.

He is always visible on his planet, not like Lord Visnu, who often leaves His abodes to visit other places.

Lord Śiva's dear devotees can always see their lord, unlike the devotees of Śrī Viṣṇu, Śrī Yajñeśvara, and the other incarnations of the Personality of Godhead on Svargaloka, Maharloka, Tapoloka, and Satyaloka.



This is the explanation given by Śrī Nandīśvara, but more precisely Lord Śiva is always in the same form in the sense that his body is always purely spiritual, sac-cid-ānanda, and never subject to change.

He is always present in his own abode, beyond the material creation, and so is always visible in that abode for the pleasure of his devotees.

2.3.65

svābhinna-bhagavad-bhakti-
lāmpaṭyaṁ grāhayann iva
sadā ramayati svīyān
nṛtya-gītādi-kautukaiḥ

By singing &
dancing → he always
gives pleasure to his
companions
as if to make them greedy for
but where they see
for diff. & (V)

With festivals of singing, dancing, and so on (nṛtya-gītādi-
kautukaiḥ), he always gives pleasure to his companions (sadā
ramayati svīyān), as if to make them greedy (lāmpaṭyaṁ
grāhayann iva) for the Supreme Lord's devotional service
(bhagavad-bhakti), in which they see that he and Lord Visnu are
nondifferent (sva abhinna).

Lord Śiva's festivals resound with congregational chanting of Lord Viṣṇu's names, and his devotees can be heard crying out in great reverence and love for Lord Viṣṇu.

It appears that Lord Śiva holds such festivals for the benefit of others, to induce them to take up worship of Lord Viṣṇu as nondifferent from himself, but in fact Lord Śiva is himself fully absorbed in viṣṇu-bhakti because like Nārada Muni he is a bhaktāvatāra, an empowered incarnation of the Lord in the role of the Lord's devotee.

Although he is
Jagad-īśvara
lovingly worships the
form of Śeṣa

2.3.66

bhagavantam sahasrāsyam
śeṣa-mūrtim nija-priyam
nityam arcayati premṇā
dāsa-vaj jagad-īśvaraḥ

Although he is the lord of the universe (jagad-īśvaraḥ), he always lovingly worships (nityam premṇā arcayati) his favorite form of the Supreme Lord, Śeṣa (nija-priyam bhagavantam śeṣa-mūrtim), He of a thousand faces (sahasra āsyam), as if a humble servant (dāsa-vad).

Lord Śiva feels a special affinity with the Ananta Śeṣa expansion of Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa because both Lord Śiva and Śeṣa are presiding lords of the mode of ignorance.



This is depicted in the Fifth Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (5.17.16),
in the account of how Lord Viṣṇu is worshiped on Ilāvṛta-varṣa:

**bhavānī-nāthaiḥ strī-gaṇārbuda-sahasrair avarudhyamāno bhagavataś catur-
mūrter mahā-puruṣasya turīyām tāmasīm mūrṭim prakṛtim ātmanah
saṅkarṣaṇa-samjñām ātma-samādhi-rūpeṇa sannidhāpyaitad abhigṛṇan
bhava upadhāvati.**

In Ilāvṛta-varṣa, Lord Śiva is always encircled (**avarudhyamānah**) by ten billion maidservants of goddess Durgā (**bhavānī-nāthaiḥ strī-gaṇa arbuda-sahasrair**). Uttering the following mantra (**etad abhigṛṇan**) in meditation (**ātma-samādhi-rūpeṇa sannidhāpya**), Śiva worships (**bhava upadhāvati**) Saṅkarṣaṇa (**saṅkarṣaṇa-samjñām**), his source (**prakṛtim ātmanah**), the spiritual form in charge of ignorance (**turīyām tāmasīm mūrṭim**), among the four forms of the Lord (**bhagavatah mahā-puruṣasya catur-mūrteh**).

As stated by Lord Śiva in his prayers in the Fifth Canto, the manifestation of Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa as Ananta Śeṣa has thousands of hoods.

And so this form is different in appearance from the form of Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa worshiped in the covering shell of ahaṅkāra, false ego.

In Lord Śiva's abode, the region of ahaṅkāra, Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa has four arms, like Śrī Pradyumna and Aniruddha. Lord Śiva's abode is thus a very special place.

2.3.67

Hearing about
the unique stories
of Śivaloka → I felt
very happy
But, my heart was not full

jñātvemaṃ śiva-lokasya
viśeṣaṃ sarvato 'dhikam
paramodaṃ paramaṃ prāpto
'py apūrṇaṃ hṛd alakṣayam

Learning about (jñātvā) this unique excellence of Śivaloka (imam śiva-lokasya sarvato adhikam viśeṣaṃ), I felt exceedingly happy (paramaṃ paramodaṃ prāptaḥ). Yet my heart (hṛd apy), I knew (alakṣayam), was not full (apūrṇaṃ).

Hearing all this made Gopa-kumāra eager to see Śivaloka, but his persistent desire to find Śrī Madana-gopāla constrained him.

2.3.68

tan-nidānam anāsādyā
sadyo 'jñāsisam āmṛśan
śrīman-guru-prasādāpta-
vastu-sevā-prabhāvatah

Initially I
could not understand
the cause of that dissection
But by the mercy of guru &
power of mantra → I quickly
understood

I couldn't discern (anāsādyā) the cause of that feeling (tan-nidānam), but by the mercy of my divine spiritual master (śrīman-guru-prasāda) I had received the transcendental mantra (āpta), and by the power of my service to the mantra (vastu-sevā-prabhāvatah), after some reflection (āmṛśan) I quickly understood (sadyo ajñāsisam).

By virtue of constantly meditating with full sincerity on the ten-syllable gopāla-mantra, Gopa-kumāra could understand in a moment the essence of his predicament.

2.3.69

śrīman-madana-gopāla-
deva-pāda-sarojayoh
līlādy-anubhavābhāvo
mām ayaṁ bād hate kila

The Gop of
disturbance → way
forgetting the lotus feet
of Mh & His attractive
pastimes

I was disturbed (mām kila bād hate) because of forgetting (abhāvo)
the lotus feet of Śrīman Madana-gopāla (śrīman-madana-gopāla
deva-pāda-sarojayoh), and His pastimes and other attractive
features (līlādy-anubhava).

In this circumstance Gopa-kumāra was unable to focus his mind on
Śrī Madana-gopāla's pastimes, beauty, sweetness, and compassion.

I told my mind
that it is Lord Śiva
who performs these pastimes
as Lord Gopāla

2.3.70

abodhayam mano 'nena
maheśenaiva sā khalu
līlā-viśeṣa-vaicitrī
kṛtā mūrti-viśeṣataḥ

I told my mind (manah abodhayam) that it is Lord Śiva himself
(anena maheśena eva) who performs (sā khalu kṛtā) these
wonderfully varied pastimes (līlā-viśeṣa-vaicitrī) in the special
form of Lord Gopāla (mūrti-viśeṣataḥ).

2.3.71

tathāpy asvastham ālakṣya
sva-cittam idam abruvam
yady asmin nānubhūyeta
sā tad-rūpādi-mādhurī

But seeing (tathāpy ālakṣya) my mind still unsettled (sva-cittam asvastham), I told it (idam abruvam), “If you fail to perceive something in Lord Śiva (yady asmin na anubhūyeta), it must be the rare sweetness of Gopāla’s beauty and His other such qualities (sā tad-rūpādi-mādhurī).”

But seeing that
my mind was still
unsettled,
I told it
↓
If you fail to perceive something
in Lord Śiva, it must be the
rare sweetness of Gopāla's beauty
& other qualities

Golakaṅga fullaḥ
tells his mind.
" By Lord's mercy
your dīrgha-vāñchā will be
fulfilled".

2.3.72

tathāpi dīrgha-vāñchā te
'nugrahād asya setsyati
acirād iti manyasva
sva-prasāda-viśeṣataḥ

“Nonetheless (tathāpi), by Lord Śiva's mercy (asya anugrahād)
your long-held desire (te dīrgha-vāñchā) will soon be fulfilled
(acirād setsyati). By his special favor toward you (sva-prasāda-
viśeṣataḥ), be assured, this will be so (iti manyasva).”

My mind was
thus appeased & I was
happy to stay by Ś's side
↓
For some reason, Ś decided
to rest in BT before returning
his journey

evam tuṣṭa-manās tasya
tatra kenāpi hetunā
viśrāntasya maheśasya
pārśve 'tiṣṭham kṣaṇam sukham

My mind was thus appeased (evam tuṣṭa-manāh), and I was happy
to stay a while (kṣaṇam sukham atīṣṭham) by the side of Lord Śiva
(maheśasya pārśve), who for some reason (kenāpi hetunā) chose to
take rest (viśrāntasya) before going on with his journey (tasya
tatra).

Why Lord Śiva rested in Mahākāla-pura before proceeding to
Kailāsa is disclosed in the next verses.

Just then
heard sweet singing of
great souls from a distance

2.3.74

tarhy eva bhagavan dūre
keṣām api mahātmanām
saṅgīta-dhvanir atyanta-
madhuraḥ kaścīd udgataḥ

↑ Mathurā Brāhmaṇa

Just then (tarhy eva), my lord (bhagavan), I heard from a distance (dūre udgataḥ) the extremely sweet melodies of the singing (atyanta-madhuraḥ saṅgīta-dhvanih) of great souls (keṣām api mahātmanām).

Gopa-kumāra calls his disciple bhagavān, showing deep respect, because the disciple is a Mathurā brāhmaṇa and is now blessed with the supreme good fortune of being engaged in the worship of Lord Madana-gopāla.

Hearing that
Sound, (S) began to dance alone

2.3.75

taṁ śrutvā paramānanda-
sindhau magno maheśvaraḥ
mahā-prema-vikārāttah
pravṛtto nartitum svayam

Hearing that sound (taṁ śrutvā), Lord Śiva (maheśvaraḥ) was swept away (magno) in an ocean of great ecstasy (paramānanda-sindhau). Under the spell of intense love of God (mahā-prema-vikāra āttah), he began to dance, alone (svayam nartitum pravṛttah).

Whatever this sound was, it at once caused transcendental symptoms
in the body of Lord Śiva, symptoms of profound transformations in
his mind—trembling, perspiration, choking of the voice, standing of
the bodily hair on end, falling to the ground, and more.

↓
SETTLE- BLUES

These appeared spontaneously, beyond his conscious control.

→ trembles

He then started to dance, though no one around him was dancing.

His wife &
Companions
high enthusiasm by playing
music, chanting etc

2.3.76

pati-vratottamā sā tu
devī nandy-ādibhiḥ saha
prabhum utsāhayām āsa
vādyā-saṅkīrtanādibhiḥ

His most faithful wife (sā tu pati-vrata uttamā), Devī (devī), and his companions headed by Nandīśvara (nandy-ādibhiḥ saha) added to the enthusiasm of their lord (prabhum utsāhayām āsa) by playing music, chanting the Supreme Lord's names, and so on (vādyā-saṅkīrtana ādibhiḥ).

Far from resenting her husband's losing his composure, the goddess Pārvatī, the most faithful of chaste wives, encouraged him, following his lead.

Even while still sitting on his lap, before he stood up to dance, she began to accompany him with music.

2.3.77

sadya evāgatāms tatrā-
drākṣam cāru-catur-bhujān
śrīmat-kaiśora-saundarya-
mādhurya-vibhavācitān

Then, suddenly
I saw beautiful
4 armed persons arrive there

Then suddenly I saw (sadya eva adrākṣam) a group of attractive four-armed
persons (cāru-catur-bhujān) arrive (āgatāms tatra), adorned with all the
opulences (vibhava ācitān) of youth, charm, beauty, and good fortune
(śrīmat-kaiśora-saundarya-mādhurya).

Some of the attendants who sang at Lord Śiva's side as he danced had four
arms also, but the newly arrived four-armed persons were exceptionally
beautiful.

2.3.78

bhūṣā-bhūṣaṇa-gātrāṃśu-
cchaṭācchādita-śaivakān
nijeśvara-mahā-kīrti-
gānānanda-rasāplutān

They were
so beautiful that
they look the saints
invisible.
↓
They were immersed in singing
the glories of their Lord

Their limbs (gātra) so effulgent (amśu-cchaṭa) as to decorate their very ornaments (bhūṣā-bhūṣaṇa) and make the Śaivites seem invisible (ācchādita-śaivakān), those four-armed persons were immersed in the blissful rasa (ānanda-rasa āplutān) of singing (gāna) the sublime glories of their Lord (nija īśvara-mahā-kīrti).

2.3.79

In the company
of those persons were
the 4 brothers

anirvācya-tamāś ceto-
hāri-sarva-paricchadān
saṅgatān pūrva-drṣṭais taiś
caturbhiḥ sanakādibhiḥ

All their ornaments and accoutrements (sarva-paricchadān) were beautiful (ceto-hāri) beyond words (anirvācya-tamāś). And in the company of those persons (taiś saṅgatān) were the four brothers I had seen before, led by Sanaka (pūrva-drṣṭaiḥ caturbhiḥ sanakādibhiḥ).

Although Sanaka and his brothers reside on Tapoloka, where Gopa-kumāra had met them before, they are as exalted as residents of Brahmaloaka and regions even higher, because they are empowered incarnations of the Supreme Lord.

I was so attracted
to see them
that I was unaware of
anything else

2.3.80

tad-darśana-svabhāvottha-
praharṣākrṣṭa-mānasah
nājñāsiṣaṁ kim apy antar
bahiś cānyan nija-priyam

So attracted was my mind (ākṛṣṭa-mānasah) by the spontaneous joy of seeing them (tad-darśana-svabhāva uttha-praharsa) that I was aware of nothing but them (nājñāsiṣaṁ kim apy), internally or externally (antar bahiś ca), not even things most dear to me (anyat nija-priyam).

After a moment,
I came back to consciousness
I wanted to request them to
make me their servant then to
But, I was too fearful & embarrassed to ask

2.3.81

kṣaṇāt svastho 'py aho teṣām
dāsatvam api cetasā
nāśakam yācituṃ bhītyā
lajjayā ca su-durghaṭam

After a moment (kṣaṇāt) I came back to normal consciousness (svasthah). But, oh (apy aho), I couldn't bring myself (cetasā nāśakam) to ask them (yācituṃ) to make me their servant (dāsatvam api). I felt too afraid and embarrassed (bhītyā lajjayā ca) to ask such an unlikely blessing, even silently within my mind (su-durghaṭam).

Gopa-kumāra thought it would be offensive for such an insignificant person as he to ask for the exalted position of a servant of the Vaikuṅṭha messengers.

So he couldn't summon the courage to submit his request.

eṣā hi lālasā nūnam kṛpaṇam mām abādhata
sambhāṣerann ime kim mām śivasya kṛpayā sakṛt

kutratyāḥ katame vaite kṛpāpāṅgena pāntu mām
yān ālingya bhṛśam rudraḥ prema-mūrcchām ayam vrajet

Embracing them
 (S) enters in prema
 Ah, I felt that by Ś's mercy
 they may talk to me
 (S) got that share
 upon me

Simply by embracing them (yān ālingya) Lord Śiva (ayam rudraḥ) could suddenly go into a swoon of prema (bhṛśam prema-mūrcchām vrajet). And in my wretchedness (kṛpanam) a certain longing (eṣā hi lālasā) troubled me (mām abādhata)—a longing that just once (sakṛt), by the mercy of Lord Śiva (śivasya kṛpayā), these persons (ime) might somehow talk to me (kim mām sambhāṣerann), or on some pretext (katame vā) might save me (pāntu mām) by the mercy of their sidelong glance (ete kṛpā apāṅgena).

Gopa-kumāra thought that only the mercy of these wonderful persons would save him from dying untimely out of frustration.

Without even knowing who they were and from where they had come, he was convinced they were great souls.

Umā understood
my thoughts & had
Ganeśa address me

2.3.84

ity-ādi-man-mano-vṛttam
jñātvā devyomayeritah
śiva-cittānuvartinyā
gaṇeśo 'kathayac chanaiḥ

The goddess Umā (devyā umayā), who always acts in accord with Lord Śiva's heart (śiva-citta anuvartinyā), understood (jñātvā) what I was thinking (ity-ādi-mad-mano-vṛttam). She then had Ganeśa gently address me (gaṇeśah akathayat śanaiḥ).

→ Pure devotee

Gaṇeśa spoke to Gopa-kumāra in a quiet voice because what he was about to say was too confidential for all the companions of Lord Śiva to hear.

Lord Śiva's consort Pārvatī, or Umā, always present in her husband's heart, acts only with his sanction.

2.3.85

śrī-gaṇeśa uvāca

ete vaikuṅṭha-nāthasya

śrī-kṛṣṇasya mahā-prabhoḥ

pārśadāḥ prāpta-sārūpyā

vaikuṅṭhād āgatāḥ kila

Śrī Gaṇeśa said: These are associates (ete pārśadāḥ) of the ruler of Vaikuṅṭha (vaikuṅṭha-nāthasya), the Supreme Lord (mahā-prabhoḥ) Śrī Kṛṣṇa (śrī-kṛṣṇasya). They have attained bodily forms similar to His (prāpta-sārūpyā) and have come here from Vaikuṅṭha itself (vaikuṅṭhād āgatāḥ kila).

Here the word kila means “Certainly this is true. You should not doubt that they have come from the spiritual world.”

These are associates
from Vaikuṅṭha
They have come here from
Vaikuṅṭha

Just see
you see these
Vaikunṭha
traveling in this small universe
ruled by 4 headed Brahmā
These are hisses universe
ruled by 8 & 16 headed
Brahmā.

paśyeme 'py apare yānti brahmaṇo 'dhikṛte 'lpake

brahmāṇḍe catur-āsyasya tathāmī dūrataḥ pare

amī cāṣṭa-mukhasyaitad-dvi-guṇe yānti vegataḥ

amī tu ṣoḍaśāsyasya brahmāṇḍe dvi-guṇe tataḥ

Just see (paśya) these other Vaikunṭha companions of the Lord (ime apy apare), traveling (yānti) in this small universe (alpake brahmāṇḍe) ruled by (adhikṛte) four-headed Brahmā (catur-āsyasya brahmaṇah). And further away (tathā dūrataḥ) those others (amī pare), moving swiftly (yānti vegataḥ) in the universe of an eight-headed Brahmā (amī ca aṣṭa-mukhasya), a world twice as large (etad-dvi-guṇe). And those others in the world of a Brahmā with sixteen heads (amī tu ṣoḍaśāsyasya brahmāṇḍe), a world twice as large again (dvi-guṇe tataḥ).

To show that these visitors from Vaikuṅṭha were indeed extraordinary, Śrī Gaṇeśa pointed out more of them entering the other side of the universe, a great distance away, on some other mission.

And beyond this relatively small universe of four-headed Brahmā, still other Vaikuṅṭha messengers were visiting the world of an eight-headed Brahmā, which was twice as big as this one, or one billion yojanas in diameter.

They were traveling swiftly (vegataḥ) because that universe is so large.

Gaṇeśa further showed the same thing happening in universes still larger.

In this way
Ganesha showed up
many such devotees
traveling to billions
of universes.
They were very
attractive

ity evaṁ koṭi-koṭīnām brahmaṇām mahatām kramāt
koṭi-koṭi-mukhābjānām tādṛg-brahmāṇḍa-koṭiṣu

gacchato līlayā tat-tad-anurūpa-paricchadān
gaṇeśo 'darśayat tān mām bahuśo dṛṇ-manoharān

In this way (ity evaṁ) Gaṇeśa (gaṇeśah) showed me (mām adarśayat) many Vaikuntha companions of the Lord (tān bahuśo) traveling with ease (gacchato līlayā) in the millions and billions of universes (tādṛg-brahmāṇḍa-koṭiṣu) of multitudes of huge Brahmās (brahmaṇām mahatām kramāt), who had millions and billions of lotus faces (koṭi-koṭi-mukhābjānām). The Vaikunṭha devotees, attractive to the eyes and mind (dṛṇ-manoharān), all had suitable bodies and were suitably equipped for the universes they were visiting (tat-tad-anurūpa-paricchadān).

One after another, Gaṇeśa pointed out messengers from Vaikuṅṭha in the universes of a Brahmā with 32 heads, 64 heads, 128 heads, and so on. Gopa-kumāra could perceive no end to these countless universes.

That there are in fact material universes beyond counting is stated in scriptures such as Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam:

kvāham tamo-mahad-aham-kha-carāgni-vār-bhū-
samveṣṭitāṇḍa-ghaṭa-sapta-vitasti-kāyah
kvedrg-vidhāvigaṇitāṇḍa-parāṇu-caryā-
vātādhva-roma-vivarasya ca te mahitvam

“What am I (kvāham), a small creature measuring seven spans of my own hand (sapta-vitasti-kāyah)? I am enclosed in a pot-like universe (samveṣṭitāṇḍa-ghaṭa) composed of material nature (tamo), the total material energy (mahad), false ego (aham), ether (kha), air (cara), fire (agni), water (vār), and earth (bhū). And what is Your glory (kva te mahitvam)? Unlimited universes (īdrg-vidha avigaṇita aṇḍa) pass through the pores of Your body (roma-vivarasya) just as particles of dust pass through the openings of a screened window (parāṇu-caryā-vāta-adhva).” (Bhāgavatam 10.14.11)

dyu-pataya eva te na yayur antam anantaayā
tvam api yad-antarāṇḍa-nicayā nanu sāvaraṇāḥ
kha iva rajāmsi vānti vayasā saha yac chrutayas
tvayi hi phalanty atan-nirasanena bhavan-nidhanāḥ

“Because You are unlimited (**anantaayā**), neither the lords of heaven (**na dyu-pataya eva**) nor even You Yourself (**tvam api**) can ever reach the end of Your glories (**te yayuh antam**). The countless universes (**yad-antara andā-nicayā**), each enveloped in its shell (**sa āvaraṇāḥ**), are compelled by the wheel of time to wander within You (**vayasā saha**), like particles of dust blowing about in the sky (**kha iva rajāmsi**). And the śrutis (**yad śrutayah**), following their method of eliminating everything separate from the Supreme (**atad-nirasanena**), become successful by revealing You (**tvayi hi phalanty**) as their final conclusion (**bhavan-nidhanāḥ**).” (Bhāgavatam 10.87.41)

kṣity-ādibhir eṣa kilāvṛtaḥ
saptabhir daśa-guṇottarair aṇḍa-kośaḥ
yatra pataty aṇu-kalpaḥ
sahāṇḍa-koṭi-koṭibhis tad anantaḥ

The universe (**aṇḍa-kośaḥ**) covered (**āvṛtaḥ**) by seven layers (**kṣity-ādibhir saptabhir**) each ten times thicker than the previous layer (**daśa-guṇa uttarair**), wanders about like an atom (**pataty aṇu-kalpaḥ**) along with billions of other universes (**saha aṇḍa-koṭi-koṭibhiḥ**) inside of you (**yatra**). Therefore you are unlimited (**tad anantaḥ**). (Bhāgavatam 6.16.37)

Gopa-kumāra could easily see into all the material universes from where he stood in the abode of liberation because that realm is free from any covering of material energy.

In each universe, he saw, the Vaikuṅṭha messengers had assumed forms with a different size and showed potencies just suitable for that universe.

Had the visitors from Vaikuṅṭha not made themselves appear similar in size and form to the inhabitants of the universe they were visiting, those inhabitants would not receive them with the respect deserved by representatives of Lord Nārayaṇa.

2.3.90-91

ete hi mṛtyu-kāle 'pi jihvāgre śrotra-vartma vā
kathañcit sakṛd-āptena nāmābhāsenā ca prabhoh

bhaktān kṛtsna-bhayāt pāntas tanvanto bhaktim ujjvalām
sarvatra vicaranty ātmec-chayā bhakty-eka-vallabhāḥ

Śrī Ganeśa continued: These persons (ete hi) cherish only devotional service to the Lord (bhakty-eka-vallabhāḥ). They travel as they please (vicaranty ātma icchayā), spreading (tanvanto) pure devotion (ujjvalām bhaktim) everywhere (sarvatra). They save the Lord's devotees (bhaktān pāntas) from all fears (kṛtsna-bhayāt), even at the time of death (mṛtyu-kāle 'pi), if those devotees have but once had (kathañcit sakṛd-āptena) even a reflection of the Lord's name (prabhoh nāmābhāsenā ca) on the tip of their tongues (jihvāgre) or the path to their ears (śrotra-vartma vā).

These persons
Cherish only D.S.
They travel as they please
to spread D.S. everywhere.
They save devotees from
all fears even at the time
of death
cherish only
bhakty-eka-vallabhāḥ

Here Śrī Gaṇeśa explains why the messengers of Vaikuṅṭha visit all the universes.

Acting on their own initiative, they travel everywhere to spread devotional service to the Supreme Lord, eager to distribute fearlessness to the Lord's devotees.



Even though Vaiṣṇavas have nothing to fear from anything material, they still fear obstructions to their bhakti.



The Vaikuṅṭha-vāsīs always endeavor to help Vaiṣṇavas everywhere overcome impediments to devotional progress.

They protect anyone who has at least once chanted or heard the holy name of Lord Viṣṇu, or even a shadow of His name uttered neglectfully or in jest, contempt, or pain.

These 4 brothers
are bhakti-avatars
↓
They also wander about
for the benefit of the world

2.3.92

bhaktāvatārās tasyaite
catvāro naiṣṭhikottamāḥ
paribhramanti lokānām
hitārtham pārśadā iva

And these four brothers (ete catvārah), the best of lifelong celibates (naiṣṭhika uttamāḥ), are the Supreme Lord's incarnations as devotees (bhakta avatārāḥ). They wander (paribhramanti) for the benefit of all the worlds (lokānām hitārtham), just like the Lord's Vaikuṅṭha associates (pārśadā iva).

They live in Tapoloka to give reassurance & security to the residents who feel insecure due to absence of the Lord

2.3.93

vasanti ca tapo-loke
prabhum nārāyaṇam vinā
anāthānām iva kṣemaṁ
vahantas tan-nivāsinām

They live on Tapoloka (vasanti ca tapo-loke), where they give reassurance and security (kṣemaṁ vahantaḥ) to the residents (tad-nivāsinām), who at times feel as if helpless (anāthānām iva) in the absence of their Lord Nārāyaṇa (prabhum nārāyaṇam vinā).

Gopa-kumāra might wonder why the self-contented Kumāra sages
had accompanied the benevolent visitors from Vaikuṅṭha.

To answer this doubt, Śrī Gaṇeśa speaks texts 92 through 95.

The messengers of Vaikuntha are servants of Lord Vaikuṅṭha-nātha,
and the four Kumāras are empowered śakty-āveśa avatāras of the
same Lord.

By personal example, therefore, the Kumāras promote the cause of
Lord Narāyaṇa's devotional service wherever they go.

They spend most of their time on Tapoloka because the celibate masters of yoga who reside there depend on their guidance.

The Kumāras teach them the paths of yoga and also create for them the highest good fortune by speaking about the Supreme Lord and engaging them in congregational chanting of His glories.

As expressed in this verse by the word iva, when Lord Visnu is absent from Tapoloka the residents suffer as if they lose contact with Him, but in their meditation they always see Him.

2.3.94-95

gatvā samprati vaikunṭhe sarvākarsaka-sad-guṇam
bhagavantam tam ālokya mokṣānanda-vidambinā

nirbharānanda-pūreṇa saṁyojyātmānam āgatāḥ
pibanto bhakta-saṅgatyā harer bhaktyā mahā-rasam

These brothers
have just gone to
Vaikunṭha & seen the Lord
They are filled with ecstasy
bliss of liberation
& they drank the
nectar of P-D-D

These brothers have just gone to Vaikunṭha (gatvā samprati vaikunṭhe) and seen (ālokya) the Supreme Lord (tam bhagavantam), whose transcendental qualities are all-attractive (sarva ākarsaka-sad-guṇam). They filled themselves (saṁyojya ātmānam) with a limitless flood of ecstasy (nirbhara ānanda-pūreṇa) that ridicules the bliss of liberation (mokṣānanda-vidambinā), and they drank (pibantaḥ) the sublime nectar of pure devotion to Lord Hari (harer bhaktyā mahā-rasam) in the company of His devotees (bhakta-saṅgatyā).

Sanaka-kumāra and his brothers were traveling with the messengers of Vaikuṅṭha because the four brothers had just been there themselves and were returning from their visit.

They are ātmārāmas, self-satisfied sages, but the transcendental qualities of Lord Viṣṇu attract everyone, even the ātmārāmas.

In Vaikuṅṭha the Kumāras had seen the Supreme Lord in person and felt ecstasy that belittled the happiness of impersonal liberation.

They had chanted the Lord's glories along with the Vaikuṅṭha devotees and enjoyed the wonderful nectar of bhakti-rasa.

nityāparicchinna-mahā-sukhāntya- kāṣṭhāvatas tādrśa-vaibhavasya
sākṣād-ramā-nātha-padāravinda- krīḍā-bharājasra-vibhūṣitasya

tat-prema-bhaktaiḥ su-labhasya vaktum vaikunṭha-lokasya param kim iṣe
advaita-durvāsanayā mumukṣā-viddhātmanām hr̥dy api durlabhasya

What more can I say (kim vaktum iṣe) about Vaikuntha-loka (vaikunṭha-lokasya)? With its opulence (tādrśa-vaibhavasya) it displays the final limit (antya- kāṣṭhāvataḥ) of eternal unlimited joy (nitya-aparicchinna-mahā-sukha). It is blessed abundantly (bhara-vibhūṣitasya) by the ever-visible (ājasra) pastimes (krīḍā) of the lotus feet of the Lord, the husband of the goddess of fortune (sākṣād-ramā-nātha-padāravinda). The Lord's loving devotees (tat-prema-bhaktaiḥ) easily gain that Vaikunṭha (su-labhasya), but persons with minds (ātmanām) tarnished by the blunder of complete oneness (advaita-durvāsanayā) and the yearning for liberation (mumukṣā-viddha) can hardly hope to achieve it even in their dreams (hr̥dy api durlabhasya).

What more can I tell about this Vaikunṭha?

① It displays the final limit of eternal joy.

② It is blessed with the eternal richness.

③ Loving devotees can easily attain ④ not those Advaita-durvāsanayā ātmānām.

Returning from his digression about why the four Kumāras are present, Śrī Gaṇeśa here summarizes his glorification of Vaikuṅṭha.

He feels he has now said enough, since his words are not capable of adequately describing the greatness of Lord Nārāyaṇa's abode.

Vaiṣṇavas who have pure love for the Lord can easily enter Vaikuṅṭha, but the impersonalists who prefer the oneness of mukti to the reciprocations of devotional service have little hope of being admitted.

Many śāstras confirm this. For example the Yoga-vāsiṣṭha-rāmāyaṇa states:

ajñasyārdha-prabuddhasya
sarvaṁ brahmeti yo vadet
mahā-naraka-jāleṣu
tenaiva viniyojitaḥ

“An ignorant (ajñasya), half-awake person (ardha-prabuddhasya) who likes to say (yah vadet) ‘Everything is Brahman (sarvaṁ brahma iti)’ earns, by this (tena eva), entanglement (viniyojitaḥ) in a network of terrible hells (mahā-naraka-jāleṣu).”

The Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa also says:

viṣaya-sneha-saṁyukto
brahmāham iti yo vadet
kalpa-koṭi-sahasrāṇi
narake sa tu pacyate

“A person full of attachment for sense gratification (viṣaya-sneha-saṁyukto) who likes to say 'I am Brahman' (brahmāham iti yah vadet) will burn in hell (narake sa tu pacyate) for billions of kalpas (kalpa-koṭi-sahasrāṇi).”

And in another Purāna:

samsāra-sukha-samyuktam
brahmāham iti vādinam
karma-brahma-paribhraṣṭam
tam tyajed antyajam yathā

“A person stuck in worldly enjoyment (samsāra-sukha-samyuktam) who says ‘I am Brahman (brahmāham iti vādinam)’ has fallen both from Vedic duties and from Brahman realization (karma-brahma-paribhraṣṭam). He should be rejected (tam tyajed) like an outcaste (antyajam yathā).”

Since materialists who identify themselves with Brahman are said to fall into hell, surely those who imagine themselves identical with Para-brahman, the Personality of Godhead, are even more condemned.

If you receive the
full mercy of my father,
you will hear the glories of
Vaikuntha & go there yourself

2.3.98

yady asya mat-pituh samyak
karuṇā syān tadā tvayā
śroṣyate mahimā tasya
gatvā cānubhaviṣyate

If you receive (yady syāt) the full mercy of my father (mat-pituh samyak karuṇā), you will hear (tadā tvayā śroṣyate) the glories of Vaikuntha (tasya mahimā) and go there to see them for yourself (gatvā ca anubhaviṣyate).

Rather than try to present more of the glories of Vaikunṭha in his own words, Gaṇeśa here directs Gopa-kumāra to see them for himself.

Since Gopa-kumāra has already been granted Lord Śiva's personal audience, Lord Śiva's complete mercy should not be difficult for him to obtain.

Receiving the full mercy of Lord Śiva results not in attaining Śivaloka but in reaching Vaikunṭha to serve Lord Viṣṇu in pure devotional service.

2.3.99

śrī-gopa-kumāra uvāca
brahmaṁs tat-prāptaye jāta-
mahā-lālasayā bhr̥śam
aham cintārṇavāpāra-
bhaṅga-raṅge pranartitah

I quickly became
ready to attack
Vaikuṇṭha & that feeling
made me very anxious

Śrī Gopa-kumāra said: O brāhmaṇa (**brahman**), I quickly became ardent (**jāta-mahā-lālasayā**) to reach that place (**tat-prāptaye**). And that feeling made me dance wildly (**aham pranartitah**) on a stage made of waves (**bhaṅga-raṅge**) of a vast ocean of anxiety (**apāra cintārṇava**).

Gopa-kumāra's eagerness made him anxious about whether he would reach
Vaikuṇṭha.

But I concluded
That I was unqualified
to go there;
This sorrow made me faint

2.3.100

vicāra-jātataḥ svasya
sambhāvya tad-ayogyatām
prarudan śoka-vegena
mohaṁ prāpyāpatam kṣaṇāt

From the many thoughts flashing (vicāra-jātataḥ) through my mind (svasya) I concluded (sambhāvya) I was unfit to go (tad-ayogyatām). I cried profusely (prarudan), and the force of my sorrow (śoka-vegena) made me faint (mohaṁ prāpya) and suddenly fall to the ground (āpatam kṣaṇāt).

From the many thoughts flashing through my mind I concluded I was unfit to go.

I cried profusely, and the force of my sorrow made me faint and suddenly fall to the ground.

2.3.101

mahā-dayālunānena
para-duḥkhāsaḥiṣṇunā
vaiṣṇavaika-priyeṇāham
utthāpyāśvāsya bhāṣitaḥ

Then the best
of the Vaiṣṇavas, para-duḥkha
spoke to, picked me up
to console me.

That most merciful of great souls (anena mahā-dayālunā), the one
best friend of the Vaisnavas (vaiṣṇava eka-priyeṇa), Lord Śiva, who
cannot tolerate the distress of others (para-duḥkha asaḥiṣṇunā),
picked me up (aham utthāpya) and spoke to console me (āśvāsya
bhāṣitaḥ).

Lord Śiva Mahādeva was ready to give his full mercy to Gopa-
kumāra.

Oh dear Vaiṣṇava!
Just like you both, Pārvatī
& I have a desire to reside
eternally in Vaikunṭha.

2.3.102

śrī-mahādeva uvāca
he śrī-vaiṣṇava pārvatya
sahāham api kāmaye
tasmin vaikuṅṭha-loke tu
sadā vāsam bhavān iva

Śrī Mahādeva said: My dear Vaiṣṇava (he śrī-vaiṣṇava), both Pārvatī and I (pārvatya saha aham api), just like you (bhavān iva), want to live forever (sadā vāsam kāmaye) in that Vaikuṅṭha-loka (vaikuṅṭha-loke).

Lord Śiva notes that the same desire harbored by him and his wife
has developed in Gopa-kumāra.

Because Lord Śiva and Gopa-kumāra share the same interest, it is
implied, perhaps Gopa-kumāra should come to Lord Śiva's planet and
stay happily with him there for some time.

This (v) is very difficult to attain.
Even liberated souls, Brahmā & I strive for it.

2.3.103

so 'tīva-durlabho lokah
prārthyo muktair api dhruvam
sādhyo brahma-sutānām hi
brahmaṇas ca mamāpi saḥ

But that world (saḥ lokah) is exceedingly difficult to attain (atīva-durlabhah). Indeed (dhruvam), even liberated souls (muktair api) pray to achieve it (prārthyah). Brahmā's sons (brahma-sutānām hi) and yet again Brahmā himself (brahmaṇas ca) strive for it (saḥ sādhyah), and so even do I (mama api).

For the liberated impersonalists and for demigods such as Śiva, Brahmā, and sons of Brahmā like Bhṛgu, the spiritual world Vaikuṅṭha is sādhyā, the goal to be attained, but not yet sādhitā, actually obtained.

only one
who has perfectly
perfected his VA duties
selfless → Gu. attet. tle
mercy of Hari

2.3.104

niṣkāmeṣu viśuddheṣu
sva-dharmeṣu hi yaḥ pumān
parām niṣṭhām gatas tasmin
yā kṛpā śrī-harer bhavet

Only one (**yaḥ pumān**) who has completely perfected (**parām niṣṭhām gatah**) his religious duties (**sva-dharmeṣu**), who is pure (**viśuddheṣu**), who is done with selfish motives (**niṣkāmeṣu**), can achieve (**tasmin bhavet**) the mercy of Śrī Hari (**śrī-harer yā kṛpā**).

If that mercy
is multiplied 100 times
→ one attains the post of
Brahmā

If the 100
→ are multiplied 100 times
→ one becomes like me

2.3.105

tasyāḥ śata-guṇā cet syād
brahmatvaṁ labhate tadā
tasyāḥ śata-guṇāyām ca
satyām mad-bhāvam ṛcchati

If that mercy is multiplied a hundred times (**tasyāḥ śata-guṇā cet syād**), one attains the post of Brahmā (**brahmatvaṁ labhate tadā**). And if a hundred times again (**tasyāḥ śata-guṇāyām ca**), one can become like me (**satyām mad-bhāvam ṛcchati**).

if one attains
more mercy than I
→ one can go to Vaikunṭha

2.3.106

śrīmad-bhagavatas tasya
mayi yāvān anugrahaḥ
tasmāc chata-guṇottāne
jāte vaikuṅṭham eti tam

And if (**yāvād**) one obtains from the divine Personality of Godhead (**tasya śrīmad-bhagavataḥ**) more mercy than I (**mayi anugrahaḥ**)—a hundred times more (**tasmād śata-guṇottāne jāte**)—one can go to Vaikuṅṭha (**vaikuṅṭham eti tam**).

This is how difficult it is to achieve entrance into *Vaikunṭha*.

Lord Śiva also described this in his instructions to the *Pracetās* in the Fourth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (4.24.29):

sva-dharma-niṣṭhaḥ śata-janmabhiḥ pumān
virīñcatām eti tataḥ param hi mām
avyākṛtaṁ bhāgavato 'tha vaiṣṇavaṁ
padam yathāham vibudhāḥ kalātyaye

A person fixed in dharma (**sva-dharma-niṣṭhaḥ pumān**) attains the post of Brahmā (**virīñcatām eti**) after a hundred births (**śata-janmabhiḥ**), and by more pious acts than that a person attains me, Śiva (**tataḥ param hi mām**). But the devotee (**bhāgavataḥ**) attains the abode of Vaikuṅṭha (**vaiṣṇavaṁ padam**) beyond the material world (**avyākṛtaṁ**) after leaving the body (**kalātyaye**). Similarly I in another form reside there (**yathā aham**), and the devatās who are qualified go there (**vibudhāḥ**) after destroying their subtle bodies (**kalātyaye**).

Some demigods, including Lord Śiva, are qualified for promotion to Vaikuṅṭha, but only after they complete their long appointments as universal rulers and after their subtle bodies are dissolved by the attainment of liberation.

But pure devotees graced with a sufficient portion of Lord Viṣṇu's mercy need not serve such long terms as demigods; they can achieve Vaikuṅṭha much more quickly.

We read in the Itihāsa-sammucaya, in the narration about Mudgala:

**brahmaṇaḥ sadanād ūrdhvaṁ tad viṣṇoḥ paramaṁ padam
śuddhaṁ sanātanam jyotiḥ para-brahmeti yad viduḥ**

**nirmamā nirahaṅkāṛā nirdvandvā ye jitendriyāḥ
dhyāna-yoga-parāś caiva tatra gacchanti sādhaḥ**

**ye 'rcayanti harim viṣṇum kṛṣṇam jiṣṇum sanātanam
nārāyaṇam ajaṁ kṛṣṇam viṣvaksenam catur-bhujam**

**dhyāyanti puruṣam divyam acyutaṁ ca smaranti ye
labhante te 'cyutaṁ sthānam śrutir eṣā sanātani**

“Above the domain of impersonal Brahman (**brahmaṇaḥ sadanād ūrdhvaṁ**) is that supreme abode of Lord Viṣṇu (**tad viṣṇoḥ paramaṁ padam**). It is the pure, eternal sky (**śuddhaṁ sanātanam jyotiḥ**) known as Para-brahma (**para-brahmeti yad viduḥ**). Sainly persons (**ye sādhaḥ**) who are free from possessiveness and ego (**nirmamā nirahaṅkāṛā**), who are beyond dualities, who have controlled their senses (**nirdvandvā ye jitendriyāḥ**), and who are fixed in meditational yoga (**dhyāna-yoga-parāś caiva**) go to that abode (**tatra gacchanti**). The eternal unborn Lord Hari (**sanātanam ajaṁ harim**), or Kṛṣṇa (**kṛṣṇam**), is variously known as Viṣṇu, Kṛṣṇa, Jiṣṇu, Viṣvaksena (**viṣṇum kṛṣṇam jiṣṇum viṣvaksenam**), and the four-armed Lord Nārāyaṇa (**nārāyaṇam catur-bhujam**). Those who worship that Supreme Lord (**ye 'rcayanti**), meditating on Him as the supreme transcendental person (**dhyāyanti puruṣam divyam**), remembering Him as the infallible Lord (**acyutaṁ ca smaranti ye**), achieve His infallible abode (**labhante te acyutaṁ sthānam**). Such is the eternal proclamation of revealed scripture (**śrutir eṣā sanātani**).”

In the context of this verse of the Itihāsa-sammucaya, the words brahmaṇaḥ sadanād ūrdhvam should be understood to refer not to Lord Brahmā's planet but to Mahākāla-pura, the abode of liberation.

~~In that mukti-pada, liberated souls merge into sāyujya in intense meditation on Brahman.~~

Vaikuṅṭha is superior both to this mukti-pada and to Maheśa-dhāma, the abode of Lord Śiva.

Because Lord Śiva, though an incarnation of the Supreme Lord, plays the role of a devotee, he humbly compares himself unfavorably with the residents of Vaikuṅṭha, but in reality even the personal associates of Lord Nārāyaṇa worship Lord Siva as an incarnation of Nārāyaṇa.

Those associates have similar respect for all of Lord Nārāyaṇa's incarnations, even the jīvas who are śakty-āveśa avatāras.

The apparent hierarchy among these expansions of Godhead rests not on their actual relative superiority but merely on how each avatāra shows himself, either as a portion of God or as God's devotee.

This will be explained more clearly later on, in the instructions given by Nārada Muni.

But, you are Qualified
to go to vaikunṭha ... why?
Bco:
a) You are a devotee of (K)
b) U r attached only to Ds
c) U r a "tal-mantra-paro"
d) U r attached to faithful
service of the Lord.

2.3.107

athāpi govardhana-gopa-putras
tam arhasi tvam mathureśa-bhaktah
tad-eka-bhakti-priya-vipra-śiṣyas
tadīya-tan-mantra-paro 'nuraktah

But (athāpi) you deserve to go to Vaikunṭha (^{tvam} tam arhasi), O son of a Govardhana cowherd (govardhana-gopa-putrah), for you are a devotee of the Lord of Mathurā (tvam mathureśa-bhaktah); a disciple of a brāhmaṇa (vipra-śiṣyah) attached only to the Lord's devotional service (tad-eka-bhakti-priya); a soul dedicated to the Lord's mantra given you by your guru (tad-mantra-parah); and faithful in your service to the Lord (tadīya anuraktah).

Although Śrī Vaikuṅṭha-loka is extremely difficult to achieve, Gopa-
kumāra is fit to go there. Lord Śiva merely mentions the ten-syllable
gopāla-mantra, with great respect, as tadīya-tan-mantra (“that mantra
of His”) because further words could not adequately express the
glories of the mantra and the extent of its potency.

For Gopa-kumāra, chanting this mantra is not a mechanical exercise
but the means for awakening his intimate loving reciprocation with
Lord Madana-gopāla.

This abode of sāyujya is the goal of those renunciants:

- a) whose minds are fixed in absolute oneness
 b) whose hearts are torn by saṁsāra
 c) who are a sara-grāhī
 d) who lack discrimination
- In fact, I make them fall into this ocean of bewilderment, wanting to protect the secret of prema from them, ordering me.

catur-vidheṣu mokṣeṣu sāyujyasya padam tv idam
prāpyam yatīnām advaita-bhāvanā-bhāvitātmanām

mahā-saṁsāra-duḥkhāgni-jvālā-saṁśuska-cetasām
asāra-grāhiṇām antaḥ-sārāsārāvivekinām

mayaiva kṛṣṇasyādeśāt patitānām bhramārṇave
nija-pādāmbuja-prema-bhakti-saṅgopakasya hi

Here is the abode of sāyujya (sāyujyasya padam tv idam), one of the four kinds of liberation (catur-vidheṣu mokṣeṣu). Here indeed is the goal (prāpyam) of renunciants (yatīnām) whose minds (ātmanām) are fixed on the thought of absolute oneness (advaita-bhāvanā-bhāvita), whose hearts have dried up (saṁśuska-cetasām) in the blazing fire of material miseries (mahā-saṁsāra-duḥkhāgni-jvālā), who pursue the worthless as if it were real (asāra-grāhiṇām), unable within themselves to discriminate between what has value and what does not (antaḥ-sāra-asāra avivekinām). I make them fall (mayaiva patitānām) into the ocean of bewilderment (bhramārṇave) by the order of Kṛṣṇa (kṛṣṇasya ādeśāt), who wants to hide from them (saṅgopakasya hi) the secret of prema-bhakti (prema-bhakti) to His lotus feet (nija-pādāmbuja).

But devotees reject
this abode & you should
also reject it seeing it as
an obstacle

2.3.111

bhagavad-bhajanānanda-
rasaikāpekṣakair janaiḥ
upekṣitam idaṁ viddhi
padam vighna-samaṁ tyaja

Devotees (janaiḥ) who care only (eka apekṣakair) for the ecstasy of worshiping the Supreme Lord (bhagavad-bhajana-ānanda-rasa) neglect this impersonal abode (idaṁ upekṣitam). Knowing this (viddhi), you too should reject it (padam tyaja) as an obstacle to your progress (vighna-samaṁ).

The abode of liberation is a fitting place for impersonalists keen on sāyujya-mukti but not for a cowherd worshiper of Madana-gopāla.

In Śrī Hari-vaṁśa (Viṣṇu-parva 114.9–12), Lord Kṛṣṇa describes Mahākāla-pura to Arjuna as follows:

BT

brahma-tejo-mayaṁ divyaṁ mahad yad dr̥ṣṭavān asi
aham sa bharata-śreṣṭha mat-tejas tat sanātanam

prakṛtiḥ sā mama parā vyaktāvyaktā sanātani
tām praviśya bhavantiha muktā yoga-vid-uttamāḥ

sā sāṅkhyānām gatiḥ pārtha yoginām ca tapasvinām
tat param paramam brahma sarvaṁ vibhajate jagat

mamaiva tad ghanam tejo jñātum arhasi bhārata

“This vast expanse (mahad) of divine (divyaṁ) Brahman effulgence (brahma-tejo-mayaṁ) you see (yad dr̥ṣṭavān asi), O best of the Bharatas (bharata-śreṣṭha)—I Myself am that (aham saḥ). This infinite light is eternal (mat-tejas tat sanātanam). It is (sā) My superior (mama parā), eternal nature (sanātani prakṛtiḥ), both manifest and unmanifest (vyakta avyaktā). The most expert knowers of yoga (yoga-vid-uttamāḥ) enter it (tām praviśya) and become liberated (muktā bhavanti iha). O Pārtha (pārtha), it is the goal (sā gatiḥ) of the Sāṅkhya philosophers (sāṅkhyānām) and austere yogīs (yoginām ca tapasvinām), the supreme transcendental Brahman (tat param paramam brahma), pervading the entire universe (sarvaṁ vibhajate jagat). Descendant of Bharata (bhārata), know this (jñātum arhasi) to be My concentrated effulgence (mama eva tad ghanam tejah).”

The Mahākāla-pura described in this passage of Śrī Hari-vaṁśa is the same region Gopa-kumāra saw outside the coverings of the universe.

Both Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and Hari-vaṁśa mention that Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, while traveling to Mahākāla-pura, passed Lokāloka.

Some take this to mean that the Mahākāla-pura they visited was a place inside the egg of the universe, in the outer region where sunlight does not reach.

Crossing Lokāloka can also be understood, however, to mean passing beyond the fourteen worlds that exist in the realm of light (loka) and also beyond the rest of the outer universe, which lies in complete darkness (aloka).

Mahākāla-pura is a suitable destination for impersonalist sannyāsīs for the reasons Lord Śiva mentions in texts 108 through 111.

Nondevotee sannyāsīs lack real spiritual knowledge and are incapable of discerning the spiritual essence of things.

As Lord Brahmā states in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.14.4), ~~sthūla-tuṣāvaghātinām~~ they are just beating the empty husks of grains already threshed.

They are in this pitiful condition because Lord Śiva has cast them into the ocean of material bewilderment, as he himself explains in the Uttara-khaṇḍa, (236.7, 10) of Śrī Padma Purāṇa:

māyā-vādam asac-chāstram
pracchannam bauddham ucyate
mayaiiva vakṣyate devi
kalau brāhmaṇa-rūpiṇā

“The Māyāvāda philosophy (māyā-vādam) is a false interpretation of the revealed scriptures (asat-śāstram). It is considered no more than a covered form of Buddhism (pracchannam bauddham ucyate). O Devī (devi), I shall appear as a brāhmaṇa (mayā eva brāhmaṇa-rūpiṇā) in the Age of Kali (kalau) to teach this philosophy (vakṣyate).”

brahmanaś cāparam rūpaṁ
nirguṇaṁ vakṣyate mayā
sarvasya jagato 'py asya
mohanārthaṁ kalau yuge

“I shall describe (vakṣyate mayā) the Absolute Truth (brahmaṇah) in a contrary way (aparam rūpaṁ) as devoid of qualities (nirguṇaṁ), just to bewilder (mohanārthaṁ) the entire universe (sarvasya jagatah apy) in the Age of Kali (kalau yuge).”

Lord Śiva performs this thankless task on the direct order of Lord Kṛṣṇa, as recorded in the Br̥hat-sahasra-nāma-stotra (Padma Purāna, Uttara 42.105):

svāgamaiḥ kalpitaḥ tvam ca
janān mad-vimukhān kuru

“By concocting your own doctrines (sva āgamaiḥ kalpitaḥ), turn the general populace against Me (tvam janān mad-vimukhān kuru).”

Because Śrī Kṛṣṇa wanted to keep His pure devotional service confidential, He requested Lord Śiva to create this confusion.

But Vaiṣṇavas whose only serious ambition in life is to achieve the blissful rasa of worshiping Kṛṣṇa reject impersonal liberation.

Gopa-kumāra, Lord Śiva advises, should reject it also, like any obstacle to his practice of bhagavad-bhakti.

For example, the
Dvārakā-vāsi-vipreṇa
wanted to taste the rasa of
kṛṣṇa-bhakti, brought his sons
from here to Dvārakā.

2.3.112

dvārakā-vāsi-vipreṇa
kṛṣṇa-bhakti-rasārthinā
ito nītāḥ sutās tatra
sa-cātura-viśeṣataḥ

Very cleverly (sa-cātura-viśeṣataḥ), the brāhmaṇa ~~residing in~~
Dvārakā (dvārakā-vāsi-vipreṇa) who wanted to taste the ~~rasa of~~
kṛṣṇa-bhakti (kṛṣṇa-bhakti-rasa arthinā) brought his sons (sutāḥ
nītāḥ) from here (itah) to Dvārakā (tatra).

Besides scripture, the behavior of respectable persons also proves that sāyujya-
mukti is undesirable for Vaiṣṇavas.



The motive of the Dvārakā brāhmaṇa who came to Kṛṣṇa complaining about
the untimely death of his newborn sons was actually to bring his sons back
from the abode of liberation. → संयुजा.

The residents of Dvārakā during Kṛṣṇa's appearance all had spiritual sac-cid-
ānanda bodies, and on the strength of their loving service to the lotus feet of
Śrī Devakī-nandana they felt contempt for the happiness of impersonal
liberation.

Some persons, in their attempt to explain the Purāṇic histories, say that the residents of Dvārakā were only human beings with bodies made of the five material elements, because the historical accounts describe their births and deaths.

Even in material bodies, these Purāṇic scholars say, the residents of Dvārakā obtained intimate relationships with Kṛṣṇa because of their unique devotion to Him in pure love.

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- ① Materialists → Jada maye vishṇu
- ② Sādhakās → Mano maye vishṇu
- ③ Siddhās/perfectly devoted → Cit maye vishṇu.

These commentators, however, have to concede that the Dvārakā-vāsīs only pretended to act like ordinary materially embodied human beings.

If that is what they actually were they would have been unfit to join in the various pleasure pastimes of the Personality of Godhead, whose bodily form is pure sac-cid-ānanda.

Moreover, it is an established fact that by the power of bhagavad-bhakti one's body becomes completely spiritual, and this principle should certainly apply to the pure devotees of Dvārakā.

PJNa - Pakṣa

The scholars may retort that if the devotees of Dvārakā only pretended to have material bodies, then the Lord's having assumed a human form and behaved like a human being must also have been only a pretense.

But this, they say, cannot be so, because after the narration of the brāhmaṇa's complaint the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam says that every one of the Supreme Lord's personal forms is eternally real and all-pervading.

Now, what the scholars say should on its surface be granted true.

Certainly the Personality of Godhead's appearances are never false imitations of material life, since all of them are eternal and He reveals Himself perpetually in those very forms to His various worshipers.

Furthermore, again supporting the scholars' view, authoritative scriptures describe that the residents of the Lord's abodes like Dvārakā sometimes abandon their imitation human appearance and assume their purely spiritual sac-cid-ānanda forms.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.29.9–11) describes, for example, that some of the gopīs who could not join the rāsa dance gave up their human bodies and at once obtained their sac-cid-ānanda bodies:

antar-gr̥ha-gatāḥ kāścīd gopyo 'labdha-vinirgamāḥ
kṛṣṇam tad-bhāvanā-yuktā dadhyur mīlita-locanāḥ

duḥsaha-preṣṭha-viraha-tīvra-tāpa-dhutāśubhāḥ
dhyāna-prāptācyutāśleṣa-nirvṛtyā kṣīṇa-maṅgalāḥ

tam eva paramātmānam jāra-buddhyāpi saṅgatāḥ
jahur guṇa-mayaṁ deham sadyaḥ prakṣīṇa-bandhanāḥ

“Some of the gopīs (kāścīd gopyah), unable to get out of their houses (alabdha-vinirgamāḥ), instead remained home (antar-gr̥ha-gatāḥ) with eyes closed (mīlita-locanāḥ), meditating upon Lord Kṛṣṇa (kṛṣṇam dadhyuh) in pure love (tad-bhāvanā-yuktā). For those gopīs, intolerable separation from their beloved (duḥsaha-preṣṭha-viraha) caused an intense agony (tīvra-tāpa) that burned away all impious karma (dhuta aśubhāḥ). By meditating upon Him (acyuta dhyāna) they realized His embrace (prāptā acyuta aśleṣa), and their ecstasy (nirvṛtyā) exhausted their material piety (kṣīṇa-maṅgalāḥ). Although Lord Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Soul (tam eva paramātmānam), these girls simply thought of Him as their male lover (jāra-buddhyāpi) and associated with Him in that intimate mood (saṅgatāḥ). Thus their karmic bondage was nullified (sadyaḥ prakṣīṇa-bandhanāḥ) and they abandoned their gross material bodies (jahur guṇa-mayaṁ deham).”

By giving up their human bodies, these gopīs were able to join the Personality of Godhead in their original forms and enjoy with Him the pleasure pastimes that most attracted them.

Here it seems that that the gopīs regained their spiritual bodies, bodies eternal, blissful, and full of knowledge, bodies just like that of the Lord.

It was in this way that the gopīs were able to be saṅgatāḥ—more intimately associated with Kṛṣṇa.

In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.47.37), in the message Uddhava carried to Vṛndāvana, the Lord told of the same incident in a similar way:

yā mayā krīḍatā rātryām
vane 'smin vraja āsthitāḥ
alabdha-rāsāḥ kalyaṇyo
māpur mad-vīrya-cintayā

“Although some gopīs had to stay in the cowherd village (yā vraja āsthitāḥ) and were unable to join the rāsa dance (alabdha-rāsāḥ) to sport with Me at night (mayā krīḍatā rātryām) in the forest (asmin vane), they were fortunate nonetheless (kalyāṇyah), for they attained Me (mām āpuh) by thinking of My potent pastimes (mad-vīrya-cintayā).”

Similar to this regaining of spiritual identity by the gopīs was the liberation of Śiśupāla and Dantavakra.

When these former gatekeepers of Lord Nārāyaṇa's kingdom were killed by Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the curse against them by Sanaka and his brothers ended, and the souls of the former gatekeepers were seen to merge into Kṛṣṇa's effulgence.

This apparent merging, however, was not actually sāyujya-mukti, because for these two persons, who were devotees of the Supreme Lord, and even residents of Vaikuṅṭha, impersonal liberation would have been the worst misfortune.


In the Bhāgavatam (7.1.47), Nārada Muni describes what really happened to Śiśupāla and Dantavakra:

vairānubandha-tīvrena
dhyānenācyuta-sātmatām
nītau punar hareḥ pārśvam
jagmatur viṣṇu-pārṣadau

These two associates of Lord Viṣṇu – Jaya and Vijaya (viṣṇu-pārṣadau) – by meditation with intense, continuous hatred of the Lord (tīvrena vairānubandha dhyānena), entered Kṛṣṇa (acyuta-sātmatām nītau), and then went to the side of the Lord as his two associates in Vaikuṅṭha (jagmatuh punar hāreḥ pārśvam).


This fulfilled the word of Lord Viṣṇu. When Jaya and Vijaya, cursed by the four Kumāras, were about to fall from their home in Vaikuṅṭha, Lord Viṣṇu assured them they would return to His abode after only three lifetimes.

And so Jaya and Vijaya gave up their material bodies to resume their posts, in their spiritual bodies, as eternal servants of the Lord.

 Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī has thus entertained the theoretical possibility that devotees who live in the Lord's abode during His appearance sometimes have material bodies.

His own opinion, however, is different.

He firmly holds that just as the Lord's appearance, even as a human being within the world of mortals, is always purely transcendental, so also are the "human" bodies of the devotees who take part in His pastimes.

When those devotees appear or disappear,  (they are either responding to the needs of the pastimes of their beloved Lord) or (expressing the ecstasies of their fully blossomed prema.)

↓
2 reasons for appearance (or) disappearance of the bodies of nitya-siddhis

This is the way we should understand such phrases as “putting aside their bodies,” which are used in the Purāṇas to describe the disappearance of devotees from this world.

Shri Senatana Goswami's explanation of the gopis
follow

The three verses cited above about the gopīs who could not join the rāsa dance (Bhāgavatam 10.29.9–11) can thus be elucidated as follows: Those gopīs at once gave up their bodies, although those bodies were guna-maya, full of all excellent spiritual qualities, and this means that as a pastime those gopīs disappeared from the sight of this world.

As stated, those particular gopīs were especially qualified, for they had fully achieved the Supreme Soul, having gained His association in the mood of His paramours.

This, indeed, is in all instances the prime cause of the gopīs' perfection.

~~←~~ → thought of Śrīmatī Sakhīnī Gopānī

Therefore, when the Bhāgavatam (10.29.11) uses the word prakṣīṇa-bandhanāḥ, this indicates not that the gopīs confined to their homes were released from karma and freed from material bodies but that they achieved the special mercy of the Personality of Godhead, (thereby gaining release from bondage to the duties and prohibitions of the Vedas.)

In the same line of thought, Śrī Nārada states in the Fourth Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (4.29.46):

yadā yasyānugṛhṇāti
bhagavān ātma-bhāvitaḥ
sa jahāti matim loke
vede ca pariniṣṭhitām

When the Lord (yadā bhagavān) shows mercy to the devotee (ātma-bhāvitaḥ yasya anugṛhṇāti), the devotee gives up (sah jahāti) thinking (pariniṣṭhitām matim) of karma-kāṇḍa and material affairs (loke vede ca).

In speaking of the gopīs locked up in their homes during the rāsa dance, the Bhāgavatam says, hirvṛtyā kṣīna-maṅgalāḥ, which in its most obvious sense means “By their joy their pious karma was destroyed.”

hirvṛtyā akṣīna-maṅgalāḥ

But Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, dividing the words differently, says that Kṛṣṇa’s embrace within their meditation gave them such exceptional joy that their auspiciousness, symbolized by their marks of tilaka, never faded (akṣīna-maṅgalāḥ).

Or else, Śrīla Sanātana suggests, taking a different meaning of akṣīna-maṅgalāḥ, their pious credits and their all-auspicious practice of devotional service were made unshakeable.

And the phrase dhutāśubhāḥ, meaning that their impious karma was removed, may also be taken to mean, instead, that even in such a fortunate condition the intolerable agony of separation from their beloved destroyed quickly (āśu) their effulgence (bhā).

~~dhutāśubhāḥ~~ → dhuta + aśubhāḥ → destroyed impious karma,
→ dhuta + āśu + bhāḥ
destroy quickly effulgence.

Or, alternatively, they were spared the future misfortune (aśubha) of suffering separation from Kṛṣṇa upon His departure from Vṛndāvana for Mathurā.

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Or, alternatively, they were spared the future misfortune (aśubha) of suffering separation from Kṛṣṇa upon His departure from Vṛndāvana for Mathurā.

These gopīs had earned Kṛṣṇa's intimate association by considering Him their paramour. (jāra-buddhye saṅgatāḥ)

Śukadeva Gosvāmī does not further elaborate on that subject in these verses, because the topic is too confidential to discuss in an open assembly.

The pāraṁkāya mood of the gopīs is told of in detail in various verses of Śrī Gīta-govinda, such as the one beginning nibhṛta-nikuñja-gṛhaṁ gatayā (2.11–12).

Śukadeva Gosvāmī mentions that these gopīs meditated on Kṛṣṇa mīlita-
locanāh—that is, with their eyes half-closed like those of yogīs practicing
dhyāna.

Or, understanding this figuratively, they had closed the two eyes of śruti and
smṛti.

According to the statement śruti-smṛtī ubhe netre, the Vedic scriptures in the
forms of śruti and smṛti are the eyes of knowledge for conditioned souls.

The fully realized gopīs had no more use for scriptural directions.

Thus they closed their eyes to everything external and simply focused their hearts on Kṛṣṇa.

Then, because they were not allowed to leave their homes to join Him in the rāsa dance, they gave up their bodies.

yet, even here in BT
you have seen the Supreme Lord
Why?
By the mercy
of the guru
you have
strong desire to see
Kṛṣṇa
revealing to
Himself

2.3.113

atrāpi bhagavantam yad
dr̥ṣṭavān asi tādr̥śam
sad-guroḥ kṛpayā kṛṣṇa-
didṛkṣā-bhara-kāritam

Yet even here (atrāpi) you have seen the Supreme Lord (bhagavantam dr̥ṣṭavān asi) in this form (tādr̥śam) because your divine guru gave you his mercy (yad sad-guroḥ kṛpayā). That mercy created in you the strong desire to see Kṛṣṇa (kṛṣṇa-didṛkṣā-
bhara), which impelled Kṛṣṇa to reveal Himself (kāritam).

In Mahākāla-pura, the same place where many come to experience impersonal liberation, Gopa-kumāra had darśana of the beauty of Lord Mahākāla Viṣṇu.

If by the mercy of guru and the Vaiṣṇavas one is eager to see the Supreme Person, nothing can stand in the way of success.

2.3.114

śrī-gopa-kumāra uvāca
tac-chaṅkara-prasādena
parānanda-bharam gataḥ
kiñcid icchann api brahman
nāśakam vaditum hriyā

Lord Śiva's mercy filled
me with great ecstasy.
I wanted to say something,
but I could not because of
shyness.

Śrī Gopa-kumāra said: O brāhmaṇa (brahman), Lord Śiva's mercy (tat-śaṅkara-prasādena) filled me with the greatest ecstasy (parānanda-bharam gataḥ). I wanted to say something (kiñcid vaditum icchann api), but was unable (nāśakam) because I felt too shy (hriyā).

Gopa-kumāra wanted to inquire from the Vaikuṇṭha messengers, but he couldn't say anything.

2.3.115

bhagavat-pārsadāḥ śrutvā
tām tām vācam umā-pateḥ
praṇamya sādaram prītyā
tam ūcur vinayānvitāḥ

Upon hearing
Lord Śiva's words,
I bowed down
& spoke with joy & humility

Upon hearing (śrutvā) Lord Śiva's words (umā-pateḥ tām tām vācam), the associates of the Supreme Lord (bhagavat-pārsadāḥ) bowed respectfully before him (sādaram praṇamya), and addressed him (tam ūcuḥ) with great pleasure and humility (prītyā vinayānvitāḥ).

Before explaining their reason for having come, the visitors from
Vaikuṅṭha first wanted to say something to ease Gopa-kumāra's
sorrow.

This accomplished, they could then awaken Gopa-kumāra's love of
God, by which he would automatically forget his anxiety.

2.3.116

Oh Lord Siva!
There is no difference
b/w yourself & Lord of Vaikuntha
& no difference b/w Gauri & Ramā

śrī-bhagavat-pārsadā ūcuḥ
tena vaikuṅṭha-nāthena
samaṁ ko 'pi na vidyate
bhagavan bhavato bhedo
gauryāś ca ramayā saha

The associates of the Supreme Lord said: O Lord Śiva (bhagavan), there is no difference (kaḥ api bhedah na vidyate) between (samaṁ) you (bhavato) and the Supreme Lord, the master of Vaikuntha (tena vaikuṅṭha-nāthena), nor between Gaurī and Ramā (gauryāś ca ramayā saha).

Just as Lord Śiva is an incarnation of Lord Vaikunṭha-nātha, the goddess Gaurī is a parallel incarnation of Ramā (Lakṣmī).

It is appropriate
that you both reside
in His abode
because
① You are His dearest friend
② You are His exalted incarnation.

2.3.117

tal-loke bhavato vāso
devyāś ca kila yujyate
khyātaḥ priya-tamas tasyā-
vatāraś ca bhavān mahān

Indeed, it is fitting (kila yujyate) for you and the goddess Gaurī (bhavato devyāś ca) to reside in Lord Viṣṇu's abode (tad-loke vāsaḥ), for you are renowned (bhavān khyātaḥ) as His dearest friend (priya-tamaḥ) and His exalted incarnation (tasyāh-avatāraś ca mahān).

Yet / What you
have spoken is very
appropriate to the mood of
the dearest devotee of the Lord

2.3.118

tathāpi yad idam kiñcid
bhāṣitam bhavatādhunā
svabhāvo bhagavat-preṣṭha-
tamataupayiko hy ayam

Yet (tathāpi) what you have just spoken (yad ayam bhavatā
adhunā idam kiñcid bhāṣitam) suits perfectly (aupayikah hy) the
mood (svabhāvah) of a dearmost devotee of the Lord (bhagavat-
preṣṭha-tamatah).

Glorifying Vaikuṅṭha, Lord Śiva had said that Brahmā, Brahmā's sons, and he himself all strive to attain it.

This sentiment is fitting for a humble Vaiṣṇava, even if not exactly true. Lord Śiva and his wife can enter Vaikuṅṭha any time they want.

You are praised
by the Vaiṣṇavas
because of mood inspiring
Bhakti
∴ You are the greatest among
all the incarnations

2.3.119

tad-bhakti-rasa-kallola-
grāhako vaiṣṇaveditaḥ
ataḥ sarvāvatārebhyaḥ
bhavato mahimādhikah

You are praised by the Vaiṣṇavas (vaiṣṇava īditaḥ), for your mood
inspires others to take to (grāhako) His devotional service (tad-
bhakti), with its waves of rasas (rasa-kallola). Among all His
incarnations (sarva avatārebhyaḥ), therefore (ataḥ), you are the
greatest (bhavato mahimādhikah).

⑤ become silent
& shy leaving his own
side
The ① person then embraced
me & spoke

2.3.120

śrī-gopa-kumāra uvāca
nija-stutyā tayā tasmin
hriyā tūṣṇīm sthite prabhau
bhagavat-pāraśadās te mām
āśliṣyocuh suhrd-varāḥ

Śrī Gopa-kumāra said: (Abashed) (hriyā) at hearing himself praised (nija-stutyā tayā tasmin), Lord Śiva (prabhau) remained silent (tūṣṇīm sthite). Then the associates of Lord Viṣṇu (te bhagavat-pāraśadāḥ), who were Lord Śiva's dearest friends (suhrd-varāḥ), embraced me (mām āśliṣya) and spoke (ūcuḥ).

Saintly persons do not like to hear themselves praised, and Lord Śiva is the most saintly and cultured person.

Another quality of saintly persons is unconditional compassion, which the Vaikuṅṭha messengers showed toward Gopa-kumāra.

They said
Oh gopānandana!
we count you amongst the
devotees

2.3.121

śrī-bhagavat-pārṣadā ūcuḥ
asmad-īśvara-san-mantro-
pāsakomā-pati-priya
gopa-nandana bhakteṣu
bhavantam gaṇayema hi

The associates of the Supreme Lord said: O worshiper of the transcendental mantra (san-mantra-upāsaka) of our Lord (asmad-īśvara), O beloved of the husband of Umā (umā-pati-priya), O son of a cowherd (gopa-nandana), indeed we count you (bhavantam gaṇayema hi) amongst the Lord's devotees (bhakteṣu).

With these kind words the Vaikuntha-dūtas assured Gopa-kumāra that he too was fit to enter Vaikuṅṭha.

In general, those who properly worship the authentic viṣṇu-mantras become pure Vaiṣṇavas, and pure Vaiṣṇavas can reside in Vaikuṅṭha.

Your Guru is
an incarnation of
born in Gauḍa-
& his name is Jayanta

2.3.122

gauḍe gaṅgā-taṭe jāto
māthura-brāhmaṇottamaḥ
jayanta-nāmā kṛṣṇasyā-
vatāras te mahān guruḥ

Born (jātaḥ) in the country of Gauḍa (gauḍe) on the banks of the Gaṅgā (gaṅgā-taṭe) was a first-class Mathurā brāhmaṇa (māthura-brāhmaṇa uttamaḥ) named Jayanta (jayanta-nāmā). He is an incarnation of Kṛṣṇa (kṛṣṇasya avatārah) and is your exalted spiritual master (te mahān guruḥ).

2.3.123

satyaṁ pratihi vayam atra bhavan-nimittam
evāgatāḥ śṛṇu hitam nija-kṛtyam etat
vaikuṅṭham icchasi yadi pravihāya sarvaṁ
sa-prema bhaktim anutiṣṭha nava-prakārām

We have
Come here just
for you.
Pls give up everything
& follow nava-prakāra-
If you want to go to
Vaikunṭha

Accept as true (satyaṁ pratihi) that we have come here (vayam atra āgatāḥ) only for your sake (bhavan-nimittam eva). And please hear (śṛṇu) what is beneficial for you to do (etat hitam nija-kṛtyam). If you want to reach Vaikuṅṭha (yadi vaikuṅṭham icchasi), then give up everything (pravihāya sarvaṁ) and with pure love (sa-prema) practice (anutiṣṭha) the nine forms (nava-prakārām) of devotional service (bhaktim).

When the messengers told Gopa-kumāra to “give up everything,” they meant that he should be ready to leave Mahākāla-pura and that he should give up attachment to his formal mantra chanting.

His chanting out of duty should transform into ecstatic nāma-saṅkīrtana, in which the enthusiasm of his love for Madana-gopāla-deva would be directed into the nine methods of pure bhakti.

- ① Honor P.D
sāstres
② They like to be regularly
They can swiftly award
Vafkumha Allah laah
with love & relief

taj-jñāpakam ca bhaja bhāgavatādi-śāstram
līlā-kathā bhagavataḥ śṛṇu tatra nityam
tā eva karṇa-vivaram praṇayāt pravistāḥ
sadyaḥ padam bhagavataḥ prabhavanti dātum

Honor (**bhaja**) the Bhāgavatam and other scriptures (**bhāgavatādi-śāstram**) that tell of this devotional service (**taj-jñāpakam**). Hear from them (**śṛṇu tatra**) regularly (**nityam**) about the Lord's pastimes (**bhagavataḥ līlā-kathā**). For when those narrations (**tā eva**) enter (**pravistāḥ**) the holes of your ears (**karṇa-vivaram**) and you relish them with love (**praṇayāt**), they will swiftly award you (**sadyaḥ dātum prabhavanti**) the Lord's abode (**bhagavataḥ padam**).

Because Gopa-kumāra is not familiar with the nine methods of devotional service, the Vaikuṅṭha messengers inform him first about the method of śravana, hearing.

Of all the authorized forms of śravana, hearing the pastimes of the Supreme Lord, especially from Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, is recommended as the most effective.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam often reiterates this recommendation:

saṁsāra-sindhūṁ atī-dustaram uttīrṣor
nānyaḥ plavo bhagavataḥ puruṣottamasya
līlā-kathā-rasa-niṣevāṇam antareṇa
pumso bhaved vividha-duḥkha-davārditasya

“For a person (pum̐sah) who is suffering (ārditasya) in the fire of countless miseries (vividha-duḥkha-dava) and who desires to cross (uttīrṣoh) the insurmountable (atī-dustaram) ocean of material existence (saṁsāra-sindhūṁ), there is no suitable boat (na anyāḥ plavaḥ) except that of cultivating devotion (niṣevāṇam antareṇa) to the transcendental taste (rasa) for the narrations of the Supreme Personality of Godhead’s (bhagavataḥ puruṣottamasya) pastimes (līlā-kathā).” (Bhāgavatam 12.4.40)

pibanti ye bhagavata ātmanaḥ satām
kathāmṛtaṁ śravaṇa-puṭeṣu sambhṛtam
punanti te viṣaya-vidūṣitāśayam
vrajanti tac-caraṇa-saroruhāntikam

Those who drink (pibanti ye) the sweet pastimes (kathāmṛtaṁ) of the Lord and his devotees (bhagavata ātmanaḥ satām) held in the cups of their ears (śravaṇa-puṭeṣu sambhṛtam) clean their hearts of all contamination^① (punanti te viṣaya-vidūṣita āśayam) and attain the lotus feet of the Lord for service (vrajanti tac-caraṇa-saroruhāntikam)^②. (Bhāgavatam 2.2.37)

Even reinforcement
of one of the 11bs of
D.S → is best possible
service to attain vaikunṭha

2.3.125

teṣām nava-prakārāṇām
ekenaiva su-sidhyati
sarva-sādhana-varyeṇa
vaikuṅṭhaḥ sādhya-sattamaḥ

Devotional service (teṣām), in any one (ekena eva) of its nine forms (nava-prakārāṇām), is the best possible spiritual discipline (sarva-sādhana-varyeṇa) and can easily award you (su-sidhyati) the ultimate goal (sādhya-sattamaḥ), Vaikuṅṭha (vaikuṅṭhaḥ).

Pure devotional service is superior to all other spiritual disciplines—
jñāna, karma, and so on—and therefore the goal achieved by bhakti
is better than liberation, material enjoyment, and the results of any
other method.

The fruit matches the quality of the tree.

Tree : ^{→ sādhavē}
P-D-S (navaśhē bhakti)
Fruit : prema
_{↳ sēdhyē}

As stated in the scriptures:

dīkṣā-mātreṇa kṛṣṇasya
narā mokṣam vrajanti vai
kiṁ punar ye sadā bhaktyā
pūjayanty acyutaṁ narāḥ

“Persons (narā) simply initiated into the chanting of Kṛṣṇa’s names (kṛṣṇasya dīkṣā-mātreṇa) certainly attain liberation (mokṣam vrajanti vai), what to speak of (kiṁ punar) those (ye narāḥ) who constantly worship (sadā pūjayanty) Lord Acyuta (acyutaṁ) with pure devotion (bhaktyā).” (Brahma Purāṇa 119.6)

śāṭhyenāpi narā nityam
ye smaranti janārdanam
te 'pi yānti tanūm tyaktvā
viṣṇu-lokam anāmayam

“People (ye narā) who always remember (nityam smaranti) Lord Janārdana (janārdanam), even with dishonest intentions (śāṭhyenāpi), upon leaving their bodies (te api tanūm tyaktvā) will go (yānti) to the faultless (anāmayam) world of Viṣṇu (viṣṇu-lokam).”

All the other
benefits glorified in
various scriptures are
of insignificant by the great
devotees

2.3.126

mahat-tamatayā śrūya-
māṇā api pare 'khilāḥ
phala-vrātāvicāreṇa
tucchā mahad-anāḍṛtāḥ

All other benefits (pare akhilāḥ phala-vrāta), even those praised in
scripture as supremely great (mahat-tamatayā śrūyamāṇā api),
advanced souls (mahad) disregard (anāḍṛtāḥ) as trifling (tucchā),
thinking nothing of them (avicāreṇa).

The desire tree of Vedic scripture can grant whatever benefits people aspire for.

Thus those who are less fortunate, who do not appreciate the value of Vaikuṅṭha-loka, approach the Vedas for lesser rewards and are granted them.

But because the great wise souls know how to discriminate between what is essential and what is useless, they are not enticed by inferior achievements offered in the Vedas; rather, those great souls are attracted to bhakti-rasa, the transcendental tastes of Lord Viṣṇu's devotional service.

Even though one
fills of D.S. or give
the highest benefit, still
learned devotees practice all 9 kinds
to easily obtain the sweet taste

2.3.127

tathāpi tad-rasa-jñaiḥ sā
bhaktir nava-vidhāñjasā
sampādyate vicitraitad-
rasa-mādhurya-labdhave

Yet (tathāpi) devotees who understand the rasas (tad-rasa-jñaiḥ) of devotional service (bhaktih) may practice (sampādyate) all nine forms of bhakti (nava-vidhā bhaktir) to easily obtain (añjasā labdhaye) the sweetness of its diverse tastes (etad vicitra rasa-mādhurya).

Although devotees can attain Vaikunṭha by any one of the nine practices of bhakti, they often like to engage in all nine to enjoy the supreme, indescribably blissful taste of those transcendental activities.

Each of the practices, beginning with śravaṇa and kīrtana, gives a sweet satisfaction of its own.

If one is engaged even in one of these 9 kinds → Premā automatically arises

2.3.128

teṣām kasmimścid ekasmin
śraddhayānuṣṭhite sati
svayam āvirbhavet premā
śrīmat-kṛṣṇa-padābjayoḥ

When one engages (anuṣṭhite sati) with faith (śraddhayā) in even one (kasmimścid ekasmin) of these forms of bhakti (teṣām), pure love (premā) for the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa (śrīmat-kṛṣṇa-padābjayoḥ) automatically arises (svayam āvirbhavet).

As explained by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī in Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya 22.62), śraddhā, or faith, is properly understood in terms of “trust” (viśvāsa) in the efficacy of the devotional process:

'śraddhā'-śabde—viśvāsa kahe sudṛḍha niścaya
kṛṣṇe bhakti kaile sarva-karma kṛta haya

“ 'By rendering transcendental loving service to Kṛṣṇa (kṛṣṇe bhakti kaile), one automatically performs all subsidiary activities (sarva-karma kṛta haya).' This confident, firm faith, favorable to the discharge of devotional service (sudṛḍha niścaya viśvāsa), is called śraddhā (kahe 'śraddhā'-śabde).”

2.3.129

tathāpi kāryā premṇaiva
parihārāya hṛd-rujaḥ
phalāntareṣu kāmasya
vaikuṅṭhāpti-virodhinaḥ

anya-abhiṣāṅ
hinders devotees
from attaining vaikunṭha
... to keep their hearts free &
anya-abhiṣāṅ → devotees should
continue practice P-D-S with pure love

Even so (tathāpi), the disease (hṛd-rujaḥ) of aspiring (kāmasya) for other goals (phalāntareṣu) may hinder devotees from attaining Vaikuṅṭha (vaikuṅṭha āpti-virodhinaḥ). To keep their hearts free of this (parihārāya), devotees should with pure love (premṇā eva) continue practicing devotional service (kāryā).

Prema, pure love of God, is never tainted by desires for selfish benefits.

Such ambitions cause all sorts of anxieties, which burn the diseased heart.

A devotee who wants to experience the higher reality of prema must cure himself of this heart disease; otherwise, entanglements will hamper his progress toward Vaikunṭha as he fulfills his ulterior desires.

Selfish desires cause misfortune in this world and obstruct one's endeavors to attain the spiritual world beyond.

But when one's prema is finally awakened these harmful desires vanish, and the sanctified devotee knows only perfect happiness in this life and the next.

yady apy etādrśī bhaktir yatra yatropapadyate
tat tat sthānam hi vaikunthas tatra tatraiva sa prabhuḥ

tathāpi sarvadā sākṣād anyatra bhagavāms tathā
na drśyete vaikuṇṭho 'vaśyam bhaktair apeksyate

of the Lord is always obtained there.

Although (yady apy) wherever (yatra yatra) there is such devotional service the Supreme Lord (etādrśī bhaktir) surely appears (upapadyate), and indeed that place is Vaikuṇṭha (tat tat sthānam hi vaikunṭhas), devotees (bhaktaiḥ) must still have special regard (avaśyam apeksyate) for the Vaikuṇṭha world (vaikuṇṭhas) because nowhere else (na anyatra) is the Personality of Godhead (sah prabhuḥ bhagavān) always (sarvadā) directly to be seen (sākṣād drśyete).

Even though, wherever
 Bhaktir is practiced, that place
 is Vaikuṇṭha, but
 devotees should
 have a special
 regard for the
 Vaikuṇṭha world.
 Why?
 Because
 of the Lord is always obtained there.

A question may arise: Since prema-bhakti ridicules the happiness of Brahman realization, includes all sweet varieties of supreme ecstasy, and is available here in this world, what need is there to go to elsewhere?

In the Padma Purāna the Lord Himself says that He can be found wherever His devotees remember Him:

nāham vasāmi vaikunṭhe
yoginām hr̥daye na ca
mad-bhaktā yatra gāyanti
tatra tiṣṭhāmi nārada

“I do not live in Vaikunṭha (nāham vasāmi vaikunṭhe), nor in the hearts of the yogīs (yoginām hr̥daye na ca). I stay instead (tatra tiṣṭhāmi), O Nārada (nārada), in that place where (yatra) My devotees sing My glories (mad-bhaktā gāyanti).”

The Vaikunṭha-dūtas point out that there is one reason why Vaikunṭha-loka is a more desirable place for devotees than the material universe: Only in the transcendental world, Vaikunṭha, is the Supreme Lord always visible with all His variegated charm, beauty, pastimes, and personal qualities.

Nowhere else
such bhakti is realized
forever in all its forms
disturbance & in the company of
so many surrendered devotees.

2.3.132

sarva-prakārikā bhaktis
tādrśī ca sadānyataḥ
na sampadyeta nirvighnā
tan-niṣṭhair bahubhiḥ saha

Nowhere else (na anyataḥ) can such bhakti to Him (tādrśī bhaktiḥ), in all its forms (sarva-prakārikā), be realized (sampadyeta) forever (sadā), without disturbance (nirvighnā), and in the company of (saha) so many (bahubhiḥ) surrendered devotees (tan-niṣṭhaiḥ).

The devotional service in Vaikuntha is unmixed with material tendencies; it is motivated solely by pure prema.

Because in Vaikuṅṭha there are none of the frustrations imposed by time and physical limitations, the Vaiṣṇavas who live there in their spiritual bodies can enjoy the rasas of prema-bhakti with full freedom available nowhere else.

All Vaisnavas, therefore, should give Śrī Vaikuṅṭha-loka the honor it deserves.

Do not consider
D-S merely as an
activity of mind, body & senses
D-S is
a) Eternal absolute reality
b) Manifests as most intense ecstasy
c) Beyond material modes.

2.3.133

nijendriya-manah-kāya-
ceṣṭā-rūpām na viddhi tām
nitya-satya-ghanānanda-
rūpā sā hi guṇātigā

You should not consider (na viddhi) devotional service (tām) merely an activity (ceṣṭā) of the body, senses, and mind (nija indriya-manah-kāya). It is in fact the eternal absolute reality (sā hi nitya-satya), manifesting itself as the most intense ecstasy (ghanānanda-rūpā), beyond the material modes (guṇa atigā).

In Text 123, where the Vaikuṅṭha messengers advised Gopa-kumāra to practice devotional service (bhaktim anutiṣṭha), this might be mistaken to mean that bhakti is a ritualistic practice, something to be accomplished by human endeavor.

To correct this potential misunderstanding, they here explain that pure bhakti is never approached by material senses.

Even though hearing is done with the ears, chanting with the tongue, remembering with the mind, and praying and other activities with the limbs of the body, these activities are not material; they are spiritual activities that can be performed only by a devotee's awakened spiritual senses.

By P's mercy
His devotees happily
relieve D's in many varieties
It reveals itself to them in
their pure hearts which are
immersed in Sat-Cid-Ananda

2.3.134

nirguṇe sac-cid-ānandāt-
mani kṛṣṇa-prasādataḥ
sphurantī vilasaty ātma-
bhaktānām bahudhā mude

By mercy of P

By Lord Kṛṣṇa's mercy (kṛṣṇa-prasādataḥ), His devotees (ātma-
bhaktānām) happily realize (mude vilasaty) this devotional service
in many varieties (bahudhā). It reveals itself to them (sphurantī) in
their hearts (ātmani), which are free from the material modes
(nirguṇe) and immersed in eternity, knowledge, and bliss (sac-cid-
ānandāt).

If devotional service can be performed only with spiritual senses,
how can conditioned souls ever qualify to engage in it?

↓
Kṛṣṇa's mercy → Faith in D.G → purifies the senses sufficiently to begin hearing & chanting - → further purifies the senses.
↓
devotees.

They can be purified sufficiently to begin transcendental hearing and chanting of the glories of the Lord only by Kṛṣṇa's causeless mercy.

śradhā → anāśā nivr̥tī → nīṣṭhā - - - - in their constitutional state.

As devotees mature in their practice, their individual tastes gradually appear, and on the higher levels of advancement their reciprocations with Kṛṣṇa become increasingly precise, diverse, and ecstatic.

2.3.135

viśuddhe tu vivekena
saty ātmani hareḥ padam
gate 'py aprākṛtaṁ bhakti-
vidhayo vilasanti hi

When, by
spiritual discrimination
a devotee becomes completely
pure in heart.
he attains Vaikunṭha &
realizes the wonderful
varieties of D.S.

When by spiritual discrimination (vivekena) a devotee becomes completely pure in heart (ātmani viśuddhe saty) and attains (gate 'py) the transcendental abode of the Lord (aprākṛtaṁ hareḥ padam), he realizes (vilasanti hi) the wonderful varieties of devotional service (bhakti-vidhayo).

ātmaniki anante nīṣṭhi → Pre nā

The argument for how an aspiring Vaiṣṇava becomes spiritualized is presented positively in this verse and negatively in the next.

By learning to (discern spirit from matter), a devotee gradually frees his consciousness from entanglement with the material body, its senses, and the things of this world.

→ by engaging in the activities constitutional to the spirit → D-S

In Bhagavad-gītā (5.9) Śrī Kṛṣṇa describes this kind of discrimination to Arjuna.

Indriyānyīndriyārthesu vartanta iti dhārayan: “One becomes aware that the senses are simply interacting with their objects.”

When one is finally free from all material contact, one can enter Vaikuṅṭha, the realm of Lord Hari, where there is also no connection with matter.

There one can enjoy the real varieties of life.

2.3.136

anyathetara-karmāṇi-
vaite 'pi syur na saṅgatāḥ
kāyendriyātma-ceṣṭāto
jñānenātmani śodhite

Other wise
how could pure
hearted persons, free
endeavors → get material
to be kṛti for material
If be kṛti attracted
material

Otherwise (anyathā), for one whose heart (ātmani) has by transcendental knowledge (jñānena) been freed (śodhite) from the material endeavors (ceṣṭātaḥ) of the body, senses, and mind (kāya-indriya-ātma), the activities of devotional service (ete) would be no more suitable (na saṅgatāḥ syuh) than ordinary affairs (itara-karmāṇi-iva).

If devotional service consisted of actions of the material senses upon material objects, it would be no more spiritual than any other activity.

No purified person who has given up material activities would want to engage in it.

After having struggled to put aside the obligations of Vedic duties, nitya and naimittika (regular and occasional), why would one accept new karmic entanglement?

The advanced soul would judge the activities of Vaiṣṇavas unfavorably, applying to them the principle that “only the senses are involved with their objects.”

∴ One who renounces D.S. if it was any other material activity will not attain vaikunṭha. → but
~~become a jīvan-mukta only~~

2.3.137

anyebhya iva karmabhyo
bhagavad-bhakti-karmataḥ
viviktaḥ san katham yātu
vaikuṇṭham muktim arhati

Why should one (katham) who renounces (viviktaḥ san) the acts of devotion to the Supreme Lord (bhagavad-bhakti-karmataḥ), as if these were like other activities (anyebhya karmabhyah iva), go to Vaikuṇṭha (vaikuṇṭham yātu)? He should obtain only liberation (muktim arhati).

Impersonalists who consider devotional activity to be material have failed to receive even a touch of mercy from devotional service.

If they have actually attained naiṣkarmya, relief from attachment to the results of material work, they can have liberation, but without bhakti they can never enter Vaikunṭha.

To attain Vaikunṭha one must be favored with the blessings of bhakti.

Thus the spiritual nature of devotional service is proven by both positive and negative logic.

2.3.138

na hy anya-karma-vad bhaktir
api karmeti manyatām
bahir-drṣṭyaiva jalpyeta
bhakta-dehādi-vat kvacit

एक ही
materialistic
Person थिंक कि
अ materialistic
अ they think
अ Qualities कए
अ limited of the bodies
they are not.

Even if persons whose vision is limited and materialistic (bahir-drṣṭyā eva) think (manyatām) devotional service (bhaktir) just another kind of karma (karma iti), it is not at all (na hy anya-karma-vad). Let them think that way and let them talk on in that way (jalpyeta), as they do when they dismiss as material the bodies and personal qualities of the Lord's devotees (bhakta-dehādi-vat kvacit).

Technically speaking, active devotional service is also a kind of disciplined work, like the duties of persons following the varṇāśrama system.

In this sense bhakti may also be called a variety of karma.

The Vaikunṭha-dūtas themselves used the word bhakti-karma in the previous verse.

But even though this concession may be granted to appease those not devoted to the Lord, bhakti should still not be regarded as karma in the sense of being a function of the material body.

Some schools of thought, for example Jaimini's Karma-mīmāṃsā philosophy, regard bhagavad-bhakti as the best of the various kinds of good karma that can purify the mind.

But they think like this only because their point of view is mundane.

The same word body may be applied both to material bodies made of the five elements and to the sac-cid-ānanda forms of the residents of Vaikuṅṭha.

Or the word jewel may be used to refer to glass ornaments or to the Vaikuṅṭha cintāmaṇi gems.

Or the Sanskrit word sattva may be used to indicate either one of the three modes of material nature or the transcendental nature of the Supreme Truth, the source of all existence and all goodness.

It is in this second sense that the word is used in scriptural texts like this one from Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.2.35):

sattvaṁ na ced dhātar idaṁ nijam bhaved
vijñānam ajñāna-bhidāpamārjanam

O Lord, cause of all causes (dhātar), if this form of Yours (idaṁ)
were not beyond the modes of material nature (na ced nijam
sattvaṁ bhaved), then how can the devotees understand Your form
(vijñānam apamārjanam), which destroys material bondage (ajñāna-
bhidā).

Only those whose vision is external can identify matter with spirit or
use the one word karma to equate worldly duties with pure
devotional service.

In Vaikuntha & elsewhere
the transcendental nature of D's
spontaneously shows itself
in the sac-cid-ānanda bodies
of the devotees

2.3.139

bhaktānām sac-cid-ānanda-
rūpeṣv aṅgindriyātmāsu
ghaṭate svānurūpeṣu
vaikuṅṭhe 'nyatra ca svataḥ

In Vaikuntha (vaikuṅṭhe) and elsewhere (anyatra ca), the transcendental nature of devotional activity spontaneously shows itself (svataḥ ghaṭate) in the suitably formed (svānurūpeṣu) sac-cid-ānanda bodies (sac-cid-ānanda-rūpeṣu) of the Lord's devotees (bhaktānām), bodies composed of limbs and senses (aṅga indriya ātmasu).

In Vaikuntha and elsewhere, the transcendental nature of devotional activity spontaneously shows itself in the suitably formed sac-cid-ānanda bodies of the Lord's devotees, bodies composed of limbs and senses.

Devotional service is thus established as transcendental activity that naturally manifests itself in the purified hearts of the devotees; it is not material.

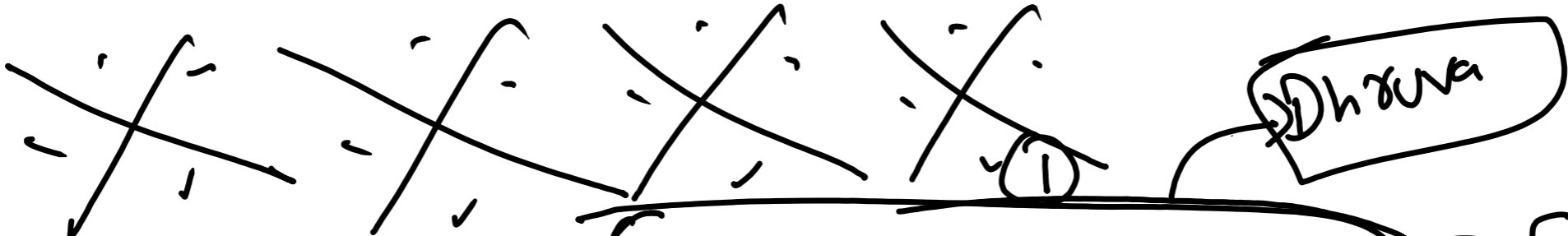
Still, someone might question how self-manifesting bhakti could appear in devotees as such activities as hearing and chanting, which involve the body and its senses.

To clear this doubt, we need to understand that devotees of the Supreme Lord, both in Vaikuṅṭha and elsewhere, perform bhakti with spiritual bodies and senses.

There is no discrepancy in this conception, because the limbs and senses of the pure Vaiṣṇavas are equal in spiritual quality with pure devotional service.

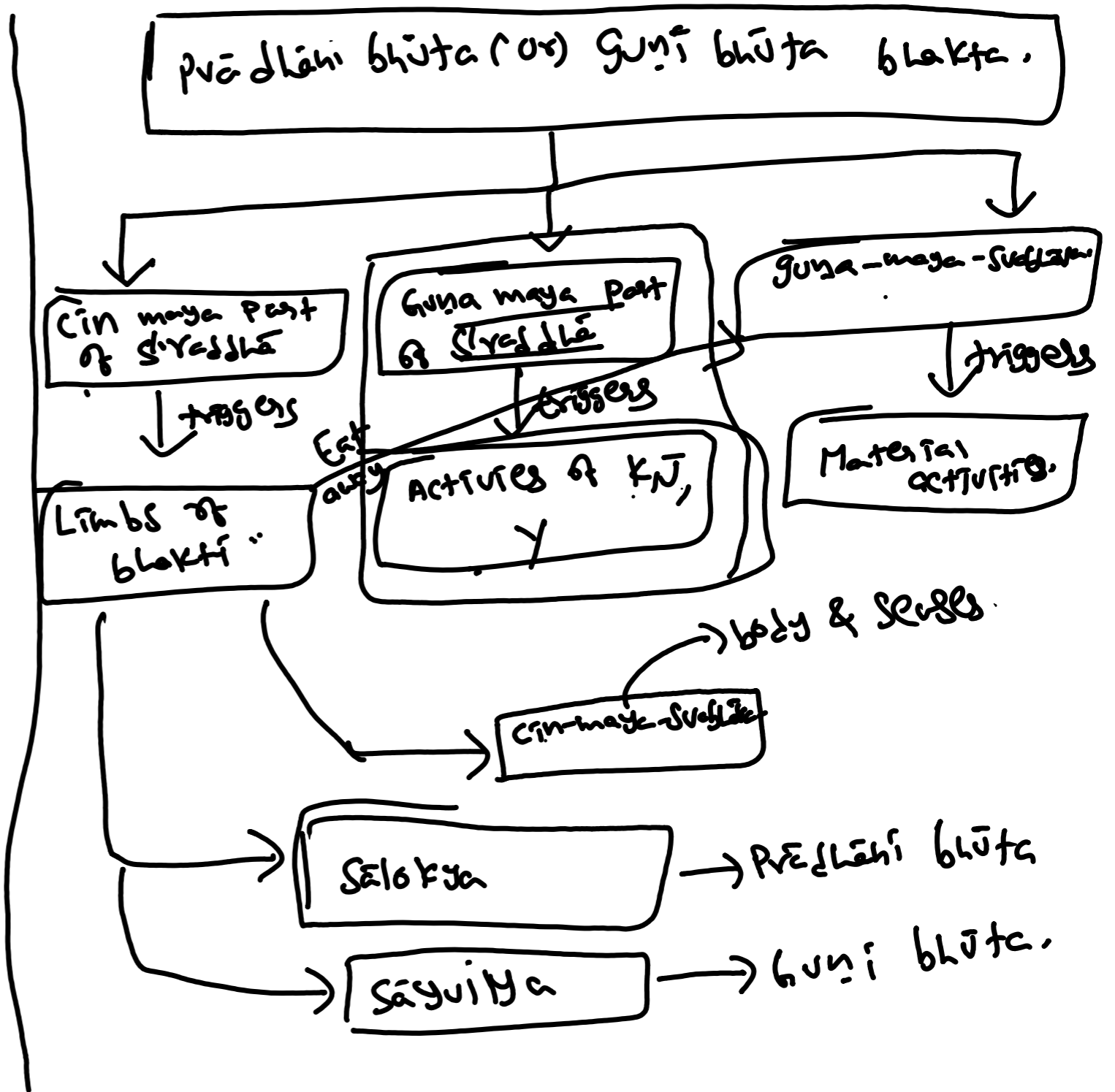
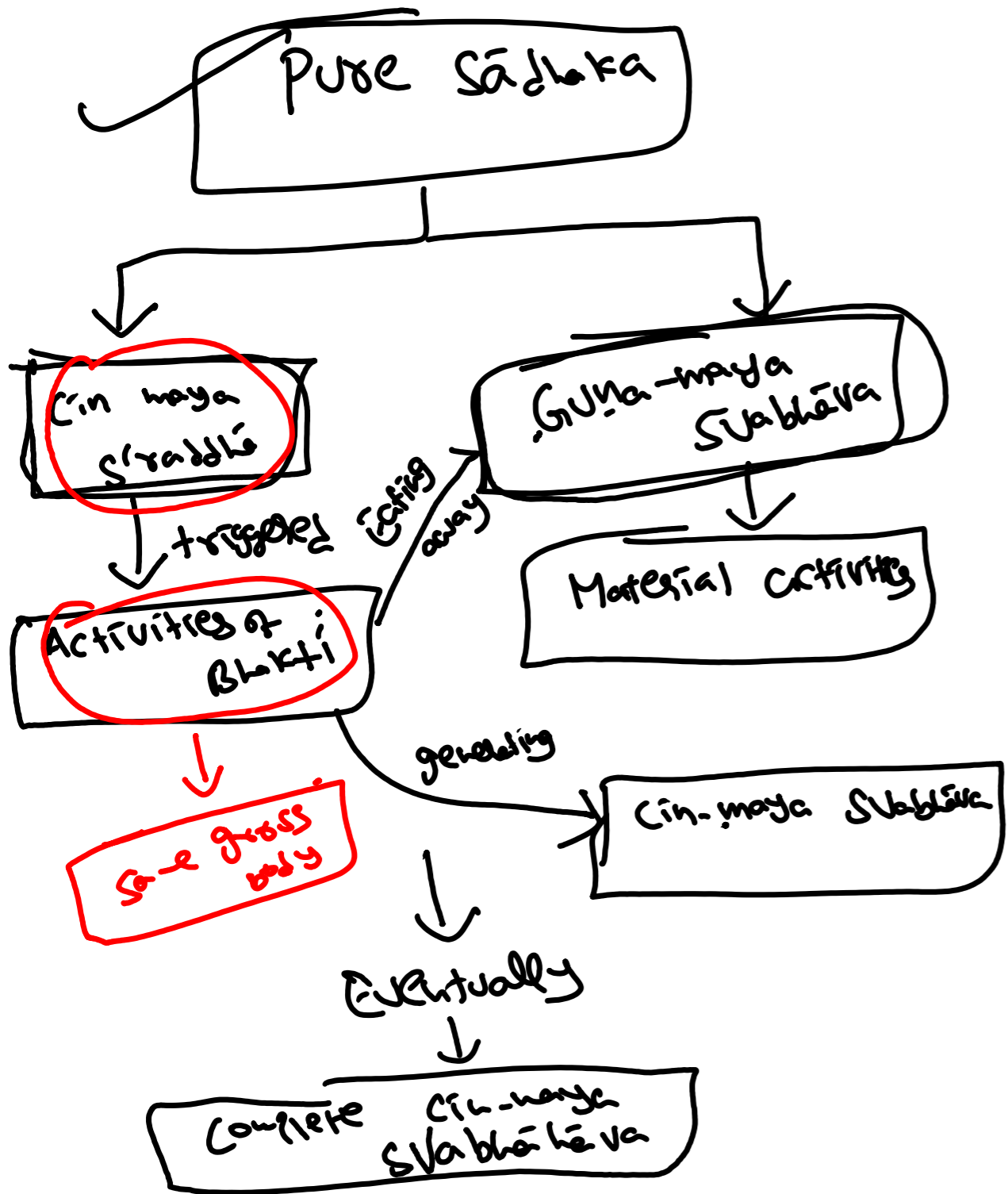


Even devotees who still live in this world in bodies made of material energy can engage in pure bhakti because the appearance of bhakti transforms their bodies.



Either their bodies become literally sac-cid-ānanda or bhakti enters
their material bodies by the potency of the Supreme Lord's special
mercy, or else their bodies and senses become suitable for
performing bhakti by some God-given potency inherent in the jīvas
themselves.





We are the proof of
this truth.
↓
We are eternal associates of
still we spread P-D-S

2.3.140

vayam atra pramānam smo
'niśam vaikuntha-pārsadāḥ
tanvanto bahudhā bhaktim
asprṣtāḥ prākṛtair guṇaiḥ

We ourselves (**vayam**) are evidence (**pramānam smah**) of this truth (**atra**). As associates of the Lord of Vaikuntha (**vaikuntha-pārsadāḥ**), we constantly spread (**aniśam tanvantah**) devotional service (**bhaktim**) in many ways (**bahudhā**) and yet are untouched (**asprṣtāḥ**) by the material modes (**prākṛtair guṇaiḥ**).

Even devotees who still live in this world in bodies made of material energy can engage in pure bhakti because the appearance of bhakti transforms their bodies.

Either their bodies become literally sac-cid-ānanda, or bhakti enters their material bodies by the potency of the Supreme Lord's special mercy, or else their bodies and senses become suitable for performing bhakti by some God-given potency inherent in the jīvas themselves.

The Vaikunṭha messengers themselves are proof that devotional service is completely nonmaterial and that those who have attained a spiritual body in Vaikunṭha engage in the various activities of devotional service, beginning with hearing and chanting.

The bodies of the Vaikuṅṭha residents are untouched by the twenty-three elements of matter.

As King Yudhiṣṭhira confirms in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (7.1.35), dehendriyāsu-hīnānām/ vaikuṅṭha-pura-vāsinām: “The bodies of the inhabitants of Vaikuṅṭha are completely spiritual, having nothing to do with the material body, senses, or life air.”

D.S appears to
neophytes to be a
function of their senses (material)
↓
So that they can engage in D.S
with relish.

2.3.141

navīna-sevakānām tu
prītyā samyak-pravṛttaye
nijendriyādi-vyāpāra-
tayaiva pratibhāti sā

Devotional service (sā) appears (pratibhāti) to new servants of the
Lord (navīna-sevakānām tu) to be a function of their own senses,
body, and mind (nija-indriyādi-vyāpāratayā eva) so that neophytes
can engage in devotional service with relish, (as they should) (prītyā
samyak-pravṛttaye).

When one undertakes devotional service, one perceives one's devotional activities to be external functions of the material body.

~~Why should such direct perception be denied?~~

It should be denied because such perception is only the experience of beginners in devotional practice.



Bhakti encourages those who are new to the Lord's service to think
"Oh, my own tongue is vibrating the names of God, and my own
ears are hearing them!"

In this way the faith of the neophytes is evoked, since otherwise they
would have difficulty making the effort required to surrender their
independence.

But great devotees do not think their D.S. is under their own control. But they see it as expressions of Lord's mercy.

2.3.142

mahadbhir bhakti-niṣṭhaiś ca
na svādhīneti manyate
mahā-prasāda-rūpeyaṁ
prabhor ity anubhūyate

But great devotees (mahadbhir) fixed in devotional service (bhakti-niṣṭhaiś ca) do not think (na manyate) the services they do to be actions under their own control (sva adhīna iti) but expressions of the Lord's supreme mercy (iyam prabhor mahā-prasāda-rūpaḥ ity anubhūyate).

If you are in
a hurry to see
Vaikunṭha then go
to Vraja & it'll fulfill
all your desires

2.3.143

tvarā ced vidyate śrīmad-
vaikunṭhālokane tava
sarvābhīṣṭa-prada-śreṣṭhām
tām śrī-vraja-bhuvam vraja

If you are in a hurry (tvarā ced vidyate) to see the divine world of Vaikunṭha (śrīmad-vaikunṭha ālokane), then go to Śrī Vraja-bhūmi (śrī-vraja-bhuvam vraja), the place (tām) that can best award (prada-śreṣṭhām) the fulfillment of all your ambitions (tava sarva-abhīṣṭa).

Having received the mercy of Lord Maheśvara, Gopa-kumāra is sure to achieve Vaikuṅṭha.

Meanwhile he can proceed to Śivaloka, from which he will be able to approach Vaikuṅṭha in due time.

But as the Vaikuṅṭha messengers know, Gopa-kumāra is anxious to reach Vaikuṅṭha as quickly as possible.

So after describing various related topics, the messengers now give the essence of their instruction: Gopa-kumāra should return to Vraja on earth and there practice pure bhakti to fulfill his ambitions.

Singly practice
D.S. mainly in the
form of nama-saṅkīrtana
with the hope of gaining
eternal contact with the Lord's
lotus feet

2.3.144

param śrīmat-padāmbhoja-
sadāsaṅgaty-apekṣayā
nāma-saṅkīrtana-prāyām
viśuddhām bhaktim ācara

Simply practice pure devotional service (viśuddhām bhaktim ā),
mainly in the form of nāma-saṅkīrtana (nāma-saṅkīrtana-prāyām),
with the hope (apekṣayā) of gaining the eternal contact (sadā
saṅgaty) of the Lord's divine lotus feet (param śrīmat-
padāmbhoja).

Bhagavan-nāma-saṅkīrtana, loud chanting of the holy name of the Lord, is the most effective way to achieve Vaikuṅṭha, or whatever else one may desire.

But the chanting must be practiced in pure devotion, unmixed with motives of karma and jñāna.

By that
Sankirtana - Praya-kranti
→ U will soon attain Kṛṣṇa
& easily see (P) IL (V)

2.3.145

tayāśu tādrśī prema-
sampad utpādayiṣyate
yayā sukhaṁ te bhavitā
vaikuṅṭhe kṛṣṇa-darśanam

By that devotional service (tayā) you will soon realize (āśu utpādayiṣyate) the treasure of prema (tādrśī prema-sampad), and you will easily (yayā sukhaṁ te) see Kṛṣṇa (kṛṣṇa-darśanam bhavitā) in Vaikuṅṭha (vaikuṅṭhe).

Pure love of God is the most sublime wealth. As Lord Brahmā says in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.15.25) while describing his own vision of Vaikuṅṭha:

yac ca vrajanty animiṣām ṛṣabhānuvṛtṭyā
dūre yamā hy upari naḥ sprhaṇīya-śīlāḥ
bhartur mithaḥ su-yaśasaḥ kathanānurāga-
vaiklavya-bāṣpa-kalayā pulakī-kṛtāṅgāḥ

Those who are far above rules (dūre yamā) by following the Lord of the demigods (animiṣām ṛṣabhānuvṛtṭyā) with dedication, who are superior to us (upari naḥ), and whose qualities are desirable by us (sprhaṇīya-śīlāḥ), and whose bodies develop goose bumps (pulakī-kṛtāṅgāḥ) and uncontrolled tears of ecstasy (vaiklavya-bāṣpa-kalayā) through attraction to discussions of the Lord (bhartuh kathanā anurāga) possessing most excellent qualities (mithaḥ suyaśasaḥ), enter Vaikuṅṭha (yac ca vrajanty).

premṇo 'ntar-aṅgam kila sādhanottamam
manyeta kaiścīt smaranam na kīrtanam
ekendriye vāci vicetane sukham
bhaktiḥ sphuraty āśu hi kīrtanātmikā

Some think
 to smaranam is superior
 to kīrtanam.
 Why?
 Kīrtan is very easily
 & quickly achieved.
 Only one sense is involved
 (to hear) → which is
 accurate.

Some think (kaiścīt manyeta) that remembering (smaranam), rather than chanting (na kīrtanam), is the essential means of devotional practice (kila sadhana uttamam), the means that most effectively leads to prema (premṇo antar-aṅgam), for bhakti (bhaktiḥ) in the form of chanting (kīrtanātmikā) appears (sphuraty) quickly (āśu) and easily (sukham), and in only one sense (eka indriye), that of speech (vāci), which is not itself alive and conscious (vicetane).

This was the opinion expressed by the masters of yoga on Tapoloka, that of all the forms of devotional service the best is smaraṇa, remembering.

Pippalāyana and others insisted that remembering the Lord, rather than chanting His names, is the most essential means of achieving prema.

They reasoned that kīrtana involves only one sense, that of speech, which is one of the karmendriyas, an unconcious material entity.

And since the kīrtana process is perfected very quickly, its result must be less than that of smaraṇa.

2.3.147

bhaktiḥ prakṛṣṭā smaraṇātmikāsmiṇ
sarvendriyāṇām adhiṇe vilole
ghore baliṣṭhe manasi prayāsair
nīte vaśam bhāti viśodhite yā

But, Superior
to Kṛi which is
superior → superior within
the turbulent, frightful mind
when by serious efforts, the
mind is fully purified.

Superior bhakti (prakṛṣṭā bhaktiḥ) in the form of remembering (smaraṇātmikā), they think, appears (bhāti) within the mind (manasi)—that turbulent (vilole), frightful (ghore), and mighty (baliṣṭhe) chief of all the senses (sarva indriyāṇām adhiṇe)—when by serious efforts (prayāsair) the mind has been brought under control (vaśam nīte) and fully purified (viśodhite).

Everyone has experience that the mind is difficult to control.

To subdue and purify it is a great achievement.

Because the mind is the ruler of the senses, when the mind is controlled the functions of the senses, including kīrtana, are also controlled.

In the words of the mendicant from Avantī in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.23.47, 45):

mano-vaśe 'nye hy abhavan sma devā
manaś ca nānyasya vaśam sameti
bhīṣmo hi devaḥ sahasaḥ sahiyān
yuñjyād vaśe taṁ sa hi deva-devaḥ

The senses (anye devā) are under the control of the mind (mano-vaśe hy abhavan sma). The mind is not under the control of anything else (manaś ca na anyasya vaśam sameti). The mind is fearsome (bhīṣmo hi devaḥ), stronger than the strongest (sahasah sahiyān). One who controls the mind is the controller of all the senses (yuñjyād vaśe taṁ sa hi deva-devaḥ).

dānam sva-dharmo niyamo yamaś ca
śrutam ca karmāṇi ca sad-vratāni
sarve mano-nigraha-lakṣaṇāntāḥ
paro hi yogo manasaḥ samādhiḥ

Charity, prescribed duties, niyama and yama (**dānam sva-dharmo niyamo yamaś ca**), hearing from scripture, pious works and purifying vows (**śrutam ca karmāṇi ca sad-vratāni**) all have as their final aim the subduing of the mind (**sarve mano-nigraha-lakṣaṇa antāḥ**), since control of the mind is the best yoga (**paro hi yogo manasaḥ samādhiḥ**).

Therefore, in the opinion of the residents of Tapoloka, one achieves the highest perfection by controlling one's mind and engaging it in remembrance of the Supreme Lord.

2.3.148

But in our opinion, chanting
is better than smārṇam.
Why?
Best,
a) chanting includes mind, speech & hearing.
b) chanting helps not only the person
practicing it, but others also.

manyāmahe kīrtanam eva sat-tamam
lolātmakaika-sva-hṛdi sphurat-smṛteḥ
vāci sva-yukte manasi śrutau tathā
dīvyat parān apy upakurvad ātmya-vat

But we consider (manyāmahe) chanting to be alone (kīrtanam eva) the most excellent form of bhakti (sat-tamam), better than remembering (smṛteḥ), which appears (sphurat) only in one's own turbulent heart (lolātmakaika-sva-hṛdi). For chanting harnesses not only the faculty of speech (vāci) which it engages directly (sva-yukte), but also the mind (manasi) and sense of hearing (śrutau tathā). And chanting helps (upakurvad) not only the person practicing it (ātmya-vat dīvyat) but others as well (parān apy).

This is the Vaikuntha-dūtas' own opinion. Smarana is purely an
internal function, but kīrtana, which actively employs one's power of
speech, affects both one's internal and external environments.

Kīrtana (also acts on the mind, bringing it subconsciously into
contact with all spiritual sensory functions.

If this subtle contact were not established, the spirit soul could not
awaken to his real life.

The transcendental sound of kīrtana enters the ears on its own strength, without any effort by the hearer and thus it benefits not only the chanter but everyone who hears it, treating them all as its subservient dependents.

The process of remembrance does not have such power.

In fact, as long as the mind's fickle character has not changed, smarana cannot manifest itself fully.

When we realistically consider the relative value of smaraṇa and kīrtana, we find, therefore, that the difficulty of performing smaraṇa does not make smaraṇa more important.

In the Viṣṇu Purāṇa (6.8.57) the sage Parāśara has said:

yasmin nyasta-matir na yāti narakam svargo 'pi yac-cintane
vighno yatra niveśitātma-manaso brāhmo 'pi loko 'lpakah
muktim cetasi yaḥ sthito 'mala-dhiyām puṁsām dadāty avyayah
kim citraṁ yad aghaḥ prayāti vilayaṁ tatrācyute kīrtite

“One who fixes his mind on Lord Acyuta (yasmin nyasta-matir) will never go to hell (na yāti narakam). Indeed, by thinking about Him (yac-cintane) one will attain heaven (svargah api). For one whose mind is fully absorbed in thought of Him (yatra niveśita ātma-manaso), even the world of Brahmā (brāhmo lokah api) is but an insignificant obstruction on the path (alpakah vighnah). The infallible Lord (avyayah) bestows liberation (dadāty muktim) on those pure souls (yaḥ amala-dhiyām puṁsām) in whose hearts He is present (cetasi sthitah). Is it any wonder (kim citraṁ), then, that when Lord Acyuta’s glories are chanted (tatra acyute kīrtite) all sins are destroyed (yad aghaḥ prayāti vilayaṁ)?”

By the kīrtana of Lord Visnu's names even the sinful Ajāmila, who could not remember the Lord at all, attained liberation.

The beneficial results of meditation, sacrifice, and worship are all automatically obtained in the process of kīrtana, especially in the present age:

dhyāyan kṛte yajan yajñais
tretāyām dvāpare 'rcayan
yad āpnoti tad āpnoti
kalau saṅkīrtya keśavam

“What was accomplished (yad āpnoti) in the Kṛta Age (kṛte) by meditation (dhyāyan), in Tretā (tretāyām) by ritual sacrifices (yajan yajñais), and in Dvāpara by worship of the Deity of the Lord (dvāpare arcayan), in this Kali Age (kalau) is accomplished (tad āpnoti) by loud chanting of the names of Keśava (saṅkīrtya keśavam).” (Viṣṇu Purāṇa 6.2.17)

The claim made in this statement and others about the potency of
hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana is not merely rhetoric; it is proven by the life
histories of many successful Vaiṣṇavas.

2.3.149

bāhyāntarāśesa-hr̥ṣīka-cālakam

vāg-indriyam syād yadi samyatham sadā

cittam sthiram sad-bhagavat-smṛtau tadā

samyak pravarteta tataḥ smṛtiḥ phalam

If Speech is brought under control & the mind becomes stable, on engage in bhagavat-smṛti. ∴ Smṛtau is the fruit of Kṛtām.

If the sense of speech (vāg-indriyam), which sets in motion (cālakam) all the external and internal senses (bāhya antara aśeṣa-hr̥ṣīka), is brought under constant control (yadi sadā samyatham syād), then the mind becomes stable (tadā cittam sthiram) and can properly engage in transcendental remembrance of the Lord (sad-bhagavat-smṛtau). Remembrance (smṛtiḥ) thus (tataḥ) develops (samyak pravarteta) as the fruit of chanting (phalam).

If still insist that remembering is more important than they should understand that only in dhyāna the Lord fully reveals Himself. @ The stage of sambandha is super-fine contact.

evam prabhor dhyāna-ratair mataḥ ced
buddhyedṛśam tatra vivecanīyam
dhyānam parisphūrṭi-viśeṣa-niṣṭhā
sambandha-mātram manasā smṛtir hi

If (**ced**) those attached to meditation on the Lord (**prabhor dhyāna-ratair**) still insist that remembering is of greater importance (**mataḥ**), with their intelligence (**buddhyā**) they should make the following distinction (**īdṛśam tatra vivecanīyam**): In meditation (**dhyānam**) the Lord reveals Himself fully (**parisphūrṭi**) with His particular qualities (**viśeṣa-niṣṭhā**), but in remembrance (**smṛtir**) the mind (**manasā**) merely comes in contact with the Lord (**sambandha-mātram hi**).

Some sincere and intelligent Vaiṣṇavas are firmly convinced that meditation on the Lord is the best form of devotional service.

Since they perceive an authentic spiritual taste from their meditation, their opinion must be honored; but as the Vaikuṅṭha-dūtas here suggest, this opinion should be adjusted to make it exactly correct.

The advocates of the meditational process think as follows: The faculty of speech has the power to mobilize all the senses, both external (like the ears) and internal (like the mind).

If a person steadies his mind by controlling his speech, either through silence or through bhagavat-kīrtana, he can begin the practice of remembering the Supreme Lord.

So kīrtana is the means to the goal of smarana.

Scriptures may say that in Kali-yuga the perfection of kīrtana is in itself the goal and automatically includes the results of smarana—but that is only in reference to the special situation of the modern age.

It may also be said that the exceptional faults of Kali-yuga can be counteracted only by the very powerful process of kīrtana, not by meditation alone or any other means, but actually there is no absolute rule that meditation on the Lord is less than enough to wash away the contamination of the modern age.

Rather, hundreds of convincing statements of scripture confirm that simply remembering the Personality of Godhead destroys one's sinful reactions.

Thus meditation is the best form of devotional service.

The Vaikunṭha-dūtas accept this opinion, as long as it is qualified by the understanding that true meditation on the Supreme Lord is a very mature stage of devotional development.

dhyanam.

In meditation the devotee realizes the Lord in the heart and directly perceives many details of the Lord's exquisite beauty and charm, from His feet to the hair on His head.

But in the more usual smṛti, or remembrance, the mind only comes in contact with the Lord, as when one thinks "God exists" or "I am the Supreme Lord's servant."

ced dhyāna-vegāt khalu citta-vṛttāv
antar-bhavantīndriya-vṛttayas tāḥ
saṅkīrtana-sparśana-darśanādyā
dhyānam tadā kīrtanato 'stu varyam

If, by the force
of meditation, all the
functions of the senses
become fully absorbed into the
function of the mind, then
that dhyāna may be
accepted as better than
saṅkīrtan.

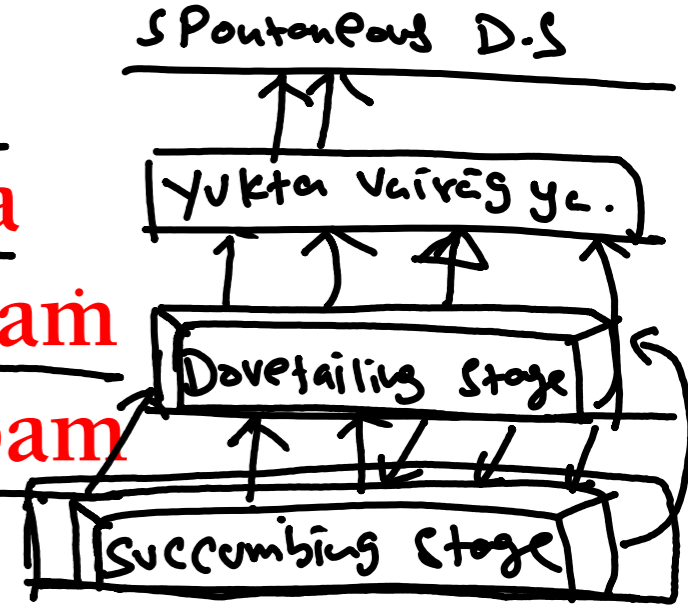
If by the force of one's meditation (ced dhyāna-vegāt) all the
functions of the senses (indriya-vṛttayas tāḥ)—including
saṅkīrtana of the Lord (saṅkīrtana), physical contact with Him,
seeing Him, and so on (sparśana-darśana ādyā)—become absorbed
into the function of the mind (citta-vṛttāv antar-bhavanti), that
meditation (tadā dhyānam) may be accepted as better than
chanting out loud (kīrtanato varyam astu).

If a devotee becomes so proficient in dhyāna (meditation on the Lord) that the devotional practices he earlier performed with his speech, touch, eyes, and other senses become spontaneous activities of his mind, then of course for that devotee meditation has become the most suitable practice.

He can inwardly continue his śravaṇa, kīrtana, and so on, with or without the participation of his external senses.

Whatever method
gives satisfaction &
complete joy for a
sādhakā → IS the most
excellent & effective method
for him

prītir yato yasya sukham ca yena
samyag bhavet tad rasikasya tasya
tat sādhanam śreṣṭha-tamaṁ su-sevyaṁ
sadbhir mataṁ praty uta sādhya-rūpaṁ



Whatever the devotional method (yasya) by which (yena) a man with true spiritual taste (tad rasikasya) feels (bhavet) satisfaction (prītir) and complete joy (samyag sukham), that is the method (tat sādhanam) saintly authorities deem (sadbhir mataṁ) most excellent (śreṣṭha-tamaṁ) and effective for him (tasya su-sevyaṁ). It is not only the best of methods but the very aim of his endeavor (praty uta sādhya-rūpaṁ).

How should we regard the meditation in which a Vaisnava does not experience the sensory functions of saṅkīrtana, touching the Lord, and so on, but merely contemplates the Lord's form?

That style of devotional service should also be accepted as perfect for the devotee who derives pleasure from it.

When a devotee feels eager attraction to any of the nine kinds of service, that devotional method becomes the means for him to quickly fulfill all his desires.

Moreover, his practice will gradually evolve into prema, the final goal of devotional life.

2.3.153

By saṅkīrtana
the joy of meditation
increases & vice versa
∴ they are actually one.

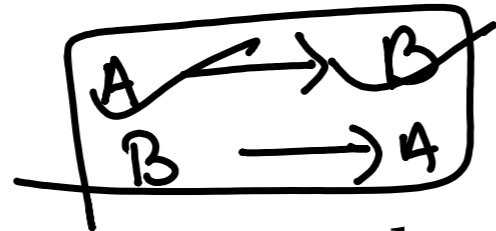
saṅkīrtanād dhyāna-sukhaṁ vivardhate
dhyānāc ca saṅkīrtana-mādhurī-sukhaṁ
anyonya-saṁvardhakatānubhūyate
'smābhis tayos tad dvayam ekam eva tat

By saṅkīrtana (saṅkīrtanād) the joy of meditation (dhyāna-sukhaṁ) grows (vivardhate), and by meditation (dhyānād ca) the sweet joy of saṅkīrtana (saṅkīrtana-mādhurī-sukhaṁ). In our own experience (asmābhih anubhūyate), the two methods (tayos tad dvayam) fortify one another (anyonya-saṁvardhakata) and are therefore actually one (ekam eva tat).

The Vaikuntha messengers' own opinion is that both meditation and saṅkīrtana are advantageous.

The two methods support one another, and because one or the other may be more suitable in different times, places, and circumstances, their mutual dependence should not be a cause of confusion.

Either may be done separately but neither, in the end, is complete without the other.



Regardless of which serves as the cause and which the effect, the two are essentially nondifferent.

Meditation gives
the same joy as
sankirtana → if
one directly sees the
lord within his heart.
Such a devotee is
sure to find
spiritual
peace

dhyānam ca saṅkīrtana-vat sukha-pradam
yad vastuno 'bhīṣṭa-tarasya kasyacit
citte 'nubhūtyāpi yatheccham udbhavec
chāntis tad-ekāpti-viṣakta-cetasām

Meditation (dhyānam) bestows the same joy as saṅkīrtana (saṅkīrtana-vat sukha-pradam) when a meditating devotee (kasyacit) directly sees (citte anubhūtyāpi) the object of his heart's desire (yad yatheccham abhīṣṭa-tarasya vastunah). Such a devotee, intent only on reaching that one desired object he worships (tad-ekāpti-viṣakta-cetasām), is sure to find spiritual peace (udbhavet śāntih).

yathā jvara-rujārtānām śītalāmṛta-pāthasaḥ
manah-pānād api trṣṭyet trḍ-vaikalyam sukham bhavet

- ① Drinking cool water → chanting
 ② within the mind → inhibited chanting
 ③ person with fever → devote in love
 ④ quenching of thirst → peace
 ⑤ actually drinking cool water → chanting without inhibition.

tat-tat-saṅkīrtanēnāpi tathā syād yadi śakyate
satām atha vivikte 'pi lajjā syāt svaira-kīrtane

As by drinking cool, nectarean water (yathā śītala amṛta-pāthasaḥ), even if only within the mind (manah-pānād api), a diseased person stricken by fever (jvara-rujārtānām) enjoys happiness (sukham bhavet) as the distress of his thirst is quenched (trḍ-vaikalyam trṣṭyet), so (tathā) simply by chanting the glories of the object one worships (yadi tat-tat-saṅkīrtanēnāpi śakyate) one can attain peace (tathā syād). Yet when saintly persons (atha satām) chant without inhibition (svaira-kīrtane) they may feel embarrassed (lajjā syāt), even in a secluded place (vivikte api).

In general, the tongue cannot fully describe everything going on in the mind.

This is especially so in the ecstasy of (hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana)

Vaiṣṇavas engaged in saṅkīrtana may sometimes feel the urge to describe what is happening within their hearts and, although these matters are confidential, may sometimes, by their words and bodily expressions, disclose what should remain private.

And this may leave them embarrassed, even when there are no witnesses.

Meditation can
successfully be performed
only in a secluded place
↓
BUT, sankīrtana can be performed
either in seclusion (v) or in the
company of others

2.3.157

ekākitvena tu dhyānam
vivikte khalu sidhyati
saṅkīrtanam vivikte 'pi
bahūnām saṅgato 'pi ca

Meditation (dhyānam) one can successfully perform (khalu
sidhyati) alone (ekākitvena) in a secluded place (vivikte) but
saṅkīrtana (saṅkīrtanam tu) either in seclusion (vivikte 'pi) or in
the company of many others (bahūnām saṅgato 'pi ca).

The Vaikuntha-dūtas have great respect for the process of devotional meditation, yet their own favorite process is saṅkīrtana.

Meditation is limited because to perform it one must be in isolation, so as not to be distracted.

2.3.158

kṛṣṇasya nānā-vidha-kīrtaneṣu
tan-nāma-saṅkīrtanam eva mukhyam
tat-prema-sampaj-janane svayaṁ drāk
śaktam tataḥ śreṣṭha-tamaṁ mataṁ tat

Of the many ways to chant Kṛṣṇa's glories (kṛṣṇasya nānā-vidha-kīrtaneṣu), foremost is His nāma-saṅkīrtana (tad-nāma-saṅkīrtanam eva mukhyam). It is deemed the best (tat śreṣṭha-tamaṁ mataṁ) because it can evoke (svayaṁ janane śaktam) at once (drāk) the treasure of pure love for Kṛṣṇa (tat-prema-sampad).

Of all types of
Kīrtana, Kṛṣṇa-nāma-
saṅkīrtana is the best
Why?
Bcoś tṛ ga st oco eva ke pure love

Besides nāma-saṅkīrtana, chanting of the Lord's names, there are other ways of performing kīrtana, such as reciting the Vedas and Purāṇas, speaking one's own narrations of pastimes of the Lord, singing devotional songs, and offering prayers.

Nāma-saṅkīrtana, however, is the best of all, because it can at once independently awaken love of God in the heart.

Lord Viṣṇu's messengers are personally convinced of this, and as implied by the unspecific expression matam ("it is considered"), this is also the opinion of many other spiritual authorities.

When relished with
love → the nectar of HN
delights the heart.
∴ who can describe the
unequaled glories? For

śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāmāmṛtam ātma-hṛdyam
premnā samāsvādana-bhaṅgi-pūrvam
yat sevyate jihvikayāvirāmaṁ
tasyātulam jalpatu ko mahattvam

When relished (samāsvādana) with love (premnā) in countless ways (bhaṅgi-pūrvam) through service rendered (yat sevyate) constantly (avirāmaṁ) by the tongue (jihvikayā), the nectar of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's name (śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāmāmṛtam) delights the heart (ātma-hṛdyam). Who can describe (kaḥ jalpatu) the unequaled excellence (atulam mahattvam) of that nectar of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's holy name (tasya)?

2.3.160

sarveṣāṃ bhagavan-nāmnām
samāno mahimāpi cet
tathāpi sva-priyeṇāśu
svārtha-siddhiḥ sukhaṃ bhavet

Ever though all
names are equally great
& easily achieved most quickly
chanting the name he himself holds

Though all names of the Lord (sarveṣāṃ bhagavan-nāmnām) are equally great (samāno mahimāpi cet), a devotee (tathāpi) most quickly (āśu), most easily (sukhaṃ) achieves his goals (svārtha-siddhiḥ bhavet) by chanting the name he himself holds most dear (sva-priyeṇa).

Since the Supreme Lord's names are all infinite in their glories, one name cannot be greater than another.

Cintāmaṇi stones may appear in different forms, but they all have the same power; any cintāmaṇi can produce whatever a person wants.

Nonetheless, if a devotee is especially attracted to a particular name, that name will most quickly and easily carry him to perfection.

absorption → love & delight

Thus the devotees who favor the name Rāma like to cite the declaration by Lord Śiva sahasra-nāmabhis tulyam/ rāma-nāma varānane: “My dear beautiful wife, the name Rāma is equal to one thousand names of Viṣṇu.” (Padma Purāṇa, Uttara 72.335)

Since they have
different likings → each
name of the Lord is dear
to one person (or) another.
↓
∴ all names of the Lord are
dear →

2.3.161

vicitra-ruci-lokānām
kramāt sarveṣu nāmasu
priyatā-sambhavāt tāni
sarvāṇi syuḥ priyāṇi hi

Since people differ in their likings (vicitra-ruci-lokānām), each name of the Lord (sarveṣu nāmasu) is dear (priyatā-sambhavāt) to one person or another (kramāt). All the names of the Lord (tāni sarvāṇi) are therefore dear (priyāṇi hi syuḥ).

A doubting person might ask whether only some of the Lord's names are worshiped and others neglected.

In fact, however, every name of the Lord has its devotees.

The word hi in this verse indicates that this is certainly true.

Some Vaiṣṇavas prefer one particular name of the Personality of Godhead, and some are attracted to two names, three, or several.

When the nectar
appears in just one
sense - if flooded one
other senses with their
own sweet tastes

ekasminn indriye prādurbhūtam nāmāmrtam rasaiḥ
āplāvayati sarvānindriyāṇi madhurair nijaiḥ

When the nectar of the Lord's name (nāmāmrtam) appears (prādurbhūtam) in just one sense (ekasminn indriye), all the senses (sarvāṇi indriyāṇi) are flooded (āplāvayati) with their own sweet tastes (nijaiḥ madhurair rasaiḥ).

In this way, every enjoyment possible is derived from nāma-saṅkīrtana.

2.3.163

mukhyo vāg-indriye tasyo-
dayaḥ sva-para-harṣa-daḥ
tat prabhor dhyānato 'pi syān
nāma-saṅkīrtanam varam

Appearing mainly
in the sense of speech,
Nāma-saṅkīrtana siva pleasure
to the chanter & others.
∴ HNS → Smaraṇam.
(or)
dhyānaṁ.

Appearing (udayaḥ) mainly (mukhyo) in the sense of speech (vāg-indriye), the Lord's name (~~tasya~~) gives pleasure (harṣa-daḥ) to the chanter^(+sva) and to others (sva-para). So (tat) even greater than meditation on the Lord (prabhor dhyānataḥ api varam) is His nāma-saṅkīrtana (nāma-saṅkīrtanam syād).

ANS is the
best & most powerful
means to attain kṛṣṇa
prema

2.3.164

nāma-saṅkīrtanam proktam
kṛṣṇasya prema-sampadi
baṣṭham sādhanam śreṣṭham
paramākarṣa-mantra-vat

The saṅkīrtana of Kṛṣṇa's names (kṛṣṇasya nāma-saṅkīrtanam) is praised (proktam) as the best (śreṣṭham) and most powerful means to attain (baṣṭham sādhanam) the treasure of kṛṣṇa-prema (prema-sampadi). It is like a potent mantra that can attract precious objects from a distance (parama ākarṣa-mantra-vat).

If one wants the ultimate success in spiritual life, one must take shelter of nāma-saṅkīrtana, as the Vaikuṅṭha-dūtas proclaim exuberantly in this verse.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.2.39–40) describes how nāma-saṅkīrtana nourishes the devotee:

śṛṇvan su-bhadrāṇi rathāṅga-pāṇer
janmāni karmāṇi ca yāni loke
gītāni nāmāni tad-arthakāni
gāyan vilajjo vicared asaṅgaḥ

Hearing (śṛṇvan) the most auspicious birth and activities (su-bhadrāṇi janmāni karmāṇi ca) of Kṛṣṇa (rathāṅga-pāṇeh) which are sung by all people (yāni loke gītāni) and singing (gāyan) his names which describe those activities (tad-arthakāni nāmāni) while having no attachment to anything else (asaṅgaḥ), a person should without shame wander in the world (vilajjo vicared).

evam-vrataḥ sva-priya-nāma-kīrtyā
jātānurāgo druta-citta uccaiḥ
hasaty atho roditi rauti gāyaty
unmāda-van nr̥tyati loka-bāhyaḥ

Regulated with such devotion (evam-vrataḥ), chanting the name of
his dear Kṛṣṇa (sva-priya-nāma-kīrtyā), he develops prema
(jātānurāgo). His heart melts (druta-citta) and he laughs loudly
(uccaiḥ hasaty), weeps, wails and sings (atho roditi rauti gāyaty).
He dances like a madman (unmāda-van nr̥tyati) without regard for
the public (loka-bāhyaḥ).

BCOS HNS leads to
Kṛ. Prema, Respects
consider HNS as the
very fruit of Bhakti

2.3.165

tad eva manyate bhakteḥ
phalam tad-rasikair janaiḥ
bhagavat-prema-sampattau
sadaivāvyabhicārataḥ

Because nāma-saṅkīrtana invariably leads (sadā eva avyabhicārataḥ) to the treasure of pure love for the Lord (bhagavat-prema-sampattau), true connoisseurs of devotional service (tad-rasikair janaiḥ) consider (manyate) nāma-saṅkīrtana (tad eva) the very fruit of bhakti (bhakteḥ phalam).

According to many pure devotees, nāma-saṅkīrtana is not only the best means of devotional service but the final perfection itself.

Of course, prema is the final goal of bhakti, but nāma-saṅkīrtana so quickly and infallibly leads to prema that the two are considered virtually identical.

S'raavanam → S'raavanam + HNS → prema
Archanam → Archanam + HNS → prema
HNS → HNS → prema.

Wherever prema is seen to have developed, one can presume that nāma-saṅkīrtana must have been performed.

Nāma-saṅkīrtana is the necessary and sufficient cause of prema.

2.3.166

According to some
rasa-jñes → JLR
Reliable source of
is
Manifestation of SP-ECstasy
When one starts HM

sal-lakṣaṇam prema-bharasya kṛṣṇe
kaiścid rasa-jñair uta kathyate tat
premṇo bhareṇaiva niṣṭa-nāma-
saṅkīrtanam hi sphurati sphuṭārtiyā

According to some knowers of rasa (kaiścid rasa-jñair), the real sign (sad-lakṣaṇam) of a person full of prema (kṛṣṇe prema-bharasya) is this (uta kathyate tat): As he performs saṅkīrtana (saṅkīrtanam) of the name he worships (niṣṭa-nāma), the full force of spiritual agony (sphuṭa ārtiyā) erupts in him (hi sphurati) by the weight of his own love (premṇo bhareṇa eva).

Other expert Vaiṣṇavas consider saṅkīrtana and prema to be altogether the same.

They are mutually the cause of one another and therefore nondifferent.

2.3.167

Like the distressed
crying of the cataka
& cakravāka birds in
separation from their
husbands respectively
the saṅkīrtana arises when
one is burdened with
too much pain

nāmnām tu saṅkīrtanam ārti-bhārān
megham vinā prāvṛṣi cātakānām
rātrau viyogāt sva-pate rathāngi-
vargasya cākrośana-vat pratīhi

Like the distressed crying (ākrośana-vat) of the cātaka birds (cātakānām) on a cloudless day (megham vinā) of the rainy season (prāvṛṣi), or the lamenting (ākrośana-vat) of a flock of cakravākī birds (rathāngi-vargasya) when parted from their husbands (viyogāt) at night (rātrau), the saṅkīrtana of the Lord's names (nāmnām tu saṅkīrtanam) arises (pratīhi) when one is burdened by too much pain (ārti-bhārān).

(Nāma-saṅkīrtana) in fact appears only when prema has been enhanced in a special way.



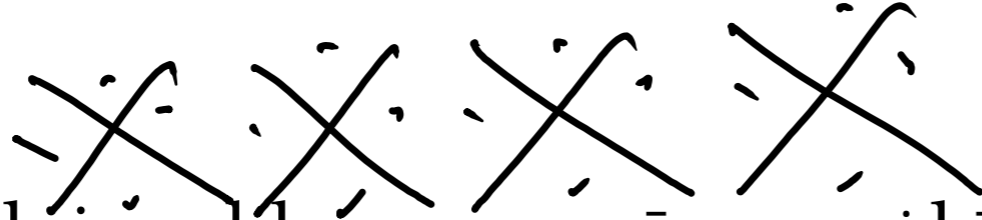
Prema enriched with transcendental hankering (results in saṅkīrtana).

To help us understand, the Vaikuṅṭha-dūtas mention, by way of analogy, the cātaka and cakravākī birds.

The plaintive call of the cātakas, sounding like priya priya (“my dear one, my dear one!”), resounds on cloudless days of the rainy season.

And the lament of the cakravākīs fills the sky when their husbands are absent at night.

In such a way, nāma-saṅkīrtana arises when one feels separation from the Lord in pure love of God.



The true way of doing bhāgavan-nāma-saṅkīrtana is to call out to one's beloved Lord in agony, expressing one's feelings in various sweet songs to attract Him.

As the philosophical maxim states, siddhasya lakṣaṇam yat syāt/ sādhanam sādhakasya tat: "The practitioner and the means of practice should be in accord with their goal."

2.3.168

vicitra-līlā-rasa-sāgarasya
prabhor vicitrāt sphuritāt prasādāt
vicitra-saṅkīrtana-mādhurī sā
na tu sva-yatnād iti sādhu sidhyet

The wonderful
sweetness of rasas
emerges only by the mercy
of (K) → This can never
be achieved by one's own
endeavor

The wonderfully varied sweetness of saṅkīrtana (vicitra-saṅkīrtana-mādhurī) emerges (sphuritāt) only by the mercy (prasādāt) shown in various wonderful ways (vicitrāt) by the Lord (prabhoh), the wonderful ocean of the varied rasas of pastimes (vicitra-līlā-rasa-sāgarasya). This sweetness (sā) one can never truly achieve (na tu sādhu sidhyet) by one's own endeavor (sva-yatnād).

The devotees who prefer meditation to saṅkīrtana might argue that chanting in full view of the public is risky in several ways: envious people may try to interfere, one may succumb to the allurements of popularity, one may not have the required physical strength, or one may be too sick to chant properly.

These dangers do not arise when a devotee simply concentrates on the Supreme Lord in a secluded place.

In answer to this objection, the Vaikuṅṭha messengers say that nāma-saṅkīrtana cannot be disrupted by obstacles, for it develops by the mercy of the Lord, not by one's own endeavor.

No one can take away that which a devotee has gained as a gift from the Lord.

This is true not only for saṅkīrtana but for all the nine methods of bhakti.

This explains why devotees engaged in the all-powerful process of nāma-saṅkīrtana may sometimes still feel unhappy.

?

In the beginning of their practice, they may carry some remnants of their past sinful karma.

→ Karma - vāṅmāyā

But the Lord's names very soon clean those remnants away, including the reactions about to be suffered and even those already manifest (prārabdha) in the body and mind.

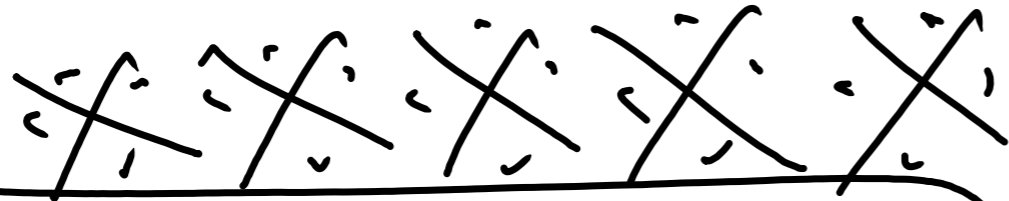
Only if devotees (for some reason) want to keep their karma is that karma not removed.

As the Lord says in Śrī Hari-bhakti-sudhodhaya:

karma-cakram tu yat proktam
avilaṅghyam surāsuraiḥ
mad-bhakti-prabalair martyair
viddhi laṅghitam eva tat

“The cycle of karma (karma-cakram tu) I have described (yat proktam) is insurmountable (avilaṅghyam) for the demigods and the demons (sura asuraiḥ). But know (viddhi) that mortals (martyair) empowered by My devotional service (mad-bhakti-prabalair) have already escaped it (laṅghitam eva tat).”

Sometimes nondevotees chant the Lord's holy names in
nāmābhāsa—that is, casually or unintentionally.



↳ (aśradhē bhābhāse)

If they somehow avoid offenses in their chanting, they too are
absolved of their sinful reactions, except for their prārabdha-karma,
the reactions already manifest.

These they must suffer, and by that suffering their prārabdha-karma
also is depleted.

2.3.170

What about Bhakta Malaya?

He seemed to suffer his reactions even till bhakta

Kaishava kṛpā
mudrā vijñāna
bhūjāt

Such great souls → fear to reveal the vast treasure of

They behave in peculiar ways to show their own faults & unhappiness

mahāśayā ye hari-nāma-sevakāḥ
su-gopya-tad-bhakti-mahā-nidheḥ svayam
prakāśa-bhītya vyavahāra-bhaṅgibhiḥ
sva-doṣa-duḥkhāny anudarśayanti te

The great souls (mahāśayā) who spontaneously serve the names of Lord Hari (svayam ye hari-nāma-sevakāḥ) fear to reveal (prakāśa-bhītyā) the vast treasure (mahā-nidheḥ) of His confidential devotional service (su-gopya-tad-bhakti). So they behave in peculiar ways (te vyavahāra-bhaṅgibhiḥ) to show (anudarśayanti) their own faults and unhappiness (sva-doṣa-duḥkhāny).

What about advanced worshipers like Bharata Mahārāja whose impending sinful reactions apparently kept going on?

We should understand that when saintly devotees like Bharata, deeply absorbed in the moods of loving service to the Lord, seem to exhibit material attachment (as when Bharata became obsessed with the care of an infant deer) and when they seem to fall into bad association and miserable conditions (as when Bharata took his next birth as an animal), they are only pretending to be materially affected, in order to keep the confidential moods of devotional service hidden from public view.

Such devotees would rather be treated with undeserved contempt than honored and worshiped.

2.3.171

tan-nāma-saṅkīrtana-mātrato 'khilā

bhaktā hareḥ syur hata-duḥkha-dūṣaṇāḥ

kecit tathāpi prabhu-vat kṛpākulā

lokān sad-ācāram imaṁ praśāsati

All the devotees of the Lord (akhilā hareḥ bhaktā) are freed (hata syuh) from contamination and misery (duḥkha-dūṣaṇāḥ) simply by the saṅkīrtana of His names (tan-nāma-saṅkīrtana-mātrato). Yet (tathāpi) some devotees (kecit), as disturbed by compassion as the Lord Himself (prabhu-vat kṛpākulā), act in these ways (imaṁ) to teach people (praśāsati lokān) civilized behavior (sad-ācāram).

Even though all devotees are freed from contamination & misery just by śaṅkīrtana.
Yet, some devotees of P
very much overcome by
compassion & -- act
in ways to teach
people civilized
behavior

Shouldn't advanced devotees, in order to deliver the world from ignorance, let everyone see their greatness?

Yes, but the so-called anomalous behavior of Vaiṣṇavas like Bharata Mahārāja is in fact their way of teaching sad-ācāra, civilized human behavior.

By the examples of their own lives they show the consequences of violating the laws of God and material nature, for if people fail to learn how to act according to civilized standards their hearts will remain contaminated by sinful desires and they will never become inclined toward the Lord's devotional service.

- ① Vṛst of Bhāṣya
taught → duḥsaṅga
- ② K.Y taught dur-dyūta-dosam
- ③ Nṛga taught → brahma-sva-bhītim
- Pure soul use their own
behavior to teach ??

duḥsaṅga-doṣam bharatādayo yathā
durdyūta-doṣam ca yudhiṣṭhirādayaḥ
brahma-sva-bhītim ca nṛgādayo 'malāḥ
prādarśayan sva-vyavahārato janān

As Bharata and others (yathā bharata ādayaḥ) showed (prādarśayan) the fault of bad association (duḥsaṅga-doṣam), Yudhiṣṭhira and others (yudhiṣṭhirādayaḥ) the fault of gambling (durdyūta-doṣam), and Nṛga and others (ca nṛgādayo) the fear caused by taking a brāhmaṇa's property (brahma-sva-bhītim), pure souls (amalāḥ) generally use their own behavior (sva-vyavahārato) to teach the people (prādarśayan janān).

Bharata Mahārāja showed by his own life the danger of wrong association.

Although almost perfectly devoted and renounced, he was distracted into caring for a newborn deer and therefore had to suffer birth as a deer.

A similar case is that of Saubhari Ṛṣi, who was deviated from meditation by seeing two fish engaged in sex.

In the opinion of the Vaikuṅṭha-dūtas, however, in reality these elevated souls were faultless.

2.3.173

bhakti-prabhāveṇa vicāra-jātaiḥ
sañjāyamānena sadedrśais tvam
vighnāti-vighnān kila jeṣyasiha
sarvatra te hanta vayam sahāyāḥ

By the power
of Bhakti → you will
have many realizations
& you will conquer all your
obstacles →
we are always there to help you

By the power of bhakti (bhakti-prabhāveṇa) you will have (sañjāyamānena) many realizations (īdrśaiḥ vicāra-jātaiḥ), time and again (sadā), and for certain (kila) you will conquer (tvam jeṣyasi) your most formidable obstacles (vighnāti-vighnān). In all circumstances (iha sarvatra), be assured (hanta), we are your helpers (vayam te sahāyāḥ).

Since devotees may have to endure formidable tests while practicing nāma-saṅkīrtana, Gopa-kumāra may doubt his own fitness to take up the process.

The visitors from Vaikuntha assure him, therefore, that he should not be doubtful and hesitant, but should begin nāma-saṅkīrtana with all confidence.

If he is worried that he cannot expect to succeed without the blessings of pure devotees, he should rest assured that the Vaikuṅṭha-dūtas will always be there to help him wherever he goes.

If he needs to understand anything philosophically or has any difficulties to overcome, they will give him the support he needs.

2.3.174

śrī-kṛṣṇa-candrasya mahānukampā-
smābhiḥ sthirā tvayy avadhāritāsti
linā na sāksād-bhagavad-didṛkṣā
tvattas tapo-loka-nivāsi-vākyaiḥ

You certainly have
received the greatest mercy
of even the arguments &
the Tapoloka-vāsīs did not
dissolve or eagerness
to see the LORD

The greatest mercy (mahā anukampā) of Śrī Kṛṣṇa-candra (śrī-kṛṣṇa-candrasya), we have found (asmābhiḥ avadhāritā), is firmly established in you (tvayy sthirā asti), because even the arguments of the residents of Tapoloka (tapo-loka-nivāsi-vākyaiḥ) could not dissolve (na linā) your (tvattah) eagerness to see in person the Supreme Lord (sāksād-bhagavad-didṛkṣā).

rūpaṁ satyaṁ khalu bhagavataḥ sac-cid-ānanda-sāndraṁ
yogyair grāhyaṁ bhavati karaṇaiḥ sac-cid-ānanda-rūpaṁ
māmsākṣibhyāṁ tad api ghaṭate tasya kāruṇya-śaktyā
sadyo labdhyā tad-ucita-gaṭer darśanaṁ svehayā vā

Lord's form
 is sac-cid-ānanda
 If one is fit to see
 only by fit senses
 One can see Lord's mercy,
 with present eyes

→ argument of Pīṭhaka

→ one can achieve it either by mercy (or) by endeavor.

The form of the Personality of Godhead (bhagavataḥ rūpaṁ), absolutely
 real (khalu satyaṁ), is the concentrated essence of eternity, knowledge, and
 bliss (sac-cid-ānanda-sāndraṁ). Only with senses that are fit (yogyair
karaṇaiḥ) can one perceive (grāhyaṁ bhavati) that sac-cid-ānanda form
 (sac-cid-ānanda-rūpaṁ). Yet by the power of the Lord's mercy (tasya
kāruṇya-śaktyā), even with the present eyes (tad māmsa akṣibhyāṁ api),
 quickly one can see it (sadyo labdhyā). Thus one beholds the object most
 suitable for one's vision (tad-ucita-gaṭer). One achieves this (ghaṭate) by the
 Lord's mercy, or even by one's own endeavor (sva ihayā vā).

This verse and the next summarize the opinions of Pippalāyana Ṛṣi, who on Tapoloka had recommended meditation to Gopa-kūmara as the best method of realizing the Supreme Lord.

Only with senses that are fit can one perceive the Lord, he had said, but the Lord's mercy can transform the limited senses of a conditioned soul, making them fit to perceive the unlimited.

By the Lord's mercy potency (kāruṇya-śakti), His personal form is revealed to a fortunate soul, or that soul may be empowered to discover the Lord even with his own senses.

No material conditions can limit the influence of the Supreme Lord's kāruṇya-śakti.

2.3.176

tad-darśane jñāna-dṛśaiiva jāya-
māne 'pi paśyāmy aham eṣa dṛgbhyām
māno bhavet kṛṣṇa-kṛpā-prabhāva-
vijñāpako harṣa-viśeṣa-vṛddhyai

Even though
One's vision of the
Lord is appearing in
his own two eyes, but one
thinks that "I am seeing with
my own two eyes"
↓
This is P's self

Even though one's vision of the Lord (tad-darśane) has its origin (jāyamāne) in the eye of knowledge (jñāna-dṛśā eva), one may think (mānah bhavet), "I am seeing Him (paśyāmy aham) with my own two eyes (eṣa dṛgbhyām)." This simply indicates (vijñāpakah) the power of Kṛṣṇa's mercy (kṛṣṇa-kṛpā-prabhāva), by which the devotee feels his own special joy (harṣa-viśeṣa) unfurl (vṛddhyai).

Some less devotional thinkers would argue to Pippalāyana that one can behold the Supreme Lord only with the eye of knowledge, not with external senses.

If the Supreme were an object of material vision, they would say, He could not be transcendently self-manifest.

Pippalāyana would respond that even if this is true, a special ecstasy is available only to one who presumes that he sees the Lord with his own eyes.

And even if devotees only imagine themselves to be seeing the Personality of Godhead with their eyes, the ecstasy they experience is real.

That ecstasy itself is proof that the potency of the Lord's special mercy has descended upon them, making them rejoice with wonder: "The Supreme is impossible to see, but now I am seeing Him right before me!"

Understanding of the devotees
By the force of mercy (or) by
the force of bhakti → one can
see Him.
... even with limited eyes
one can achieve constant
vision.

2.3.177

prabhoh kṛpā-pūra-balena bhakteḥ
prabhāvato vā khalu darśanam syāt
ataḥ paricchinna-dṛśāpi sidhyen
nirantaram tan manaseva samyak

By the force (balena) of the vast mercy of the Lord (prabhoh kṛpā-pūra) or (vā) by the natural influence of devotional service (bhakteḥ prabhāvato), one can see Him (khalu darśanam syāt). So (ataḥ) even with the limited eyes (paricchinna-dṛśāpi) one can achieve (sidhyet) the constant vision (tad nirantaram) one may have with the mind in meditation (samyak manasā eva).

Now the Vaikuṅṭha-dūtas, willing to go along no further with Pippalāyana's thinking, refute one of his ideas.

Pippalāyana might say, "Seeing the Supreme Lord with one's own eyes is imperfect because by nature external perception is imperfect. Interruptions and obstacles will inevitably impede one's external vision of the Lord. The mind, however, is extremely subtle; it can reach everywhere and enjoy undisturbed darśana of the Lord in all circumstances."

Although this is not one of the things Pippalāyana told Gopakumāra on Tapoloka, the Vaikuṅṭha-dūtas refute it in this verse.

By the Supreme Lord's infinite mercy, even external eyes can see Him in all His splendor.

This is further evidence of the great efficacy of devotional service.

If this was not
 true, then no one could
 see Him even within the mind.
 ↓
 When worshipped, the Lord bestows
 intense happiness

na cet kathañcin na manasy api syāt
svayam-prabhasyekṣaṇam īśvarasya
ghanam sukham sañjanayet kathañcid
upāsitaḥ sāndra-sukhātmako 'sau

If this were not so (na cet), by no means (na kathañcin) would one be able to see (īkṣaṇam syāt) the self-effulgent supreme controller (svayam-prabhasya īśvarasya), even within the mind (manasy api). When the Lord is worshiped in any manner (kathañcid upāsitaḥ), He bestows (asau sañjanayet) intense happiness (ghanam sukham), for He is the very embodiment of such happiness (asau sāndra-sukhātmakah).

If the Lord's special mercy and the potency of devotional service were not the true causes of realizing Him, even a mental vision of Him would be impossible, for He is self-manifesting, never an object of sensory or mental perception.

Because He is the completely independent controller of everyone, no one can force Him to reveal Himself.

पुत्रवत् पश्यन् अर्जुन

A proponent of inner meditation may argue that by perceiving the Lord internally the mind with its unlimited scope enjoys unlimited bliss, whereas the limited eyes can perceive only a small fraction of such pleasure.

But the Vaikuṅṭha-dūtas reply that when devotees worship the Personality of Godhead by any of the methods of devotional service—whether by mental meditation or by the direct perception and activity of the external senses—the Lord bestows intense happiness.

In fact, according to the Taittirīya Upaniṣad (2.7), boundless pleasure is the very nature of the Supreme.

Raso vai saḥ, rasam hy evāyaṁ labdhvānandī bhavati: “The Supreme is rasa itself. When a living being obtains this rasa, he becomes blissful.”

2.3.179

dr̥gbhyām prabhor darśanato hi sarvatas
tat-tat-prasādāvali-labdhir ikṣyate
sarvādhikam sāndra-sukham ca jāyate
sādhyam tad eva śravaṇādi-bhaktitah

↳ Indeed, to see HRL is the goal of all types of D-S

We everywhere find (sarvatah ikṣyate) that by seeing the Lord (prabhor darśanato) with the eyes (dr̥gbhyām) one achieves His mercy in all its forms (tat-tat-prasādāvali-labdhih), and the most intense and excellent joy (sarvādhikam sāndra-sukham ca jāyate). Indeed, to see Him (tad eva) is the goal (sādhyam) of hearing and of all the other ways of devotional practice (śravaṇādi-bhaktitah).

Proof is
our Pratyakṣa
?r̥cena.
we see
seeing the Lord by
achieves mercy
all its forms
extreme bliss.

Superior to the fruits of realizing the Lord inwardly are the fruits of seeing the Lord with one's own eyes.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and other Purāṇas record how Vaisnavas like Kardama and Prahlāda received abundant mercy from the Supreme Lord when they met Him in person.

On Tapoloka, the sage Pippalāyana told Gopa-kumāra about Śrī Brahmā's attaining similar mercy from the Lord through meditation, but that kind of success from meditation occurs in only a few instances, for a rare, fortunate person like Brahmā.

And the Vaikunṭha messengers declare, besides, that the joy felt from directly perceiving the Personality of Godhead with one's senses is unequaled.

This complete vision, gained by devotional service in the forms of hearing, chanting, remembering, and so on, is also the ultimate fruit of the devotional service performed by inward meditation.

By all the Sādhanās,
seeing the Lord in
person is the sat phalam -
to be attained → true reward
That alone ↓ destroys illusion down to the
root & allows pure love to blossom

2.3.180

sarvesām sādhanānām tat-
sākṣāt-kāro hi sat phalam
tadaivā-mūlato māyā
naśyēt premāpi vardhate

By all methods of spiritual discipline (sarvesām sādhanānām),
seeing the Lord in person (tat-sākṣāt-kāro hi) is the true reward to
be attained (sat phalam). That alone (tadaiva) destroys illusion
(māyā naśyēt) down to the root (ā-mūlato), so that pure love of
God may flourish (premāpi vardhate).

The direct vision of Lord Viṣṇu, being the supreme fruit of all endeavors, is preferable even to realization of the Lord by meditation.

In fact, when one sees the Lord directly one's forgetfulness of Him, which is the root of all illusion, is destroyed.

This is described in the First Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.2.21):

bhidyate hr̥daya-granthiś
chidyante sarva-saṁśayāḥ
kṣīyante cāśya karmāṇi
dr̥ṣṭa evātmaniśvare

“Thus the knot in the heart is pierced (bhidyate hr̥daya-granthih),
and all misgivings are cut to pieces (chidyante sarva-saṁśayāḥ).
The chain of fruitive actions is terminated (kṣīyante cāśya karmāṇi)
when one sees (dr̥ṣṭa eva) the Lord (ātmani) as master (īśvare).”

The entanglements of material work, the doubts and confusions of material consciousness, and the knots of material desire all encumber the conditioned soul, but when he again finds his dearmost friend, the Supreme Soul, he transcends all these anomalies.

When one perceives the beauty and charm of prema for Lord Visṇu, the natural urge of pure love spontaneously arises in one's heart.

2.3.181

kāyādhavāder hr̥di paśyato 'pi
prabhum sadākṣṇā kila tad-didr̥kṣā
tatra pramāṇam hi tathāvalokanād
anantaram bhāva-viśeṣa-lābhaḥ

PM of 6th class
Even though they saw
the Lord within they
still desired to see Him
with their eyes.
↓
When they saw Him
in the heart they experienced

Although devotees like Prahlāda, the son of Kayādhva (kāyādhava
ādeh), saw the Lord in their hearts (prabhum hr̥di paśyatah api),
they always yearned to see Him (sadā tad-didr̥kṣā) with their eyes
(akṣṇā). For this the proof is (tatra pramāṇam hi) that when they
finally saw Him (tathā avalokanād anantaram) they felt special
ecstasies (bhāva-viśeṣa-lābhaḥ).

Maheṣāno ye na sath, sa Pentlā

The experiences of Prahlāda and other great devotees should be taken seriously because sad-ācāra, the behavior of elevated persons, is important evidence for judging what is of true value.



According to Śrī Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya, it was after Prahlāda first saw Lord Nṛsimha that Prahlāda's pure love fully blossomed.

When some devotees
close their eyes when
they see the Lord, it seems
to be meditation → but
it's not.
It is actually a
prema-vikāra

kṛṣṇasya sākṣād api jāyate yat
keṣāñcid akṣi-dvaya-mīlanādi
dhyānaṁ na tat kintu mudāṁ bhareṇa
kampādi-vat prema-vikāra eṣaḥ

When some devotees (keṣāñcid), even while seeing Kṛṣṇa in person (yat kṛṣṇasya sākṣād api jāyate), close their eyes (akṣi-dvaya-mīlanādi) and appear to withdraw into their minds (dhyānaṁ), this may seem to be meditation, but in fact it is not (na tat). Rather (kintu), it is a transformation (eṣaḥ vikāra) brought on by excessive joy (mudāṁ bhareṇa), like the trembling and other signs (kampādi-vat) of ecstasy in devotees in pure love (prema-vikāra).

See vikāra vikāra

This verse answers the possible objection that when Sanaka-kumāra and his brothers met the Lord of Vaikuṅṭha they went into a trance of meditation.

As described by Maitreya Muni in the Third Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.15.44):

te vā amuṣya vadanāsita-padma-kośam
udvikṣya sundaratarādhara-kunda-hāsam
labdhāśiṣaḥ punar avekṣya tadīyam aṅghri-
dvandvam nakhāruṇa-maṇi-śrayaṇam nidadhyuḥ

jay vijaya
Gazing upon the face of the Lord (amuṣya vādāna udvikṣya)
resembling a blue lotus bud (asita-padma-kośam), with even more
beautiful lips (sundara tara adhara), and a smile like a jasmine
flower (kunda-hāsam), the Kumāras, having attained the mercy of
the devotees (te labdhāśiṣaḥ), then looked at his lotus feet (avekṣya
tadīyam aṅghri-dvandvam) with ruby-like toe nails (nakhāruṇa-
maṇi-śrayaṇam), and again looked at his face (punar nidadhyuḥ).

In this verse the word nidadhyuh, from the verb nidhyai, “to meditate deeply,” seems to indicate that when the Kumāras saw the Lord they passively withdrew into meditative contemplation.

But as the Vaikuṅṭha-dūtas point out, we should not judge simply from the outward appearance of these symptoms.

Closing of the eyes and ceasing from bodily movements need not be signs of meditative trance; they may instead be physical expressions of bhāvas, devotional ecstasies, similar to other physical signs of ecstasy like trembling, perspiration, and standing up of the bodily hair.

Maitreya Muni described the ecstasy of the Kumāras as “meditation” only because it seemed so externally.

Therefore the superiority of directly seeing the Lord with one's own eyes stands undefeated.

Meditation is
befitting only when the
Lord cannot be seen.
↓
But śaṅkīrtana is always befitting
whether the Lord is visible or not

2.3.183

dhyānam parokṣe yujyeta
na tu sākṣān mahā-prabhoḥ
aparokṣe parokṣe 'pi
yuktaṁ saṅkīrtanam sadā

Meditation (dhyānam) makes sense (yujyeta) when the Supreme Lord cannot be seen (mahā-prabhoḥ parokṣe), not when He is directly present (na tu sākṣād); but saṅkīrtana (saṅkīrtanam) is always befitting (sadā yuktaṁ), whether the Lord is visible or not (aparokṣe parokṣe api).

Drawing the argument to a close on an especially sweet note (madhureṇa samāpayet), the messengers of Vaikuṅṭha reiterate the importance of nāma-saṅkīrtana.

Seeing the Supreme Lord with one's own eyes is more desirable than merely seeing Him in meditation, and the best means of achieving direct vision of Him is to chant His holy names.

नमः → यज्ज → गुण → इति

The behavior of all kinds of devotees of the Lord gives ample evidence that in every situation saṅkīrtana is appropriate.

For example, as described in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.33.7), the gopīs of Vṛndāvana chanted His names while dancing with Him in their rāsa-līlā:

pāda-nyāsair bhuja-vidhutibhiḥ sa-smitair bhrū-vilāsair
bhajyan madhyaiś cala-kuca-paṭaiḥ kuṇḍalair gaṇḍa-lolaiḥ
svidyan-mukhyaḥ kavara-rasanāgranthayaḥ kṛṣṇa-vadhvo
gāyantyas taṁ taḍita iva tā megha-cakre virejuḥ

“As the gopīs (tā) sang in praise of Kṛṣṇa (taṁ gāyantyaḥ), their feet danced (pāda-nyāsair), their hands gestured (bhuja-vidhutibhiḥ), and their eyebrows moved (bhrū-vilāsair) with playful smiles (sa-smitair). With their braids and belts tied tight (kavara-rasanā āgranthayaḥ), their waists bending (bhajyan madhyaiḥ), their faces perspiring (svidyan-mukhyaḥ), the garments on their breasts moving this way and that (cala-kuca-paṭaiḥ), and their earrings swinging on their cheeks (kuṇḍalair gaṇḍa-lolaiḥ), Lord Kṛṣṇa’s young consorts (kṛṣṇa-vadhvaḥ) shone (virejuḥ) like streaks of lightning (taḍita iva) in a mass of clouds (megha-cakre).”

This is also described in Śrī Viṣṇu Purāṇa (5.13.52, 56):

kṛṣṇaḥ śarac-candramasaṁ
kaumudī-kumudākaram
jagau gopī-janas tv ekaṁ
kṛṣṇa-nāma punaḥ punaḥ

“Kṛṣṇa sang (kṛṣṇaḥ jagau) about the glories of the autumn moon (śarac-candramasaṁ), whose beams awaken the night-blooming lotuses (kaumudī-kumudākaram). Meanwhile, the gopīs (gopī-janas tv) simply chanted Kṛṣṇa’s name (ekaṁ kṛṣṇa-nāma) over and over again (punaḥ punaḥ).”

rāsa-geyaṁ jagau krsno
yāvat tārāyata-dhvaniḥ
sādhu kṛṣṇeti kṛṣṇeti
tāvat tā dvi-guṇaṁ jaguḥ

“Kṛṣṇa (**kṛṣṇah**) sang (**jagau**) a rāsa-līlā song (**rāsa-geyaṁ**), His voice becoming louder and louder (**yāvat tārāyata-dhvaniḥ**). In response (**tāvat**), the gopīs (**tā**) sang twice as loud (**dvi-guṇaṁ jaguḥ**), ’Wonderful, O Kṛṣṇa! O Kṛṣṇa (**sādhu kṛṣṇeti kṛṣṇeti**)!’”

The Tenth Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam tells of several instances in which devotees chant Kṛṣṇa's glories in His absence, as in the prayers sung by the gopīs before the rāsa dance, and after Kṛṣṇa disappeared from the dance, and later during Uddhava's visit to Vr̥ndāvana.

The HW is
more beneficial to
the entire world than
the Rūpa of the Lord.
In fact, nothing is as full
of nectar as the HW

2.3.184

śrīman-nāma prabhos tasya
śrī-mūrter apy ati-priyam
jagad-dhitam sukhopāsyam
sa-rasam tat-samam na hi

Dearer to the Lord (prabhoh ati-priyam) than even His own
beautiful form (śrī-mūrter apy), His easily worshiped (tasya sukha
upāsyam) holy name (śrīman-nāma) benefits the entire world
(jagad-dhitam). Indeed, nothing is (na hi) as full of nectar as the
holy name of the Lord (sa-rasam tat-samam).

In conclusion, the Vaikunṭha-dūtas say that they seize every opportunity to glorify śrī-bhagavan-nāma-saṅkīrtana.

Saṅkīrtana is all-attractive, full with all power, beauty, and opulence.

It exerts its powerful influence over anyone who takes part in it, anywhere and anytime.

The Lord of Vaikunṭha Himself is more attracted to His holy name than to His own supreme beauty.

The Supreme Lord may indeed regard something as more dear than His own transcendental form.

For example, in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.14.15) Kṛṣṇa told Uddhava:

na tathā me priya-tama
ātma-yonir na śaṅkaraḥ
na ca saṅkarṣaṇo na śrīr
naivātmā ca yathā bhavaṇ

“Neither Lord Brahmā (na ātma-yonih), Lord Śiva (na śaṅkaraḥ), Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa (na ca saṅkarṣaṇaḥ), the goddess of fortune (na śrīr) nor indeed My own self (naivātmā ca) is as dear to Me (tathā me priya-tama) as you (yathā bhavaṇ).”

The holy name of the Lord is incomparable; nothing else can equal or surpass it.

The holy name is the Lord's supreme blessing for the world's welfare, benefiting everyone—properly qualified or not—who serves it with any of the senses.

It is easily worshiped, requiring only some movement of the tip of the tongue.

And it is sa-rasa, “full of rasa,” a term that can be understood in several ways.

1st meaning
Sa-rasa can mean "very gentle," since the holy names consist of sweet-sounding syllables.

2nd meaning
It can also mean "composed of pure spiritual substance, sac-cid-ānanda."

3rd meaning
Or it can mean that the holy names are accompanied by all the various devotional relationships, the nine rasas, headed by śrīgāra (mādhurya-rasa).

In the pure chanting of the holy names, all these varieties of prema-rasa are manifest, in the moods of both separation (viraha) and meeting (saṅga).

Rasa also means "attraction to Kṛṣṇa" (rāga), which devotees performing saṅkīrtana unavoidably experience as their kṛṣṇa-prema is rapidly evoked by the holy names.

↓
4th meaning

~~saṅkīrtana~~

In other words, the Lord's saṅkīrtana inspires His servants and everyone else to become attracted to the Lord.

5th meaning

Rasa also means "special potency" (vīrya-viśeṣa); the chanting of the holy names is extremely powerful.

6th meaning

And rasa can mean "exceptional quality" (guṇa-viśeṣa), indicating in the present context that nāma-saṅkīrtana has the power to deliver the most fallen persons in the world.

7th meaning

Rasa also means “exceptional happiness” (sukha-viśeṣa); hari-nāma
is the most concentrated essence of happiness.

8th meaning

And it also means “exceptional sweetness” (mādhurya-viśeṣa).

Nāma-saṅkīrtana is often glorified for its sweetness, as in this
famous verse from the Prabhāsa-khaṇḍa of the Skanda Purāṇa:

madhura-madhuram etan maṅgalaṁ maṅgalānām
sakala-nigama-vallī-sat-phalaṁ cit-svarūpam
sakṛd api parigītaṁ śraddhayā helayā vā
bhṛgu-vara nara-mātraṁ tārayet kṛṣṇa-nāma

“O best of the Bhṛgu dynasty (bhṛgu-vara), the holy name of Kṛṣṇa (etad kṛṣṇa-nāma) is the sweetest of the sweet (madhura-madhuram), the most auspicious of the auspicious (maṅgalaṁ maṅgalānām). This transcendental fruit of all the Vedas (sakala-nigama-vallī-sat-phalaṁ) is purely spiritual (cit-svarūpam). Whoever chants it but once (sakṛd api parigītaṁ), whether with faith or with contempt (śraddhayā helayā vā), is liberated (nara-mātraṁ tārayet).”

Even more meanings of the word rasa could be applied to interpreting this verse, but the above examples give at least some understanding of the greatness of saṅkīrtana.

Therefore follow
the order of Śiva
Go to Mathura
Oh Mathura! we bow down to you
satisfactorily.

2.3.185

tan mānayañ chivasyājñām
ito niḥsara satvaram
kṛṣṇa-priya tamām śrīman-
mathurām tvām namāma tām

Therefore (tad), honoring the order of Lord Śiva (śivasya ājñām mānayañ), you should leave this place (ito niḥsara) at once (satvaram). Go to divine Mathurā (śrīman-mathurām tvām), the place most dear to Kṛṣṇa (kṛṣṇa-priya tamām). O Mathurā, we bow down to you (namāma tām)!

Lord Śiva has already advised Gopa-kumāra to leave Mahākāla-pura and go to Mathurā on the earth.

Now the Vaikuṅṭha messengers encourage him to do this at once.

The very reason they came down from Vaikuṅṭha was to make Gopa-kumāra return to Bhauma-vr̥ndāvana.

In case Gopa-kumāra, having traveled so far to reach the abode of liberation, questions why he should go back to where he started from, the Vaikuṅṭha-dūtas assure him that Śrī Mathurā, Kṛṣṇa's favorite place, will shower him with the fulfillment of all his ambitions without delay.

śrī-gopa-kumāra uvāca

nipīya hr̥t-karṇa-rasāyanam tat

pramoda-bhāreṇa bhṛto namams tān

śivau ca sadyo vraja-bhūmim etām

taiḥ prāpito 'ham bata mugdha-buddhiḥ

Vpon hearing
these nectarean words
I was filled with delight
& I bowed down to the v-dētas
& sive & by their grace
transported to vāraṇasī

Śrī Gopa-kumāra said: Upon drinking (nipīya) this invigorating tonic for the ears and heart (tat hr̥t-karṇa-rasāyanam), I was filled with delight (pramoda-bhāreṇa bhṛtaḥ). I bowed down to the messengers from Vaikuṅṭha (tān naman) and to Lord Śiva and his wife (śivau ca), and by their grace (taiḥ) I was swept (prāpitaḥ) at once (sadyaḥ) to this Vraja-bhūmi (etām vraja-bhūmim). Oh, how my mind was stunned (bata mugdha-buddhiḥ)!

A moment before, Gopa-kumāra had been offering prostrate obeisances, and now when he looked up he suddenly found himself in Vraja-bhūmi.

This left him bewildered.

Thus ends the Third Chapter of Part Two of Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī's Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta, entitled "Bhajana: Worship."