

SRIMAD BHAGAVATAM

Volume 11, Chapter 2

THE QUESTIONS OF VASUDEVA TO NARADA; NARADA EXPLAINING ABOUT WHAT IS BHAGAVATA DHARMA BY ILLUSTRATING THE DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN KING NIMI AND THE NAVA YOGIES

Introduction

The last chapter has dealt with the causes for the destruction of Yadu dynasty as per the wish of Sri Krishna Bhagavan. Before Sri Krishna departed from this world He wanted to ensure that His own people also return to their respective abodes as the purpose for which they had all come here at the time when Sri Bhagavan manifested were all over by now.

During these developments, Sage Narada happened to visit Dwarka to be with Sri Krishna Bhagavan and other people whom he considered in high esteem. Narada had been a frequent visitor to Dwaraka and whenever he had come, he used to stay for some period. Though, due to the curse of Daksha, he cannot remain at one place continuously, it is said that the curse had no effect on him in Dwaraka because of the presence of Sri Krishna Bhagavan.

While in Dwaraka, Narada came to the home of Vasudeva, who accorded appropriate welcome to him and received him with all respects

and reverence. He requested Narada to explain to him the highest principles leading to liberation from the distress of this material world. He also asked him to explain as to how one can overcome fear.

Vasudeva tells Narada that Sri Krishna Bhagavan Himself has appeared as his own son and He had explained to him on several occasions about the higher principles to be followed in human life. However, Vasudeva sees Him as his son alone, and that attachment comes in the way of his spiritual development. He expresses his inability to overcome this attachment. Therefore, Vasudeva considers Narada as the right person to give him the appropriate advice so that he will realize them.

Narada explains to Vasudeva that the questions put forward by him are very appropriate. He said that King Nimi of Videha put similar questions before the Nava Yogies once upon a time. Thereafter, he goes on to explain to Vasudeva the principles of higher life as presented by the Nava Yogis in that discussion. These Nava Yogis are among the sons of Rishabha Deva. A reference about them comes earlier in Stanza number 12, Volume 5 of Srimad Bhagavatam. It was said then that these nine great personalities shall talk about what is Bhagavata Dharma and the details will be presented through Vasudeva Narada discussions, which is dealt with in this chapter of Volume 11.

This chapter also highlights the importance of being in the company of any sagely person (like Narada) which is real Satsangha. The company of such a person itself purifies the atmosphere wherein the seeker derives the benefit of spiritual advancement. Realizing the self is the ultimate goal of any devotional service and that is definitely possible in the company of a realized person.

Stanza 1

śrī-śuka uvāca
govinda-bhuja-guptāyām
dvāravatyām kurūdvaha
avātsīn nārado 'bhīkṣṇam
kṛṣṇopāsana-lālasaḥ

(*śrī-śuka uvāca*) Sri Sukha Brahmarishi continues his discourse to
King Pareekshit:

(*kurūdvaha*) Hey! The ideal person of the Kuru dynasty ! (*nāradaḥ*)
Sri Narada used to visit (*dvāravatyām*) Dwaraka (*abhīkṣṇam*)
consistently, (*govinda-bhuja-guptāyām*) which is well protected by
the valor of Sri Krishna Bhagavan's powerful arms, (*avātsīt*) and stay
there for long duration each time.

(*kṛṣṇopāsana-lālasaḥ*) Narada used to visit Dwarka frequently like
this because of his ardent desire to do devotional service to Sri Krishna.

Stanza 2

ko nu rājann indriyavān
mukunda-caraṇāmbujam
na bhajet sarvato-mṛtyur
upāsyam amarottamaiḥ

(*rājan*) Hey, King Pareekshit! (*amarottamaiḥ*) When even Lord
Brahma and other greatest of the greatest divine beings (*upāsyam*)
desire to worship (*mukunda-caraṇāmbujam*) the pious lotus feet of
Sri Krishna Bhagavan, (*kḥ nu*) which person, (*sarvato-mṛtyuḥ*)

who is always confronted by death and (*indriyavān*) who is under the influence of the five sense organs, (*na bhajet*) would not worship Him?

Sri Narada is a greatest saint. He has no desire for anything leave alone the worldly desires. How is that he is so much interested in the devotional service of Sri Krishna Bhagavan? Sri Sukha Brahmarishi is explaining that only those persons who have given up desires can really worship Sri Krishna Bhagavan. He is reiterating this fact to King Pareekshit because the king himself has left all the worldly comforts and desires and decided to listen to Srimad Bhagavatam from Sri Sukha Brahmarishi when he knew that he had only seven days left in this world.

Stanza 3

*tam ekadā tu devarṣim
vasudevo gṛhāgatam
arcitam sukham āsīnam
abhivādyedam abravīt*

(*ekadā*) As things were progressing like this, once (*devarṣim*) Narada (*gṛhāgatam*) reached the home (*vasudevaḥ*) of Vasudeva (*tam*) where he was (*arcitam*) worshipped with reverence by Vasudeva, (*āsīnam*) who made him sit (*sukham*) very comfortably (*abhivādyā*) and after paying his obeisance to him, (*idam abravīt*) spoke to him as follows.

Stanza 4

śrī-vasudeva uvāca

*bhagavan bhavato yātrā
svastaye sarva-dehinām
kṛpaṇānām yathā pitror
uttama-śloka-vartmanām*

(*śrī-vasudeva uvāca*) Vasudeva said to Narada:

(*bhagavan*) Hey Bhagavan! (*yathā*) Just like (*pitroḥ*) the visit of parents benefit their children, (*yathā*) just like (*uttama-śloka-vartmanām*) the visit of great devotees who have chosen the path of singing the glories of Sri Krishna Bhagavan (*kṛpaṇānām*) benefit those persons who are immersed in the miseries of worldly life, (*bhavataḥ*) your (*yātrā*) visits (*svastaye*) are for the welfare (*sarva-dehinām*) of all the living beings.

Stanza 5

*bhūtānām deva-caritam
duḥkhāya ca sukhāya ca
sukhāyaiva hi sādḥūnām
tvāḍṛśām acyutātmanām*

(*deva-caritam*) The activities of the divine personalities like Indra and others (*duḥkhāya ca*) result in the misery (*sukhāya ca*) or happiness (*bhūtānām*) of the living beings. (*hi*) However, (*sādḥūnām*) the activities of the saintly persons (*tvāḍṛśām*) like yourself, (*acyutātmanām*) who have totally surrendered unto the Supreme Being Who is ever permanent, (*sukhāya eva*) are only for the benefit of all the living beings.

Note: Through the above stanza, Vasudeva is trying to tell the selfless nature of the saintly persons like Saint Narada. All divine personalities like Indra etc. can bestow benefits or misery according to the situation. However, the self-realized personalities like Narada can only bestow benefits to all the living beings. That is because people like Narada help remove ignorance in others. It is through this process the goal of self-realization is achieved. Therefore, there is a special place for saintly personalities like Narada.

The limited benefits of Karma as compared to the total surrender to the Supreme Being, be it through devotional route and/or knowledge route, is highlighted above.

Stanza 6

*bhajanti ye yathā devān
devā api tathaiva tān
chāyeva karma-sacivāḥ
sādhavo dīna-vatsalāḥ*

(*thathā eva devāḥ api tān bhajanti*) The reciprocation by the divine beings (*ye yathā devān bhajanti*) match with the kind of worship the persons offer to them. (*chāya iva karma-sacivāḥ*) They follow the principle of shadow of the image according to the law of Karma.

(*sādhavaḥ dīna-vatsalāḥ*) However, the saintly persons are compassionate to all the living beings.

Note: The saintly persons do not see any distinction in any living being. They do not expect anything from anyone. At the same time, they wish for the well-being of all irrespective of what they do or do not do towards them.

By just having a “darshan” of them (their very presence), the persons are able to purify themselves.

As far as the divine beings are concerned, they reciprocate to the person according to what worship they offer. It is just like the shadow form depending upon the image offered.

Vasudeva is putting the question straight to Narada through the following stanza that forms the main and the important content of the subject matter. The question has two parts: (1) what are the righteous activities (Bhagavata Dharma) when carried out pleases the Supreme Being and (2) by following which a person can get rid of all kinds of fear from all directions in this material world.

Stanza 7

*brahmaṁs tathāpi pṛcchāmo
dharmān bhāgavatāṁs tava
yān śrutvā śraddhayā martyo
mucyate sarvato bhayāt*

(*tathāpi*) That being so (by having said that the saintly persons’ very presence purify the people because of their compassionate nature),

(*brahman*) Hey the realized Narada!

(*tava pṛcchāmaḥ*) I am asking you (1) (*yān*) to highlight such of those things, (*martyaḥ*) which a person (*śrutvā*) upon listening and understanding (*śraddhayā*) very carefully, (*mucyate*) can get rid of (*sarvato bhayāt*) the fear originating from any and all directions in this worldly life, and (2) (*bhāgavatān dharmān*) such righteous

activities following which (Bhagavata Dharma) the Supreme Being shall be pleased.

Stanza 8

*aham kila purānantam
prajārtho bhuvi mukti-dam
apūjayam na mokṣāya
mohito deva-māyayā*

(*mohitaḥ*) Due to my bewilderment (*deva-māyayā*) with the illusionary powers (Maya Shakti) of Sri Bhagavan, (*aham purā*) during my previous lives (*apūjayam kila*) I had undertaken high devotional service (*anantam*) to The Ever Permanent Sri Hari, (*prajārtho*) just for the sake of begetting a son (*bhuvi*) on this earth (*mukti-dam*) Who in fact is the one who bestows deliverance. (*mokṣāya na*) I regret why I didn't do it for the sake of deliverance.

Note: Sri Krishna Bhagavan had, as soon as He had manifested in the prison cell as the son of Vasudeva reminded Vasudeva about his previous lives. Now, Vasudeva connects those memories to Narada and regrets that He had never asked for Moksha or deliverance to Sri Krishna in his earlier births but only desired Sri Krishna Bhagavan to be born as his son. He attributes this to his desire to be in the worldly life with family etc., instead of not having self- realization. For this purpose, he had undertaken great penances. There are detailed explanations about this incidence in the Dasama Skandam (tenth volume). Stanzas 32 to 45 in Chapter 3 Volume 10 deal with the realization about Vasudeva's previous lives that Sri Krishna Bhagavan gave to Vasudeva in the prison cell.

Stanza 9

*yathā vicitra-vyasanād
bhavadbhir viśvato-bhayāt
mucyema hy añjasaivāddhā
tathā naḥ śādhi su-vrata*

Hey, the highly realized saint. (*yathā*) In what way, (*bhavadbhiḥ*) according to you, (*añjasā*) without much difficulty, (*mucyema hi*) people like us can get liberation (*addhā*) in the real sense (*viśvato-bhayāt*) from all sorts of fears in this worldly existence (*vicitra-vyasanāt*) which has innumerable miseries. (*su-vrata*) Hey, the one who has unwavering determination to uplift the fallen people due to their ignorance! (*tathā naḥ śādhi*) Please make us understand those principles in the manner you so desire.

Note: Irrespective of who is born as son to parents, the worldly life in itself has its own miserable situations. Sri Bhagavan Himself was born as son to Vasudeva and Devaki, as is being explained by Vasudeva to Narada here. He is requesting Narada to explain those higher principles to him (and through him to the people inhabiting in this world) which can ensure deliverance from the miseries and fears of this life in this material world.

Sri Sukha Brahmarishi is now continuing with his further discourse to King Pareekshit.

Stanza 10

śrī-śuka uvāca

*rājann evaṁ kṛta-praśno
vasudevena dhīmatā
pṛītas tam āha devarṣiḥ
hareḥ saṁsmārito guṇaiḥ*

(*śrī-śuka uvāca*) Sri Sukha Brahmarishi said to King Pareekshit:

(*rājan*) Hey, king Pareekshit! (*kṛta-praśnḥ*) Having presented these questions (*dhīmatā*) by the most knowledgeable (*vasudevena*) Vasudeva (*evaṁ*) in this manner, (*devarṣiḥ*) the greatest saint Sri Narada, (*saṁsmāritaḥ*) deeply remembered (*hareḥ*) Sri Hari (*guṇaiḥ*) and His greatest potencies, (*pṛītaḥ*) because of which he became very much pleased (*āha*) and replied (*tam*) to Vasudeva.

Stanza 11

*śrī-nārada uvāca
samyag etad vyavasitaṁ
bhavatā sātvatarṣabha
yat pṛcchase bhāgavatān
dharmāṁs tvam viśva-bhāvanān*

(*śrī-nārada uvāca*) Sri Narada said to Vasudeva:

(*sātvatarṣabha*) Hey, Vasudeva, you are highly knowledgeable among the sincere devotees! (*samyak*) How appropriately (*tvam pṛcchase*) you have made (*etat*) these questions (*vyavasitaṁ*) and put them forward (*bhavatā*) by you (*bhāgavatān dharmān*) that are related to the righteous principles (Bhagavata

Dharma), (*yat*) which if followed properly, (*viśva-bhāvanān*) can purify the entire humanity.

Stanza 12

śruto 'nupaṭhito dhyāta
ādṛto vānumoditaḥ
sadyaḥ punāti sad-dharmo
deva-viśva-druho 'pi hi

(*deva*) Hey, Vasudeva! (*sad-dharmaḥ hi*) As far as Bhagavata Dharma, (the righteous principles) are concerned, (*va*) one either (*śrutaḥ*) can listen them through the mouth of the Guru, (*anupaṭhitaḥ*) or after listening from the Guru one can recite them oneself, (*dhyātaḥ*) or they can be remembered, (*ādṛtaḥ*) or can assimilate them with the required attention, (*anumoditaḥ*) or can appreciate them seeing others reciting them.

(*punāti*) It does not matter whichever way they are, all of them have the potency of purifying instantly (*viśva-druhaḥ api*) even those who torture or inflict pain to the creations of the universe.

Stanza 13

tvayā parama-kalyāṇaḥ
puṇya-śravaṇa-kīrtanaḥ
smārito bhagavān adya
devo nārāyaṇo mama

(*tvayā*) Because of your very question about the principles of righteousness (Bhagavata Dharma) (*mama*) I could (*smāritaḥ*) remember (*adya*) right at this time (*nārāyaṇaḥ*) Sri Narayana, (

parama-kalyāṇaḥ) Who is nothing but absolute auspiciousness, (*punya-śravaṇa-kīrtanaḥ*) whose glories themselves bestow the greatest benedictions, (*bhagavān*) Who possesses all the six qualities and all prosperities (*devaḥ*) and Who is self effulgent pure consciousness.

Note: Narada is thanking Vasudeva for his question about the Bhagavata Dharma. Narada says his question has given him an opportunity to remember about Sri Narayana instantly. So more importantly, the very question put up by Vasudeva was so pious that it gave Narada an opportunity to delve deep into the devotional service aspects of Sri Narayana.

Stanza 14

*atrāpy udāharantīmam
itihāsam purātanam
āṣabhāṇām ca samvadam
videhasya mahātmanaḥ*

(*atrāpi*) Whenever these questions had come up for dialogue, (*imam*) normally a particular (*purātanam*) ancient (*itihāsam*) historical incidence (*samvadam*) wherein detailed discussions (*āṣabhāṇām*) between the sons of Rishabhadeva (*mahātmanaḥ*) and the spiritually advanced (*videhasya ca*) King of Videha Nimi had taken place (*udāharanti*) is cited as the appropriate example to delve on these points.

Note: Through the following seven stanzas brief explanation about Rishaba Deva and his sons is given.

Stanza 15

*priyavrato nāma suto
manoḥ svāyambhuvasya yaḥ
tasyāgnīdhras tato nābhir
ṛṣabhas tat-sutaḥ smṛtaḥ*

(*manoḥ*) The Manu (*svāyambhuvasya*) known as Swayambhu
(*sutaḥ*) had a son (*priyavrataḥ nāma yaḥ*) named Priyavrata.
(*tasya sutaḥ*) His son was (*agnīdhraḥ*) Agneedra. (*tataḥ*) He had
a son (*nābhiḥ*) named Nabhi. (*tat-sutaḥ*) That Nabhi had a son (*smṛtaḥ*)
who came to be known as the famous (*ṛṣabhaḥ*)
Rishabha.

Stanza 16

*tam āhur vāsudevāmśam
mokṣa-dharma-vivakṣayā
avatīrṇam suta-śatam
tasyāsīd brahma-pāragam*

(*āhuḥ*) It is being said that (*tam*) Rishaba Deva
(*vāsudevāmśam*) was the very potency (or the expansion) of the
Supreme Being (*avatīrṇam*) who manifested in this world
(*mokṣa-dharma-vivakṣayā*) to spread the knowledge regarding the
principles of liberation and put them into practice of execution. (*tasya*)
He (*āsīt*) had (*suta-śatam*) one hundred sons (*brahma-pāragam*)
who were all Vedic scholars and erudite in regulative principles.

Stanza 17

*teṣām vai bharato jyeṣṭho
nārāyaṇa-parāyaṇaḥ*

*vikhyātam varṣam etad yan-
nāmnā bhāratam adbhutam*

(*teṣām vai*) Among those one hundred sons (*jyeṣṭhaḥ*) was the eldest son (*bharataḥ*) Bharata. (*nārāyaṇa-parāyaṇaḥ*) He considered only Sriman Narayana to take shelter unto and remained all through as a great devotee and realized personality very firmly. (*etat varṣam*) This part of the earth (*vikhyātam*) that was earlier called as Ajanabha, (*adbhutam vikhyātam*) came to be famously known to the surprise of all (*bhāratam*) as “Bharatam” (*yan-nāmnā*) linking it with his name Bharata.

Stanza 18

*sa bhukta-bhogām tyaktvemām
nirgatas tapasā harim
upāsīnas tat-padavīm
lebhe vai janmabhis tribhiḥ*

(*saḥ*) This emperor Bharata (*tyaktvā*) had given up (*imām*) his kingdom, (*bhukta-bhogām*) which was highly prosperous for material enjoyment (*nirgataḥ*) and left his home (*tapasā*) engaging himself in greatest penances (*upāsīnaḥ*) and serving in devotion (*harim*) Sri Hari. (*tribhiḥ*) In three births, (*lebhe vai*) he could attain (*tat-padavīm*) liberation.

Note: The first fifteen chapters in Volume 5 is entirely devoted to these great personalities including Rishaba Deva and Bharata.

Stanza 19

*teṣām nava nava-dvīpa-
patayo 'sya samantataḥ
karma-tantra-praṇetāra
ekāśītir dvijātayaḥ*

(*teṣām*) Among those one hundred sons, (*nava*) nine persons (*nava nava-dvīpa-patayaḥ*) were the sovereign kings of the nine islands (*samantataḥ*) surrounding (*asya*) Bharatam. (*ekāśītīḥ*) Eighty-one of them (*dvijātayaḥ*) were great Brahmins thorough in Vedic principles (*karma-tantra-praṇetāraḥ*) and they engaged themselves in the path of Vedic sacrifices as propounded by the Vedas.

Note: Out of those one hundred sons of Rishabhadeva, the eldest one Bharata became the emperor Bharata. Out of the remaining ninety-nine younger brothers, nine of them became the sovereign kings of the nine islands surrounding Bharatam. Eighty-one of them became great Brahmin Vedic scholars and engaged themselves in the pursuit of Karma as propounded by the Vedas. The remaining nine persons became great Yogis about whom Narada Maharshi is going to present through the following stanzas.

Stanza 20

*navābhavan mahā-bhāgā
munayo hy artha-śāmsinaḥ
śramaṇā vāta-rasanā
ātma-vidyā-viśāradāḥ*

(*mahā-bhāgāḥ*) Extremely fortunate were those (*nava*) nine sons of Rishabhadeva. (*munayaḥ*) They were great sages of high spiritual

knowledge. (*śramaṇāḥ*) They always engaged themselves in the processes of self-realization. (*vāta-rasanāḥ*) They never at all bothered about the kind of dress they wore. (*ātma-vidyā-viśāradāḥ*) They had very good expertise on the concepts of the higher knowledge about self (*artha-śāmsinaḥ*) and continuously advocated the principles about the Absolute Truth.

Note: These nine sons of Rishabhadeva, known as Naya Yogis, had attained spiritual heights when they were very young. That was because in the young age itself they started pursuing the knowledge about the Absolute Truth. They had the special capacity to elucidate the principles regarding the attainment of higher values of life right from young age. They bothered neither about their food nor the kind of dress did they wear. They were not at all interested in the worldly pleasures. Therefore, they could easily discriminate between truth and untruth, righteousness and non-righteousness. Therefore, they were the most competent and deserving sages who could enlighten about the Absolute Truth.

Stanza 21

kavir havir antarīkṣaḥ
prabuddhaḥ pippalāyanaḥ
āvirotra 'tha dhumilāś
camasaḥ karabhājanaḥ

Those self realized nine sages were Kavi, Hari, Anthariksha, Prabuddha, Pippalayana, Avirotra, Dhurumila, Chamasa and Karabhajana.

Note: King Nimi asked nine questions to Naya Yogies. Turn by turn they answered these questions. The answers and explanations given

by them are of very high spiritual value. They appear in the following order in Volume 11.

Kavi	Chapter 2 – Stanzas 33 to 43
Hari	Chapter 2 – Stanzas 45 to 55
Anthariksha	Chapter 3 – Stanzas 3 to 16
Prabhuddha	Chapter 3 – Stanzas 18 to 33
Pippalayana	Chapter 3 – Stanzas 35 to 40
Avirhotra	Chapter 3 – Stanzas 43 to 55
Dhrumila	Chapter 4 – Stanzas 2 to 23
Chamasa	Chapter 5 – Stanzas 2 to 18
Karabhajana	Chapter 5 – Stanzas 20 to 42

Stanza 22

*ta ete bhagavad-rūpaṁ
viśvaṁ sad-asad-ātmakam
ātmano 'vyatirekeṇa
paśyanto vyacaran mahīm*

(*ete te*) These nine Yogies (*vyacaran*) travelled all over (*mahīm*) the world (*paśyantaḥ*) considering (*viśvaṁ*) the entire universe, (*sad-asad-ātmakam*) along with all the gross and subtle objects contained therein, (*bhagavad-rūpaṁ*) as the form of that Supreme Consciousness/Ultimate Truth, (*avyatirekeṇa*) which is not at all distinct (*ātmanaḥ*) from the self.

Note: As earlier mentioned these nine Yogies were already realized souls. They never considered anything in this universe as distinct

entities. Their realization was such that they never had a feeling that they were individual entities and thus there was nothing as me and mine attitude in them. They realized themselves the Supreme Consciousness and the entire world also as such. Therefore, they were the entire universe and the entire universe in them. This level can come only to those who are in the highest stage of spiritual perfection known as “Paramahamsas”.

Stanza 23

*avyāhateṣṭa-gatayaḥ sura-siddha-sādhyā-
gandharva-yakṣa-nara-kinnara-nāga-lokān
muktāś caranti muni-cāraṇa-bhūtanātha-
vidyādhara-dvija-gavām bhuvanāni kāmam*

(*avyāhateṣṭa-gatayaḥ*) The nine great Yogis, who were in a position to travel anywhere as per their wish without any hindrance (*muktāḥ*) and who were free from all kinds of desires, (*kāmam aranti*) moved around as much as they wanted (*sura-siddha-sādhyā-gandharva-yakṣa-nara-kinnara-nāga-lokān*) in the worlds of divine beings, Sidha devas, Sandhyas, Gandharvas, Yakshas, human beings, Kinnaras and serpents. (*kāmam aranti*) They also went, as they liked, (*bhuvanāni*) to the places of residence (*muni-cāraṇa-bhūtanātha-vidyādhara-dvija-gavām*) of great sages, Charanas, Bhutha Nahas, Vidyadharas, Brahmins and cows.

Note: Though they had great Yogic powers because of their position as Paramahamsas, they never had any desire for anything. They never stayed at one place but kept on moving around to various places without any hindrance. It is felt that such great Yogis even now travel continuously because they do have such powers due to their unique

position. The important point is that they can reach any place anywhere according to their wish without any obstacle.

Stanza 24

*ta ekadā nimeḥ satram
upajagmur yadṛcchayā
vitāyamānam ṛṣibhir
ajanābhe mahātmanaḥ*

(*te*) These nine Yogies (*upajagmuḥ*) happened to reach (*ekadā*) once, (*yadṛcchayā*) all of a sudden, (*satram*) the place of sacrificial performance (*vitāyamānam*) conducted as per Vedic traditions (*ajanābhe*) in Anjanabha Varsha (Bharatam) (*mahātmanaḥ*) by the saintly (*nimeḥ*) emperor Nimi (*ṛṣibhiḥ*) under the directions of the great sages.

Note: Emperor Nimi was a highly realized personality. It is said that great Yogis like Nava Yogis reach such places of worship if they so desire from nowhere because of their yogic heights. This is particularly so when some performances without any self-interest take place keeping the welfare of all the living beings as the only goal.

Stanza 25

*tān dṛṣṭvā sūrya-saikāśān
mahā-bhāgavatān nṛpa
yajamāno 'gnayo viprāḥ
sarva evopatasthire*

(*sūrya-saikāśān*) As these nine Yogis appeared there, those present could see they were radiating such effulgence as if the sun itself has manifested before them. (*tān dṛṣṭvā*) When they saw

(*mahā-bhāgavatān*) these great saintly personalities, (*yajamānaḥ*) the performer of the sacrifice namely the emperor Nimi, (*agnayaḥ*) the sacrificial fires, (*viprāḥ*) the sages under whose supervision the sacrifices were being conducted, (*sarve eva*) all of them simultaneously reached to them (*upatasthira*) and stood in reverence before them.

Note: It is difficult to describe in words the greatness of highly realized personalities. When the Nava Yogies appeared emitting around them such radiation of light conforming to that of the sun, all the persons present there understood that the persons arrived are the greatest realized souls. Not only had all of them, but also the sacrificial fires also stood up in front of them with reverence. The sacrificial fires are divine beings through which the offerings are made to reach the intended destination by chanting the prescribed Vedic hymns. In such sacrifices, the divinity of the performance reaches sanctity when conducted strictly as per the prescribed norms. When the fires also got up to receive the Yogis it meant the sacrifices were going on in a very pious manner. The purpose of any Vedic sacrifice is for the welfare of all the living beings. The Yogis are in a higher platform from this point of view because they travel all around keeping the welfare of all the beings of the universe. Therefore, the sacrifice instantly halted to give preference to such great Yogis who deserve reverence and appropriate welcome. By means of their very presence, such Yogies are in a position to bestow blessings to each and everyone by spreading divine knowledge and by removing the darkness of ignorance.

Stanza 26

*videhas tān abhipretya
nārāyaṇa-parāyaṇān*

*prītaḥ sampūjayām cakre
āsana-sthān yathārhataḥ*

(*abhipretya*) All of them realized at once (*tān*) that these Yogies (*nārāyaṇa-parāyaṇān*) are the exalted devotees of the Supreme Being, Sriman Narayana (*prītaḥ*) and so became very much pleased. (*videhaḥ*) The emperor of Videha, Nimi, became very much happy about their arrival. (*āsana-sthān*) He made them seated (*yathārhataḥ*) at the deserving places (*sampūjayām cakre*) and very respectfully paid his obeisance.

Note: To get these types of Yogies the person must be very fortunate. Such divine personalities do not go to places by invitation. This shows the worthiness of the emperor Nimi and his spiritual elevation where the Yogies had felt it appropriate to be present in the assembly of the Vedic sacrifice.

Stanza 27

*tān rocamānān sva-rucā
brahma-putropamān nava
papraccha parama-prītaḥ
praśrayāvanato nṛpaḥ*

(*nṛpaḥ*) The emperor Nimi, (*parama-prītaḥ*) who overcame with extreme happiness (*praśrayāvanataḥ*) and became so humble, respectfully (*papraccha*) asked (*tān nava*) those Naya Yogies, (*rocamānān*) who were radiating spiritual effulgence (*sva-rucā*) from within themselves (*hma-putropamān*) and who were just looking like the Sanaka Saints, the sons of Lord Brahma.

Stanza 28

śrī-vidēha uvāca
manye bhagavataḥ sākṣāt
pārśadān vo madhu-dviṣaḥ
viṣṇor bhūtāni lokānām
pāvanāya caranti hi

(*śrī-vidēha uvāca*) King Nimi said:

(*manye*) I consider (*vaḥ*) all of you (*pārśadān*) as the true devotees of (*sākṣāt*) the Supreme (*bhagavataḥ*) Bhagavan (*madhu-dviṣaḥ*) Sri Maha Vishnu. (*hi*) That is because (*bhūtāni*) the devotees (*viṣṇoḥ*) of Sri Maha Vishnu (*caranti*) travel a lot (*pāvanāya*) with the intent of purifying (*lokānām*) all the worlds.

Note: The devotees of Lord Maha Vishnu travel all over the worlds and while doing so they highlight the principles of spiritual values just to purify all the living beings. There are various examples for this: like the Sanaka Saints, Sage Narada etc. Naya Yogies also fall in this category.

Stanza 29

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

(*kṣaṇa-bhaṅguraḥ*) Even though the human body perishes as if in split second, (*mānuṣaḥ dehaḥ*) getting a human body (*durlabhaḥ*) itself is very very rare for the living entity, (*dehinām*) which had assumed various kinds of bodies in different lives earlier. (*tatra api durlabham*) It is much more difficult for a human being (*vaikuṅṭha-priya-darśanam*

) to come into association with the pure devotees of Sri Vishnu Bhagavan, than getting the rarest human body in one's life.

Note: The statement of emperor Nimi is very profound. One might get a human body after taking births several times in different bodies. The span of life of the human body itself is very short. Moreover, no one can say when the death will approach. It is only through the human body one can think of spiritual advancement. However, it is rare to come across and associate with the real devotees of Sri Maha Vishnu. One has to be fortunate to get that opportunity. Such real devotees of Sri Maha Vishnu can purify all living beings just by their presence.

Stanza 30

*ata ātyantikam kṣemam
pṛcchāmo bhavato 'naghāḥ
saṁsāre 'smin kṣaṇārdho 'pi
sat-saṅgaḥ śevadhīr nṛṇām*

(*anaghāḥ*) You are the ones who are very clean unaffected by any dirt – the real form of Atman which is Pure, Conscious Bliss and ever permanent. (*ataḥ*) Therefore, (*pṛcchāmaḥ*) I am asking (*bhavataḥ*) you (*ātyantikam*) about the highest, perfect and ever permanent (*kṣemam*) goodness for a human being. (*nṛṇām*) When human beings (*sat-saṅgaḥ*) get the association of the real devotees of Shri Mahavishnu (*asmin*) in this (*saṁsāre*) material world (*kṣaṇārdhaḥ api*) even for a fraction of a second, (*śevadhīḥ*) it is like a valuable treasure for them.

Stanza 31

*dharmān bhāgavatān brūta
yadi naḥ śrutaye kṣamam*

*yaiḥ prasannaḥ prapannāya
dāsyaty ātmānam apy ajaḥ*

(*yadi*) If you consider (*naḥ*) we are (*kṣamam*) qualified enough (*śrutaye*) to listen to them, (*brūta*) kindly explain to us (*dharmān*) those righteous principles of devotional service (*yaiḥ*) that shall (*bhāgavatān*) please the Supreme Being (*prasannaḥ*) and by the observance of which Srihari will be pleased (*dāsyati*) to give (*ātmānam api*) even Himself (*prapannāya*) unto that devotee.

Note: Emperor Nimi's question is very profound. He is asking what the highest, perfect and ever permanent goodness is for a human being in this material existence. What righteous principles a sincere devotee should follow, which shall please Srihari, in order to reach that stage of goodness. One can see the similarity of the question put forward by the emperor Nimi to the Nava Yogies and Vasudeva to Narada. That is why Narada is taking us back to the discussions happened earlier between the emperor Nimi and the Nava Yogis in Videha. As per the Vedic traditions, the spiritual knowledge remains the same as it was before. What was originally there in the form of knowledge continues to be there now and shall be there in the future. Therefore, there is nothing new to add or deduct from what is already available. It is complete in all respects. This is the basic concept in Vedic teaching and it contains the paramount truth that there exists only one truth and nothing other than that one truth.

Stanza 32

*śrī-nārada uvāca
evam te niminā pṛṣṭā
vasudeva mahattamāḥ*

*pratipūjyābruvan prītyā
sa-sadasyartvijam nṛpam*

(*śrī-nārada uvāca*) Sri Narada said to Vasudeva:

(*vasudeva*) Hey, Vasudeva! (*niminā*) When emperor Nimi (*prṣṭāḥ*) put forward (*evam*) these questions before them, (*te*) those (*mahattamāḥ*) great Yogis (*pratipūjya*) appreciated Nimi profoundly, (*nṛpam*) who was (*sa-sadasyartvijam*) surrounded by the sages and other members assembled there to witness the Vedic sacrifice, (*prītyā*) and very pleasingly (*abruvan*) started explaining to him.

It is Kavi Maharshi, among those Nava Yogis, who replies first to emperor Nimi.

Stanza 33

śrī-kavir uvāca

*manye 'kutaścid-bhayam acyutasya
pādāmbujopāsanam atra nityam
udvigna-buddher asad-ātma-bhāvād
viśvātmanā yatra nivartate bhīḥ*

(*śrī-kavir uvāca*) Kavi Maharshi replied to emperor Nimi:

(*atra*) In this material world, (*asad-ātma-bhāvāt*) when one gets oneself identified with the falsehood like depending upon or liking/disliking other human bodies, which are purely of temporary nature, and also that one gets oneself too much engrossed with his own sense organs, which again have no permanent existence, (*nityam*)

such a person always (*udvigna-buddheḥ*) comes under the influence of fear.

(*manye*) I consider that (*pādāmbujopāsanam*) engaging in the devotional service at the pious lotus feet of Sri Bhagavan, (*acyutasya*) Who is ever permanent and not subject to any changes, (*akutaścid-bhayam*) ensures removal of all sorts of fears from all directions.

(*yatra*) When a person engages himself in the devotional service of Sri Bhagavan (*bhīḥ*) the fear of this material world (*nivartate*) totally gets relieved from him (*viśvātmanā*) in all respects.

Note: Kavi Maharshi now goes on to explain that the highest, perfect and ever permanent goodness for a human being is to engage himself in the devotional service of Bhagavan. Due to this, he is relieved of all sorts of fears while living in this material world. Now Kavi Maharshi goes on to explain the characteristics of the righteous principles of devotional service (Bhagavata Dharma).

Stanza 34

*ye vai bhagavatā proktā
upāyā hy ātma-labdhaye
añjaḥ puṁsām aviduṣām
viddhi bhāgavatān hi tān*

(*añjaḥ*) For easily (*ātma-labdhaye*) reaching to the state of self-realization (*puṁsām*) by those people (*aviduṣām*) who are ignorant, (*bhagavatā hi*) Sri Bhagavan Himself (*proktāḥ*) had advocated (*ye vai upāyāḥ*) a few ways. (*viddhi*)

Please understand (*tān*) all of them (*bhāgavatān*) as the righteous principles (Bhagavata Dharma).

Note: Kavi Maharshi says that Sri Bhagavan Himself has advocated many means, which if followed properly, can lead an ordinary person who is not familiar with the stringent rules of Vedic sacrifices etc. towards the goal of self-realization. It is impossible for an ordinary person to understand Manu Smriti, Vedic hymns, Narada Bhakti Sutra etc. However, by reading, listening and assimilating the principles contained in Bhagavad Geeta, Srimad Bhagavatam, and many other Puranas, one can come to the path of self-realization.

Kavi Maharshi had used the expression “*añjah*” which means very easily. Through the next stanza, he is elaborating why these righteous principles (Bhagavata Dharmas) are easy to follow for an ordinary person.

Stanza 35

*yān āsthāya nara rājan
na pramādyeta karhicit
dhāvan nimīlya vā netre
na skhalen na pated iha*

(*rājan*) Oh, the great king Nimi! (*āsthāya*) While executing (*yān*) these righteous principles (Bhagavata Dharma) (*narah*) a person (*karhicit na*) shall never ever (*pramādyeta*) get into any difficulty. (*dhāvan vā*) Even if he runs (*nimīlya*) closing (*netre*) both his eyes (*iha*) while executing these principles, (*na skhalet*) he shall never tumble (*na pated*) nor shall he fall.

Note: Kavi Maharshi is explaining that while executing these righteous principles (Bhagavata Dharma) like reading, listening, or assimilating,

even if some hurdles come in between, the same will not have any adverse effect on the person executing them. This is not so in the case of performance of Vedic sacrifices and other Yogic exercises.

However, what are these righteous principles (Bhagavata Dharma)? Kavi Maharshi now goes on to explain them step by step. They are not just limited to reading some scriptures or executing something for the sake of doing them. They are much more than that.

Stanza 36

*kāyena vācā manasendriyair vā
buddhyātmanā vānusṛta-svabhāvāt
karoti yad yat sakalam parasmai
nārāyaṇāyeti samarpayet tat*

Whatever one does (*kāyena*) through his body, (*vācā*) words, (*manaā vā*) mind, (*indriyaiḥ*) senses, (*buddhyā*) intelligence, (*ātmanā*) consciousness, (*anusṛta-svabhāvāt*) or does according to one's own individual characteristic acquired through tradition, (*karoti*) and whatever one executes, (*yad yat*) all and all (*tat sakalam*) of them (*parasmai nārāyaṇāya*) “are for the sake of the Supreme Being, Sriman Narayana”. (*iti samarpayet*) One has to execute all such actions with this unwavering determination.

Note: In simple words, Kavi Maharshi says that whatever the form of worship to that Supreme Being, all of them are the righteous principles (Bhagavata Dharma), and needs to be executed by the person with the spirit mentioned in Stanza 36.

Now, he goes on to explain that the fear arising in the human being while living in this material world is because of ignorance. One can overcome this only through the right knowledge.

Stanza 37

*bhayaṁ dvitīyābhiniveśataḥ syād
īśād apetasya viparyayo 'smṛtiḥ
tan-māyayāto budha ābhajet taṁ
bhaktyaikayeśaṁ guru-devatātmā*

(*apetasya*) A person who stands apart as a separate entity (*īśāt*) away from Bhagavan (*asmṛtiḥ syād*) forgets about his own real identity (*tan-māyayā*) because of the illusionary powers (Maya Shakti) of Bhagavan.

(*viparyayaḥ*) Due to this fact – of standing apart as a separate entity- he will develop false ego about himself identifying him with his material body.

(*dvitīyābhiniveśataḥ*) He comes to identify himself as the second one within that one single indivisible all pervading supreme consciousness due to the illusion.

(*bhayaṁ*) Because of this false identification with himself, as against the unified single absolute consciousness, he develops fear in the material existence.

(*budhaḥ*) A person who has better insight (*guru-devatātmā*) shall approach a spiritual master with all due respect to him and considering him as non-distinct from that indivisible supreme consciousness.

That person, thereafter goes on engaging himself in the service of worship (*taṁ īśāṁ*) to that Supreme Being (*ekayā bhaktyā*) with unflinching devotion (*ābhajet*) till he gets liberated.

Note: Human mind is always under the influence of material desires and sense enjoyment. That being so, where is the question of unflinching devotion? Kavi Maharshi is clearing this doubt through the following stanza.

Stanza 38

*avidyamāno 'py avabhāti hi dvayo
dhyātur dhiyā svapna-manorathau yathā
tat karma-saṅkalpa-vikalpakam mano
budho nirundhyād abhayaṁ tataḥ syāt*

(*dvayaḥ avidyamānaḥ api*) Even though there is no duality in this material world in real terms, (*dhiyā*) because of the nature of his mind, (*dhyātuḥ*) the human being (*avabhāti hi*) experiences (*svapna-manorathau yathā*) whatever he had seen in his dream state. He also experiences what he has perceived in his mind through his mental chariot following him like a shadow even while in waking stage.

(*tat*) Therefore, (*manaḥ*) the mind is responsible for (*karma-saṅkalpa-vikalpakam*) determining some of the material activities as something very desirable and attractive, while some other material activities as something leading to aversion.

(*budhaḥ*) A person having proper insight (*nirundhyāt*) should exercise control over his mind.

(*tataḥ*) The exercise of proper control over his mind helps in bringing about the unflinching devotional service (*abhayaṁ syāt*) that alone can get rid of the fear in this material world.

Note: The mind is responsible for our perception of duality in this material world. When there is no mind, there is no outside world. Kavi Maharshi explains that pure devotees have achieved this height of not coming under the control of their minds.

Stanza 39

*śṛṇvan su-bhadrāṇi rathāṅga-pāṇer
janmāni karmāṇi ca yāni loke
gītāni nāmāni tad-arthakāni
gāyan vilajjo vicared asaṅgaḥ*

(*vicaret*) A person should wander around in this world (*asaṅgaḥ*) without having attachment to and desires/ aversion for this material world.

(*vilajjaḥ*) While doing so he must not be ashamed (*gāyan ca*) of singing loudly (*śṛṇvan*) or listening attentively to the glories (*yāni*) about a few (*janmāni*) manifestations, (*rathāṅga-pāṇeḥ*) of Sri Bhagavan Chakrapani – the One Who holds a disc in His hands – (*nāmāni*) His great names ensuring instant piousness, (*karmāṇi*) and His great deeds.

(*gītāni*) The glories of the Bhagavan are praiseworthy (*loke*) in this world, (*su-bhadrāṇi*) are extremely pious, (*tad-arthakāni*) and contain the greatest principles leading to the path of liberation.

Note: Kavi Maharshi now goes on to explain about the amazing way of life of a person who has reached that height of devotional character by

continuously engaging himself in singing and listening about the Bhagavan. In this process itself, he has given up totally his material attachment and aversion.

Stanza 40

*evam-vrataḥ sva-priya-nāma-kīrtyā
jātānurāgo druta-citta uccaiḥ
hasaty atho roditi rauti gāyaty
unmāda-van nṛtyati loka-bāhyaḥ*

(*evam-vrataḥ*) A person, who has reached this stage of devotion in his life – as mentioned in the previous stanza – (*sva-priya-nāma-kīrtyā*) as he continuously glorifies the pious holy names of his dearest Bhagavan, (*jātānurāgaḥ*) develops a special relationship of enchanting devotional attachment to the Bhagavan – as against the material attachment of non-devotees.

(*druta-cittaḥ*) By reaching this stage of enchanting devotional relationship with Bhagavan (*unmāda-vat*) his heart totally melts with ecstatic love and like a mad person, (*loka-bāhyaḥ*) ignoring the ways of the so called practical worldly way of life, (*atho*) at different times (*uccaiḥ*) he loudly (*hasati*) laughs, (*roditi*) cries, (*rauti*) shouts, (*gāyati*) sings (*nṛtyati*) and dances.

Stanza 41

*kham vāyum agniṁ salilaṁ mahīṁ ca
jyotīṁsi sattvāni diśo drumādīn*

*sarit-samudrāmś ca hareḥ śarīram
yat kim ca bhūtam praṇamed ananyaḥ*

Such a pure devotee – as mentioned in the previous stanzas – bows down to every moving and non-moving thing in this universe seeing them as the pure manifestation of the Bhagavan.

(*kham*) He considers the sky, (*vāyum*) air, (*agnim*) fire, (*salilam*) water, (*mahīm ca*) earth, (*jyotīṃśi*) the planetary system, (*sattvāni*) animals, (*diśaḥ*) the directions, (*drumādīn*) plants, trees and creepers, (*sarit-samudrāmś ca*) rivers, oceans; (*yat kim ca bhūtam*) and all other moving and nonmoving things (*hareḥ śarīram*) as the body of Sri Bhagavan. (*ananyaḥ*) He has the firm determination that he is also not a separate entity from the body of the Bhagavan. (*praṇamed*) This is the reason why he shows his reverence to all of them with ecstatic love and devotion to Bhagavan.

Note: Kavi Maharshi says that it is impossible even for a person who has attained great Yogic feats to reach the special situation in which a pure devotee has reached by always reciting/remembering the name of the Bhagavan.

Stanza 42

*bhaktiḥ pareśānubhavo viraktir
anyatra caiṣa trika eka-kālah
prapadyamānasya yathāśnataḥ syus
tuṣṭiḥ puṣṭiḥ kṣud-apāyo 'nu-ghāsam*

(*prapadyamānasya*) When a person engages himself in the devotional service of the Bhagavan without any falsehood in the manner mentioned above, (*eka-kālah*) he develops the following three things simultaneously together at the same time.

- (*bhaktiḥ*) (1) Ecstatic love of devotion for Bhagavan,
 (*pareśānubhavaḥ*) (2) Continuous remembrance of the form of the
 Bhagavan within him, which is the cause for the ecstatic love of
 devotion,
 (*anyatra viraktiḥ ca*) (3) He gets fully detached from all other things
 in this world.

(*eṣaḥ trikaḥ*) The above development of three things happening
 together to the pure devotee (*yathā*) is just like (*aśnataḥ*) when a
 hungry person eats food, (*anu-ghāsam*) as he swallows each morsel
 (*tuṣṭiḥ*) he gets satisfaction, (*puṣṭiḥ*) the feeling of filling his belly,
 (*kṣud-apāyaḥ*) and relief from hunger (*syuḥ*) simultaneously at the
 same time as he eats his food.

Stanza 43

*ity acyutāṅghriṁ bhajato ’nuvṛṭtyā
 bhaktir viraktir bhagavat-prabodhaḥ
 bhavanti vai bhāgavatasya rājan
 tataḥ parāṁ śāntim upaiti sākṣāt*

(*rājan*) Hey, king Nimi! (*iti*) In this manner, (*bhāgavatasya*) the
 pure devotee of Sri Bhagavan, (*anuvṛṭtyā bhajataḥ*) who engages
 himself continuously at the worship of (*acyutāṅghriṁ*) the pious lotus
 feet of Sri Hari, (*bhavanti vai*) definitely attains (*bhaktiḥ*) ecstatic
 devotion, (*viraktiḥ*) total aversion to all material desires, (*bhagavat-prabodhaḥ*)
 and reaches the state of self-realization. (*tataḥ*) Overwhelmed with this kind of devotion
 (*upaiti sākṣāt*) that devotee achieves the absolute (*parāṁ śāntim*) spiritual state of liberation
 - right here on earth where he continues to live.

Note: There is a statement in the above stanza “*bhavanti vai bhāgavatasya*” - to such a devotee of the Bhagavan it happens etc. etc. At this stage, king Nimi takes the discussion further by asking the Nava Yogies, who is in fact a real “*bhāgavata*” and what are his characteristics.

Stanza 44

śrī-rājovāca
atha bhāgavatam brūta
yad-dharmo yādṛśo nṛṇām
yathācarati yad brūte
yaiḥ liṅgaiḥ bhagavat-priyaḥ

(*śrī-rājovāca*) King Nimi further asked –
(*brūta*) Now, please explain (*bhāgavatam*) about the devotee of the Bhagavan. (*yad-dharmaḥ*) What righteous principles does he observe? (*yādṛśaḥ*) What characteristics does he have? (*yathā*) How does (*carati*) he interact and transact while living (*nṛṇām*) among the ordinary people? (*yad brūte*) What does he speak? (*yaiḥ liṅgaiḥ*) What symptoms can we find in him through which one can say that (*bhagavat-priyaḥ*) he is the most loved one by the Bhagavan?

Note: One can observe how intelligently the emperor Nimi put forward this question. He articulated the Nava Yogis to highlight the symptoms for identifying a real devotee. These are – his righteous principles, character, how he transacts in this world, how he speaks and the visible symptoms through which we can say so and so a real devotee.

Stanza 45

śrī-havir uvāca
sarva-bhūteṣu yaḥ paśyed
bhagavad-bhāvam ātmanaḥ
bhūtāni bhagavaty ātmany
eṣa bhāgavatottamaḥ

(*śrī-havir uvāca*) Now, it is the turn of the Nava Yogi, Hari, to reply:

(*yaḥ*) The devotee (*paśyet*) who sees (*ātmanaḥ*) his (*bhagavad-bhāvam*) own real identity (*sarva-bhūteṣu*) in all the moving and non-moving beings and (*paśyet*) in the same manner sees (*ātmani bhagavati*) in his real identity (*bhūtāni*) all the moving and non-moving beings, (*eṣaḥ*) such a devotee (*bhāgavatottamaḥ*) is considered as devotionally most advanced among all the devotees.

Note: It is only one undivided, ever permanent, and indestructible supreme conscious bliss which is inherent in all the moving and non-moving things and, therefore, the person who sees them as such including himself as a single one without the second, is considered as the most advanced devotee. While he transacts in this world, his basic understanding of the above principle does not change.

Hari Maharshi is taking the discussion to a very high spiritual level through these stanzas. Stanza 45 describes the symptoms of the most advanced devotee, the one who is the first class devotee. Now he describes as to who comes in the middle category (the second-class devotee) through Stanza 46.

Stanza 46

*īśvare tad-adhīneṣu
bālīśeṣu dviṣatsu ca
prema-maitrī-kṛpopekṣā
yaḥ karoti sa madhyamaḥ*

(*yaḥ karoti sa madhyamaḥ*) He is the middle class or second rated devotee (*prema*) who has love (*īśvare*) for the Bhagavan, (*maitrī*) friendship (*tad-adhīneṣu*) towards other devotees of the Bhagavan, (*kṛpā*) mercy (*bālīśeṣu*) for the ignorant people (*uopekṣā*) and disregard (*dviṣatsu ca*) for those who are against the Bhagavan.

Note: The middle class devotee has has discrimination among the living entities and classifies them differently. He also considers himself as a separate entity. The first class devotee sees unity in everything in which chain he also becomes one with the total. This differentiation or “Bedha Budhi” is the basic point of difference between these two categories of devotees.

Stanza 47

*arcāyām eva haraye
pūjām yaḥ śraddhayehate
na tad-bhakteṣu cānyeṣu
sa bhaktaḥ prākṛtaḥ smṛtaḥ*

(*yaḥ*) There are persons who (*śraddhayā*) faithfully (*īhate*) engage in (*pūjām*) worshiping (*arcāyām*) idol (*eva*) alone, (*haraye*) invoking Sri Hari in it.

(*anyeṣu ca na*) But they, at the same time do not show the same kind of attitude (*tad-bhakteṣu*) towards other devotees of Sri Hari and all others in general.

(*saḥ*) Such persons (*smṛtaḥ*) are considered to be (*prākṛtaḥ*) in the initial stage (*bhaktaḥ*) as a devotee.

Note: When someone confines his devotion to merely worshipping an idol, however sincere he might be, he is considered to be in the initial stages of becoming a devotee.

Stanza 45 describes the nature of a first class devotee – Uthama, Stanza 46, the second class – Madhyama and Stanza 47, the third class – Prakrita. Now, through the following eight stanzas Hari Maharshi is explaining the characteristics of the Uthama devotee (the most advanced devotee).

Stanza 48

*gṛhītvāpīndriyair arthān
yoh a dveṣṭi na hr̥ṣyati
viṣṇor māyām idaṁ paśyan
sa vai bhāgavatottamaḥ*

(*yaḥ*) A person, (*gṛhītvā api*) even though absorbs and perceives (*arthān*) the worldly matters (*indriyaiḥ*) through his senses, (*paśyan*) sees (*idaṁ*) this entire universe (*māyām*) as the energy - Maya Shakti – (*viṣṇoḥ*) of Shri Vishnu, (*na dveṣṭi*) because of which neither hates it (*na hr̥ṣyati*) nor rejoices about it, (*sa vai*) is the most (*bhāgavatottamaḥ*) advanced among all the devotees. This is because he has fixed himself on Sri Vasudeva through his heart and soul.

Note: When a person absorbs the worldly objects through his eyes, nose etc. he enjoys either some pleasure or some misery. However, an advanced devotee does not feel pleasure or misery both because of his advanced state of accepting either of them in equanimity.

Stanza 49

*dehendriya-prāṇa-mano-dhiyām yo
janmāpyaya-kṣud-bhaya-tarṣa-kṛcchraiḥ
saṁsāra-dharmair avimuhyamānaḥ
smṛtyā harer bhāgavata-pradhānaḥ*

(*hareḥ smṛtyā*) Due to his constant remembrance of Sri Hari within himself, (*yaḥ*) when a person (*avimuhyamānaḥ*) is not bewildered (*saṁsāra-dharmaiḥ*) with the special characteristics of the material nature (*janmāpyaya-kṣud-bhaya-tarṣa-kṛcchraiḥ*) like birth, death, hunger, fear, and the pain due to exertion (*dehendriya-prāṇa-mano-dhiyām*) affecting his body, senses, life air, mind and intelligence, (*bhāgavata-pradhānaḥ*) he is considered as the most advanced devotee.

Note: The characteristics of the material body are it is subject to birth and death. Similarly, the hunger and thirst are of the life air. Desires, anger, hankering, bewilderment, pleasure, miseries, fear are of the mind. The characteristic of the intelligence is pain due to exertion. The characteristic of the senses is the efforts. All these characteristics described above connect to the material body and they are nothing to do with the internal self, which is the pure consciousness. When a person considers that his own real self is experiencing all these, he is in the stage of bewilderment of this material nature, which is ignorance. When this ignorance goes away from him, he starts realizing his own real self.

When he remains in that state he is self realized. At that stage, even though it may appear that he is like all others transacting in this material world, nothing of the worldly matters affect him and he remains in his own self-realized state while living right in this material world.

Stanza 50

*na kāma-karma-bījānām
yasya cetasi sambhavaḥ
vāsudevaika-nilayaḥ
sa vai bhāgavatottamaḥ*

(*yasya*) A person in whose (*cetasi*) mind (*kāma-karma-bījānām*) the desire for material hankerings leading to sense enjoyment and the sowing of the seed of fruitive deeds (*sambhavaḥ na*) do not take place, (*vāsudevaika-nilayaḥ*) and for whom the only shelter is Sri Vasudeva, (*sa vai bhāgavatottamaḥ*) he is the one who is the most advanced devotee.

Note: The driving desire to enjoy each material nature is lust. To fulfil that lust one has to transact so many activities. Because of that continuous endeavour, one has to do pious and sinful activities. These activities sow the seeds for future births. When all these are absent in one's mind he is the most advanced devotee. His focus on the pious lotus of the Supreme Being becomes incessant and, therefore, he is not wavered into the distractions of material nature. When he is enjoying the happiness of the supreme bliss by focussing on the pious lotus feet of the Supreme Being, he is simply not attracted towards the enjoyment of the lower levels of happiness of this material world. Therefore, he does not transact fruitive activities, which is a vicious cycle to trap a person into taking future birth through pious and sinful activities.

Through the above three stanzas how the most advanced devotee transacts in this world has been described. What his symptoms are? The following stanza shall reveal them through.

Stanza 51

*na yasya janma-karmabhyām
na varṇāśrama-jātibhiḥ
sajjate 'sminn aham-bhāvo
dehe vai sa hareḥ priyaḥ*

(*sa vai*) That devotee is the one (*priyaḥ*) the most endearing (*hareḥ*) to Sri Hari, (*yasya*) (*na sajjate*) who does not allow (*aham-bhāvaḥ*) even the slightest of ego (*asminn*) on his (*dehe*) material body (*janma-karmabhyām*) because of his taking birth in certain good family, or engaging in certain good deeds.

(*varṇāśrama-jātibhiḥ na*) Similarly, he also does not allow this ego to get into him because of his family status (like Brahmin etc.) or the occupation his family is engaged in the society.

Note: The linkage of birth, activities, classification in the Varna and Ashrama (the social status and the social order because of the status) all relate to the material body and not the pure consciousness. A realized person does not belong to any of these. He is a pure devotee and, therefore, is beyond all these limitations. He is the one who is most endearing to Sri Hari.

Through stanza 44, we can see how the emperor Nimi has specifically asked “(*yādṛśaḥ*) What characteristics does he have?” The following three stanzas deal through this concept as explained by Nava Yogi Hari Maharshi.

Stanza 52

*na yasya svaḥ para iti
vitteṣv ātmani vā bhidā
sarva-bhūta-samaḥ śāntaḥ
sa vai bhāgavatottamaḥ*

(*sa vai*) He is the one who (*bhāgavatottamaḥ*) is the most advanced among all devotees of Sri Bhagavan

- (a) Who, (*vitteṣu*) in matters connected with property and wealth (*ātmani vā*) as well as his material body (*yasya na*) does not have (*svaḥ para iti bhidā*) duality in thinking like “mine” and “someone else’s” etc.,
- (b) Who, (*śāntaḥ*) without any attachment and aversion, (*sarva-bhūta-samaḥ*) considers with equanimity all the moving and non- moving beings in this creation.

Stanza 53

*tri-bhuvana-vibhava-hetave 'py akuṇṭha-
smṛtir ajitātma-surādibhir vimṛgyāt
na calati bhagavat-padāravindāl
lava-nimiṣārdham api yaḥ sa vaiṣṇavāgryaḥ*

(*vaiṣṇavāgryaḥ*) He is the one who is the most advanced among all devotees of Sri Bhagavan

- (a) (*yaḥ*) Who (*bhagavat-padāravindāt*) does not leave the pious lotus feet of the Bhagavan, (*vimṛgyāt*) which is sought after even (*ajitātma-surādibhiḥ*) by those divine beings who

are so much devoted Him, (*na calati*) to such an extent that he does not stay away from them with absolute firmness (*lava-nimiṣārdham api*) even for fraction of a second (*tri-bhuvana-vibhava-hetave api*) even if he is offered in exchange the position of a ruler and enjoying all the prosperities of all the three worlds,

- (b) (*akuṇṭha-smṛtiḥ saḥ*) Such a devotee, who always remembers the Bhagavan consistently and firmly, (*vaiṣṇavāgryaḥ*) is the most advanced amongst all the devotees of the Bhagavan.

Stanza 54

*bhagavata uru-vikramāṅghri-śākhā-
nakha-maṇi-candrikayā nirasta-tāpe
hṛdi katham upasīdatām punaḥ sa
prabhavati candra ivodite 'rka-tāpaḥ*

(*candre udite*) As soon the moon arises, (*arka-tāpaḥ*) the heat of the sun felt until that time disappears. (*iva*) In the same manner, (*nirasta-tāpe*) having already removed the burning heat (*hṛdi*) from the hearts (*upasīdatām*) of the devotees (*uru-vikramāṅghri-śākhā-nakha-maṇi-candrikayā*) through the cool moonshine emanating from the effulgent jewels like nails of the lotus feet (*bhagavataḥ*) of the Bhagavan, (*katham*) how can (*saḥ*) that heat (*prabhavati*) arise (*punaḥ*) again in their hearts?

Note: When such an advanced devotee always remembers the Bhagavan consistently and firmly, his focus remains incessantly at the pious lotus

feet of the Bhagavan. Hari Maharshi is equating the beautiful nails of the feet of the Bhagavan with that of the precious jewels emanating cool moonshine touching the hearts of the devotees thereby removing from their hearts all desires (both attachment and aversion) in this worldly life. When the devotee reaches that stage in life, even while living in this material world, the attractions of sense enjoyments do not affect him at all. He remains steady in all situations and remembers Sri Hari constantly.

After answering the question “(*yādīśaḥ*) what characteristics does the devotee have” through the above three stanzas, Hari Maharshi goes on to explain the the question as to what such a devotee speaks “*kim brūte*” through the last stanza of this chapter. He concludes there saying that except the names of Sri Hari, the most advanced devotee never says anything else.

Stanza 55

*visṛjati hṛdayam na yasya sākṣād
dharir avaśābhihito 'py aghaughā-nāśaḥ
praṇaya-rasanayā dhṛtāṅghri-padmaḥ
sa bhavati bhāgavata-pradhāna uktaḥ*

(*avaśābhihitaḥ api*) Due to certain unavoidable circumstances in one’s life, by pronouncing even unknowingly the pious words like “Hare Krishna” (*aghaughā-nāśaḥ*) they are capable of mitigating all the sinful effects. That being so, such a devotee is the most advanced devotee (*yasya hṛdayam*) from whose heart (*hariḥ*) the Bhagavan (*sākṣāt*) Himself (*na visṛjati*) does not leave from that place, (*dhṛtāṅghri-padmaḥ*) where that devotee has tied His pious lotus feet (*praṇaya-rasanayā*) with the rope of his pure devotion and he remains in that stage by repeating His holy names constantly. (*saḥ*) He (

uktaḥ bhavati) is recognized (*bhāgavata-pradhānaḥ*) as the most advanced among the devotees.

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This concludes Chapter 2 of Volume 11 of Srimad Bhagavatam

Hari Om