

# Garuḍa Purāṇa Sāram

The Spiritual Essence of the Garuda Purana  
With Bhishma's discourse on heaven and hell.



by  
Paṇḍit Sri Rama Ramanuja Achari  
srimatham.com

14:10:2021

## PART 1

## Dharma Khāṇḍa

om nārayaṇā namaskṛtya narā caiva narottamam |  
devīm sarasvatīm caiva tato jayamudīrayet ||

*One should begin the recital of this holy Purana after bowing to Narayana & Nara the most excellent beings, Goddess Sarasvati and Vyasa.*

## Garuda's Query

Suta Said

ekadā vinateyasya lokānām lokanasprhā |  
babhūva so'tha babhrāma teṣu nāma harer-gr̥ṇan || 1:9||

*Once upon a time, Garuda desired to travel around the world. He set off on his journey, wandering all over chanting the name of Hari.*

sa pātālā bhuvā svargā bhrāntvā'labdha śamāśayaḥ |  
loka-duḥkhenati duḥkhī punar-vaikuṇṭhāgamat || 1:10||

*He wandered over the earth, through purgatory and through the heavenly realms but was discomforted and more distressed than ever by the sight of beings suffering, so he returned to Vaikuntha.*

caturbhujāḥ kuṇḍalino maulino mālinastathā |  
bhrājiṣṇubhirvimānānām paṅktibhirye mahātmānam || 14 ||

*There dwell the great beings, four-armed, wearing earrings and garlands, with beautiful hairdos, shining in the radiance of rows of aerial cars.*

dyotante dyotamānām pramadānā ca paṅktibhiḥ |  
śrīryatra nānāvibhavairhareḥ pādau mudārccati || 15 ||

*There lakshmi gladly adorns the feet of Lord Vishnu by offering many precious gems, herself surrounded by a bevy of beautiful damsels.*

harī gāyati dolāsthā gīyamānālibhiḥ svayam |  
dadarśa śrīharī tatra śrīpatī sātvatām patim || 16 ||  
jagatpatī yajñapatī pārśadaiḥ pariṣevitam |  
sunanda nanda prabalārhaṇa-mukhyair-nirantaram || 17 ||

*She sits in a moving swing praising the Lord along with all her friendly associates. There Garuda saw the all-mighty Lord of lakshmi, the Lord of the good, the Lord of the universe, the Lord of sacrifices, surrounded by his courtiers, Sunanda, Nanda, Prabalarhana the principle ones among them.*

pītāṃśukā caturbahū prasanna hasitānamam |  
abhyar-haṇāsanāsīnā tābhiḥ śaktibhir-āvṛtam || 19 ||

*Garbed in yellow silk, having four-arms, with joyful smiling faces, sitting on precious thrones surrounded by the Principles of the Universe —*

pradhāna puruṣābhyām ca mahatā cāhamā tathā |  
ekādaśendriyaiścaiva pañca bhūtaistathaiva ca || 20 ||  
svarūpe ramamāṇā tamīśvarā vinatā-sutaḥ |

tad-darśanāhlāda yutasvanto hr̥ṣyattanūruhaḥ || 21 ||

*Pradhana (primordial nature), Purusha (consciousness), Mahat (principle of expansion), Ahankara (notion of individuality), the five sense organs of perception, the five motor-organs of action, the mind, the five states of matter (solid, liquid etc.) and delighting in the Self. Garuda was pleased to see the Lord.*

Locanabhyām aśru muñcan premamagno nanāma ha |  
tam āgatā natā svīyavāhanā viṣṇurabravīt || 22 ||  
bhūmiḥ laṅghitā pakṣīstvayeyantamanehasam |

*His hair thrilled with joy and with tears coming out of his eyes one bowed to him with the feeling of love. Vishnu spoke to Garuda his vehicle: "O Garuda, tell us how much of this universe you have wandered over and within such a short time."*

garuḍa uvāca

tava prasādadvaikuṅṭha trailokyā sacarācaram || 23 ||  
mayā vilokitā sarvā jagatsthāvara jāgamam |  
bhūrlōkāt satya paryantā purā yāmyā vinā prabho || 24 ||

*Garuda said:— "My Lord, by your grace, I have visited the three realms and seen all beings the sentient and the insentient. I have visited all realms, except the realm of Yama, O my lord.*

bhūrlōkaḥ sarvalokānām pracuraḥ sarva jantuṣu |  
mānuṣyā sarva bhūtānām bhukti-muktyālayā śubham || 25 ||  
ataḥ sukṛtinām loko na bhūto na bhaviṣyati || 26 ||

*Among all the worlds, the Bhū-loka (earthly realm) is thickly populated by various kinds of creatures. This realm is the most auspicious of all inasmuch as it affords a place of enjoyment to all and is celebrated as the place where beings can strive for Liberation. A realm better than this, for those who perform good actions has neither been before nor will there ever be.*

gayanti devāḥ kila gītakāni dhanyāstu ye bhāratabhūmi bhāge |  
svargāpavargasya phalārjjanāya bhavanti bhūyaḥ puruṣāḥ suratvāt ||27||

*It appears that even the gods praise this fact. Those who live in this part of the world called Bharata are in deed blessed. In order to experience here itself the fruits of heaven and liberation they are born as human beings casting off their deityhood.*

lokāṃllokayatā loke jagāhe viśvamaṇḍalam |  
tatrājani janāndrṣṭvā duḥkheṣveva nimajjataḥ || 58 ||  
svānte me durdharā pīḍā tatpīḍāto garīyasi |  
tridive ditijātebhyo bhūmau mṛtyurugādibhiḥ || 59 ||

*After roaming through all the three worlds and seeing all beings enmeshed in suffering, a great pain arose in my heart. The affliction on the earth caused by death and disease is greater than affliction from the sight of Asuras (Antigods) in paradise.*

iṣṭa vastu viyogaiśca pātāle māmakā bhayam |  
evā na nirbhayā sthanam anyadīśa bhavatpadāt || 60 ||

*In the hell realm I was petrified of losing my most precious objective which is refuge in your holy feet — there is no other place of fear-lessness O Lord!*

asatyam svapna māyāvat kālena kavalīkṛtam |  
tatrapī bhārate varṣe bahu duḥkhasya bhāgiṇaḥ || 61 ||

*Time has consumed the world of relative external reality, as it has consumed the inner dream-world. Still in the land of Bharata I saw a huge number of people suffering.*

janā dṛṣṭā mayā rāgadveṣa mohādi viplutāḥ |  
 kecid andhāḥ kekarākṣāskhaladvācastu paṅgavaḥ || 62 ||  
 svañjāḥ kāñāśca badhirā mūkāḥ kuṣṭāśca lomaśāḥ |  
 nānā rogaparītāśca khapuṣpāccābhimāninaḥ || 63 ||

*People were immersed deeply in attachment, envy, affection, etc. Some were blind, some squint-eyed, some dumb, some lame, some one-eyed, some deaf, some suffering from leprosy and other diseases and some from pride as false as the sky-flower.*

teṣāṃ doṣasya vaicitryā mṛtyorgocarātāmapi |  
 dṛṣṭvā praṣṭumanāḥ prāptaḥ ko mṛtyuścitratā katham || 64 ||

*After seeing the strangeness of their faulty ways in the face of death. I have come to you with a mind to ask what is death? Why is it such a mystery?*

## Origin of Life

katham utpadyate jantuḥ bhūta grāme caturvidhe |  
 indrajālamidā manye sāsāre'sāra sāgare |  
 kartā ko'tra hṛṣīkeṣa sāsārā duḥkha sākule || 2.32.1 ||

Garuda said:

*How does life come into being, in the four species of living beings? (Insects, plants, birds and mammals) I consider this ocean of worldly existance to be a great mystery! O Mighty One, who is the controller of this vast ocean of sorrow?*

sādhu pṛṣṭā tvayā loke sadayā jīva kāraṇam |  
 vainateya śṛṇuśva tvamekāgra kṛta mānasah || 2.32.6 ||

The Lord Krishna said;

*O Garuda, out of compassion for all living beings, you have asked a very pertinent question about the origin of life, listen therefore attentively.*

ṛtukāle nārīṇāṃ varjya dinacatuṣṭayam |  
 yatas tasmin brahma hatyāṃ purā vṛtra samutthitām || 2.32.7 ||

*The 4 days of the menstrual cycle shall be avoided for impregnation, because previously the sin of brahminicide was allocated to women during these four days.*

brahmā śakrāt samuttārya caturthīśena dattavān |  
 tāvannālokyate vakrā pāpā yāvad vapuḥ sthitam || 2.32.8 ||

*Brahma removed the sin of killing a brahmin from Indra and apportioned a fourth of the guilt to women during their menstrual cycle hence one should avoid intercourse during these days<sup>1</sup>.*

niṣeka samaye pitroryādrk citta vikalpanā |  
 tādr̥g garbha samutpattiḥ jāyate nātra sāsayaḥ || 2.32.11 ||

*The thoughts of the couple during intercourse affect the character of the progeny. There is no doubt about this.*

cikitsā jāyate tasya garbhavāsa parikṣaye |  
 nāri vātha naro vātha napūsatvā vabhijāyate || 2.32.29 ||

<sup>1</sup> Apart from the 4 days of bleeding women are considered pure 24/7 whereas men are considered as impure by default and require daily bathing and Sandhya recitation in order to maintain their purity.

*Whatever the sexual orientation of the child whether it be male, female or non-binary it is born in the ninth or the tenth month.*

krāmanti bhuktapītāni strīṇāṃ garbhodare tathā |  
tairāpyāyita deho'sau jantur vṛddhimupaiti ca || 2.32.62 ||

*In the uterus the foetus is sustained by whatever the mother consumes; Thereby it receives nourishment and develops in form.*

smṛtyastatra prayāntyasya bahvyaḥ sāsārabhūtayaḥ |  
tato nirvedamāyāti pīḍyamāna itastataḥ || 2.32.63 ||

*In the uterus the jiva recalls the events and happenings in the previous births. Tormented by the memories of its past lives it feels depressed.*

punarnaivā kariṣyāmi bhuktamātra ihodarāt |  
tathātathā yatiṣyāmi garbha nāpnomyahā yathā || 2.32.64 ||

*It thinks " as soon as I leave this womb I shall be very cautious. I shall never repeat the mistakes I made in the past. I shall so act that I will never be born again."*

niṣkramyamāṇo vātena prajāpatyena pīḍyate |  
niṣkramate ca vilapāstadā duḥkhāni pīḍitaḥ || 2.32.67 ||

*The mechanism of parturition causes great suffering as the baby is forced out. When it is born it cries out in anguish.*

niṣkrāmāścodarānmūrccchām asahyāṃ pratipadyate |  
prāpnoti cetanāṃ cāsau vāyusparśa sukhānvitah || 2.32.68 ||

*After having left the womb the baby faints due to its excessive suffering. Then, with the touch of the air, it obtains a little relief and is revived.*

tatasthā vaiṣṇavī māyā samāskandati mohinī |  
tayā vimohitātmāsau jñānabhrāśamavāpnute || 2.32.69 ||

*Then the deluding power (maya) of the Lord overpowers it. Deluded thereby, it loses the faculty of discernment and experiences a fall from knowledge.*

bhraṣṭa jñānā bālabhāve tato jantuḥ prapadyate |  
tataḥ kaumārakāvasthāṃ yauvanam vṛddhatām api || 2.32.70 ||

*In childhood one remains in that state of delusion & ignorance, passing through childhood one attains youth and then old age.*

punaśca tadvan-maraṇā janma prāpnoti mānavaḥ |  
tataḥ sāsāra-cakre'smin bhrāmyate ghaṭa yantravat || 2.32.71 ||

*One then succumbs to death as before, and then again is one born. Thus on the wheel of existence, one is made to rotate like a pot on a potter's wheel.*

kadācit svargam āpnoti kadācin nirayā naraḥ |  
svargā ca nirayā caiva svakarma phalam aśnute || 2.32.72 ||

*Sometimes one may attain a period of sojourn in a heavenly realm, sometimes on purgatory. In heaven and purgatory one reaps the fruits of one's actions [fast-tracks excessive karma].*

kadācid bhukta karmāca bhuvā svalpena gacchati |  
svarloke narake caiva bhukta prāye dvijottamāḥ || 2.32.73 ||

*At other times having exhausted the merit of one's actions one returns to the earth plane, according to the residue of one's karma. Heaven and hell are not permanent states, O Garuda, this you should know.*

garbhavāse mahad-duḥkhā jāyamānasya yonijam |  
jātasya bāla bhāve'pi vṛddhatve duḥkham-eva ca || 2.32.77 ||

*A jiva in the state of an embryo experiences great suffering. In childhood too there is suffering, as well as in old age.*

kāmerṣya krodha sābandhād yauvane'pi ca duḥsaham |  
duḥsvapnā yā vṛddhatā ca maraṇe duḥkhamutkaṭam || 2.32.78 ||

*In youth one suffers the negative effects of uncontrollable desires, jealousy and rage. In maturity one is afflicted by nightmares. Old age ends in death which is extremely painful*

sukhā duḥkhā bhayā kṣemā karmaṇaivābhi padyate |  
adhomukhā corddhapādā garbhādvāyuh prakarṣati || 2.32.127 ||

*Happiness or misery, fear or welfare are the results of one's own actions. The foetus lies in the womb with the feet up and the face downwards being forced out during parturition*

sukṛtāduttamo bhoga bhogyavān sukule bhavet |  
yathā yathā duṣkṛtā tat kule hīne prajāyate || 2.32.129 ||

*Due to merit one enjoys pleasures in heaven and is born in a fortunate noble family. Due to demerit caused by wrong actions, one is born in an unfortunate family devoid of means.*

daridro vyādhito mūrkhah pāpakṛd-duḥkha-bhājanam |  
ataḥ parā kim-arthā te kathayāmi khageśvara || 2.32.130 ||

*One becomes poor, sick, foolish, sinful and miserable (by one's own demerit). Thus have I told you about the various features of the birth of a jiva.*

## The Realm of Yama

utpatti lakṣaṇā jantoḥ kathitā mayi putrake |  
yamalokaḥ kiyanmātraḥ trailokye sacarācaram || 2.33.1 ||

Garuda said;

*You have told me all about the origin of beings. Now please tell me about the realm of Yama. What is its expanse compared to the three worlds inhabited by mobile and immobile beings.*

yāmya naiṛrtayormadhye purā vaivasvatasya tu |  
sarvā vajra-mayā divyā abhedyā tat surāsuraiḥ || 2.33.15 ||

The Lord said;

*The realm of Yama is located between the Southwest & Southern directions. It is adamantine, divine and impenetrable to deities as well as demons.*

tatrastho bhagavān dharmā āsane tu same śubhe |  
daśa yojana vistīrṇe nīlajīmūta sannibham || 2.33.21 ||

*The Lord of Righteousness is seated there in his auspicious throne of Judgement; which is 80 miles in width; and resembles the blue cloud.*

dharmajño dharmā-śīlaśca dharmā yukto hito yamaḥ |  
bhayadaḥ pāpa-yuktānāṃ dhārmikānāṃ sukha-pradaḥ || 2.33.22 ||

*Yama knows dharma well. He practices the dharma and is concerned for the righteous. He is terrifying to the sinner and benevolent to the virtuous.*

manda māruta sāyogaḥ utsavair-vividhais-tathā |  
vyākhyānair-vividhair yuktaḥ śaṅkha vādi traniḥ svanaḥ || 2.33.23 ||

*There the wind blows very gently, many festivals are celebrated there, and many sages conduct discourses. Various musical instruments are played.*

dīpikāśata sākīrṇā gītadhvani samākulam |  
vicitra citra kuśalaiḥ citraguptasya vai gr̥ham || 2.33.26 ||

*Chitrugupta's palace glows with hundreds of lamps burning and thousands of musical notes reverberating. It is adorned with multifarious pictures. (which are the akashic records)*

maṇi-muktāmāye divye āsane paramādbhute |  
tatrastho gaṇayatyaḥ mānuṣeṣvitarēṣu ca || 2.33.27 ||

*There, seated upon his wonderful throne inlaid with precious stones, Chitrugupta calculates the lifespan of human beings and all other creatures.*

na muhyati kadācit sa sukṛte duṣkṛte'pi vā |  
yadyenopārjitā yāvat tāvadvai vetti tasya tat || 2.33.28 ||

*He never errs in the matter of recording the merit and demerit. Whatever a person does, however insignificant, is noted and recorded by Him.*

dharma-rāja gr̥he-dvāri dūtas-tārksya tathā niśi |  
tiṣṭhanti pāpa-karmāṇaḥ pacyamānā narādhamāḥ || 2.33.33 ||

*The attendants of Yama are located in different places near the palace of Lord Yama, they mature & purge the sinful wretches who committed wicked deeds.*

baddhaḥ parikarastena mokṣāya gamanā prati |  
kr̥ṣṇa kr̥ṣṇeti kr̥ṣṇeti yo mām smarati nityaśaḥ || 2.38.8 ||

*Whoever remembers me ever and anon saying Krishna! Krishna! Krishna! is lifted up by Me from purgatory just as a lotus springs up breaking through the water.*

gururātmaivatām śāstā rājā śāstā durātmanām |  
iha pracchana pāpānām śāstā vaivasvato yamaḥ || 2.46.8 ||

*The Guru guides the spiritual seeker, the Judicial system punishes the criminals, Lord Yama regulates and rectifies the person who sins in secret.*

prāyaścittesvacīrṇeṣu yama-lokā hyanekadhā |  
yātanābhir-vimuktā ye yānti te jīva-santatim || 2.46.9 ||

*When the expiatory and deterrent punishments in purgatory cease, O Garuda the jiva again enters into the cycle of rebirth.*

gatvā mānuṣabhāve tu pāpa-cihnā bhavanti te |  
tānyahā tava cihnāni kathayiṣye khagottama || 2.46.10 ||

*It is born again as a human with the characteristic traits of those sins. which were committed in the previous life. I shall explain O Garuda.*

devatve mānuṣatve ca dāna bhogādikāḥ kriyāḥ |  
yā dr̥ṣyante vainateya tatsarvā karmajā phalam || 2.46.36 ||

*O Garuda, whatever experience or condition is observed amongst the devas or humans; is entirely the fruit of karma.*

akarmā vihite ghore kāma krodhārjite'śubhe |  
patedvai narake bhūyo tasyottaro na vidyate || 2.46.37 ||

*If one habitually indulges in wrong actions motivated by desire or anger, it is certain that one will fall into purgatory from which escape will be difficult.*

tadairbādana-kālaḥ syād yataḥ sāpatir-asthirā |  
anityāni śārīrāni vibhavo naiva śāśvataḥ || 2.47.24 ||

*Bodies are perishable, riches are transitory, death is ever present; therefore should one exert oneself to accumulate merit.*

dharmo jayati nādharmāḥ satyā jayati nānṛtam |  
kṣamā jayati na krodho viṣṇur jayati nāsurāḥ || 2.47.46 ||

*Dharma is victorious not adharma, truth conquers not falsehood; forgiveness succeeds not anger; Cosmic Order prevails not the forces of chaos.*

viṣṇur mātā pitā viṣṇuḥ viṣṇuḥ svajana bāndhavāḥ |  
yeṣām-eva sthirā buddhiḥ na teṣāṃ durgatir-bhavet || 2.47.47 ||

*Vishnu is mother, Vishnu is father, Vishnu is kith and kin. No mishap occurs to those who set their minds on Vishnu.*

yo dharmāśīlo jita māna roṣo vidyāvinīto na paropatāpī |  
svadāra tuṣṭaḥ paradāra dūrasya vainaro no bhuvī vandanīyaḥ || 2.48.40

*That person on earth is praise worthy who follows the principles of Dharma, who has conquered pride and anger, who although learned is humble, who does not trouble others in vain, who is satisfied with one's own spouse and refrains from adultery.*

## Importance of Dharma.

śrī kṛṣṇa uvāca

evā te kathitas-tārksya jīvitasya vinirṇayaḥ |  
mānuṣāṅaṃ hitārthāya pretatva vinivṛttaye || 2.12.1 ||

Lord Krishna said;

*O Garuda, I have explained the various proclivities of life for the benefit of humankind and for the avoidance the earth-bound state in which the dead may find themselves.*

caturśīti lakṣāṇi caturbhedāśca jantavaḥ |  
aṇḍajāḥ svedajāścaiva udbhijjāśca jarāyujāḥ || 2.12.2 ||

*There are eight million four hundred thousand species of creatures divided into four main groups. They are oviparous, insects, plant life and viviparous.*

jarāyujāstathā proktā manuṣyādyāstathā pare |  
sarveṣāṃ eva jantūnāṃ mānuṣatvā hi durlabhā || 2.12.4 ||

*Humans are among those creatures known as viviparous. It is very difficult for the lower species to attain the human state.*

pañcendriya nidhānatvā mahā-puṇyair-avāpyate |  
brāhmaṇāḥ kṣatriyā vaiśyāḥ sūdrās-tatparajātayaḥ || 2.12.5 ||

*This vehicle [body] of the five sense organs can only be attained through great merits. Humankind is divided into five classes; intelligentsia, administrators, entrepreneurs, workers and the non-conformists.*

jantunām-eva sarveṣāṃ bhedāścaiva sahasraśaḥ |  
āhāro maithunā nidrā bhayā krodhas-tathaiva ca || 2.12.8 ||



*There are innumerable differences between living creatures but eating, procreating, sleeping, fear and anger are common to all living beings.*

sarveṣām-eva jantūnām viveko durlabhaḥ paraḥ |  
eka pādādi rūpeṇa dehabhedāstv-anekaśaḥ || 2.12.9 ||

*The types of bodies that living creatures possess are also innumerable, but among all sentient beings discernment is an extremely rare quality.*

bhūtānām prāṇinaḥ śreṣṭhāḥ prāṇinām matijīvinaḥ |  
matimatsu narāḥ śreṣṭhā nareṣu brāhmaṇāḥ smṛtāḥ || 2.12.11 ||

*Among living beings, animals are the best. Among the animals the intelligent are the best. Among the intelligent, humans are the best and among humans the spiritually awakened are the best.*

mānuṣyā yaḥ samāsādyā svarga mokṣaika sādhakam |  
tayorna sādhayedekā tenātmā vañcito dhruvam || 2.12.12 ||

*Having obtained a human body; which is the sole means for striving for heaven or Liberation, one is guilty of self-destruction who does not strive for either of these two.*

icchati śatī sahasrā sahasrī lakṣamīhate kartum |  
lakṣādhipatī rājyā rājāpi sakalām dharām labdhum || 2.12.13 ||

*One who has a hundred silver pieces craves for a thousand; the one who has a thousand yearns for a hundred thousand. The one who possesses a hundred thousand wishes to be a monarch; a monarch longs to rule the whole world.*

cakradharo'pi suratvā surabhāve sakala-surapatir-bhavitum |  
surapatir-ūrdhva-gatitvā tathāpi na nivarttate tṛṣṇā || 2.12.14 ||

*An emperor wishes to become a god, and on obtaining the status of a god; wishes to be King of the gods. The King of the gods wishes to become the Lord of the universe and still the thirst for power is never satiated.*

tṛṣṇayā cābhibhūtastu narakā pratipadyate |  
tṛṣṇāmuktāstu ye kecit-svarga-vāsā labhanti te || 2.12.15 ||

*A person afflicted by covetous desires eventually falls into purgatory. Those who are freed of craving secure a residence in a heavenly realm.*

ātmādhīnaḥ pumānlloke sukhi bhavati niścitam |  
śabdaḥ sparśaśca rūpā ca raso gandhaśca tad guṇāḥ || 2.12.16 ||  
tathāca viṣayādhīno duḥkhi bhavati niścitam || 2.12.17 ||

*A person who is self-dependant is sure to be happy. The qualities of sound, touch, colour, taste and smell make one dependant upon the objects of the senses and hence one is sure to be unhappy.*

kuraṅga mātaṅga pataṅga bhr̥ṅga mīnā hatāḥ pañcabhireva pañca |  
ekaḥ pramādī sa kathā na hanyate yaḥ sevate pañcabhireva pañca || 2.12.18 ||

*The deer, the elephant, the moth, the bee, and the fish — these five are all destroyed due to their addiction to the sense organs<sup>2</sup>.*

<sup>2</sup> The deer is caught by sound, the elephant by sex (she elephants), the moth by colour of the flame, the bee by fragrance of the lotus and gets caught within, and the fish gets caught by the sense of taste.

pitṛ mātṛmayo bālye yauvane dayitāmayaḥ |  
putra pautramayaścānte mūḍho nātmamayaḥ kvacit || 2.12.19 ||

*In infancy one is enthralled with one's parents. In youth one is enthralled with one's partner; in old age one is enthralled with one's grand-children. Never is one enthralled with the Atman.*

loha dārumayaḥ pāsaiḥ pumānbaddho vimucyate |  
putra dāramayaḥ pāsaiḥ naiva baddho vimucyate || 2.12.20 ||

*It is easy for one bound with iron fetters and wooden pegs to get released. But one bound with the nooses of children and spouses is never released.*

ekaḥ karoti pāpāni phalā bhūṅkte mahājanaḥ |  
bhoktāro vipra-yujyante karttā doṣeṇa lipyate || 2.12.21 ||

*Alone one performs hurtful deeds and reaps the rewards thereof, one enjoys the deeds and is tainted by the result.*

ko'pi mṛtyū na jayati bālo vṛddho yuvāpi vā |  
sukha duḥkhādhiko vāpi punarāyāti yāti ca || 2.12.22 ||

*It is impossible to escape death; whether a child, a youth or elderly, whether happy or dejected; one dies and is reborn again and again.*

sarveṣāṃ paśyatāmeva mṛtaḥ sarvā parityajet |  
ekaḥ prajāyate jantureka eva pralīyate || 2.12.23 ||

*Even as everyone stands by watching, one leaves off everything and dies. All beings are born alone, and alone do they pass away.*

eko'pi bhūṅkte sukṛtam-eka eva ca duṣkṛtam |  
mṛtā śarīram utsṛjya kāṣṭha loṣṭha samā kṣitau || 2.12.24 ||

*Alone does one experience the results of one's actions; either good or bad. The kinsmen, after death, dispose of the corpse through cremation or burial.*

bandhavā vimukhā yānti dharmastam-anugacchati |  
gṛheṣvarthā nivarttante śmaśānān mitra-bāndhavāḥ || 2.12.25 ||

*All kinsmen turn away from the dead; one's only companion is one's virtue. In the house itself all one's property changes hands, and one's family & friends abandon one at the cremation grounds.*

śarīrā vahnir-ādatte sukṛtā duṣkṛtā vrajet |  
śarīrā vahninā dagdhā puṇyā pāpā saha sthitam || 2.12.26 ||

*The physical body is consigned to the flames, one's merit and demerit continue on. The body is certainly consumed by the fire but the pleasant and unpleasant fruits of one's actions remain with one to be experienced.*

śubhā vā yadi vā pāpā bhūṅkte sarvatra mānavaḥ |  
yadanastamite sūrye na dattā dhanā arthinām || 2.12.27 ||

*As certain as rising and setting of the sun, so will the individual reap the just rewards for pious and impious actions, and for neglecting to give charity to the needy.*

dharmā evāpavargāya tasmād dharmā samācaret |  
śraddhayā sādhyate dharmo bahubhīrṇārtha rāśibhiḥ || 2.12.32 ||

*Dharma is the basis of Liberation. Hence one should follow Dharma. It is by faith that Dharma is sustained and not by heaps of riches.*

## Final Liberation

Garuda uvāca

śrutā mayā dayāśindho hyajñānājjīva sāsṛtiḥ |  
adhunā śrotum icchāmi mokṣopāyā sanātanam || 2.49.1 ||

Garuda said;

*O Ocean of Mercy! I have heard that due to ignorance the jivas are subjected to transmigration. Now I wish to hear the infallible method of final release.*

bhagavan deva deveśa śaraṇāgata-vatsala |  
asāre ghora sāsāre sarva duḥkha-malīmase || 2.49.2 ||

*O Supreme Being, God of gods, O Lover of those who take refuge in You, in this world which is tainted with suffering,*

nānā vidha śarīrasthā anantā jīvarāśayaḥ |  
jāyante ca mriyante ca teṣāmanto na vidyate || 2.49.3 ||

*There are innumerable jivas existing in a myriad of bodies, being born and dying. There seems to be no end to this process;*

sadā duḥkhātūrā eva na sukhī vidyate kvacit |  
kenopāyena mokṣeśa mucyante vada me prabho || 2.49.4 ||

*All beings are always suffering, none is truly happy. O Saviour, please teach me how one can be liberated.*

śrī bhagavan uvāca

śṛṇu tārksya pravakṣyāmi yanmām tvā paripṛcchasi |  
yasya śravaṇamātreṇa sāsārān mucyate naraḥ || 2.49.5 ||

The blessed Lord said;

*Listen, O Garuda, and I shall tell you all that you have enquired, by listening attentively one can attain liberation from the cycle of transmigration.*

asti devaḥ parabrahma-svarūpo niṣkalaḥ śivaḥ |  
sarvajñaḥ sarva-kartā ca sarveśo nirmalo'dvayaḥ || 2.49.6 ||

*There is an Absolute Reality, in the form of the Supreme Godhead, indivisible and Benevolent, Omniscient, the Supreme Cause, Lord of all, Pure, without a second,*

svayājyotiranādyanto nirvikāraḥ parātparaḥ |  
nirguṇaḥ saccidānandas-tadāśā jīvasājñakāḥ || 2.49.7 ||

*Self-luminous, without beginning or end, unchangeable, the highest of the high, devoid of all negative attributes, having existence, consciousness and bliss as His qualities. All creatures are His parts and parcels.*

anādyā vidyopahatā yathāgnau visphuliṅgakāḥ |  
dehādyupādhi sambhinnāste karmabhir anādibhiḥ || 2.49.8 ||

*Being handicapped by beginningless cognitive error; like sparks of fire, they separate into different bodies, through the effect of karma which has no beginning.*

sukha duḥkha pradaiḥ puṇya pāpa rūpair niyantritāḥ |  
tattaj-jātiyutā deham āyur-bhogañca karmajam || 2.49.9 ||

*They are controlled by virtues and vices in the form of bliss and sorrow. Their bodies have different social functions, life-spans and enjoyment caused by their various previous karmas.*

pratijanma prapadyante teṣāmapī parā punaḥ |  
sasūkṣma liṅga śarīram āmokṣād akṣarā khaga || 2.49.10 ||

*Through every birth, O Garuda, the jivas maintain their subtle astral bodies (comprised of the emotions & mind) these remain until final liberation is attained.*

sthāvarāḥ kṛmayāścājāḥ pakṣiṇaḥ paśavo naraḥ |  
dhārmikā stridaśāstadvan mokṣiṇaśca yathā kramam || 2.49.11 ||

*The jivas evolve through births in insentient objects, in the bodies of insects, birds, animals, men women and deities but after obtaining Liberation do not again take birth in any material form.*

catur vidha śarīrāṇi dhṛtvā muktvā sahasraśaḥ |  
sukṛtānmā navo bhūtvā jñāni cen mokṣam āpnuyāt || 2.49.12 ||

*Passing through four types of bodies conditioned by their actions (karma) and leaving one body after the other; innumerable times, the jiva finally takes birth as a human being. Acquiring Spiritual Wisdom through merit from righteous actions, one attains liberation.*

caturśītilakṣeṣu śarīreṣu śarīriṇām |  
na mānuṣā vinānyatra tattvajñānantu labhyate || 49.13 ||

*In the eight million four hundred thousand (lower) births a jiva cannot acquire Wisdom and Discrimination, it is only in the human birth that this is possible.*

atra janma sahasrāṇāṃ sahasrair-api koṭibhiḥ |  
kadācil-labhate jantuḥ mānuṣyā puṇya-sañcayāt || 49.14 ||

*After millions of births a jiva may obtain a human form, due to the aggregate of merit accumulated in all the previous lives.*

sopāna bhūtā mokṣasya mānuṣyā prāpya durlabham |  
yastārayati nātmānā tasmāt pāpataro'tra kaḥ || 49.15 ||

*After obtaining this rare human form which is the stepping stone to Liberation; surely there is no greater sinner than one who does not pursue the spiritual path.*

naraḥ prāpyetarajanma labdhvā cendriya sauṣṭhavam |  
na vettyātma hitā yastu sa bhaved brahma-ghātaḥ || 49.16 ||

*Having been born in this most beautiful human form, one surely incurs the sin of spiritual suicide if one neglects one's spiritual progress.*

vinā dehena kasyāpi puruṣārtho na vidyate |  
tasmād dehā dhanā rakṣet puṇya karmāṇi sādhyet || 49.17 ||

*Without a human body it is impossible to obtain the Supreme Goal. One should therefore, be very cautious to guard this extremely precious body and to perform virtuous actions.*

rakṣecca sarvadātmānam ātmā sarvasya bhājanam |  
rakṣeṇa yatnamā tiṣṭhejjīvan bhadraṇi paśyati || 2.49.18 ||

*One should always protect one's body & mind which is the means of accomplishing everything. One should protect this body at all costs and do that which is conductive to general well-being.*

tād gopitam syād-dharma arthi dharmo jñānārthameva ca |  
jñānā tu dhyāna yogārthā acirāt pra-vimucyate || 2.49.21 ||

*The body is the means of practicing the Dharma, accumulating wealth and knowledge. Knowledge leads to meditation, meditation to unification with the Supreme; then is one quickly liberated.*

vyāghrīvāste jarā cāyuryāti bhinna ghaṭāmbuvat |  
nighnanti ripuvad rogāḥ tasmācchreyaḥ samabhyaset || 2.49.24 ||

*Old age stalks us like a tigress. Youth ebbs away like water from a leaking pot. Sickness enfeebles us like an enemy. Hence one should apply oneself to Dharma alone.*

yāvan-nāśrayate duḥkhā yāvan-nāyānti cāpadaḥ |  
yāvan-nendriya vaikalayā tāvac-chreyaḥ samabhyaset || 49.25 ||

*As long as one is free from sorrow, and not beset by misfortune, as long as one is free from infirmity and illness, one should practice Dharma.*

yāvat-tiṣṭhati deho'yā tāvat-tattvā samabhyaset |  
sandīpta kośabhavane kūpā khanati durmatih || 2.49.26 ||

*As long as the health is robust, one should exert oneself in the practice of the Dharma and discernment between the real and unreal. Only fools start digging a well when the house is on fire.*

kālo na jñāyate nānakāryaiḥ sāsāra-sābhavaiḥ |  
sukhā duḥkhā jano hanta na vetti hitā ātmanaḥ || 2.49.27 ||

*Time flies away while the foolish person is engrossed in mundane activities. Most people do not realize what is beneficial or harmful to them, they are unaware of their own real interest.*

jātān ārttān mṛtān āpaddhaṣṭān dṛṣṭvā ca duḥkhitān |  
loko mohasurām pītvā na bibheti kadācana || 2.49.28 ||

*Even after seeing (all around) the pangs of birth, the distressed, the dead, the fallen and the aggrieved, people do not fear, having drunk the wine of infatuation (with materialism).*

sampadaḥ svapna sākāśā yauvanā kusumopamam |  
taḍiccapalam āyuṣyā kasya syājñānato dhṛtiḥ || 2.49.29 ||

*Wealth is fleeting like a dream, youth is fading like a flower, age is fickle like the lightning. Knowing this who can entertain fortitude.*

śatā jīvitam atyalpā nidrā lasyaistad arddhakam |  
bālya roga jarā duḥkhair-alpā tad-api niṣphalam || 2.49.30 ||

*A life-span of a hundred years is too little (for fulfilling all our desires). Half of that is spent in sleep or idleness. Whatever is left is wasted due to childhood, disease, old age and misfortune.*

prārabdhavye nirud-yogī jāgartavye pra-suptakaḥ |  
viśvastaścabhayasthāne hā naraḥ ko na hanyate || 2.49.31 ||

*Alas! Is that person not dead; who is idle at a place of action, sleeps at a place of awakening and is complacent in a place of death?*

toya-phena same dehe jīvenākramya sāsthite |  
anityā prayasāvāse kathā tiṣṭhati nirbhayaḥ || 2.49.32 ||

*When the jīva inhabits the physical body which is (unsubstantial) like foam on the sea, when the company of the beloved is but temporary, how can a person remain indifferent?*

ahite hita-sājñāḥ syād-adhruve dhruva sājñakaḥ |  
anartho cārtha vijñānaḥ svamarthā yo na vetti saḥ || 2.49.33 ||

*One who does not know the Ultimate Reality; thinks that to be useful which is useless, considers the impermanent to be the permanent and as meaningful that which is meaningless.*

paśyann-api praskhalati śṛṅvann-api na budhyati |  
pathann-api na jānāti deva-māyā vimohitaḥ || 2.49.34 ||

*Being deluded by the illusion of materialism, one stumbles even while seeing, misunderstands even while hearing and misses the import even while reading.*

tan-nimajjaj-jagad-idā gambhīre kāla-sāgare |  
mṛtyu rogajarā grāhair-na kaścid-api budhyate || 2.49.35 ||

*Even when drowning in this ocean of Time, beset by sharks in the form of death, disease, and old age; one does not become mindful of reality.*

prati-kṣaṇa bhayā kālaḥ kṣīyamāṇo na lakṣyate |  
āma kūbha ivāmbhaḥstho viśīrṇo na vibhāvyaḥ || 2.49.36 ||

*One is not mindful that time is slipping away at every moment, one is not mindful of impermanence as a pot of unbaked clay lying in water does not appear to be unsubstantial.*

yujiyate veṣṭanā vāyor-ākāśasya ca khaṇḍanam |  
grathanañca taraṅgāṇām āṣṭhā nāyuṣi yujiyate || 2.49.37 ||

*It may be possible to wrap the mind up, to tear the ether, or to knot the waves; but it is not possible to perpetuate one's existence (in this world).*

prthivī dahyate yena meruś-cāpi viśīryate |  
śuśyate sāgara jalā śarīrasya ca kā kathā || 2.49.38 ||

*(Forested) land turns into desert, even the lofty mount Meru will one day be eroded away, even the deep water of the ocean will dry up, what then can be said of this insignificant body?*

apatyā me kalatrā me dhanā me bāndhavāśca me |  
jalpan tamiti marttyājā hanti kālavṛko balāt || 2.49.39 ||

*“This child is mine, this spouse is mine, all this wealth, these relatives and friends all these belong to me”! Even while thinking thus; one is snatched by Time ; like a wolf seizing a goat.*

idā kṛtam-idā kāryam idam-anyat-kṛtākṛtam |  
evam-īhā-samāyuktā kṛtāntaḥ kurute vaśam || 2.49.40 ||

*“This I have achieved, this I will achieve, this project has almost been accomplished”; — even while thus aspiring, one is taken by the god-of-death.*

śvaḥ kāryam-adya kurvīta pūrvāhṇe cāparāhṇikam |  
na hi mṛtyuḥ pratīkṣet kṛtā vāpyatha vā'kṛtam || 2.49.41 ||

*One should do today what one plans for tomorrow, in the fore-noon what is planned for the afternoon — for Death will not wait for one to complete the projects one sets for oneself.*

tṛṣṇā sūcīvi nirbhinnā siktā viṣaya sarpiṣā |  
rāga-dveṣānale pakvā mṛtyur-aśnati mānavam || 2.49.43 ||

*Skewered on the spit of craving, basted in the oil of passion, roasted in the fire of attraction and aversion, humans are eaten up by Death.*

bālāṃśca yauvana-sthāṃśca vṛddhān garbha-gatān-api |  
sarvā nāviśate mṛtyuḥ evam bhūtam-idam jagat || 2.49.44 ||

*Death takes away even children, young people, the aged and even those in the womb — everything is overcome by Death, such is this world.*

svadeham-api jīvo'yā muktvā yāti yamālayam |  
strī mātr̥ pitr̥ putrādi sambandhaḥ kena hetunā || 2.49.45 ||

*Every jiva is separated from its own body and goes to the realm of Death, what permanence then is there, in relationships of spouse, mother, father, offspring and other relatives?*

duḥkha-mūlā hi sāsāraḥ sa yasyāsti na duḥkhiṭaḥ |  
tasya tyāgaḥ kṛto yena sa sukhī nāparaḥ kvacit || 2.49.46 ||

*This world has suffering as its base, there is no creature that is free from suffering. Whoever renounces this material world will have joy, there is no other way.*

prabhavā sarva duḥkhānām ālayā sarva āpadām |  
āśrayā sarva pāpānām sāsārā varjayet kṣṇāt || 2.49.47 ||

*This world is controlled by suffering, it is the abode of misfortune it is the field of wrong & misguided actions, therefore should one renounce it immediately.*

māmsa lubdho yathā matsyo loh-aśāṅkū na paśyati |  
sukha-lubdhas tathā dehī yamavādhām na paśyati || 2.49.51 ||

*Just as the fish tempted by the bait does not see the barbed hook, so also do those who are engrossed in sense gratification not anticipate the torment of Death.*

hitāhitā na jānanto nityam-unmārga-gāmiṇaḥ |  
kuḥṣi-pūrṇa niṣṭhā ye te narā nārakāḥ khaga || 2.49.52 ||

*Those travelling on the wrong path do not distinguish between that which is beneficial and that which is not. Those engaged only in self-gratification deserve suffering, O Garuda.*

nidrābhī maithunāhārāḥ sarveṣāṃ prāṇinām samāḥ |  
jñānavān mānavaḥ prokto jñāna-hīnaḥ paśuḥ smṛtaḥ || 2.49.53 ||

*Sleep, defence, eating and sex are common in all creatures. One who possesses wisdom is human, and one devoid of it is an animal.*

prabhāte mala mūtrābhyāṃ kṣuttr̥nbhyāṃ madhyage ravau |  
rātrau madana nidrābhyāṃ bādhyante mūḍha mānavāḥ || 49.54 ||

*People are troubled in the morning by the calls of nature, by hunger and thirst at midday and by lust and sleep at night.*

svadeha dhana dārādi niratāḥ sarva jantavaḥ |  
jāyante ca mriyante ca hā hantājñāna mohitāḥ || 2.49.55 ||

*All people are obsessed with their bodies, their wealth, their spouses etc. Alas remaining thus infatuated & deluded by materialism they are born again and again.*

satsaṅgaśca vivekaśca nirmalā nayana dvayam |  
yasya nāsti naraḥ so'ndhaḥ kathā na syād-amārga-gaḥ || 2.49.57 ||

*Association with the virtuous and discernment between the beneficial and non-beneficial are the two clear eyes. Whoever lacks them is blind and will certainly stray from the path of Dharma.*

sva sva varṇāśram-ācāra niratāḥ sarva mānavāḥ |  
na jānanti parā dharmā vṛthā naśyanti dāmbhikāḥ || 2.49.58 ||

*People are completely obsessed with their own mundane affairs, with their professions or their various stages of life. Being Ignorant of true Dharma, filled with vainglory & living in vain they perish.*

nāma mātrena santuṣṭāḥ karma-kāṇḍa-ratā narāḥ |  
mantroccāraṇa homādyair bhrāmitāḥ kratu-vistaraiḥ || 2.49.60 ||

*The Hypocrites are satisfied by performing rituals in name alone. Being misguided they perform empty rituals and make an ostentatious show of piety for their own glorification.*

eka bhuktopavāsādyair niryamaiḥ kāya-śoṣaṇaiḥ |  
mūḍhāḥ parokṣam icchanti mama māyā vimohitāḥ || 2.49.61 ||

*Some other fools think they can obtain the Supreme Goal by torturing their bodies with fasts and self-imposed restrictions, thus are they deluded by the material world.*

jaṭābhārājīnair yuktā dāmbhikā veṣa-dhāriṇaḥ |  
bhramanti jñānival-loke bhrāmayanti janān-api || 2.49.63 ||

*There are many imposters who pretend to be Enlightened. They disguise themselves with religious garb, with matted hair and deer skins, they move about deceiving & cheating people.*

sāsārāja sukhāsaktā brahmajño'smīti vādinam |  
karma brahmobhaya bhraṣṭā tā tyajed antyajā yathā || 2.49.64 ||

*The fraudulent rascal who takes delight in material pleasures but pretends to be spiritually enlightened; is deprived of both material success and the knowledge of God. Such a person should be avoided like an outcaste.*

gṛhāraṇya samā loke gata-vrīḍā digambarāḥ |  
caranti garddabhādyāśca viraktāste bhavanti kim || 2.49.65 ||

*Alike at home and in the forest, naked and shameless, the donkeys and others, move about here and there. Are they considered as liberated through their [apparent] non-attachment?*

mṛdbhasmoddhṛlanād eva muktāḥ syur-yadi mānavāḥ |  
mṛdbhasma-vāsī nityā śvā sa kī mukto bhaviṣyati || 2.49.66 ||

*If one can be Liberated by smearing oneself with mud and ash, will those creatures that dwell in mud and ash like dogs attain Liberation?*

trṇa parṇodakāhārāḥ satatā vanavāsinaḥ |  
jambūkākhumṛgādyāśca tāpasāste bhavanti kim || 2.49.67 ||

*If by being a vegetarian one can attain beatitude, then what of forest creatures, like jackals, mice and deer that live on grass, leaves and water. Are they also considered to be ascetics?*

tasmān-nityādikā karma loka rañjana kārakam |  
mokṣasya kāraṇā sāksāt tattvajñāna khageśvara || 2.49.70 ||

*Therefor people may be content with their own routines, but these will only further their own sense-gratification. The only way to Liberation is through the knowledge of the Truth, O Garuda.*

vedāgama purāṇajñāḥ paramārthā na vetti yaḥ |  
viḍambakasya tasyaiva tat sarvā kāka-bhāṣitam || 2.49.73 ||

*A person well versed in the text of all the scriptures but ignorant of the Highest Truth is an imposter whose utterances resemble the cawing of a crow.*

idā jñānam idā jñeyam iti cintā samākulāḥ |  
paṭhantyaharniśā śāstrā para-tattva parān-mukhāḥ || 2.49.74 ||

*Those who are concerned about the source of the universe and the nature of material objects, take recourse to study of science which they pursue by day and night, but they turn away from the highest Truth.*



anyathā paramā tattvā janāḥ kliśyanti cānyathā |  
anyathā śāstra sadbhāvo vyākhyāṃ kurvanti cānyathā || 2.49.76 ||

*Reality is not what it seems, and people suffer due unpercieved causes. The meaning of the scriptures is obscure, and people discourse on unbeneficial topics.*

kathayanty-unmanī-bhāvā svayā nānubhavanti ca |  
ahaṅkārastāḥ kecid upadeśādi varjitāḥ || 2.49.77 ||

*Some egoistic people devoid of initiation and without direct empirical experience, self-interpret the scriptures; which they do not rightly understand.*

śiro vahati puṣpāṇi gandhā jānāti nāsikā |  
paṭhanti veda śāstrāṇi durlabho bhāvabodhakaḥ || 2.49.79 ||

*The flowers which adorn the head, are smelt by the nose. People study scriptures, but (without a guru) it is very difficult to understand the essential meaning.*

tattvam ātmasthamajñātvā mūḍhaḥ śāstreṣu muhyati |  
gopaḥ kaksāgatec-chāge kūpā paśyati durmatiḥ || 2.49.80 ||

*Not realizing that the Truth is within one. A fool is beguiled by (self study of) the scriptures. While the goat stands in the shed the shepherd seeks for it in the well in vain.*

prajñā-hīnasya paṭhanā yathāndhasya ca darpaṇam |  
ataḥ prajñāvatāṃ śāstrā tattvajñānasya lakṣaṇam || 2.49.82 ||

*For the un-realized person the self-study of scriptures is useless — like a mirror to the blind. But for the Self-realized person the same is the means of true knowledge.*

anekāni ca śāstrāṇi svalpāyur vighna koṭayaḥ |  
tasmāt sārā vijānīyāt kṣīrā hāsa ivāmbhasi || 2.49.84 ||

*Scriptures are many, life is short. Obstacles come in battalions. One should discriminate between that which is true and that which is false like a swan separating milk from water.*

na vedādhyāyanān-muktiḥ na śāstra paṭhanād-āpi |  
jñānād-eva hi kaivalyā nānyathā vinatātmaja || 2.49.87 ||

*One cannot obtain Liberation by simply chanting Vedas nor by self-study of the Scriptures. Liberation comes from the dawning of pure wisdom alone, not otherwise O Garuda.*

nāśramaḥ kāraṇā muktiḥ darśanāni na kāraṇam |  
tathaiiva sarva karmāṇi jñānam eva hi kāraṇam || 2.49.88 ||

*Simply following the duties prescribed for a certain stage in life is not conducive to Liberation; nor the study of a particular system of philosophy, nor the mindless practice of rituals, Wisdom alone is conducive to Liberation.*

muktidā guru-vāgekā vidyāḥ sarvā viḍambikāḥ |  
śāstra bhāra-sahasreṣu hyekā saṭ-jīvanā param || 2.49.89 ||

*It is by instruction from the Guru alone, that one can attain realization. All (book-learned) knowledge is vain. Among thousands of scriptural verses the word of the Guru alone is productive [of true knowledge].*

āgamoktā vivekotthā dvidhā jñānā pracakṣate |  
śabda-brahmāgama-mayā parā brahma vivekajam || 2.49.91 ||

*There are two types of Spiritual Knowledge; one arising from the study of scripture — known as Shabda Brahman. The other arising from contemplation and discernment known as Parabrahman.*

dve pade bandha mokṣāya na mameti mameti ca |  
mameti badhyate jantuḥ na mameti pramucyate || 2.49.93 ||

*Two words — “mine” (mama) and “not mine” (na mama) signify bondage and release. By possessiveness is one bound (to the wheel of rebirth) and by non-possessiveness is one Liberated.*

tat karma yan-na bandhāya sā vidyā yā vimuktidā |  
āyāsāyā parā karma vidyāyā śilpanai puṇam || 2.49.94 ||

*Right Action is that which does not bind one — through the renunciation of the fruits thereof. Right Knowledge is of the Ultimate Reality, it is that which gives liberation.*

yāvat karmāṇi dīpyante yāvat sāsāra vāsanā |  
yāvad-indriya cāpalyā tāvat tattva kathā kutaḥ || 2.49.95 ||

*As long as engagement in mundane activities yields it's petty enjoyment, as long as one pursues the fulfillment of desires, as long as one is enamoured of sense gratification, there is little interest in talk of the Ultimate Truth.*

yāvad-dehābhimānaśca mamatā yāvad-eva hi |  
yāvat prayatna vego'sti yāvat saṅkalpa kalpanā || 2.49.96 ||

*As long as one is obsessed with one's physical appearance, as long as one is attached to material possessions, as long as one strives to fulfill material goals, as long as one is engaged in formulating happiness projects,*

yāvan-no manasaḥ sthairyā na yāvac-chāstra cintanam |  
yāvan-na guru kāruṇyā tāvat tattva kathā kutaḥ || 2.49.97 ||

*As long as the mind is unsteady, as long as one does not meditate upon the import of the Scripture, as long as one is devoid of the blessing of the Guru, there is little interest in talk of Ultimate Reality.*

tāvat tapo vratā tīrthā japa homārcanādikam |  
veda śāstrāgama kathā yāvat tattvā na vindati || 2.49.98 ||

*Penances, vows, pilgrimage, prayers, sacrifice, worship, scriptural study and discussion on scriptural injunctions are only meaningful when one is mindful of the Ultimate Reality.*

tasmāt jñānenātma tattvā vijñeyā śrī guror-mukhāt |  
sukhena mucyate jantuḥ ghora sāsāra bandhanāt || 2.49.101 ||

*Therefore one should obtain the True Knowledge of the Atman from a worthy preceptor. From following the teaching of a Guru, one may easily attain liberation from this awesome ocean of rebirth.*

tattva jñāsyāntimā kṛtyā śṛṇu vakṣyāmi te'dhunā |  
yena mokṣam avāpnoti brahma nirvāṇa sājñakam || 2.49.102 ||

*Now listen, and I shall teach you the final conclusion of Knowledge of the Ultimate Reality. By knowing this one can attain the final goal which is known as the Great Liberation — Brahma Nirvana.*

nirmāna mohā jitasāṅgadoṣā  
adhyātma nitya vinivṛtta kāmāḥ |  
dvandvair-vimuktāḥ sukha duḥkha sājñaiḥ  
gacchanty-amūḍhāḥ padam-avyayā tat || 2.49.110 ||

*Those who are free from egoism and delusion, who are unattached to material possessions, who are constantly mindful of their true spiritual identity as a Self (and not the body), who are free from material desires and their results of elation and dejection, such enlightened beings attain that imperishable Supreme State.*

jñāna-hrade satya-jale rāga-dveṣa malāpahe |  
yaḥ snāti mānase tīrthe sa vai mokṣam-avāpnuyāt || 2.49.111 ||

*That person attains the Great Liberation who, in the expanse of the mind, bathes in the holy lake of the Wisdom in the water of Supreme Truth which removes the impurity of attraction and repulsion (to material objects).*

prauḍhavair-āgyamāsthāya bhajate mām ananya bhāk |  
pūrṇa dṛṣṭiḥ prasannātmā sa vai mokṣam avāpnuyāt || 2.49.112 ||

*Whosoever contemplates upon Me with full devotion, with matured aversion to rebirth, who has attained complete awareness of their true identity and whose mind is full of peace can obtain the Great Liberation.*

mokṣā gacchanti tattvajñā dhārmikāḥ svargatī narāḥ |  
pāpino durgatī yānti sāsaranti khagādayaḥ || 2.49.116 ||

*Those who have realized their true Self can obtain the Great Liberation, those who resort to rituals and pious activities can attain a heavenly state, those who are committed to the performance of sinful activities go to hell. Others [the mediocre] rotate upon the wheel of birth and death.*

## Nature of God

śrī kṛṣṇa uvāca;

mūla rūpo hyato jñeyo viṣṇutvād viṣṇur avyayaḥ |  
avatāram idā proktā pūrṇatvād eva suvrata || 3.2.6 ||

*The eternal indeclinable Vishnu is the root form (of the Supreme Godhead). Because of His all-pervading nature this incarnation (Krishna) is known as complete.*

kāla koṭi vihīnatvā kālān-antya vidurbudhāḥ |  
deśa koṭi vihīnatvā deśān-antya vidurbudhāḥ || 3.3.48 ||

*None but the Lord is eternal in respect of time, space and quality. The wise define the eternity of time as time devoid of measurement, the eternity of space as space devoid of measurement,*

guṇānām aprameyatve guṇān-antya vidurbudhāḥ |  
anantya trividhā nityā harer-nānyasya kasyacit || 3.3.49 ||

*The eternity of attribute is defined as possessing attributes that are impossible to enumerate. None but the Lord is thus eternal in respect of these three factors.*

tasya sarva svarūpeṣu cānantya tu tri-lakṣaṇam |  
tathāpi deśatasya paricchedopi yujyate || 3.3.50 ||

*Thus the Lord's forms are characterized by His threefold eternity. Although all-pervasive, He can still become circumscribed by space.*

paricchedas tathā vyāpter-eka rūpepi yujyate |  
tasyā cīntyād bhutaiśvarya vyavahārārtham eva ca || 3.3.51 ||

*Maintaining His integral Unity, His inconceivable and wondrous powers are manifested in the forms He takes for the welfare of all beings.*

guṇataḥ kālataścaiva paricchedo na kutrācit |  
vyāptatvā deśato hyasti sarva bhūteṣu yady-api || 3.3.52 ||

*In respect of attributes and time He is never limited. Although situated within all beings, He is still omnipresent.*

na ca bhedaḥ kvacit tasya hyaṇumātrapi yujyate |  
tathāpi vidyateṇutvā tasmād-aiśvarya yogataḥ || 3.3.53 ||

*There is no difference even in the minutest form of the Lord. Still He is divisible in subtle parts. Such is the virtue of His Supreme Power.*

tasmād viddhyavatārārthā vyāptatvā cāpi bhānyate |  
yattasya vyāpakā rūpā parā nārāyaṇā viduḥ || 3.3.54 ||

*Therefore know O Garuda that although He incarnates in particular forms, as it were, His all-pervasive form which is called Narayana is not compromised.*

## Devotion to Narayana

sūta uvāca

ālokya sarva śāstrābhi-vicārya ca punaḥ punaḥ |  
idam ekā suniṣyannā dhyeyo nārāyaṇaḥ sadā || 1.230.1 ||

Suta said;

*After studying all the sacred literature and deliberating frequently, the only conclusion arrived at is that Narayana is worthy of constant contemplation.*

kī tasya dānaiḥ kī tīrthaiḥ kī tapobhiḥ kim adhvaraiḥ |  
yo nityā dhyāyet devā nārāyaṇam ananyadhīḥ || 1.230.2 ||

*Of what use is charity, pilgrimages, austerities and Vedic sacrifices to a person who meditates upon Lord Narayana constantly with single-minded devotion?*

prāyaścittānya śeṣāni tapaḥ karmāni yāni vai |  
viddhi teṣām aśeṣāṇām kṛṣṇa anusmaraṇā param || 1.230.4 ||

*Constant mindfulness of Lord Krishna is far superior to all kinds of expiatory rites, practices of austerities and rituals.*

uttiṣṭhan-nipatan viṣṇū pralapan viviśāstathā |  
bhañjātjāgraṇca govindā mādhavā yaśca sāsmaret || 1.230.8 ||

*It is the duty of the devotee to be mindful of Govinda the Lord of Lakshmi, whether standing, falling, chatting, entering, taking food or upon waking from sleep.*

dhyānam-eva paro dharma dhyānam-eva parā tapaḥ |  
dhyānam-eva parā śaucā tasmād-dhyāna paro bhavet || 1.230.10 ||

*Meditation is the greatest virtue, meditation is the greatest penance, meditation is the greatest purificatory rite, therefore should one devote oneself to meditation.*

nāsti viṣṇoḥ parā dhyeyā tapo nānaśanāt param |  
tasmāt pradhānam atroktā vāsudevasya cintanam || 1.230.11 ||

*There is no greater object of meditation than the form of Vishnu. There is no greater penance than fasting, Even more important is the constant mindfulness of Vasudeva.*

pramādāt kurvatām karma pracyavetādhvareṣu yat |  
smaraṇād eva tad viṣṇoḥ sāvṛṇā syāditi śrutiḥ || 1.230.13 ||

*If inadvertently a slip occurs while one is performing a sacrifice, a mere recalling to mind of Vishnu fills the void. This is what is taught by the Vedas.*

sā hanistan mahācchidrā sā cārtha jaḍamūktā |  
yan-muhūrtā kṣaṇo vāpi vāsudevo na cintyate || 1.230.22 ||

*If an hour or a moment passes without mindfulness of Vasudeva, it is a great loss, a great void, a blunder, a sluggishness, a dumb-foundedness.*

vāsudeva taruc-chāyā nātiśītāti tāpadā |  
naraka dvāra śamanī sā kim arthā na sevyate || 1.230.31 ||

*Why do people not seek refuge under the shade of the tree Vasudeva which accords no excessive coolness or excessive heat, and which closes the gate to hell.*

tajjñānā yatra govindaḥ sā kathā yatra keśavaḥ |  
tat karma yat-tadārthāya kim anyair-bahubhāṣitaiḥ || 1.230.38 ||

*That is perfect knowledge through which one learns about the Lord of the Universe. That is true holy discourse where Kesava is discussed. That is the holy rite which is performed for His sake. Of what use are other long-winded discussions?*

yat-kiñcit kurute karma puruṣaḥ sādhu-asādhu va |  
sarvā nārāyaṇe nyasya kurvan-napi na limpanti || 1.230.42 ||

*Whatever a person does, whether it be skillful or unskillful, the fruit thereof should always be dedicated to Narayana —one is then not affected by the positive or negative reactions.*

agni-kāryā japaḥ snānā viṣṇor-dhyānaṅca pūjanam |  
gantū duḥkhodadhe kuryurye ca tatra taranti te || 1.230.45 ||

*Those who wish to cross this ocean of misery should use as the means, the practice of Homa, japa, ablution, meditation and adoration of Vishnu. These are certain to help.*

rāṣṭrasya śaraṇā rājā pitaro bālakasya ca |  
dharmaśca sarva martyānām sarvasya śaraṇā hariḥ || 1.230.46 ||

*The Government is the refuge of the nation, the parents that of the child, Dharma is the refuge of those seeking gain, and the Lord Hari is the refuge of all beings.*

śūdrā vā bhagavad bhaktā niśādā śvapā tathā |  
dvija jāti samā manyu na yāti narakā naraḥ || 1.230.49 ||

*A devotee of the Lord, whether a Sudra, a Nishada, a Chandala or a Brahmin are all equal to one another. None of them are destined to go to purgatory.*



## Bhishma's Discourses on Heaven and Purgatory<sup>3</sup>

### Anuśāsana Parva 23: 59 – 101

bhīṣma uvāca

nirayaṃ yena gacchanti svargaṃ caiva hi tacchṛṇu || 59 ||

*Listen now to me as I expound what those acts are that lead to purgatory or heaven.*

gurvarthaṃ vābhayārthaṃ vā varjayitvā yudhiṣṭhira |  
ye'nṛtaṃ kathayanti sma te vai nirayagāmiṇaḥ || 60 ||

*They, that speak an untruth on occasions other than those when such untruth is needed for serving the purpose of the preceptor or for giving the assurance of safety to a person in fear of his life, will visit purgatory.<sup>4</sup>*

paradārābhihartāraḥ paradārābhimarśiṇaḥ |  
paradāraprayoktāraste vai niraya-gāmiṇaḥ || 61 ||

*They who ravish other people's spouses, or have sexual intercourse with them, or assist at such acts of delinquency, will visit purgatory.*

ye parasvāpahartāraḥ parasvānām ca nāśakāḥ |  
sūcakāśca pareṣām ye te vai niraya-gāmiṇaḥ || 62 ||

*They who rob others of their property or destroy the wealth and possessions of other people, or proclaim the faults of other people, will visit purgatory.*

prapāṇām ca sabhānām ca saṅkramāṇām ca bhārata |  
agārāṇām ca bhettāro narā nirayagāmiṇaḥ || 63 ||

*They who destroy the water-containers which are used by cattle for quenching thirst, or damage buildings used for purposes of public meetings, or destroy bridges and causeways, and destroy houses used for purposes of habitation, will visit purgatory.*

anāthām pramadām bālām vṛddhām bhītām tapasvinīm |  
vañcayanti narā ye ca te vai nirayagāmiṇaḥ || 64 ||

*They who deceive and cheat helpless women, or girls, or aged dames, or such women as have been frightened or female ascetics, will visit purgatory.*

vṛtticchedaṃ ḡhacchedaṃ dāra-cchedaṃ ca bhārata |  
mitra-cchedaṃ tathāśāyāste vai nirayagāmiṇaḥ || 65 ||

*They who destroy the means of other people's living, and who destroy the habitations of others, they who destroy marriages, they who sow dissensions among friends, and they who destroy the hopes of other people, will visit purgatory.*

<sup>3</sup> Purgatory is the better translation of "Naraka" than hell. Purgatory is a temporary state of Karmic purgation and there is no concept in Hinduism of eternal damnation and torture in "hell".

<sup>4</sup> The two exceptions have been much discussed in moral philosophy. All ethicists agree that a lie may sometimes be honourable. For example, a lie for saving life and even property under certain circumstances, and for retain honour, is acceptable. The owner also who hides his property from robbers, cannot be regarded as acting dishonourably.

sūcakāḥ sandhibhettāraḥ paravṛtṭyupajīvakāḥ |  
akṛtajñāśca mitrāṇām te vai nirayagāmināḥ || 66 ||

*They who proclaim the faults of others, they who break down bridges<sup>5</sup>, they who live by following vocations laid down for other people, and they who are ungrateful to friends for services received, will visit purgatory.*

pāṣaṇḍā dūṣakāścaiva samayānām ca dūṣakāḥ |  
ye pratyavasitāścaiva te vai niraya-gāmināḥ || 67 ||

*Hypocrites and evil doers, the breakers of agreements, and they who fall from grace through sin, will visit purgatory.*

dyūta-saṁvyavahārāśca niṣparīkṣāśca mānavāḥ |  
prāṇihimsāpravṛttāśca te vai niraya-gāmināḥ ||

*They who are addicted to gambling, those men who lack any scruples, and they who are given to slaughter of living creatures, will visit purgatory.<sup>6</sup>*

kṛtāsaṁ kṛta-nirveśaṁ kṛta-bhaktaṁ kṛtāśramam |  
bhedairye vyapakarṣanti te vai niraya-gāmināḥ || 68 ||

*They who give false hope, they who deceive wage-earners and those trusting ones who have exerted great effort [in working for one], will visit purgatory.*

paryaśnanti ca ye dārān agni bhrṭyātithīms tathā |  
utsanna pitṛ devejyāste vai niraya-gāmināḥ || 69 ||

*They who themselves eat without offering portions thereof to their spouse or their sacred fires or their servants or their guests, and they who abstain from performing the rites laid down in the scriptures for honouring the Pitris and deities, will visit purgatory.*

veda-vikrayiṇāścaiva vedānām caiva dūṣakāḥ |  
vedānām lekhakāścaiva te vai niraya-gāmināḥ || 70 ||

*They who sell the Vedas, they who neglect the teaching of the Vedas, and they who reduce the Vedas into writing, all will visit purgatory.<sup>7</sup>*

cāturāśramyabāhyāśca śrutibāhyāśca ye narāḥ |  
vikarmabhiśca jīvanti te vai niraya-gāmināḥ || 71 ||

*They who are out of the pale of the four well-known modes of life<sup>8</sup>, they who betake themselves to practices interdicted by the Srutis and the scriptures, and they who make a living by criminal activities will visit purgatory.*

<sup>5</sup> Since bridges and causeways have already been mentioned in verse 5 this reference to "bridges" can be taken metaphorically as destroying the means of success of others.

<sup>6</sup> This verse is found only in the Southern recension.

<sup>7</sup> By selling the Vedas is meant the charging of fees for teaching them. As regards the Vedas, the injunction in the scriptures is to commit them to memory and impart them from mouth to mouth. Hence to reduce them into writing was regarded as a transgression.

<sup>8</sup> The four "modes of life" are:— student, householder, forest hermit and renunciate monk. Originally these were four vocations one could choose from after completing one's studentship i.e. remaining a perpetual student or choosing one of the other three. In the later Dharma Shastras these became sequential stages for all those initiated with the sacred thread i.e. *dvijas*.

keśa vikrayikā rājan viṣa vikrayikāśca ye |  
kṣīravikrayikāścaiva te vai niraya-gāmiṇaḥ || 72 ||

*They who live by selling hair, they who subsist by selling poisons, and they who live by selling milk<sup>9</sup>, will visit purgatory.*

brāhmaṇānām gavām caiva kanyānām ca yudhiṣṭhira |  
ye'ntaraṁ yānti kāryeṣu te vai niraya-gāmiṇaḥ || 73 ||

*They, O Yudhisthira, who put obstacles in the path of priests and cattle and maidens, have to sink in hell – these obstructors of others will surely visit purgatory.*

Śastra-vikrayakāścaiva kartāraśca yudhiṣṭhira |  
śalyānām dhanuṣām caiva te vai niraya-gāmiṇaḥ || 74 ||

*They who sell weapons, they who forge weapons, they who make arrows, and they who make bows, will visit purgatory O Yudhisthira.*

śalyairvā śaṅkubhirvāpi śvabhairvā bharatarṣabha |  
ye mārgam anurundhanti te vai niraya-gāmiṇaḥ || 75 ||

*O Best of the Bharatas! Those who obstruct paths and roads with stones, spikes and holes will visit purgatory.*

upādhyāyāṁśca bhṛtyāṁśca bhaktāṁśca bharatarṣabha |  
ye tyajantyasamarthāṁstāmste vai niraya-gāmiṇaḥ || 76 ||

*They who abandon and cast off preceptors and servants and loyal followers without any offence, will visit purgatory.*

aprāpta damakāścaiva nāsānām vedhakās tathā |  
bandhakāśca paśūnām ye te vai niraya-gāmiṇaḥ || 77 ||

*They who set bullocks to work while still young, or who bore the noses of bullocks [and put rings in them], and they who keep animals always tethered will visit purgatory.*

agoptāraścaladrvyā baliṣadbhāga tatparāḥ |  
samarthāścāpyadātāraste vai niraya-gāmiṇaḥ || 78 ||

*Those kings that do not protect their subjects while forcibly taking taxes - 1/6<sup>th</sup> of their produce, and they though able and possessed of resources, abstain from making gifts, will visit purgatory.*

kṣāntāndāntāms tathā prājñān dīrgha kālāṁ sahoṣitān |  
tyajanti kṛtakṛtyā ye te vai niraya-gāmiṇaḥ || 79 ||

*They who abandon persons that are imbued with forgiveness and self-restraint and wisdom, or those with whom they have associated for many years, when these are no longer of service to them, will visit purgatory.*

bālānām atha vṛddhānām dāsānām caiva ye narāḥ |  
adattvā bhakṣayantyagre te vai niraya-gāmiṇaḥ || 80 ||

*Those men who themselves eat before first feeding children, the aged and servants, will surely visit purgatory.<sup>10</sup>*

<sup>9</sup> The selling of milk products is forbidden to priests because it always entails some cruelty to the animals involved and Brahmins are theoretically devoted to the practice of non-injury (*ahimsa*). This prohibition does not apply to those born in the farming community.

<sup>10</sup> According to the Dharma Shastra, the householder should ensure that children, the aged, pregnant women, the invalids, the servants and hired workmen are fed first, before he himself takes his meals.



ete pūrva-rṣibhir dr̥ṣṭāḥ proktā niraya-gāmināḥ |  
bhāgīnaḥ svarga-lokasya vakṣyāmi bharatarṣabha || 81 ||

*All these people enumerated above have to spend some time in purgatory. Listen now to me, as I tell you who those people are that ascend to heaven.*

### Acts which lead to Heaven

sarveṣveva tu kāryeṣu daiva pūrveṣu bhārata |  
hanti putrān paśūn kṛtsnān brāhmaṇātikramaḥ kṛtāḥ || 82 ||

*The person who transgresses against a priest by impeding the performances of all such ceremonies in which the deities are adored, becomes afflicted with the loss of all his children and animals. (They who do not transgress against priests by obstructing their religious acts spend time in heaven).*

dānena tapasā caiva satyena ca yudhiṣṭhira |  
ye dharmam anuvartante te narāḥ svarga-gāmināḥ || 83 ||

*They who follow the duties as laid down in the scriptures for them and practise the virtues of charity, self-restraint and truthfulness, spend time in heaven.*

śuśrūṣābhīṣṭapobhīṣca śrutam ādāya bhārata |  
ye pratigraha niḥsnehās te narāḥ svarga-gāmināḥ || 84 ||

*They who having acquired knowledge by rendering obedient service to their gurus and observing austere penances, become reluctant to accept gifts, spend time in heaven.*

bhayāt pāpāt tathābādhād dāridryād vyādhi dharṣaṇāt |  
yat kṛte pratimucyante te narāḥ svarga-gāmināḥ || 85 ||

*They through whom other people are relieved and rescued from fear, sin and impediments, and who alleviate the poverty and the afflictions of disease of others will spend time in heaven.*

kṣamāvantaśca dhīrāśca dharmā kāryeṣu cotthitāḥ |  
maṅgalācārayuktāśca te narāḥ svarga-gāmināḥ || 86 ||

*Those who are imbued with a forgiving disposition, who are possessed of patience, who are prompt in performing all righteous acts, and who are of virtuous conduct, will spend time in heaven.*

nivṛttā madhu-mām̐sebhyaḥ paradārebhya eva ca |  
nivṛttāścaiva madyebhyaste narāḥ svarga-gāmināḥ || 87 ||

*Those who abstain from honey and meat, who abstain from sexual intercourse with the spouses of other people, and who abstain from wines and spirituous liquors, will spend time in heaven.*

āśramāṇāṃ ca kartāraḥ kulānāṃ caiva bhārata |  
deśānāṃ nagarāṇāṃ ca te narāḥ svarga-gāmināḥ || 88 ||

*Those that help in the establishment of ashrams for ascetics, who become founders of families, who open up new land for farming, and lay out towns and cities will spend time in heaven.*

vastrābharāṇa dātāro bhakṣa pānānadās tathā |  
kuṭumbānāṃ ca dātāste narāḥ svarga-gāmināḥ || 89 ||

*Those folks who give away cloths and ornaments, as also food and drink, and who help in marrying others, will spend time in heaven.<sup>11</sup>*

<sup>11</sup> The act of marrying poor girls off by paying all the expenses of the marriage, is regarded as an act of supreme righteousness. Of course, the couple should also be given sufficient resources to be able to set up viable home.

sarva himsā nivṛttāśca narāḥ sarva sahāśca ye |  
sarvasyāśraya bhūtāśca te narāḥ svarga-gāmināḥ || 90 ||

*Those that have abstained from all kinds of injury or harm to all creatures, who are capable of enduring anything, and who are a refuge of all creatures, will spend time in heaven.*

mātaram pitaram caiva śusrūṣanti jitendriyāḥ |  
bhrātrṇām caiva sasnehāste narāḥ svarga-gāmināḥ || 91 ||

*They who serve their fathers and mothers with humility, who have subjugated their senses, and who are affectionate towards their siblings, will spend time in heaven.*

ādhyāśca balavantaśca yauvanasthāśca bhārata |  
ye vai jitendriyā dhīrāste narāḥ svarga-gāmināḥ || 92 ||

*Those O Bharata who subjugate their senses, notwithstanding the fact of their being youthful, prosperous and powerful will spend time in heaven.*

aparāddheṣu sasnehā mṛdavo mitravatsalāḥ |  
ārādhanasukhāścāpi te narāḥ svarga-gāmināḥ || 93 ||

*Those that are kind towards even those that offend against them, that are mild of disposition, that have an affection for all, who are gentle, and that contribute to the happiness of others by rendering them every kind of service will spend time in heaven.*

sahasra pariveṣṭāras tathaiva ca sahasradāḥ |  
trātāraśca sahasrāṇām puruṣāḥ svarga-gāmināḥ || 94 ||

*Those that protect thousands of people, that make gifts to thousands of people, and that rescue thousands of people from distress, will spend time in heaven.*

suvarṇasya ca dātāro gavām ca bharatarṣabha |  
yānānām vāhanānām ca te narāḥ svarga-gāmināḥ || 95 ||

*Those men who make gifts of gold and of cattle, O Best of Bharatas, as also those who give away vehicles and animals, will spend time in heaven.*

vaivāhikānām kanyānām preṣyāṇām ca yudhiṣṭhira |  
dātāro vāsasām caiva te narāḥ svarga-gāmināḥ || 96 ||

*Those who make gifts of such articles as are needed in marriages, as also subsidising the service providers as well as the robes, will spend time in heaven.<sup>12</sup>*

vihārā vasathodyāna kūpārāma sabhā pradāḥ |  
vapraṇām caiva kartāraṣte narāḥ svarga-gāmināḥ || 97 ||

*Those who make gaming-houses and gardens and wells, resting houses and buildings for public meetings and tanks for enabling animals and people to quench their thirst, and fields for cultivation, will spend time in heaven.<sup>13</sup>*

niveśanānām kṣetrāṇām vasatīnām ca bhārata |  
dātāraḥ prārthitānām ca te narāḥ svarga-gāmināḥ || 98 ||

*Those who make gifts of (or endower) [public] buildings, arable land and homes to persons that solicit them, will spend time in heaven.*

rasānām atha bījānām dhānyānām ca yudhiṣṭhira |  
svayam utpādyā dātāraḥ puruṣāḥ svarga-gāmināḥ || 99 ||

<sup>12</sup> Articles needed in marriages are, of course, girls and ornaments

<sup>13</sup> *Vapra* has various meanings. Here it means a field. Large waste lands often require to be enclosed with ditches and causeways. Unless so reclaimed, they cannot be fit for cultivation.

*Those who having themselves manufactured juicy drinks of sweet taste and seeds, paddy or rice, make gifts of them to others will spend time in heaven.*

yasmin kasmin kule jātā bahu-putrāḥ śatāyuṣaḥ |  
sānukrośā jita-krodhāḥ puruṣāḥ svarga-gāmināḥ || 100 ||

*Those who being born in families high or low beget many children and live long lives practising compassion and keeping anger under complete subjection, will spend time in heaven.*

etad uktam amutrārthaṁ daivaṁ pitryaṁ ca bhārata |  
dharmādharmāu ca dānasya yathā pūrva ṛṣibhiḥ kṛtau || 101 ||

*I have thus expounded to you, what the rites are in honour of the deities and the Pitris which are performed by people for the sake of the other world, what the ordinances are in respect of making gifts, and what the views are of the Rishis of ancient times in respect of both the articles of gift and the manner of giving them.*

## POST SCRIPT

There is a didactic format in which the teaching is directed at three different levels of spiritual aspirants. Originally Hinduism was a guru-disciple transmission system and so this didactic format was not widely taught - but if you understand this format then everything becomes clear.

There are three types or levels of people who engage with religion and spirituality.

The majority are known as the **kaniṣṭha-adhikāris** - simple folk who are unschooled in lateral and critical thinking and constitute the masses. They are also known as the **paśus** - or “the herd” because they are motivated by the desire for reward and the fear of punishment (stick and carrot motivation).

The higher level is known the **madhyama-adhikāris** or **vīras** - these are the “heroes” who ask questions, discuss, argue and investigate, rationalise and want to discover the higher truths. They are a much smaller group.

The highest level is known as the **uttama-adhikāris** or the **siddhas** or **divyas** – this is a tiny group at the top of the pyramid who are enlightened, insightful and highly intelligent. They are the philosophers, the poets and the thinkers.

So in regard to heaven and purgatory there are also three levels of teaching we encounter.

1. There are real places in the universe to which one will go after death. To heaven if you have a surplus of good deeds and to purgatory if the balance is more weighted towards the bad deeds. Both states are temporary and after exhausting your merit and demerit you are both again on the earth to continue your transmigration. This teaching found in the Purāṇas is meant exclusively for the **kaniṣṭha adhikāris**.
2. Heaven and purgatory are states of mind and not real places. This is found in the higher secret teachings of the Yoga Vasiṣṭha and Ribhu Gita for example and is the teaching that is intended for the consumption of the **madhyama-adhikāris** or the **vīras**.

ye svargā narakābhogā yā janma maraṇaiṣaṇāḥ |  
sva-mano manane nedaṁ sa niṣpando’pi duḥkhadaḥ ||

*These creations, states of heaven and hell, birth, death and desire are due the mental creations of one’s own mind. That is the cause of suffering in this world. (Yoga Vasiṣṭha 4.13.13)*

deho’ham iti yad jñānam tadeva narakāṁ smṛtam |  
kāḷa-trayepi yan nāsti sarvam brahmaeti kevalam ||

*The notion that “I am the body” is verily to be considered as hell. In all three periods of time it is not. All is Brahman alone. (Ribhu Gita 8:34)*

sankalpa mātram narakam sankalpam svargam ityapi |  
sankalpam eva cinmātram sankalpam cātma-cintanam ||

*Thought alone is purgatory, heaven too is thought alone. Thought alone is consciousness and thought alone is contemplation of the self. (Ribhu Gita 8:79)*

indriyāṅyeva tat sarvaṁ yat svarga narakāvubhau |  
nigṛhīta viśṛṣṭāni svargāya narakāya ca ||

*The concept of heaven and hell are both dependent on our senses, when one is in control of one's senses then svarga is said to exist, lack of control is naraka. (Vyādha Gita 6.18)*

mūrkho dehādyaham buddhiḥ panthā mannigamaḥ smṛtaḥ |  
utpathaścitta vikṣepaḥ svargaḥ sattva guṇodayaḥ || 42 ||  
narakas tama unnāho bandhur gurur aham sakhe |  
gṛham śarīram mānuṣyam guṇādhyo hyādhyā ucyate || 43 ||

*A fool is someone who identifies with the body and merely one who is unlearned the right path is the path of renunciation which leads to Me and not those that lead to material ends. Heaven is the dawn of Sattva (the mode of goodness.) Hell is the predominance of the Tamas (mode of ignorance). The true relative is the guru who is Me, and the human body is one's home and not the house. (Bhagavatam 11:19)*

3. Then when the aspirants reach the highest level known as **Uttama-adhikāris** they they are taught that all **nāma-rūpa** – names and forms are false and the multiplicity of the manifest universe is māyā – a phantasmagoria with no substantive existence of its own and only the Supreme Consciousness – illumination and unbounded is real.

