Śrī Tattva-sandarbha

TEXT 1

krṣṇa-varnam tviṣākrṣṇam
sāṅgopāṅgāstra-pārsadam
yajñaiḥ sankirtana-prāyair
yajanti hi su-medhasah

“In the age of Kali intelligent persons perform congregational chanting to worship the incarnation of Godhead who constantly sings the names of Krṣṇa. Although His complexion is not blackish, He is Krṣṇa Himself. He is accompanied by His associates, servants, weapons, and confidential companions.”

Purport by Gopiparanadhana prabhu

Śrī Jiva Gosvāmī begins the mangalācarana of his Bhāgavata-sandarbha with this text from Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.5.32). The word mangala-ācarana literally means “enacting auspiciousness,” and this enactment is usually done poetically, by means of a sanctifying invocation. Traditionally in India authors were expected to start all their serious works with one or more verses of mangalācarana. The oft-cited reasons for doing so were that the invocation helps remove obstacles and assure the successful completion of one's book, and also that beginning one's work in this way conforms to the precedent set by cultured authorities (nirvighnāyai tat-pūrtaye šiṣṭācāra-pariprāpta...mangalam ācarati [Baladeva Vidyābhūṣana, Śūksma-tikā on Govinda-bhāṣya I.1.1]). Though it is undeniable that many inferior writers have followed the tradition with mediocre results, in the hands of a great author the mangalācarana can concisely summarize his whole message and immediately establish an elevated level of discourse.

Śrīla Krṣṇadāsa Kavirāja lists the purposes the mangalācāraṇa can serve after completing his own invocation at the start of Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta: :

se mangalācarana haya tri-vidha prakāra
vastu-nirdeśa, āśirvāda, namaskāra
“The mangalācarana involves three processes: defining the objective, offering benedictions, and offering obeisances” (Cc. Ādi 1.22). Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī has accomplished the first of these purposes in this opening verse of the Tattvasaṁdarbha, and in the following seven verses, which continue the mangalācarana, he will reiterate this purpose and also accomplish the other two.

By first citing a verse from Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam instead of following the general practice of composing a showcase verse of his own, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī turns our attention without undue formalities to the Bhāgavatam itself, the vastu (subject) of Śrī Bhāgavata-saṁdarbha. The Bhāgavatam is unique even among the eighteen major Purāṇas. It is more coherently organized than others, its style is more elegant, and more than any other Purāṇa it focuses on a single theme: the supremacy and all-attractiveness of svayam bhagavān, the original Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Each of the standard schools of Vaiṣṇavism implicitly trusts the Bhāgavatam and studies it regularly. The followers of Caitanya Mahāprabhu especially revere it as their primary scripture. Since Śrī Jīva was the protege of his uncles Rūpa and Sanātana, who were directly working under the personal instructions of Lord Caitanya, it was natural for Jīva to be imbued with an intimate affinity for Lord Caitanya and for His favorite source of inspiration, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.

Here at the beginning of the mangalācarana and throughout the Sandarbhās we find that Śrī Jīva forgoes opportunities to display his poetic eloquence. Such an encyclopedic work of systematic philosophy as this demands from its author a concise, straightforward presentation, and so in the Sandarbhās Śrī Jīva expresses himself tersely in prose, though he was certainly a brilliant poet, as anyone who has read his Gopāla-campū can attest.

Because the Sandarbhās are a commentary on Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, they inherit the Bhāgavatam’s own subject, namely the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa along with His avatāra expansions and generations of devotees. This additional vastu (substance) is also indicated in the first mangalācarana verse. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī has taken the verse from the section of the Bhāgavatam’s Eleventh Canto recounting a long conversation between King Nimi and the nine Yogendra sages that ranges over a number of theological topics. Nimi asked Yogendra Karabhājana about the Supreme Lord’s yuga-avatāras, His special incarnations who appear once in each age to teach human society the particular method of spiritual development appropriate for that age. (The general Purānic scheme of ages measures the current age, Kali-yuga, as lasting 432,000 years, five thousand of which have passed; preceding it were three other yugas—Satya, Tretā, and Dvāpara—the first four times as long as Kali, the second three times as long, and the third twice as long.) Karabhājana said that the yuga-avatāra in Satya-yuga has a white complexion, dresses as a brahmacāri celibate student, is known by the names Hamsa, Vaikuntha, and others, and teaches meditational devotion. Karabhājana explained that the Tretā-yuga avatāra has a red complexion, is known by the names Viṣṇu, Yajña, and others, and teaches the rituals of Vedic fire sacrifice as the method of devotional service appropriate for that age.
Describing the avatāra during the Dvāpara Age, Karabhājana said that He has a
dark blue complexion, wears yellow garments, is addressed in prayer as Vāsudeva,
Sankarsana, Pradyumna, and Aniruddha, and teaches worship of the Supreme
througby the combined methods of the Vedas and tantras. Though Karbhājana
does not explicitly identify this yuga-avatāra, one can easily recognize Him to be
Krśna, the son of Vāsudeva. Then, reaching the point of our maṅgalācarana verse,
Karbhhājana introduces it by stating,

\[ \text{iti dvāpara urviśa/ stuvanti jagad-īśvaram} \]
\[ \text{nānā-tantra-vidhānena/ kālāv api tathā śrnu} \]

“O King, in this way people in Dvāpara-yuga glorified the Lord of the universe. In
Kali-yuga also people worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead by following
various regulations of the revealed scriptures. Now kindly hear of this from me”
(Bhāg. 11.5.31).

Some contend that Lord Viśnu does not appear as a yugāvatāra in Kali-yuga.
Indeed, one of Viśnu's descriptive names is Tri-yuga, which apparently means that
He manifests Himself in three ages—Satya, Tretā, and Dvāpara—but not in Kali,
the most corrupt age, when even lesser demigods avoid visiting the earth. There is
some Purānic evidence supporting this view: Śrī Jiva Gosvāmi, in his own
commentary on Śrī Tattva-sandarbhā (known as Sarva-samvādini), cites the
following verses from the Viśnu-dharmottara Purāṇa:

\[ \text{pratyakṣa-rūpa-dhṛg devo/ [DDB1]drṣyate na kalau harih} \]
\[ \text{ḥṛtādīśv eva tenaiva/ tri-yugah paripathyate} \]

\[ \text{kaler ante ca samprāpte/ kalkinam brahma-vādinam} \]
\[ \text{anupraviśya kurute/ vāsudevo jagat-sthitim} \]

“The Supreme Lord Hari does not appear in a visibly manifest form in the Age of
Kali. He appears only in the three ages starting with Krśa [Satya], and so He is
called Tri-yuga. But at the end of the Kali Age Lord Vāsudeva reestablishes order in
the world by causing the appearance of Kalki, the proponent of absolute truth.”
Prahlāda Mahārāja makes a similar statement in his prayers to Lord Nṛsimha in the
Seventh Canto of Śrimad-Bhāgavatam:

\[ \text{ittham nr-tiryag-rṣi-deva-jhasāvatārāir} \]
\[ \text{lōkān vibhāvayasi hamsi jagat-pratipāṇ} \]
\[ \text{dharmaṃ mahā-pūrusa pāśi yugānuvṛttaś} \]
\[ \text{channas kalau yad abhavas tri-yugo 'tha sa tvam} \]

“In this way, my Lord, You appear in various incarnations as a human being, an
animal, a great saint, a demigod, a fish, or a tortoise, thus maintaining the entire
creation in different planetary systems and killing the demoniac principles.
According to the age, O my Lord, You protect the principles of religion. In the Age
of Kali, however, You are covered, and therefore You are known as Tri-yuga”
(Bhāg. 7.9.38). The venerable Bhāgavatam commentator Śrīdhara Svāmī gives his
gloss on this prayer: vibhāvayasi pālayasi hamsi ghatayasi kalau tu tan na karosi yatas tadā tvam channo 'bhavah, atas triśv eva yugeśv āvibhāvāt sa evam-bhūtas tvam tri-yuga iti prasiddhah. “You [usually] engage in protecting [the devotees] and killing [the demons], but not in Kali-yuga, for at that time You are covered. Therefore, since you appear only in three yugas, you are known as Tri-yuga.”.

Later, in his comments on the Eleventh Canto, when he comes to the verse kṛṣṇa-varnam tvīśākṛṣnam, Śrīdharā Svāmī reads tvīśākṛṣnam as the euphonic combination of tvīṣa kṛṣṇam (“having a blackish complexion”) instead of tvīṣa akrṣṇam (“having a nonblackish complexion”), which is grammatically allowable because of the inherent ambiguity of the combination. Based on this reading of tvīṣākṛṣnam, Śrīdharā Svāmī identifies the avatāra being described as Śrī Kṛṣṇa, making Him the yugāvatāra for both Dvāpara and Kali.

But Śrīdharā Svāmī wrote his commentary a few hundred years before the advent of Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the worshipable Lord of Jīva Gosvāmī and all other Gauḍiya Vaiṣṇavas. They consider Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who initiated the devotional method of sankirtana, congregational chanting of the names of God, to be the actual yuga-avatāra for Kali. Lord Caitanya fits the description channah kalau, the hidden avatāra in Kali-yuga, because He consistently played the role of a simple devotee of Kṛṣṇa, refusing to admit He was Kṛṣṇa Himself. Lord Caitanya greatly respected Śrīdharā Svāmī’s explanation of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and did not like to hear any criticism of his opinions, but we cannot expect the commentator to have predicted the Lord’s future covert appearance. In any case, if he did know of it, he did not publically reveal this insight.

In his Sarva-samvādini Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī states that the Viṣṇu-dharmottara’s denial of a yugāvatāra in Kali may apply to other Kali-yugas but not to the present one. As Śrī Jīva explains, we are living in the twenty-eighth Kali-yuga of the seventh manvantara of the day of Brahmā called Śveta-varāha-kalpa. Only once in each day of Brahmā—meaning once every 8,640,000,000 years—does the Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa descend to the earth in His original form. This rare descent of Lord Kṛṣṇa did in fact occur during our present cycle of ages, just before Kali-yuga began five thousand years ago. Kṛṣṇa is not just another avatāra but is the ultimate source of all forms of God. When He appears, His unlimited potency overrules the general pattern and He comes again in Kali-yuga. Thus Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who displayed His pastimes in Bengal and elsewhere some five hundred years ago, is Kṛṣṇa Himself, not an avatāra of Kṛṣṇa exhibiting only some of the Supreme Lord’s potencies. Lord Caitanya coincidentally accepts the role of yugāvatāra, but to regard Him as that and nothing more would be a gross underestimation of His greatness. The Gauḍiya Vaiṣṇava’s realization that Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu are one and that Lord Caitanya is the deliverer of Kali-yuga easily reconciles with Śrīdharā Svāmī’s opinion that Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself is the yugāvatāra for both the Dvāpara and Kali ages.

The principal thesis of this first Sandarbha, Śrī Tattva-sandarbha, is that Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the perfect scriptural authority. The other Sandarbhas will demonstrate how the Bhāgavatam perfectly reveals the glories of Lord Kṛṣṇa and of devotional service to Him. As Śrīnātha Cakravartī has written in his Caitanya-
mañjuśā,

ārādhya bhagavān vrajeśa-tanayas tad-dhāma vrndāvanam
ramyā kācid upāsanā vraja-vadhū-vargaṇa yā kalpitā
śāstrāṃ bhāgavatam pramāṇam amalam premā pum-artha mahān
ittham gaura-mahāprabhu matam atas tatrādaro nah parah

“The Supreme Lord to be worshiped is the son of the King of Vraja. His personal abode is Vṛndāvana. The most favorable mode of serving Him is that practiced by the young maidens of Vraja. The scripture Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the spotless source of reliable knowledge, and pure love of God is the supreme goal of human life. Such are the opinions of Gaura Mahāprabhu, and we therefore respect them implicitly.”

The Bhāgavatam is such a complete revelation of all the Supreme Truth’s potencies that it can enlighten the various understandings of Vaiṣṇava ācāryas both before and after Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s appearance. For example, directly following the verse kṛṣṇa-varṇam tvisakṛṣṇam, Karabhājana Yogendra addresses two beautiful prayers to the Mahāpurusa. The followers of Lord Caitanya understand that these prayers are offered to Him, the Mahāprabhu, while Śrīdharā Svāmī interprets them more generically, removing them from the context of the description of the yugavatāras.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{tyaktvā su-dustyaja-surepsita-rājya-lakṣmīm} \\
\text{dharmiṣṭha ārya-vacāsā yad ağād aranyam} \\
\text{māyā-mrgam dayitayepsitam anvadhāvad} \\
\text{vande mahā-puruṣa te caraṇāravindam}
\end{align*}
\]

“O Mahāpurusa, I worship Your lotus feet. You gave up the association of the goddess of fortune and all her opulence, which is most difficult to renounce and is hankered after by even the great demigods. Being the most faithful follower of the path of religion, You thus left for the forest in obedience to a respectable superior’s words. Out of sheer mercy You chased after the fallen conditioned souls, who are always in pursuit of the false enjoyment of illusion, and gave them the true object of all desire” (Bhāg. 11.5.34). The devotees of Caitanya Mahāprabhu understand this verse as a summary of His pastimes: Cursed by an angry brāhmaṇa (ārya-vacāsā) to lose all happiness in family life, Lord Caitanya entered the renounced order (āranyam) and left His wife Viṣṇupriyā, even though she is directly His eternal consort, the goddess of fortune (rājya-lakṣmīm).

Śrīdharā Svāmī reads the same lines differently: Ordered by His father (ārya-vacāsā) into exile in the forest (āranyam), Lord Rāmacandra gave up His royal opulence (rājya-lakṣmīm). For Śrīdharā Svāmī, māyā-mrgam means “the golden deer that was the sorcerer Marīci in disguise,” and dayitayā Ĩpsitam means “desired by His beloved Śītā”; that is, Lord Rāma chased after the false deer because His wife wanted to have it. The Gauḍīya ācārya Viśvanātha Cakravartī repeats Śrīdharā Svāmī’s explanation in his commentary but then adds another: Māyā-mrgam means “the living entities who are entangled in material life, seaking out the
illusion of wife, children, wealth, and so on” (māyām kalatra-putra-vittādi-rūpāṁ
mrgayati anvesyattī māyā-mṛgaḥ samsārāviśto janah). Dayitāyā means “out of
compassion,” and īpīsam means “object of desire.” In other words, Lord Caitanya
pursued the deluded souls to attract them to the better life of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.
Both these interpretations are grammatically and logically feasible.

In his Sarva-sāṁvādī Śrī Jīva explains the phrase kṛṣṇa-varṇam tviṣākrṣnam as
follows: Lord Caitanya is Kṛṣṇa Himself, yet His complexion (tviṣā) is akṛṣṇam,
not dark blue but golden. Kṛṣṇa-varṇam means “containing the syllables kṛṣṇa,”
as in the name Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, the brahmacārī name given to Lord Caitanya by
His spiritual master Kesava Bhārati. Or, alternatively, Lord Caitanya always
describes (varṇayati) the glories of Śrī Kṛṣṇa under the spell of remembering His
own blissful pastimes as Kṛṣṇa; out of His supreme compassion He also describes
these glories to everyone else. Or, although He does not appear in the dark-blue
form of Kṛṣṇa, by the brilliance of His golden effulgence (tviṣā) He nevertheless
inspires everyone with realization of Kṛṣṇa (kṛṣṇa-varṇam); therefore those who
see Him also see Kṛṣṇa. Or, although to the general populace He is not Kṛṣṇa but a
devotee, to a few intimate followers He offers a revelation (tviṣā) of Himself as the
same Śyāmasundara with dark-blue complexion (kṛṣṇa-varṇam).

Each avatāra of Viśṇu should be identifiable by His special bodily features and
ornaments (āngas and upāngas), His personal weapons (astras), and His associates
(pāṛsadās). According to Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣana in his commentary on the
Tattva-sandarbha, Caitanya Mahāprabhu appears with all of these identifying features
(sāṅgopāṅgāstra-pāṛsadām): His main limbs (āngas) are Lord Nityānanda
and Lord Advaitācārya; His ornaments (upāngas) are principal followers like
Śrīvāsa Thākura; even though in this appearance Lord Viśṇu does not directly kill
demons, with His weapons (astras) of the holy names of God He kills the demonic
spirit lurking in every heart in Kali-yuga; and He has His regular associates
(pāṛsadās), such as Gadādhara Pandita and His servant Govinda.

Thus the Eleventh canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam verifies that Lord Caitanya
Mahāprabhu is the yugāvatāra for the current age. Further verification is found in
the Tenth Canto, where Vasudeva’s priest, Garga Muni, says the following during
the name-giving ceremony for His new-born son Kṛṣṇa:

āsan varnās trayo hy asya/ grnato ’nu-yugam tanūh
suklo raktaś tathā pita/ idānim kṛṣṇatām gatah

“Your son Kṛṣṇa appeared previously in three different colors, assuming His forms
according to each age. He has been white, red and yellow, and now He is dark
blue” (Bhā. 10.8.13). The white incarnation was Lord Hamsa, the yugāvatāra for
Satya-yuga; the red incarnation was Lord Yajña, the yugāvatāra for Tretā-yuga; and
dark-blue Kṛṣṇa appeared in Dwāpara-yuga. By a simple process of elimination, the
yellow yugāvatāra must appear in Kali-yuga. Garga Muni is referring to a previous
Kali-yuga, but in the current Kali Age the yugāvatāra is also yellow (pita): He is
Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the Golden Avatāra. Fully aware of this and of the fact that
no attempt at spiritual advancement can be succesful without following the lead of
the current age's yugāvatāra, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī first dedicates Śrī Bhāgavata-
sandarbha to the glorification and service of Lord Caitanya.

Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣana remarks that Lord Kṛṣṇa became non-kṛṣṇa, or
golden, when His own dark-blue complexion was covered by the effulgence (tiṣṇa)
of His beloved consort, Śrīmati Rādhārāṇī. This comment hints at the more
confidential purpose Lord Kṛṣṇa had in appearing as Caitanya Mahāprabhu,
namely, that He assumed the mood and complexion of own pleasure potency to
experience for Himself the love that only She knows.

Purport by BBT Translators

Invocation I

natvā kṛṣṇadāsa-varyam prabhupādam tattvārtha-dam
bhāṣātikān karomy aham śrī-vaiṣṇavinām tuṣṭaye

“After paying my obeisances to the best among Lord Kṛṣṇa’s devotees, Śrīla
Prabhuṣaṇḍa, who has imparted knowledge about the essence of Vedic literature, I
write this translation and commentary for the satisfaction of the Vaiṣṇavas.”[new2]

In the Vedic culture every undertaking begins with an invocation, technically
called maṅgalācarana. The purpose is to invoke the blessings of the Supreme
Personality of Godhead so He may remove any obstacle to the completion of the
work. This book, Śrī Sat-sandarbha, is a detailed treatise on the Lord’s name, fame,
abode, qualities, pastimes, and associates. As such, it is already all-auspicious and
thus needs no invocation. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī nonetheless performs maṅgalācarana,
following in the footsteps of the previous acāryas and setting an ideal example for
his readers.

A book’s maṅgalācarana is of three types and may have one or more verses. The
three types are:

Namās-kriyātmaka: paying obeisances to one’s teacher(s) or worshipable deity, or
to both.

Āśīr-vādātmaka: praying to the Lord for His blessings, bestowing blessings upon
the readers, or exclaiming “All glories to the Lord!”

Vastu-nīrdeśātmaka: summarizing the subject matter of the book.

Often the maṅgalācarana will also describe four essential elements of the book,
called anubandha-catuṣṭaya:

adhitkāri ca sambandho viṣayaḥ ca prayojananam
avaṣṭam eva vaktavyam sāstrādau tu catuṣṭayaṃ

“At its beginning a book must describe these four items: the qualifications of the
person who may read the book (adhitkāri), the connection between the book and
its subject (sambandha), the subject itself (viṣaya or abhidheya), and what the
reader will gain by reading the book and following the path it prescribes
(prayojana).” In modern books these four items are usually covered in the introduction.

It is significant that Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī begins his mangalacarana with a quotation from Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and not with an original verse. By doing so he shows his reverence for Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and his surrender to the instructions of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, for whom Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam was the supreme scriptural authority. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī also implies that in the Śat-sandarbha he will analyze the Bhāgavatam and establish its superiority over all other scriptures. In addition, this verse establishes that his worshipable Deity is Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

The opening verse was spoken by Karabhājana Rṣi in response to a question Maharāja Nīma posed concerning the Lord’s color, name, and mode of worship in the various yugas. In this verse Karabhājana Rṣi describes the Lord’s incarnation in Kali-yuga, and in so doing he indirectly reveals that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Kṛṣṇa-varṇam indicates one who describes the pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa to others or who always chants “Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa.” Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu certainly meets this criterion for being kṛṣṇa-varna. Varna also means “class” or “category.” So kṛṣṇa-varna may also indicate one who is in the same class as Kṛṣṇa. Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu is kṛṣṇa-varna in this sense because He is nondifferent from Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Varna also means “letter” or “word,” and thus kṛṣṇa-varna also indicates one whose name has the word Kṛṣṇa in it—in this case Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya.

Other meanings of varna are “fame,” “form,” “outward appearance,” “quality,” and “ritual.” One may apply all these meanings to the phrase kṛṣṇa-varna and thus understand it to indicate Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu. For example, kṛṣṇa-varna may indicate one whose fame is like Kṛṣṇa’s or whose form is like Kṛṣṇa’s.

In Sarva-samvādini, a supplementary commentary to Śrī Śat-sandarbha by Śrīla Jīva Gospāmī himself, he explains that Lord Caitanya is referred to as kṛṣṇa-varna because people were reminded of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa just by seeing Him. Another reason is that although Śrī Caitanya displayed a golden complexion to the common man, to His intimate associates He sometimes appeared blackish.

[DDB3]Finally, kṛṣṇa-varna also means one who is blackish like Kṛṣṇa, but in the case of Lord Caitanya kṛṣṇa-varna must refer to His inner complexion. This Śrīla Jīva Gospāmī explains in the next Text.

The compound word tvisākṛṣṇam may be broken as tvisā akrṣnam, giving the meaning “whose bodily hue is not blackish.” In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.8.13), Garga Muni tells Nanda Mahārāja:

āsan varnās trayo hy asya grhnato ’nu-yugam tanuḥ
śuklo raktas tathā pīta idānim kṛṣṇatām gataḥ

“Your son Kṛṣṇa appears as an incarnation in every millennium. In the past He assumed three different colors—white, red,[DDB4] and yellow—and now He has appeared in a blackish color.”
According to Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, the Supreme Personality of Godhead had a white complexion when He appeared in Satya-yuga, a reddish one in Tretā-yuga, and a blackish one in Dvāpara-yuga. So by the process of elimination the word ākṛṣṇam, “non-blackish,” must indicate the incarnation with a yellow complexion—that is, the golden avatāra, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Garga Muni’s mention of His yellow color “in previous yugas” may refer either to Lord Caitanya’s previous appearances or to His future appearances, but Garga Muni uses the past tense because he is mentioning the yellow incarnation along with other incarnations who had appeared in the past. The usage is similar to what a person might say if he saw a householder and fifteen brahmācāris walking on the road: “The brahmācāris are coming.” Yet another consideration is that Gargacārya may have used the past tense to hide Kṛṣṇa’s future incarnation as Lord Caitanya. Garga’s purpose would have been to avoid confusing Nanda Mahārāja and to play along with the Lord’s plan to appear in Kali-yuga as the channa-avatāra, or hidden incarnation. This last reason is why the Vedic scriptures only indirectly refer to Lord Caitanya’s incarnation.

In the Bhagavad-gitā (7.25) Lord Kṛṣṇa says, nāham prakāśah sarvasya yoga-māyā- samavṛtah: “Because the veil of Yogamāyā covers Me, I am not manifest to everyone as I am.” This declaration specifically applies to the Lord’s appearance in Kali-yuga as Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya. Prahlaṅga Mahārāja also refers to Lord Caitanya when he says in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (7.9.38), channah kalau yad abhavas tri-yugo 'tha sa tvam: “O Lord, Your incarnation in Kali-yuga is hidden, or confidential, and therefore you are called Tri-yuga, one who incarnates in three yugas [namely Satya, Tretā, and Dvāpara].” Here the word channa (“covered”) also signifies that Lord Caitanya is Lord Kṛṣṇa covered by the mood and complexion of Śrī Rādhikā. The Nārādiya Purāṇa (5.47) also foretells the Lord’s appearance as a devotee:

aham eva kalau vipra nityam prachanna-vigrahah
bhagavad-bhakta-rūpeṇa lokān rakṣāmi sarvādā

“The Lord said: ‘Concealing My real identity, O vipra [Mārkandeya Rṣi], I appear in Kali-yuga in the garb of a devotee and always protect My devotees.’”

Tviṣākṛṣṇam may also be broken up as tviṣā krṣṇam, meaning “one whose complexion is blackish.” Although Lord Caitanya’s complexion was golden, He is Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself, and thus the words tviṣā krṣṇam indicate His original form as Lord Kṛṣṇa, which He revealed only to certain devotees, such as Śrīvāsa Bhattācārya.

Sāṅgopāṅgāstra-pārśadam means “with His limbs, ornaments, weapons, and associates.” According to Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣana, Lord Caitanya’s limbs are Lord Nityānanda Prabhu and Advaita Ācārya, His ornaments are Śrīvāsa Thākura, Śrīla Haridāsa Thākura, and others, His weapons are the holy names, which dispel ignorance, and His associates are Gadādhara, Govinda, and the many other devotees who stayed with Him in Jagannātha Puri.
Sāngopāṅgāstra-pārśadam may also refer to Lord Caitanya’s form as Śrī Krṣṇa, which He showed to His intimate devotees. This form has beautiful limbs decorated with ornaments (such as the Kaustubha gem), which act like weapons by attracting one’s mind toward Lord Krṣṇa and thus killing one’s demoniac mentality. The Lord’s ornaments are also associates of His, since they are living persons and are His devotees.

The words yajñaiḥ sankīrtana-prāyair yajanti hi su-medhasah convey the following meaning: The Vedas recommend many processes for worshiping the Supreme Lord, but in Kali-yuga the wise worship Him by chanting His holy names congregationally. Lord Caitanya inaugurated this process and is thus called the father of the sankīrtana movement.

Su-medhasah means “people of fine intelligence.” The implication is that less intelligent people will worship the Lord in other ways and that outright fools will oppose the sankīrtana movement. Sankīrtana is very dear to Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. He Himself was always absorbed in performing sankīrtana, and He enjoined everyone to participate, declaring it the [DDB5]universal remedy for all the defects of Kali-yuga. Śukadeva Gosvāmī confirms this in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (12.3.51, 52):

\[
\begin{align*}
kaler \ doṣa-nidhe \ rājann \ asti \ hy \ eko \ mahān \ gunah \\
kirtanād \ eva \ krṣṇasya \ mukta-saṅgha \ param \ vrajet
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
kṛte \ yad \ dhīyāyato \ viśnum \ tretāyām \ yajato \ mahaḥ \\
dvāpare \ paricaryāyām \ kalau \ tad \ dhari-kirtanāt
\end{align*}
\]

“My dear king, although Kali-yuga is an ocean of faults, there is still one good quality about this age: Simply by chanting the names of Krṣṇa one can become free from material bondage and be promoted to the transcendental kingdom. Whatever result was obtained in Satya-yuga by meditating on Viśnu, in Tretā-yuga by performing sacrifices, and in Dvāpara-yuga by serving the Lord’s lotus feet can be obtained in Kali-yuga simply by chanting the Hare Krṣṇa mahā-mantra.”

Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī’s worshipable Deity is Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Therefore Jiva Gosvāmī begins his topmost literary achievement by quoting a verse about Śrī Caitanya from Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, the supreme scriptural authority for all time. This is a vastu-nirdeśātmaka mangalācarana.

TEXT 2

\[
antah \ krṣnam \ bahir \ gauram
\]

\[
darśitāngādi-vaiḥavam
\]
kalau sankirtana dyaih smah
krśna-caitanyam āśritāh

Gopiparanadhana: In this Age of Kali we have taken shelter of Kṛṣṇa Caitanya by congregationally chanting the Lord’s holy names and performing other devotional practices. Blackish within but golden without, He exhibits all His opulences, beginning with His bodily features.

Purport by Gopiparanadhana prabhu

This original verse by Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī restates the previous text. In the first line he glosses kṛṣṇa-varṇam as meaning antah kṛṣṇam, “internally Kṛṣṇa Himself,” [DDB6] and tvīsākṛṣṇam as bahir gauram, “outwardly appearing golden.” Gaura (“Golden One”) and Gaurāṅga (“Golden-limbed One”) are names of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. He displayed the spiritual opulences proving He is God (dārśitāṅgādai-vāibhavam), but not in the usual ways. Unlike such incarnations as Lord Varāha and Lord Nṛsimha, He did not kill great demons, and unlike Lord Kṛṣṇa, He did not exhibit amorous pastimes that violated ordinary morality. Instead, the distinctive opulences of Lord Caitanya were His all-attractive pure love of Kṛṣṇa and the unprecedented kindness He showed to His devotees and to the unfortunate, deluded people of this world. Those with clear intelligence can understand that Lord Caitanya’s activities are far beyond the ability of a mortal being. He was more generous than any previous avatāra, including Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself, who advised in the Bhagavad-gītā (18.66):

```
sarva-dharmān parityajya/ mām ekam saranam vraja
aham tvām sarva-pāpebhyo/ mokṣayisyāmi mā sucah
```

“Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender unto Me. I shall deliver you from all sinful reactions. Do not fear” Thus Lord Kṛṣṇa demanded full surrender before He would give His full mercy. When He appeared 4,500 years later as Lord Caitanya, however, He put aside that demand and freely gave love of God to whoever would hear and chant Kṛṣṇa’s names according to His instructions.

Devotees who receive the mercy of Lord Caitanya know directly the power of that mercy, and anyone who takes shelter of such devotees will also begin to experience its influence. Any person in this age who honors Lord Caitanya as the Supreme Lord and faithfully follows His simple teachings will become an ideal Vaiśṇava, with the saintly qualities described in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.25.21–23) by Lord Kapila, the incarnation of the Supreme Lord born in Satya-yuga as the son of Devahūti:

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titikṣavah kārunikāh/ suhrddah sarva-dehinām
ajāta-satrabhā sāntāh/ sādhavah sādhu-bhūsanāh
mayy ananyena bhāvena/ bhaktim kurvanti ye đṛḍhām
```
mat-krte tyakta-karmânas/ tyakta-svañana-bândhavâh

mad-aśrayâh kathâ mrśtâh/ śrñvanti kathayanti ca
tapantî vividhâs tâpâ/ naitân mad-gata-cetasâh

“The symptoms of a sâdhu are that he is tolerant, merciful, and friendly to all living entities. He has no enemies, he is peaceful, he abides by the scriptures, and all his characteristics are sublime. Such a sâdhu engages in staunch devotional service to the Lord without deviation. For the sake of the Lord he renounces all other connections, such as family relationships and friendly acquaintances within the world. Engaged constantly in chanting and hearing about Me, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, ]the sâdhus do not suffer from material miseries, for they are always filled with thoughts of My pastimes and activities.”

The special dispensation of Lord Caitanya Mahâprabhu—sankirtana, the congregational chanting of the Lord’s holy names—was considered in other ages suitable only for the most advanced spiritualists, not for those who are still inclined toward materialism or impersonalism. But by the mercy of Lord Caitanya this process is now freely available to all. One who chants the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra approaches the Supreme Personality of Godhead in His most intimate relationship with His feminine counterpart, Śrīmati Râdhârâni; there are several dangerous offenses that a careless practioner can commit in this mode of worship, any of which will impede the good effects of chanting. Only by Lord Caitanya’s special order has the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra recently been made universally available. Lord Caitanya has requested every man, woman, and child in the universe to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, promising that if we chant under His guidance He will protect us from our offenses.

Although Kali is the most corrupt of ages, Caitanya Mahâprabhu has made it auspicious:

kaler doṣa-nidher râjan/ asti hy eko mahân gunah
kîrtanâd eva kṛṣṇasya/ mukta-saṅgaṁ paraṁ vrajät

“My dear King, although Kali-yuga is an ocean of faults, there is still one good quality about the age: Simply by glorifying Kṛṣṇa one can become free from material bondage and be promoted to the transcendental kingdom.

kṛte yâd dhyâyato viṣñunî/ tretâyâṁ yañato makhiaṁ
dvâpare paricaryâyâṁ/ kalau tad dhari-kîrtanât

“Whatever result was obtained in Satya-yuga by meditating on Viṣṇu, in Treta-yuga by performing sacrifices, and in Dvâpara-yuga by serving the Lord’s lotus feet can be obtained in Kali-yuga simply by chanting the glories of Kṛṣṇa” (Bhâg. 12.3.51–52). Therefore the most discriminating and fortunate people are eager to participate in Lord Caitanya’s sankirtana movement. Even residents of higher planets and of the spiritual world, who otherwise do not come near the earth during Kali-yuga, are
attracted:

\[kṛtādisu prajā rājaḥ\ kalāv icchānti sambhavam\]
\[kalau khalu bhaviṣyantī/nārāyaṇa-parāyaṇah\]

“My dear King, the inhabitants of Satya-yuga and other ages eagerly desire to take birth in this Age of Kali, since in this age there will be many devotees of the Supreme Lord, Nārāyaṇa” (Bhāg. 11.5.38).

As in His other appearances, when the Supreme Personality of Godhead came to this world as Caitanya Mahāprabhu He brought with Him many intimate companions from His eternal abode. These pārsads were related to the Lord in various ways, and among the most confidential of these associates were six devotees from Goloka Vṛndāvana in the conjugal mode of loving service to Kṛṣṇa (mādhurya-rasa), who joined Lord Caitanya’s pastimes as the Gosvāmīs of Mathurā Vṛndāvana. The six Gosvāmīs exemplified the perfection of love of God in separation, living out their lives in extreme renunciation and apparent pain in the absence of Kṛṣṇa but in fact all the while immersed in the immeasurable bliss of remembering Him in one another’s company.

Lord Caitanya entrusted them with the tasks of restoring the forgotten sites of Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes in the area of Vṛndāvana and of writing books to establish the principles of devotional practice for this age. Jīva Gosvāmī took his birth as the nephew of Rūpa and Sanātana, the leaders of this group. He carried their work forward into the next generation.

**Purport by BBT Translators**

**Invocation II**

Here Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī explains the meaning of the opening verse. Lord Kṛṣṇa, whose complexion is blackish, covered Himself with the golden complexion of Śrīmati Radhārāni to appear in Kali-yuga as Kṛṣṇa Caitanya. He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, but His purpose is to show us how to be devotees of the Lord. For this reason it is not readily apparent that He is the Supreme Lord, and so Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam describes Him as “the hidden incarnation.” Or, alternatively, the words \textit{antah kṛṣṇam bahīr gauram} here may be taken to mean not that Lord Caitanya is blackish within and golden without but that He is Kṛṣṇa within though outwardly appearing as Gaura, Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī also indicates here that one can please Lord Kṛṣṇa Caitanya by chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra.

\textit{Darśītāṅgādi-vaiḥbhavam} means that Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu manifested His opulence through His limbs and associates. His body was so beautiful that just by seeing Him people would be inspired to surrender to Him. He also manifested His supremacy through Nityānanda Prabhu and other associates who preached the chanting of the holy name. This phrase can also mean that Lord Caitanya
manifested the 'greatness of his associates by engaging them in distributing love of Godhead.

By using the plural form “we” in the phrase “we take shelter of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya,” Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī includes the readers of Śrī Śat-sandarbha. He invites them to join him in taking shelter of Lord Caitanya by participating in the sankirtana movement, the universal process for pleasing the Supreme Lord and attaining deliverance. By using the plural Śrī Jiva also implies that Lord Caitanya’s teachings are not limited to a particular sect or nationality.

So far Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī has described his worshipable Deity. Next he performs aśīr-vādātmaka-maṅgalācarana, invoking auspiciousness by declaring the glories of his spiritual masters.

TEXT 3

jayatāṁ mathurā-bhāmāu
śrīla-rūpa-sanātanau
yau vilekhayatas tattvam
jñāpakau pustikāṁ imām

Gopiparanadhana prabhu: All glories to Śrīla Rūpa and Śrīla Sanātana in the land of Mathurā! Having enlightened me in the true science, they are inspiring me to write this book.

BBT: All glories to Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī in the land of Mathurā! They have engaged me in writing this book to broadcast the essential truth about the Supreme Lord.

Purport by Gopiparanadhana prabhu

As Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣana discusses in his Tattva-sandarbha commentary, this verse fulfills the second and third purposes of a maṅgalācarana, namely offering blessings and paying respects. Jiva Gosvāmī had a blood relationship with Rūpa and Sanātana as their nephew, the son of their brother Śrī Anupama. But spiritually the relationship between Rūpa, Sanātana, and Jiva was more formal: Rūpa Gosvāmī accepted, revered, and obeyed his older brother Sanātana Gosvāmī as his guru, the prime director of his spiritual life. Śrī Jiva, in turn, considered himself a surrendered disciple of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. In this verse, then, the
The title Śrīla means “endowed with the blessings of Śrī, the goddess of fortune and consort of Lord Viṣṇu.” For Rūpa and Sanātana these blessings took the form of their great knowledge, detachment, and spiritual discipline. Jayatām literally means “may they be victorious” or, in other words, “may they manifest their superexcellence.” Rūpa, Sanātana, and later Jīva especially showed their excellence in the land of Mathurā, the best place in the universe for practicing pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Their lives became successful when each of them, one after another, overcame difficult obstacles and finally reached Mathurā-mandala. In that most sacred of districts they lived sometimes in Vṛndāvana and sometimes at other sites such as Govardhana and Rādhā-kūnda. They and the other Gosvāmīs founded temples for the Deities of Kṛṣṇa who preside over the town of Vṛndāvana. Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī founded the Rādhā-Madana-mohana temple, Śrīla Rūpa the Rādhā-Govindaji temple, and Śrīla Jīva the Rādhā-Dāmodara temple.

Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣana states that the verb jayati (“is victorious”) here expresses excellence beyond that of all other saintly persons, indicating that all Vaiṣṇavas owe respect to Rūpa Gosvāmī and Sanātana Gosvāmī. In this way the current verse offers blessings to all the devotees of the Lord by reminding them to acknowledge the supremacy of these two transcendental brothers. And because Jīva Gosvāmī considers himself among the general mass of Vaiṣṇavas, he is hinting in this verse that he also feels obliged to maintain a reverential attitude toward them.

Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī is especially grateful to Rūpa and Sanātana for the enlightenment and inspiration in Kṛṣṇa consciousness he received from them. They revealed the Absolute Truth, tattva, to him. Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣana points out that the Viśva-koṣa dictionary assigns a few definitions to this word tattva: tattvam vādyaprabhede syāt svarūpe paramātmāni. “Tattva (‘truth’) means a kind of verbal proposition, the essential substance of something, or the Supreme Soul.” In accordance with these meanings of tattva, what Rūpa and Sanātana revealed to Jīva was the Supreme Personality of Godhead along with His entire retinue. To Śrī Jīva they were jñāpakau, imparters of knowledge, but not in the ordinary sense. They gave their student the kind of knowledge received only from teachers who are entirely free from material motivations.

A sentiment of belief in God is the beginning of spiritual progress, but one cannot make substantial advancement without seriously committing oneself to following a living representative of God. A disciple's initiating spiritual master and his instructing spiritual master (or masters) are his direct, personal link with the entire line of previous ācāryas, and through them to the Personality of Godhead. A spiritual master must know his disciple's individual spiritual needs so that he can engage the disciple in practical devotional service to Kṛṣṇa for his purification. The spiritual master establishes the individual mood of devotional service to be followed by the disciple. Thus only when a conditioned soul becomes a Vaiṣṇava's
disciple does he establish his link with spiritual reality. The process is not just an institutional formality but an essential step for one who wants to reach God consciousness.

Purport by BBT Translators

Invocation III

Here Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī explains his reason for composing the Śat-sandarbha. He is doing so at the behest of his spiritual masters, Rūpa and Sanātana Gosvāmīs, who are also his uncles. Jiva Gosvāmī studied under them, and they asked him to compile their teachings into a book for the benefit of all. This request is indicated by the word jñāpakau, which literally means “those who like to teach others.”

Previously Śrīla Rūpa and Śrīla Sanātana were glorious in Bengal as ministers of Hussein Shah[new7]. Now they are glorious in the land of Mathurā, which is itself glorious, being the place of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes. To be glorious in this land means to have the wealth of kṛṣṇa-prema, love of Godhead, which is the most rare possession. To show this achievement Jiva Gosvāmī adds the honorific “Śrīla” before their names. “Śrīla” signifies that Rūpa and Sanātana Gosvāmīs are endowed with transcendental knowledge, renunciation, devotional service, and love of God. Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī prays that through the Sat-sandarbha these two great souls may manifest their opulence and glory for the welfare of others.

According to Sanskrit grammatical rules, the pronoun imām (“this”) is used for objects near at hand. Since at this point Jiva Gosvāmī is in the process of writing the Sat-sandarbha, his mention here of pustikāṁ imām (“this book”) may seem a defect. Baladeva Vidyābhūṣana comments, however, that because the book already exists within the author's mind, his usage is proper.

TEXT 4

ko ’pi tad-bāndhavo bhaṭṭo
dakṣiṇa-dvija-vamśa-jah
vivicya vyālikhad granthaṁ
likhitād vrddha-vaiśṇavaṁ

Gopiparanadhana: A friend of theirs, a Bhaṭṭa scholar from a family of South
Indian brähmanas, composed the original edition of this book after studying the writings of venerable Vaisnavas.

**BBT:** Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, a friend of Śrī Rūpa’s and Śrī Sanātana’s born in a South Indian brāhmaṇa family, compiled the original version of this book based on the works of venerable Vaisnavas.

**Purport by Gopiparanadhana prabhu**

Here Jīva Gosvāmī gives credit to Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī as the original author of Śrī Bhāgavata-sandarbha. Gopāla Bhaṭṭa first conceived of the project, extensively researched the writings of Vaisnava authorities—Rāmānuja, Madhva, Śrīdhara Svāmī, and others—and compiled his findings into notes. It was upon these notes that Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī later based the Sandarbhas. Śrīla Gopāla Bhaṭṭa’s exalted place among the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana is so well known that Śrī Jīva’s poetic understatement in this verse only serves to underscore the depth of his appreciation for his senior.

The title Bhaṭṭa belongs to a certain class of scholarly brähmanas who specialize in prescribing for the public appropriate atonements for sins. That Gopāla Bhaṭṭa had such a prestigious birth was certainly not the extent of his glory. His family did come from the Bhaṭṭa subcaste, but much more significantly they were advanced devotees of the Lord whose association Lord Caitanya Himself enjoyed.

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda has provided information about Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmi’s life in a purport to Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Adi 10.105): “Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmi was the son of Venkata Bhaṭṭa, a resident of Śrī Raṅgam. Gopāla Bhaṭṭa formerly belonged to the disciplic succession of the Rāmānuja-sampradāya but later became part of the Gaudiya-sampradāya. In the year 1433 śaṅkāda (A.D. 1511), when Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu was touring South India, He stayed for four months during the period of Cāturmāśya at the house of Venkata Bhaṭṭa, who then got the opportunity to serve the Lord to his heart’s content. Gopāla Bhaṭṭa also got the opportunity to serve the Lord at this time. Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmi was later initiated by his uncle, the great sannyāsi Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī. Both the father and the mother of Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmi were extremely fortunate, for they dedicated their entire lives to the service of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. They allowed Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmi to go to Vṛndāvana, and they gave up their lives thinking of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. When Lord Caitanya was later informed that Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmi had gone to Vṛndāvana and met Śrī Rūpa and Sanātana Gosvāmī, He was very pleased, and He advised Śrī Rūpa and Sanātana to accept Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmi as their younger brother and take care of him. Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī, out of his great affection for Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmi, compiled the Vaiṣṇava smṛti named Hari-bhakti-vilāsa and published it under his name. Under the instruction of Śrīla Rūpa and Sanātana, Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī installed one of the seven principal Deities of Vṛndāvana, the Rādhā-ramaṇa Deity. The sevāits (priests) of the Rādhā-ramaṇa temple belong to the Gaudiya-sampradāya.”
Purport by BBT Translators

The Source of Śrī Śat-sandarbha

Śrīla Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī was the son of Venkata Bhaṭṭa, the head priest of the temple of Lord Ranganātha at Śrī Rangam, where the Śrī-vaiṣṇava sect had[DD8] its headquarters. It was in Venkata’s home that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu stayed for the four months of the rainy season during His tour of South India. There He and Venkata discussed philosophy, as is known from the Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā, chapter nine, and the Bhakti-ratnākara, first wave. At that time Gopāla Bhaṭṭa was a young boy, and he learned the intricacies of Gaudīya-vaiṣṇava philosophy directly from Śrī Caitanya. Later he studied the writings of the eminent Vaiṣṇavas of the Śrī-sampradāya. On Lord Caitanya’s order Gopāla Bhaṭṭa later moved to Vṛndāvana, where he established the temple of Śrī Rādhā-ramana. He is one of the great authorities on Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s teachings.

As we shall learn further on, the venerable Vaiṣṇavas Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī refers to here as sources for Śrīla Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī include Śrī Rāmānuja-cārya, Śrī Madhvacārya, and Śrīdhara Svāmī. Śrīla Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī culled the essence from the works of these previous acāryas and Vaiṣṇava scholars and then composed a book explaining the essential truths about Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. That book is the basis for the present work. In this way Jīva Gosvāmī hints at the authenticity of his work, for by basing it on Śrīla Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī’s book he implies that the work is authoritative, free of concocted ideas.

TEXT 5

tasyādyam granthanālekham

krānta-vyutkrānta-khāditam

paryālocyātha paryāyam

kṛtvā likhati jīvakah

Gopiparanadhana: That first edition of this work was a rough draft, with some parts in topical order and others not, and with some parts only suggestive fragments. So I, an insignificant Jīva, have carefully gone over the manuscript and rewritten it more systematically.
BBT: Some parts of this first book by Gopâla Bhaṭṭa Gosvâmî were in correct sequence, and some were not. Some parts were incomplete or lost. Now, after careful study, Jiva is rewriting this book in the proper sequence.

Purport by Gopiparandhana prabhu

Since no copies of Śrīla Gopâla Bhaṭṭa's original notes are known to exist, we cannot say just what in the Sandarbhas Śrīla Jiva Gosvâmî borrowed from him. But judging from this verse and from the coherence and sheer volume of the Sandarbhas in their present form, we can conclude that the material and its organization must be largely Śrī Jiva Gosvâmî's own. Here Jiva humbly credits Śrīla Gopâla Bhaṭṭa for doing the important part of the work, just as Śrīla Sanâtana Gosvâmî credited him for Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilâsa. In any case, novelty was not considered much of a virtue in India's brahminical tradition of philosophy. Much more valued was loyalty to one's own school of thought. A theoretician's task in traditional India was not to invent new schemes of ideas. Rather, each philosophical author started with what the original founder of his school had taught and what generations of commentators had added in elaboration; he then tried to elucidate once more the same ideas without contradicting them, adapting them to the language, level of culture, and special concerns of the current generation. He would also deal with issues raised by contemporary opponents.

Thus faithfulness to one's school of philosophy was the ideal, although in some schools—for example Nyāya epistemology—writers expressed only token respect for their predecessors' opinions, especially in later centuries. But among the Vedântists, adherence to the opinions of previous âcâryas is not merely a matter of intellectual integrity but is an essential spiritual principle. Vaiśnava Vedântists do not try to discover reality on their own strength, individual or collective, but depend on revealed knowledge recorded in standard scriptures (śâstra) and received through ancient lines of disciplic succession (guru-paramparâ).

\[ \text{yasya deve parâ bhaktir/ yathâ deve tathâ gurau} \\
\text{tasyai te kathitâ hy arthâh/ prakâšante mahâtmanaḥ} \]

[DDB9]“If someone has unalloyed devotion for the Supreme Lord and equal devotion for his own spiritual master, then his intelligence becomes broad and everything described in these texts reveals itself clearly to him” (Śvetâsvatara Upaniṣad 6.23).

Purport by BBT Translators

Homage to Śrī Gopâla Bhaṭṭa Gosvâmî

The following question may arise: If Gopâla Bhaṭṭa Gosvâmî had already composed a work on this subject, why should Rûpa and Sanâtana have engaged Jiva Gosvâmî
in compiling a similar work? Jīva Gosvāmī replies in this verse: His mission is to complete the task that Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī began and to set the material in proper order. In the previous two verses Jīva Gosvāmī has already established that his work is not a product of his imagination but is based on the authority of the scriptures and previous acāryas.

By using the word jīvaka, Jīva Gosvāmī makes a pun on his name. Jīvaka means “a petty soul,” or else it can be taken as the name of the author. Out of humility the author refers to himself here in the third person. The suffix kan is used in this context in a diminutive sense, to indicate that a humble soul is writing.

As jivānugas, or followers of Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, we may prefer to interpret jīvaka in other ways. We may, for example, apply the definition jīvān kāpayati bhāgavatārtha-pradānāndeneti jīvakah: “One who makes the living beings emit ecstatic sounds by supplying them with the esoteric meaning of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam [through his Bhāgavata-sandarbha] is jīvaka.” Or, alternatively, jīva-svarūpa-sambandhābhidheya-pravajjanānā kāyati varnayati jīvakah: “One who explains the nature of the jīva, his relation with the Lord, the process by which he can achieve the ultimate goal of life, and also that ultimate goal—such a person is jīvaka.” Or, jīvaya jīvān krṣṇa-prema-pradānena jīvā, jīva eva jīvaka iti svārthe kan: “One who infuses life into living beings by giving them love of Krṣṇa is [DDB10]jīva or, equivalently, jīvaka.” Finally, the word jīvaka may also be formed by applying to the root jīv the suffix -aka in the sense of “blessing.” In this case jīvaka means “the person who confers blessings on the living entities.”

TEXT 6

yah śrī-krṣṇa-padāmbhojan-

bhajanaikābhilāsa-vān

tenaiva drṣyatām etad

anyasmāi śapatho ’rpitah

Gopiparanadhana: Only those who have no desire other than to worship the lotus feet of Lord Krṣṇa should read this book; everyone else I warn off with my curse.

BBT: This book may be studied only by one whose sole desire is to serve the lotus feet of Lord Śrī Krṣṇa. I warn everyone else not to read it.

Purport by Gopiparanadhana prabhu

Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī does not intend his Bhāgavata-sandarbha to be polemical. Rather,
his purpose is to explain Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, a scripture that must be trusted to be correctly understood. Only in a few places will he confront opposing opinions, such as in his discussion of Śaṅkara’s Advaita-vāda later in Śrī Tattva-sandarbha. Therefore here he plainly advises those who want to argue over differing opinions that this is not the right book for them. Best if they stop right here. If such critical speculators proceed, when they reject the opinions of saintly authorities like Śrīdhara Svāmī and Dvaipa-yāna Vyāsa, they will create unfortunate karmic reactions for themselves, or at least they will certainly fail to understand the Bhāgavatam’s transcendent message.

Śrī Jiva’s cursing some of his readers is not as cruel or fanatic as it may seem, because he is in fact sincerely concerned for their spiritual development. A pure Vaiṣṇava advances everyone’s welfare by everything he does, even his condemnation of offenders. The Dharma-sāstras state that a criminal who is punished by the government escapes much of the sinful reaction he would otherwise have to suffer in future lives. Similarly, an offender benefits from a compassionate Vaiṣṇava’s curse. The Tenth Chapter of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam’s Tenth Canto tells how when the two demigods Nalakūvara and Manigrīva appeared naked in front of Nārada Muni, he cursed them to take birth on earth as two trees in the yard of Nanda Mahārāja in Vraja. This curse proved to be the cause of their perfection, for after some years baby Kṛṣṇa Himself uprooted them and granted them liberation from material life.

Practicing Vaiṣṇavas, however, should not indulge in the brahminical prerogative of casting curses as long as they themselves have not yet become truly humble. A devotee of the Lord should see no one as his enemy, what to speak of trying to harm someone out of vengefulness. Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu taught a devotional attitude of complete tolerance and simplicity:

\[
\text{trnād api su-nicenā/ tāror iva saхиśnunā}
\]
\[
\text{amāninā māna-dena/ kirtantiyāḥ sadā hariḥ}
\]

“One who thinks himself lower than the grass, who is more tolerant than a tree, and who does not expect personal honor but is always prepared to give all respect to others can very easily always chant the holy name of the Lord.” (Śiśkāṣṭaka 3).

Well-intentioned non-Vaiṣṇava readers may very well ask what they are supposed to do now, having been categorized as offenders and told not to continue reading. They may also question why this translation of the Sandarbhas is even being published and made generally available. The simplest answer to the second question is that our spiritual master, Śrīla Prabhupāda, asked for it. Śrīla Prabhupāda received instructions from his spiritual master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura, that publishing the great works of standard Vaiṣṇava ācāryas is the most way to increase God consciousness in this confused age. Nowadays the world is filled with lavishly funded propaganda for the purchase and consumption of material things, in the face of which only the most vigorous counter-advertisement for things of spiritual value will even be noticed. When Lord Caitanya was present on this planet, He organized His followers to perform
sankirtana publicly, singing and dancing in glorification of God on the city streets. But five hundred years later, unfortunately, many people are unaware of the sacred history of sankirtana and view the devotees’ street chanting as foolish. As Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvati Thākura told Śrila Prabhupāda, a kirtana party playing karatālas and mrdanga drums on a street corner may be heard for one or two blocks, but the printing press is “the big mrdanga”; it can be heard all over the world.

Therefore Śrila Prabhupāda wanted his disciples to make publishing and distributing Krṣṇa conscious literature their first priority, even at the risk of sometimes committing the offense of “preaching the glories of the Lord to the faithless.” At the end of the Bhagavad-gītā (18.67), Krṣṇa told Arjuna:

\[
\text{idam te nātapaskāya/ nābhaktāya kadācana} \\
\text{na ca suśrūṣave vācyanī/ na ca mām abhyāsīyati}
\]

“This confidential knowledge should not be explained to those who are not austere, or devoted, or engaged in devotional service, nor to one who is envious of Me.” Despite this direct injunction from Lord Krṣṇa Himself, Śrila Prabhupāda chose to present Bhagavad-gītā As It Is, aiming at the most general possible audience, and he had his disciples print and sell millions of copies in English and dozens of other languages. In this regard Śrila Prabhupāda commented that the Vaiṣṇava acāryas, representatives of the Supreme Lord, sometimes show even more mercy than the Lord Himself: “The Lord explicitly forbade the Gītā’s being spoken to those who are envious of the Lord. In other words, the Bhagavad-gītā is for the devotees only. But it so happens that sometimes a devotee of the Lord will hold open class, and in that class not all the students are expected to be devotees. Why do such persons hold open class? It is explained here that although everyone is not a devotee, still there are many men who are not envious of Krṣṇa. . . . Simply by hearing the Bhagavad-gītā, even a person who does not try to be a pure devotee attains the result of righteous activities” (Bhagavad-gītā As It Is, purport to 18.71).

So we humbly suggest to our readers who do not consider themselves Vaiṣṇavas, please approach this book with respect for Śrila Jiva Gosvāmī and the authorities he cites. Let the book speak for itself. Carefully study Śrila Jiva’s arguments and you will find that they are very reasonable, consistent, and illuminating.

**Purport by BBT Translators**

**Qualifications of the Reader**

Here Śrila Jiva Gosvāmī defines the *adhikārī*, the person qualified to read Śrī Śat-sandarbha. Śrī Jiva is writing only for those whose sole desire is to serve Lord Krṣṇa. He bars all others from reading this work. What prompts him to do so is not fear that critics will find defects in his work; since he is working under the order and supervision of learned Vaiṣṇavas, namely Rūpa Gosvāmī and Sanātana Gosvāmī, and since all his statements will be based on scripture, there is no
question of defects. Rather, it is out of compassion that Jīva Gosvāmī says that the Śat-sandarbha “may be studied only by one whose sole desire is to serve the lotus feet of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.” His intention is to prohibit those who have no desire to engage in devotional service from reading his book. In the Śat-sandarbha he intends to establish the glories of the Supreme Personality of Godhead with great logic and force and with scriptural reference. Such a book will displease those who have no desire to be devoted to the Supreme Lord, since they cannot tolerate His glorification. If such persons happen to read this book, they may become offensive toward the Lord and His devotees and thus bring hellish miseries upon themselves. For their benefit, therefore, Śrī Jīva pens this statement forbidding them to read Śrī Śat-sandarbha.

In the Bhagavad-gītā (18.67), Lord Kṛṣṇa imposes[dDB11] a similar restriction on Arjuna:

\[
\text{idām te nātапaskāya nābhaktāya kādācana} \\
\text{na cāsūrūṣave vācyam na ca mām yo 'bhyasyāyati}
\]

“This confidential knowledge may never be explained to those who are not austere, or devoted, or engaged in devotional service, nor to one who is envious of Me.”

In this Text the word eka (“only”) significantly means that even among those desiring to render service to Lord Kṛṣṇa, none should harbor personal ambition in his heart and misuse Śrī Śat-sandarbha for gaining profit, adoration, and distinction.

Finally, here Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī indicates indirectly that in Śrī Śat-sandarbha he will establish service to Lord Kṛṣṇa as the supreme goal of life.

**TEXT 7**

\[
\text{atha natvā mantra-gurūn} \\
\text{gurūn bhāgavatārtha-dān} \\
\text{śrī-bhāgavata-sandarbham} \\
\text{sandarbham vaśmi lekhitum}
\]

**Gopiparanadhana**: Now I bow down to my initiating spiritual master and to my spiritual masters who taught me the meaning of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. Having done this, I declare my desire to present this encyclopedic work, Śrī Bhāgavata-sandarbha.

**BBT**: After offering obeisances to my initiating spiritual master and to those spiritual masters who taught me the meaning of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, I wish to
write this book called Śrī Bhāgavata-sandarbha.

Purport by Gopiparanadhana prabhu

There is ancient precedent in the rituals of Vedic sacrifice for declaring one’s sankalpa or solemn intent to carry out some sacred work. A brāhmaṇa who has uttered the sankalpa at the beginning of a fire sacrifice is obliged to maintain his adherence to truth by finishing the sacrifice at any cost. In the complex soma sacrifices, the yajamāna—the person for whom the sacrifice is being performed—chants the sankalpa-mantras and accepts a danda (wooden rod) symbolic of his vow and a deer-skin on which he must sit throughout the ritual performances to remain purified.

The infrequently used word sandarbha, which appears in the title of the Bhāgavata-sandarbha and also again in this verse separately as a descriptive term, has been defined as follows (anonymously):

\[
gūḍhārthasya prakāśaḥ ca sāroktih śreṣṭhatā tathā
nānārtha-vatvam vedyatvam/ sandarbhaḥ kathyate budhaih
\]

“The wise call a composition sandarbha when it elucidates a deep subject matter, focuses directly on essentials, is excellently composed, conveys various complex ideas and is readily understandable.” In a more general sense sandarbha can also mean simply “a written work.” It is likely that no other author has used the word in the title of a book.

Purport by BBT Translators

After showing reverence to his teachers, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī names his book in this verse. He calls it Śrī Bhāgavata-sandarbha because in it he will explain the essential meanings of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa (Srimad-Bhāgavatam). To explain the term sandarbha, in his commentary on this Text Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūsana quotes a well-known verse of unknown origin:

\[
gūḍhārthasya prakāśaḥ ca sāroktih śreṣṭhatā tathā
nānārtha-vatvam vedyatvam sandarbhaḥ kathyate budhaih
\]

“A literary work that explains the confidential aspects of a subject, incorporates its essence, explains the superiority of the subject, gives its various meanings, and is worth learning is called a sandarbha by learned scholars.”

The Bhāgavata-sandarbha is also called the Śat-sandarbha because it contains six books, the Tattva-, Bhagavat-, Paramātma-, Krṣna-, Bhakti-, and Pṛti-sandarbha. Each sandarbha is an analysis of the subject stated in its title, and each is based on Srimad-Bhāgavatam. Śrīlā Jīva Gosvāmī also wrote a verse-by-verse commentary on Srimad-Bhāgavatam called the Krama-sandarbha, and this is sometimes referred to
as the seventh sandarbha.

Both Vaisnavas and others have written many essays and treatises on Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, but among them all these six works stand as the most exhaustive exposition of the Bhāgavata philosophy. His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda joined all the other acāryas coming in succession after Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī in praising him as the greatest Vaisnava philosopher of all time. Śrīla Prabhupāda called Śrī Śat-sandarbha “the last word on the teachings of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu.” Thus it is clear that Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī is perfectly justified in giving the title sandarbha to his work.

In the next Text, while giving blessings to his readers, Jiva Gosvāmī indirectly explains the subject matter of the Śat-sandarbha, the process presented in the book by which one can attain the goal, and the goal itself.

TEXT 8

yasya brahmeti samjñāṁ kvacid api nigame yāti cin-mātra-sattāpy amśo yasyāṁśakaiḥ svair vibhavati vaśayann eva māyāṁ punāṁś ca ekaṁ yasyaiva rūpaṁ vilasati parama-vyomni nārāyanākhyam sa śrī-kṛṣṇo vidhātāṁ svayam iha bhagavān prema tat-pāda-bhajāṁ

Gopiparanadhana: Lord Kṛṣṇa’s abstract feature of pure spiritual existence often goes by the name Brahman in the texts of the Vedas. His partial expansion as the Lord of creation regulates the material nature (Māyā) and exerts His control through further personal expansions. A single manifestation of His personality, called Nārāyaṇa, rules sovereign in the transcendental sky beyond this universe. May that same Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, be pleased to grant pure love for Himself to those who worship His lotus feet in this world.

BBT: The feature of Lord Kṛṣṇa as pure consciousness, without any manifest characteristics, is called Brahmaṇ in some portions of the Vedas. In another feature He expands as the Puruṣa, who controls the external potency, Māyā, by His many plenary portions. In yet another of His principal forms He is present as Nārāyaṇa in the spiritual sky, Vaikunṭha. May that Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, bestow love for Himself on those who worship His lotus feet in this world.

Purport by Gopiparanadhana prabhu

With this verse Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī concludes his mangalācarana. Here he praises Lord Kṛṣṇa, wishes the blessing of love of God on His devotees, and also leads directly into the main discussion of Śrī Bhāgavata-sandarbha, since the revelation
of Kṛṣṇa and His expansions and energies constitutes the whole substance of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. Throughout the Sandarbhas, especially in Śrī Kṛṣṇa-sandarbha, Śrīla Jīva will elaborate in great detail upon everything he mentions in this verse.

This verse mentions three different manifestations of the Absolute Truth realized by various seekers and identifies all three as expansions of the original Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Some understand the Absolute Truth abstracted from His personality, as the perfect source of all existence, one without a second. The Upaniṣads teach this view, which appeals to philosophers who prefer that the truth remain impersonal. Others conceive the same Supreme as nothing more than the creator of this world, for they cannot imagine that God has more important business of His own. Still others strive to know the Supreme in His form as Nārāyaṇa (Viṣṇu), Lord of the infinite spiritual world and object of worship for devotees awestruck by His supremacy. Ultimately, however, the Absolute Truth is Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Person, who shares intimate exchanges with the best of His devotees, placing Himself in positions equal to and even subordinate to theirs. Only those who have taken shelter of the Absolute Truth in this original, most confidential form can experience pure love of God. Technically, one may also call love of God in official reverence purely, but it is not of the same transcendental order of perfection as that experienced by Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s associates. Fear of God as the creator and judge of this world is only peripherally spiritual, and when the Lord’s personality has been relativized and His essence reduced to something nameless and formless, one can no longer have any real relationship with Him at all.

When one perceives the Absolute Truth vaguely, having failed to approach Him with devotion so that He reveals His distinctive personal qualities, one identifies Him impersonally as the perfect existence of pure consciousness. As mentioned above, this level of realization is taught in the Upaniṣads, the special portions of the Vedas that comprise their philosophical culmination (Vedānta). In the Upaniṣads we find such statements as satyam jñānam anantam brahma (“The Absolute Truth is real existence and consciousness, unlimited”; Taittiriya Up. 2.1) and asity evopaladhavyah (“It can only be known to the extent of saying ‘It exists’”; Kaṭha Up. 6.13). In this way the Vedas provide an impersonal understanding of the Supreme. But those who are empowered with the vision of pure devotion can also perceive the personality of the Supreme in these Upanisadic statements. In fact, the Upaniṣads specify many qualities of the Absolute Truth that it should not have if it were purely impersonal. For example, the Taittiriya Upaniṣad follows its statement that “Brahman is real existence and consciousness, unlimited” with a detailed description of Brahman as ānanda-maya, “ecstatic,” and as rasa, “the taste of personal reciprocations”: raso vai sah, rasam hy ayaṁ labdhvānandī bhavāti (“He is the reservoir of pleasure; one who realizes Him as rasa also becomes ecstatic,” Taittiriya Up. 2.7).

God as the creator of this world is called the Puruṣa or Pumān. He is an expanded form of Kṛṣṇa named Kāranodakaśāyi Viṣṇu, the Personality of Godhead sleeping in the spiritual Causal Ocean. He is the Lord of Māyā, material nature, and exerts His absolute control over her simply by glancing at her once, agitating her
equilibrium by injecting the countless conditioned living entities into the millions of egglike material universes that have emanated from the pores of His own body. Into each of these universal eggs Lord Viṣṇu enters as His further expansion, Garbhodakasāyī Viṣṇu, who lies down in the water that fills the bottom half of the universal shell and directs the subsequent evolution of creation. Through the Garbhodakasāyī Viṣṇu in each universe appear the Personality of Godhead's various pastime incarnations—Lord Matsya, Lord Varāha, and many others. The activities of Kāranodakaśāyī Viṣṇu and His expansions constitutes the meaning of the phrase amākaih svair vibhavati vaśayann eva māyām: “[He] regulates the material nature (Māyā) and exerts His control through further personal expansions.”

Lord Nārāyana is the expansion of Krṣṇa who in the infinite realm of Vaikkunṭha rules with inconceivable splendor (vilasa). He is technically called a vilasa expansion of the original Godhead because, although He is in essence fully God, He displays not quite all of Krṣṇa's attributes. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī hints at this vilasa status by using the verb vilasati here. Vaikkunṭha lies beyond the boundaries of material creation; it is the transcendental sky, the perfect, eternal world inhabited by the Supreme Lord, His consorts, and His surrendered servants. All the residents of Vaikkunṭha—both those who never fall to this world and those who have recovered their spiritual status—enjoy the Lord's mercy in the form of opulence equal to His and full facility to serve Him in personal, loving relationships.

God is one. In His original and fullest manifestation He is Krṣṇa, the cowherd boy of Vṛndāvana, and to increase His own pleasure He expands Himself unlimitedly and still remains the same Supreme Person. This original Godhead Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam designates svayam bhagavān:

\[ \text{ete cāmśa-kalāḥ punṣah krṣnas tu bhagavān svayam} \]

“All the above-mentioned incarnations are either plenary portions or portions of the plenary portions of the Lord, but Lord Śrī Krṣṇa is the original Personality of Godhead” (Bhāg. 1.3.28). As Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī will show us in the course of Śrī Bhāgavata-sandarbha, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam recommends with great emphasis, repeatedly and unequivocally, that all success in human life is achieved by attaining pure Krṣṇa consciousness, which is best cultivated through the easy process of hearing and chanting Krṣṇa's glories. Because the practice of Krṣṇa consciousness pleases the Supreme Lord, He gradually frees His devotees from material entanglement and awakens in their hearts their dormant love for Him.

Purport by BBT Translators

The Essence of Śrī Śat-sandarbha

Although one without a second, Lord Śrī Krṣṇa has limitless expansions. His
feature that manifests as dazzling effulgence, without form, qualities, or opulences, is called Brahman in some sections of the Vedas. Some transcendentalists worship this undivided, formless aspect of the Absolute, considering it the ultimate reality. For such persons the Absolute Truth, Lord Kṛṣṇa, appears as impersonal Brahman. This feature of the Lord is described in the Taittiriya Upaniṣad (2.1.1): satyam jñānam anantam brahma. “Brahman is eternal, conscious, and unlimited.”

Another aspect of Lord Kṛṣṇa is His controlling feature called the Puruṣa. There are three such Puruṣa expansions. The first is Kāranodakaśayī Viṣṇu, who lies in the Causal Ocean and is the Supersoul of the entire material creation. The Lord has only one Kāranodakaśayī Viṣṇu expansion, also called Mahā-Viṣṇu. He activates the material energy with His glance. The second Puruṣa is Garbhodakaśayī Viṣṇu, the Supersoul expansion within each of the innumerable universes. He is the source of the various līlā-avatāras, the Supreme Lord’s pastime incarnations, who appear in the various universes. The Supreme Lord delegates the responsibility for creating each universe to one of the innumerable Brahmās, each of whom is born from the lotus flower growing from Garbhodakaśayī Viṣṇu’s lotus navel. The third Puruṣa is Kṣīrodakaśayī Viṣṇu, who expands as the Supersoul in all life forms, and indeed in every atom.[DDB12]

These three Puruṣāvatāras are also called Saṅkarsana, Pradyumna, and Aniruddha, respectively. Kṛṣṇa controls the material nature through the agency of His Puruṣa incarnations. A summary description of these three Puruṣa manifestations is given in the Sātvata-tantra (cited by Rūpa Gosvāmi in his Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta 1.25):

visnos tu trini rūpāni puruṣākhyaṁ ato viduh
ekam tu mahatāh sraṣṭr dvitiyam tv anda-samsthitam
tṛtiyam sarva-bhūta-stham tāni jñātāṁ vimucyyate

“Lord Viṣṇu has three forms called Puruṣas. The first is Mahā-Viṣṇu, who is the creator of the total material energy [mahat], the second is Garbhodakaśayī Viṣṇu, who is situated within each universe, and the third is Kṣīrodakaśayī, who lives in the heart of every living being. He who knows these three becomes liberated from the clutches of Māyā.”

Beyond the material creation is the spiritual sky (para-vyoma), which contains the various spiritual planets, called Vaikuṇṭhas. The chief Deity in the spiritual sky is Lord Nārāyaṇa, a vilāsa expansion of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta (1.15) defines a vilāsa form as follows:

svarūpam anyākāram yat tasya bhāti vilāsataḥ
prāyenātma-samam śaktyā sa vilāsa nigadyate

“When the Lord expands into a form that appears different from His original form but has almost all His original qualities, that form is called a vilāsa expansion.”

Lord Kṛṣṇa in His two-handed form is svayam bhagavān, the original Personality of Godhead. This svayam-rūpa is described in the Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta (1.12):
ananyāpeksi yad rūpaṁ svayam-rūpaḥ sa ucyate. “That form of the Supreme Lord which is not a dependent expansion of some other form is called svayam-rūpa, a 'self-sufficient form.'” The Lord's svayam-rūpa is grounded in itself and is the basis of all other forms. It is completely independent, second to no other form. In Śrī Kṛṣṇa-sandarbha Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmi will explain all this in greater detail. Here he briefly describes the essence of Śrimad-Bhāgavatam, giving us a seed that he will cultivate until it gradually grows into the tree of Śrī Bhāgavata-sandarbha.

Words have an integral relationship with their meaning, or reference, and in Sanskrit linguistics this relationship is called vācyavācaka-sambandha. Similarly, a book has an integral relationship with its subject through the meanings of the words that constitute it. In the present Text the phrase sa krṣnah indicates that svayam bhagavān, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is the subject (viṣaya) of the Sat-sandarbha. By this phrase Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmi establishes the vācyavācaka-sambandha between his book and the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

The process (abhidheya) for realizing Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is devotional service to His lotus feet, a fact indicated by the words tat-pāda-bhājām. The purpose (prayojana) of this process is to attain love of Godhead, indicated by the word prema. In this way Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmi here alludes to the four introductory topics mentioned in Text 1: the subject of the book, the book’s relationship with the subject, the process of achieving the final purpose, and the final purpose itself. In the next Text he explicitly states these four and explains the means of acquiring valid knowledge about them.

TEXT 9


Translation

Gopiparanadhana: The previous verse has alluded to a few topics: Śrī Kṛṣṇa; sambandha, or the relation between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the words that describe Him; abhidheya, what is enjoined to be done, or in other words the recommended practice of worshiping Him; and prayojana, the final goal, which is love for Him.

Before we can elucidate these topics we must first settle the question of pramāṇa; i.e., we must determine a reliable means of ascertaining facts. To start with, an ordinary person’s means of knowing—sensory perception and so on—are imperfect: they are tainted by his four defects, beginning with incorrect judgment, and moreover they are simply inadequate for establishing contact with a reality
whose nature is supramundane and inconceivable.

BBT: Four topics were suggested in the previous Text: Śri Krṣna as the subject (visaya), the connection between Him and the words describing Him (sambandha), service to Him as the recommended process to be performed (abhidheya or vidheya), and pure love for Him as the final purpose (prayojana).

Now, to understand these topics we should first determine the means of acquiring valid knowledge. Human beings are bound to have four defects: They are subject to delusion, make mistakes, tend to cheat, and have imperfect senses. Thus their direct perception, inference, and so forth are deficient, especially since these means of knowing cannot help them gain access to the inconceivable spiritual reality.

Purport by Gopiparanadhana prabhu

After invoking auspiciousness in his maṅgalācarana, the author of a work of philosophy in the brahminical tradition is next expected to justify his book by stating how it fulfills the anubandha-catuṣṭaya, or “four prerequisites.” These requirements are often said to comprise visaya, sambandha, adhidheya, and prayojana: The author should establish his viṣaya, “subject matter,” showing that the book he is writing has a specific, well-defined topic. He should show the sambandha, or “connection” between the topic (vācya, what needs to be described in words) and his book (vācaka, the words that fulfill this need), convincing the readers that his presentation is going to be relevant to the stated subject and adequately explain it. He should also indicate the adhidheya, the practical method he will provide so that his readers can realize the subject, and the prayojana, the higher purpose to be achieved by this realization.

Systematic thought in India is called darśana (“vision”), a word with different connotations than the Greek term philosophia (“love of knowledge”). Indian philosophy is generally intended not for amateurs but for those who are serious about achieving their own full potential in life. In other words, one who practices philosophy should aim at some form of substantial self-realization. Therefore a serious work in any school of darśana should not only theoretically describe its topic but also relate it to the readers’ self-realization under the headings of abhidheya and prayojana. This requirement implies that an author claiming to be an authority on darśana should be fully realized himself, at least within the scope of his topic. Since he is responsible for teaching his readers the effective means by which they can achieve a definite goal, he will be regarded as unreliable if he is only speculating about his subject.

In this first prose anuccheda (“section”) of Śrī Bhāgavata-sandarbha, Śrila Jiva Gosvāmī points out that the preceding verse has already stated the anubandha-catuṣṭaya. Śrī Krṣna is the subject of the Bhāgavatam and of the Sandarbhas. The Bhāgavatam is fully competent to describe Krṣna—His personality and expanded energies—and the Sandarbhas will be an exposition of the Bhāgavatam by an
experienced and authorized representative of a Bhāgavata school whose eminent members include Madhva Muni and Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Śrīla Jiva's words in the preceding verse, sa kṛṣṇah and bhagavān iha svayam ("that same Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead"), concisely express that Kṛṣṇa as He is portrayed in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is Himself the Absolute Truth in all its aspects, personal and impersonal, complete and partial. In the same final line of the verse, the phrase tat-pāda-bhajām ("for those who worship His lotus feet") describes in essence the recommended means for realizing Śrī Kṛṣṇa, i.e., the standard method of bhakti-yoga, devotional service, which begins with hearing and chanting about Him. The word prema identifies the final goal achieved by bhakti-yoga, namely transcendental love for Kṛṣṇa, in which a devotee enjoys his own personal relationship with the Lord forever.

The overall plan of the Sandarbhās is as follows: The first sandarbha, Śrī Tattva-sandarbha, will prove the sambandha; this is Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmi's thesis that Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the most appropriate source of useful knowledge in Kali-yuga and that it thoroughly describes Lord Kṛṣṇa. The Bhāgavata-, Paramātma-, Kṛṣṇa- and Bhakti-sandarbhas will explain the methods of devotional thought and activity on the basis of statements from Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. and the Pṛti-sandarbha will discuss pure love of God according to the Bhāgavatam.

But, as Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmi says here, “before we can elucidate these topics we will first have to settle the question of pramāṇa.” We need to ascertain how, in general, human beings can arrive at a correct understanding of things. Pramāṇa, as defined in the epistemology of the Nyāya darśana, means pramāṇa-karana, “an instrumental cause of true knowledge” (Nyāya-bhāṣā 5). “True knowledge” (pramāṇa) is further defined as yathārthānubhava, “perception that agrees with the facts” (Nyāya-bhāṣā 7). (Nyāya authors have also given analytic definitions for “instrumental cause,” “perception” and several other connected terms, but we need not deal with these here.) The Nyāya theory of pramāṇa is accepted by Vaiṣṇava acāryas with some modifications, but it is not the only version; each school of thought in India has its own conception of pramāṇa and pramāṇa—what true knowledge is, to what extent it can be achieved, and how. Buddhist logicians, for example, do not like to define true knowledge as a correspondence to real things because they deny that any “things”, that any reality extends in time and space beyond the raw phenomena of each separate moment. Buddhists instead define truth in terms of consistency and of capacity to inspire purposeful activity: avisamvādakam jñānam samyag jñānam (“True knowledge is knowledge which does not create contradiction”; Nyāya-bindu 1).

Vedic philosophers also differ concerning what the valid pramāṇas are. In the Sarva-samvādini Śrī Jiva Gosvāmi mentions ten different pramāṇas accepted by various philosophic schools. Śrī Jiva states, in agreement with other Vaiṣṇavas and Vedāntists, that only the first three of these are primary, the other seven being derivative applications of them. The most basic pramāṇa is sensory perception (pratyakṣa). When one of our senses contacts its object and our mind chooses to give the received sensation attention, knowledge has been created. Within its natural limits this knowledge should be considered valid, as long as the senses and
mind are functioning properly. Since all the other pramānas start from pratyakṣa and extend it, they depend on its validity. One who insists on always distrust ing the evidence of his senses will have no basis for participating in philosophy or, for that matter, in any meaningful aspect of life.

The second major pramāna is logical inference (anumāna), the instrument of knowing that recognizes an unperceived fact on the basis of the its being known to accompany another fact that is perceived. The Nyāya school often gives the following classic example:
1. There is fire on the mountain.
2. The reason is that there is smoke.
3. Wherever there is smoke there is fire, as in a kitchen.
4. Indeed, on the mountain there is smoke.
5. Therefore there is fire on the mountain.

This example uses the five-step style of syllogism preferred by the Nyāya logicians: First, the claim to be proven is stated (pratijñā). Second, the observed fact that will prove it (hetu) is stated. Third, the general premise (vyāpti) is stated—that what is to be proven is a fact whenever the hetu occurs, and at least one instance of this combination is cited (udāharana). Citing an instance (“as in a kitchen”) roots the argument in concrete reality and makes it difficult to introduce absurd arguments. (Without this provision, “formal” logic as practiced by Western philosophers and the Buddhists has to recognize as valid arguments like “All flowers in the sky are pink,” because formally “A implies B” is false only in the case that A is true and B false; “A is a flower in the sky” is always false, so the inference is always true.) Fourth, the reason is confirmed to be present in the specific situation under consideration (upanayana). Finally, the conclusion is drawn that in situation under consideration what was to be proven is true (nigamana). An inference is considered valid when none of its constituents is defective, but outside of pure mathematics and trivial arguments there is always an element of uncertainty about the vyāpti, in this case the general premise that “wherever there is smoke there is fire.” Such a premise is necessarily based on induction—the accumulation of enough experience in kitchens and other places to allow one to believe that whenever there is smoke there is fire—and this kind of reasoning is never completely certain. Modern science suffers from this same unavoidable weakness.

It is theoretically possible to create a philosophy that accepts the validity only of pratyakṣa-pramāna, sense perception. The version of materialism ascribed to Cārvaka Muni was one attempt to do this. Cārvaka is said to have denied both logic and the law of karma. He is famous for preaching,

\[
\text{rnam kṛtvā gḥtam pibet jīved yāvat sukham jīvet}
\]
\[
\text{bhasmi-bhūtasya dehasya kim punar-āgamō bhavet}
\]

“Eat ghee even if you have to go into debt for it. As long as you are alive, live happily. After your body has been burned to ashes, how will it ever return to this world again?” A world-view without inference is very limited, however, and invites ridicule from rival philosophers:
cārvāka tava cārv-āngī jārato vikṣya garbhiniṁ
pratyakṣa-mātra-viśvāso ghāna-śvāsan kim ujjhāsi

“My dear follower of Čārvaka, since you have faith only in the direct evidence of your senses, why are you sighing so deeply to see your lovely wife, now pregnant by some other man?” (Vedānta-syamantaka 1.6)

Buddhist logicians recognize only pratyakṣa and anumāna as valid pramānas. In their opinion, only immediate sense perception is strictly speaking reliable but inference can also be put to practical use although it is founded on the mere useful fictions of persistent things and general categories.

The third pramāna, called śabda, was never accepted by the Indian materialists and Buddhists, and it is also little understood by us in the modern world, where we have been conditioned by the predominance of science and critical thought. A standard definition of śabda-pramāna is āpta-vākyā, “the words of a reliable authority.” Who is a reliable authority depends on what field of knowledge is being studied. If one’s mother is a simple woman with no reason to deceive, she can be trusted as an authority on who one’s father is. Any honest person who has seen things we have not should be trusted to provide us information otherwise difficult or impossible to obtain. Everyone relies on such knowledge from āpta-vākyā in day-to-day life, even those who proudly declare they have no faith in any authority.

According to the Sarva-samvādini, these are the other pramānas proposed by various schools:
(4) Ārṣa, the authority of sages. Knowledge gleaned through this pramāna is based on statements by gods and rṣis. Ārṣa is just a kind of śabda-pramāna.
(5) Upamāna, analogy. Using this pramāna, one can derive knowledge from such comparisons as “the creature called a gavaya is similar to a cow.” A forest-dweller may tell this to a city-dweller who has no knowledge of gavayas, and when the city-dweller visits the forest and sees a gavaya the analogy will give him correct understanding. Upamāna is thus an application of śabda and pratyakṣa.
(6) Arthāpatti, conjecture from an otherwise unexplainable situation. Devadatta is fat, but no one ever sees him eat during the day, so therefore he must be eating at night. This kind of reasoning is a form of anumāna, sometimes called negative hypothetical deduction.
(7) Abhāva, nonexistence. This pramāna gives knowledge of an object’s absence from the fact of not seeing it. Abhāva has been analyzed as a special variety of pratyakṣa, where the object of perception is not a positive thing but the absence itself.[DDB14]
(8) Sambhava, inclusion. When we conclude that someone with a thousand dollars also possesses a hundred dollars, we are employing sambhava to acquire knowledge. This pramāna is a form of simple mathematical deduction.
(9) Aitihya, tradition. We employ this pramāna when we receive knowledge through a chain of informants without knowing the original speaker. Aitihya can be identified as śabda if in fact we can establish the reliability of the authority
without even knowing his identity.

(10) Čestā, gesture. When we make something known by literally pointing at it, we are employing čestā. This is a tacit variation of sabda together with pratyakṣa.

Śrī Bhāgavata-sandarbha is concerned with the highest kind of knowledge obtainable, personal realization of the Absolute Truth. Śrī Jñāna Gosvāmī emphatically asserts in the present anuccheda that for this purpose all pramāṇas are unreliable in the hands of imperfect humans. Every person in this world tends to make four kinds of mistakes in perceptive judgment: bhrama, confusing one thing for another, as when one sees a tree at dusk and thinks it is a man; pramāda, inattentiveness because of having one's attention turned elsewhere, as when one fails to notice that someone close by is singing a song; vipralipsā, [DDB15] the desire to deceive others, as when a teacher fails to divulge some useful information to his students; and karanāpātava, weakness of the senses, as when even with a focused mind one cannot discern some object. Because of these natural faults, it is impossible for any mortal to be [DDB16] perfectly reasonable on his own strength, no matter how diligently he tries.

Dharma, the eternal principles of human responsibility, stood originally like a mighty bull with four legs—self-control, cleanliness, mercy, and truthfulness. Each yuga in the cycle of four has seen a loss of one of these legs of dharma, to the point where now only one leg remains in Kali-yuga, respect for truth. Thus in our materialistic age science is the predominant belief system. We are supposed to have faith in the collective endeavor of the scientific community, trusting that science will eventually succeed in conquering nature for the perfect, eternal happiness of mankind. We are encouraged to assume that the truths science gives us are firm and unquestionable. But this faith is naive: like every other human pramāṇa, the inductive scientific method is prone to error. Fifty years ago, the findings of medical research indicated that tobacco smoke was harmless to the human body and even beneficial for the lungs and heart. Backed up by the best available scientific findings of the day, a cigarette company in 1945 could hire Ronald Reagan to dress as a doctor in magazine advertisements and recommend that his patients could improve their health by smoking more cigarettes. This mistake due to the weakness of anumāna-pramāṇa has resulted in untold suffering for millions.

The ordinary means of acquiring knowledge are especially inadequate for learning about the Absolute Truth, which is not a measurable thing of this world and which refuses to reveal itself to speculators and skeptics. Although physical scientists may claim to know the basic laws of nature, knowledge of these laws reveals only the relative truths of how mechanical forces interact and how we can manipulate them for our own aims. Such incomplete knowledge falls far short of knowledge of the absolute Truth, which requires knowing not only how to use things but also what their ultimate causes and purposes are. The laws of physics tell us how to measure and predict the physical forces at work among objects, but they say nothing about what or who first brought these forces into being, nor about why these forces and objects exist.
Many consider Henry Ford one of the practical geniuses of the twentieth century. He foresaw the usefulness of mass-produced automobiles and devised the means to realize this vision. He saw a desirable purpose in this, better mobility for the common citizen, but his material vision could not foresee other, unexpected results of the automobile. Hundreds of thousands of unmarried couples would use it for parking in secluded places, resulting in hundreds of thousands of unwanted births and abortions. Domiciles and workplaces would be separated by up to a hundred miles, causing great inconvenience and social dislocation. In cities around the world, the air would be filled with carcinogens and other poisons. And all due to the inadequacies of *anumāna-pramāṇa*.

A basic premise of spiritual science is that there is a unity underlying all existence, an Absolute Truth, and that thus everything has definite causes and purposes. As long as human intelligence ignores this premise, it remains sadly inadequate.

**Purport by BBT Translators**

**Vaiṣṇava Epistemology**

Without knowing the purpose of a book, a prospective reader is unlikely to take a keen interest in it, so in the previous Text Śrīla Jiva Gosvami outlines his subject and purpose. Now, with the phrase *tad-bhajana-laksana-vidheya*, he states that devotional service as explained in the Vedic scriptures is the process for achieving the final goal, *prema-bhakti*. But before one practices any important process he should have correct knowledge about it. Thus the need arises for discerning the various means of acquiring valid knowledge. This portion of *Tattva-sandarbha* therefore deals with Vaiṣṇava epistemology. Jiva Gosvami first establishes the validity of his means of acquiring knowledge before analyzing the four topics mentioned in the previous Text. In English the word “knowledge” means valid knowledge. In Sanskrit, valid knowledge is called *pramāṇa*, and a means of acquiring it is called *pramāṇa*. Sometimes the word *pramāṇa* is used to mean “proof,” “evidence,” or “authority.”

Jiva Gosvami is concerned with establishing an infallible means of acquiring knowledge. Ordinary human beings use various means to acquire knowledge, but none of these is infallible. This fallibility is due to the four inherent defects found in all ordinary humans. Without exception every ordinary human being has the tendency to be deluded (*bhrama*), makes mistakes (*pramāda*), has a cheating propensity (*vipralipsa*), and has imperfect senses (*karanāpāṭava*).

*Bhrama*, or mistaken identification, is of two kinds. The first is identification of the body as the self. Everyone is born with this delusion, but how completely we identify with our body depends on our attachment to it. Because of this defect we mistake the temporary, [*DDB17*]miserable sense objects as permanent sources of pleasure. The second kind of mistaken identification occurs when we think we perceive something that in fact is not present, as in the case of a mirage or hallucination.
Pramāda, the second of the four defects, is our tendency to become deluded because of inattention. If our mind is not connecting with a particular perceiving sense—the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, or skin—we do not get the knowledge it can supply. For example, we may sit through a lecture but miss portions of it because our mind is wandering.

The third defect is vipralipsā, the propensity to cheat. Material conditioning causes us to consider ourselves the material body, which, being temporary, can never give us real happiness. But still out of delusion we seek happiness through sense gratification. When we fail to obtain this to our full satisfaction, we take to cheating to improve our chances. Friends cheat friends, politicians cheat the public, and so on. Even in spiritual life a so-called guru will cheat his disciple [DDB18]by teaching some materialistic philosophy as the absolute truth, or an insincere disciple will try to cheat his guru by pretending to follow the guru’s orders when he’s not. This cheating propensity manifests on all levels of material existence.

The last of the four defects is karanāpātava, imperfect senses. We have five perceptive senses—the eyes, ears, tongue, nose, and skin. Each of these functions only within a limited range. The human eye, for instance, can see light between infrared and ultraviolet wavelengths, but there are many other wavelengths the eye cannot discern—radio waves, x-rays, and so on. Even within the visible range our eyes cannot see clearly if the light is too bright or too dim, if the object is too far or too close, or if the eyes themselves are diseased[DDB19]. Upon analysis, each sense will reveal a similar built-in limitation.

The conclusion is that since these four defects make perfectly reliable knowledge about material objects a rare achievement, perfect knowledge about the transcendental realm is altogether impossible by the means we commonly accept. This premise is the cornerstone of Vedic epistemology. Of course, after[DDB20] acknowledging these four defects one will find the quest for a reliable pramāṇa to be an exacting challenge.

Among India’s philosophical traditions there are a total of ten pramāṇas, or means of acquiring valid knowledge. Each philosophical school recognizes a certain combination of these as valid and may present arguments to support its opinion. These ten traditional pramāṇas, with the three most important ones listed last, are as follows:

1. Ārśa: the statements of an authoritative sage or demigod. There are many exceptional sages, such as Kapila, Gautama, and Patañjali, who founded their own schools of philosophy. Naturally these authorities’ opinions differ, and therefore the Mahābhārata (Vana-parva 313.117) says, nāsāv rṣir yasya matain na bhinnam: “One is not considered a philosopher if his opinion does not differ from the opinions of other philosophers.” Since these philosophers are all profound thinkers, we take their utterances seriously, but an ordinary person can hardly determine which philosopher’s opinion is correct. For Vaiśṇavas, the criterion for
judging whether a particular ārṣa opinion is valid is whether it conforms to the principal pramāṇas (numbers 8, 9, and 10 below)[DDB21].

2. Upamāṇa: comparison. We can identify something about which we have no prior knowledge after it has been compared to a familiar object. Suppose we have seen an ordinary cow but never a gavaya (forest cow), and someone tells us that a gavaya resembles a cow. Then we may recognize a gavaya when we see one.

3. Arthāpatī: presumption. By this means we assume an unknown fact or facts to account for some known fact or facts that are otherwise inexplicable. For example, if we know that fat Devadatta does not eat during the day, we can safely assume he must eat at night. Otherwise his stoutness is inexplicable.

4. Abhāva: absence. Failing to perceive an object by means of a suitable sense is considered perception of the absence of that object. For example, a book is a suitable object for visual perception, and the eyes constitute the suitable means for this perception. Thus when one does not see a book on a table, one is experiencing the book’s absence. Such abhāva is classified as a separate category of perception because in it there is no actual contact between the object and the sense instrument, as there would be in ordinary sensory perception. What is perceived is the object’s absence.

5. Sambhava: inclusion. This pramāṇa is based on our common experience that a larger quantity includes some smaller quantity. For example, if we know someone possesses a hundred dollars, we automatically know he possesses one dollar, five dollars, ten dollars, and so on. This kind of reasoning, based on the principle of inclusion, is called sambhava.

6. Aitihya: tradition. This pramāṇa is applied when some accepted fact is known by common belief or tradition but the original source of that knowledge is unknown. For instance, there is a popular belief that the Pāṇḍavas built the Old Fort in what is now New Delhi. There is no written proof or scriptural authority to support this belief, but it has been passed down for generations to the present day and is nearly universally accepted as corresponding to fact.

7. Cēṣṭā: gesture. This pramāṇa comes into play when one learns something from a knowledgeable person’s gestures or from symbols. For instance, we may make a “V” sign with our fingers to indicate victory, or a pujārī may show the Deity mudrās to convey certain messages.

8. Pratyakṣa: direct perception. Directly perceiving something with our senses can be the means to either valid or invalid knowledge. But only that sense perception which leads to valid knowledge should be considered pramāṇa. Sense perception is the principal means of acquiring knowledge in this material world. Both theistic and atheistic philosophers accept pratyakṣa-pramāṇa as one of the means to valid knowledge. Direct perception is of two types—external and internal. An external perception occurs when we acquire knowledge through the senses. In an internal perception we acquire knowledge directly through the mind, as when we perceive
emotions such as pain, pleasure, love, and hate. In the Bhagavad-gītā (15.7) Lord Kṛṣṇa lists the mind as the sixth sense (manah-saṭṭhāndriyānī).

Because of our four inherent human defects, pratyakṣa is not always a reliable means with which to acquire valid knowledge. For one thing, its scope is limited only to the present, since it cannot extend into the past or future[DDB22]. Moreover, it is limited only to material things. According to Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, however, perfect devotees who achieve direct perception of the Lord, His abode, and His associates through spiritual trance all have pure senses and have transcended the four defects. For such persons pratyakṣa is a reliable source of knowledge because their sense perception is completely pure. Lord Kṛṣṇa confirms this in the Ninth Chapter of the Bhagavad-gītā (9.2) when He says that “this knowledge leads to direct realization of transcendence by experience (pratyakṣāvagamam).” And in the sixth chapter (Bg. 6.21) the Lord likewise assures Arjuna that in the state of transcendental trance, samādhi, a devotee acquires perfect knowledge through his purified intelligence and transcendental senses (buddhi-grāhyaḥ atāndriyam vetti). This experience of pure Vaiṣṇavas is called vaidūṣa-pratyakṣa, and it is flawless.

9. Anumāna: inference based on generalized experience. The word anumāna literally means “knowing after.” Based on repeated experience or authoritative verbal testimony, one arrives at some probable general principle, called vyāpti (“invariable concomitance”). One can then apply this principle in specific cases to deduce unknown facts.

Inference is of two kinds, for oneself and for others. An example of inference for oneself, which is less formal, is the process of reasoning a person goes through when he repeatedly sees, in the kitchen and elsewhere, the concomitance between smoke and fire and arrives at the general principle “Wherever there’s smoke, there’s fire.” Then if he sees smoke hanging over a mountain in the distance, he may recall the principle and conclude, “There is a fire on the mountain.”

Inference for others uses a five-step syllogistic formula. After arriving at an inferred conclusion for himself, a person uses this method to enable others to infer the same conclusion. The syllogistic format is as follows:
1. Proposition: There is a fire on the mountain.
2. Reason: Because there’s smoke..
3. General principle and example: Wherever there’s smoke, there’s fire, as in the kitchen.
4. Application: There is smoke over the mountain.
5. Conclusion: Therefore there is a fire on the mountain.

If there is any error in perceiving the reason or any deviation in the universal generalization, the inference will be faulty and its conclusion unreliable. In the above example, if the observer mistakes clouds over the mountain for smoke or sees the smoke just after rain has extinguished the fire, his deduction that a fire is burning on the mountain will be wrong. Like pratyakṣa, therefore, anumāna is not a foolproof means of acquiring knowledge.
10. Šabda: revealed knowledge. Šabda literally means sound, but as a pramâna it refers to meaningful, articulate sound spoken or written by an āpta-purusa, a trustworthy person who is an authority on the matter in question. In its ultimate sense the term šabda refers to revealed knowledge that concerns the transcendental reality and that has come from reliable authorities free from the four human defects. This kind of šabda differs from the language used in mundane transactions, which is called pauruseya-šabda and is not always reliable. For Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmi, šabda-pramâna is restricted to the revealed knowledge of the Vedas. It is called apauruseya-šabda, revealed knowledge from a superhuman source. It originated with the Supreme Personality of Godhead and is received in disciplic succession from a bona fide guru. Apauruseya-šabda is therefore the perfect pramâna because it is free from the four defects.

At present, people who fail to accept the authority of apauruseya-šabda-pramâna generally fall into two groups: those in the first group doubt the very existence of a transcendental reality beyond the empirical world; those in the second group accept the existence of such a reality, and may even accept the principle of hearing from apauruseya-šabda-pramâna as a means of knowing about it, but unfortunately they also accept one or more pauruseya sources of šabda-pramâna as apauruseya. Members of the first group usually favor knowledge gained through their own sensory experience. Yet like everyone else they constantly rely on knowledge imparted to them through sound. In our practical day-to-day life we depend on knowledge transmitted from parents, teachers, books, magazines, TV, radio, and numerous experts. Hearing from authorities enhances the extent of our learning, and if we were to dispense with it we could not function in our complex modern society. Those who consider sensory experience superior to śabda forget that we gain most of our knowledge by hearing second hand or reading, not by immediate perception. Direct experience is a great teacher, but it is nonetheless severely vitiated by the four human defects, and also by the great expenditure of time it takes to acquire it. Moreover, we cannot directly experience past or future events. So even though those in the first group actually accept the principle of śabda, because the śabda they accept imparts to them only empirical knowledge and is therefore all pauruseya, they remain skeptical about the existence of transcendental reality. Ultimately, no amount of raw sensory experience or pauruseya-śabda can ever give us access to the transcendent, spiritual reality, for it is a simple fact that neither of these means is at all reliable for understanding transcendence. For that, apauruseya-śabda-pramâna is our only hope. This brings us to the second group—those who accept both the existence of a transcendental reality and the principle of hearing from apauruseya-śabda-pramâna to learn about it. For them, Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmi elaborately explains in the next Texts what constitutes genuine apauruseya-śabda-pramâna.

Unlike pratyakṣa, śabda is not limited in scope only to the present time. It extends into the past and future as well. It is the most powerful tool for conveying knowledge from one person to another, especially if they are greatly separated by time or space, which is almost always the case when one wants to understand the spiritual realm. For all these reasons philosophers in virtually all of India's
orthodox traditions accept *apauruṣeya-sabda-pramāṇa* as the flawless means for acquiring transcendental knowledge.

Like other followers of India’s orthodox philosophical traditions, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī (as we have already mentioned[DDB23])[DDB24] calls *apauruṣeya-sabda-pramāṇa* and equates the latter with the Vedas. The Vedas alone can deliver knowledge of the spiritual reality, which lies beyond all our sensory perception. As explained in the next Text, the Vedas are not human creations: they are manifest from the Supreme Lord (*vedo nārāyanah sāksāt; Bhāg. 6.1.40*), who is free from all defects.

In his *Sarva-saṁvādīni*, while discussing the principle of *śabda-pramāṇa*, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī writes: *tathāpi bhrama-pramāṇa-vipralipsā-karanāpātava-dosa-rahitavacanāmakaḥ śabda eva mūlam pramānam. anyesam prāyath puruṣa-bhrāmādi-dosa-mayatayānyathā-prattit-darsanena pramānam vā tād-ābhāṣo vēti puruṣair nirnetum aṣāhyatvāt tasya tād-ābhāvāt.* Although there are ten means of acquiring knowledge, *śabda* is the primary process because all other means are made unreliable by the four human defects. In all other processes it is difficult for an ordinary person to tell whether or not the knowledge gained is valid.

Although different schools of philosophy accept various combinations of the ten *pramāṇas*, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī follows in the footsteps of Madhvācārya by accepting *pratyakṣa* (direct perception), *anumāṇa* (inference) and *śabda* (revealed knowledge) as the only valid means by which one can acquire knowledge and subsuming the other *pramāṇas* under them. *Pratyakṣa* and *anumāṇa* can serve as assistants to *śabda*, but whenever *pratyakṣa* and *anumāṇa* contradict *śabda*, we should give preference to *śabda-pramāṇa*.

Here are some scriptural references showing the importance of these three *pramāṇas*:

\[
\text{pratyakṣaṁ cānumānaṁ ca śāstraṁ ca vividhāgamam} \\
\text{trayāṁ su-viditāṁ kāryaṁ dharma-śuddhām abhīpsatā}
\]

“A person serious about executing the responsibilities of human life should try to understand the three processes of direct perception, inference, and hearing the various Vedic scriptures” (*Manu-saṁhitā* 12.105).

\[
\text{pratyakṣenānumānaṁena nigamenaṁsaṁvīdā} \\
\text{ādy-anta-vad asaj jñātvā nihsango vicared iha}
\]

“[Lord Kṛṣṇa said:] ‘By direct perception, logical deduction, scriptural testimony and personal realization one should know that this world has a beginning and an end and so is not the ultimate reality. Thus one should live in this world without attachment’” (Bhāg. 11.28.9).

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.19.17) Lord Kṛṣṇa includes *aitihya* (tradition) with sense perception, inference, and *śabda* as a means of acquiring knowledge, but in
fact *aitihya* is usually considered a kind of *śabda*, although not necessarily *apaauruseya-sabda*.

By accepting only three of the ten *pramāṇas*, Jiva Gosvāmi does not exclude the other seven. His opinion is that *pratyakṣa*, *anumāṇa*, and *śabda* include the other seven *pramāṇas*, as follows: *Upamāṇa*, *arthāpatti*, *sambhava*, and *ceṣṭā* are varieties of *anumāṇa*; *abhāva* is a kind of *pratyakṣa*; and *ārṣa* and *aitihya* are kinds of *śabda*.

Next Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmi explains the process suitable for determining the *viṣaya* (the subject), the *sambandha* (the connection between the *viṣaya* and the words describing it), and the *prayojana* (the final goal).

**TEXT 10**


**Translation**

**Gopiparanadhana:** Therefore direct perception and so on are unreliable sources of valid knowledge. We want to understand that object which transcends everything and is the shelter of everything, and whose nature no person can conceive or imagine. For this purpose our source of knowledge can only be the *Vedas*, which are comprised of nonmaterial sound. The *Vedas* alone should be our *pramāṇa* because they are [DDB25] externally self-manifest and from them in fact have been derived all departments of knowledge, mundane and spiritual, among all schools of thought in human society since time immemorial.

**BBT:** Consequently, for us who are inquisitive about that which is beyond everything yet the support of everything—that which is most inconceivable and wondrous in nature—direct perception, inference, and so on are not suitable means of gaining knowledge. For this purpose the only suitable means is the *Vedas*, the transcendental words that have been the source of all mundane and spiritual knowledge passed down among all schools of thought in human society since time immemorial.

**Purport by Gopiparanadhana prabhu**

However useful ordinary sense perception, logic, and expert opinion may be in their proper realms, these means of knowing cannot approach the transcendental
reality, which no ordinary person has ever seen or inferred. That higher reality simply cannot be reached by any human capacity; only when it chooses to reveal itself can anyone know it. In Vedic terms, the process of knowing the Absolute Truth must be descending rather than ascending (avaroha-panthā instead of āroha-panthā). The Absolute Truth makes itself known by śabda-pramāṇa (word of authority) that is apauruseya, not created by any mortal being.

Authentic scriptures of various cultures reveal aspects of the Absolute Truth, but among these scriptures the Vedic literature distinguishes itself by the scope of its revelation. The Vedas and their supplements offer a great variety of approaches to the Absolute for people in different situations in life and on different levels of spiritual development. The Vedic corpus includes thousands of separate texts, yet when we carefully study the whole we find it very consistent. Many generations of reputable, discriminating brahmānas have been satisfied to direct their lives according to Vedic authority, not only because their parents did so but because they themselves have experienced the practical benefits. By living according to the Vedic standards of self-control in body and mind, one becomes peaceful, clear-headed, and fit to understand the highest purposes of life.

This anuccheda of Śrī Tattva-sandarbhā calls the Vedas the source of all kinds of knowledge “mundane and spiritual, among all schools of thought in human society since time immemorial.” In other words, all human knowledge comes from the Vedas; the various branches of worldly scholarship and even corrupted and faulty teachings all derive from the original Vedic knowledge. In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.14.3–8) Lord Kṛṣṇa outlines the history of Vedic knowledge in human society:

śrī-bhagavān uvāca
kālena naṣṭā pralaye vāntiyam veda-śaṁjñitā
mayādau brahmaṇe proktā dharma yasyāṁ mad-ātmakaḥ

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: By the influence of time, the transcendental sound of Vedic knowledge was lost at the time of annihilation. Therefore, when the subsequent creation took place, I spoke the Vedic knowledge to Brahmā because I Myself am the religious principles enunciated in the Vedas.

tenā proktā sva-putrāya manave pūrva-jāya sā
tato bhṛgy-ādayo ‘grḥnan sapta brahma-mahāśayāh

“Lord Brahmā spoke this Vedic knowledge to his eldest son, Manu, and the seven great sages headed by Bhṛgu Muni then accepted the same knowledge from Manu.

tebhyah pitr bhṛyas tat-putrā deva-dānava-guhyakāh
manusyaḥ siddha-gandharvāḥ sa-vidyādhara-cāraṇāh
kindevāh kinnarā nāgā rakṣaḥ-kimpuruṣādayāh

“From the forefathers headed by Bhṛgu Muni and other sons of Brahmā appeared
many children and descendants, who assumed different forms as demigods, 
demons, human beings, Guhyakas, Siddhas, Gandharvas, Vidyādharas, Cāranas, 
Kindevas, Kinnaras, Nāgas, Kimpuruśas, and so on.

*bahvyaś teśāṃ prakṛtyayō rajah-sattva-tamo-bhuvah*

*yābhir bhuṭāṇī bhidyante bhūtāṇāṃ patayās tathā*
*yathā-prakṛti sarvēśāṃ citrā vācaḥ sraṇṭi hi*

“All of the many universal species, along with their respective leaders, appeared 
with different natures and desires generated from the three modes of material 
nature. Therefore, because of the different characteristics of the living entities 
within the universe, there are a great many Vedic rituals, *mantras*, and rewards.

*evam prakṛti-vaiścitrā bhidyante matayo nṛṇāṁ*
*pāramparyena heśācit pāśanda-matayo ’pare*

“Thus, due to the great variety of desires and natures among human beings, there 
are many different philosophies of life, which are handed down through tradition, 
culture, custom, and discipic succession. There are other teachers who directly 
support atheistic viewpoints.”

Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣana comments that when it is not *apauruseya*, *śabdam-
pramāṇa* is subject to the human imperfections of ordinary speakers and hearers. 
Each authority presents “final” theories, only to be corrected by his successors. In 
the words of the *Mahābhārata* (*Vana-parva* 313.117), *nāśā vrsir yasya matām na 
*bhinnam* (“No one is considered a sage who does not have his own opinion”).

In his *Sarva-saṁvādinī* Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī has a good deal to say about the 
superiority of *śabda-pramāṇa*, even the *śabda* spoken by ordinary human 
authorities. *Śabda* alone is the basis of all correct knowledge because a person can 
ever be certain that an instance of one of the other *pramāṇas* is not faulty, a 
perverted reflection of the true instrument (*pramāṇa-abhāsa*). *Apauruseya-śabda*, 
however, is free from the influence of the four human defects in perception. 
Therefore all the other *pramāṇas* depend completely on its authority, just as a 
powerful king’s ministers depend completely on his direction and good will. 
*Śabda-pramāṇa* is independent of the other *pramāṇas*. Although sometimes the 
others assist *śabda*, still *śabda* is free to overrule any of them, while the others can 
ever contradict the facts *śabda* has established. *Śabda* alone, moreover, is the only 
effective means for gaining knowledge of matters the other *pramāṇas* cannot 
penetrate.

When employed by an infallible perceiver, however, any *pramāṇa* can be a source 
of reliable knowledge. For example, not only ordinary persons but also those in 
perfect knowledge can exercise *pratyakṣa*, direct sense perception. And the 
*pratyakṣa* of one who uses his senses infallibly, as does God or His faultless 
servant, is undeniable evidence. When the Supreme Lord explains reality as He 
sees it or an inspired messenger of the Lord conveys His *pratyakṣa* without
distortion, we can trust that the words spoken are true. Such infallible pratyakṣa is indeed, is the origin of apauruseya-sabda-pramāṇa. The pratyakṣa of imperfect perceivers, however, is always more or less doubtful. For example, the audience in a movie theater may be fooled by an expertly constructed model of an actor's head and think that the actor has actually been decapitated. Sabda evidence is free from such doubt. The speaker's authority certifies as doubtless statements like “There is snow in the Himalayas” and “There are jewels in this mine,” regardless of the hearers' ignorance about these things. When an expert on special effects explains how a model of the actor's head was constructed for his death scene, the audience has received definitive information and need no longer entertain the idea that the actor was killed. As a matter of epistemological principle, no fact is absolutely certain until an appropriate authority verifies it; in our eclectic age many may not like to acknowledge this principle, but it is natural and in practice even radical skeptics obey it.

Śabda-pramāṇa is independent of the dictates of pratyakṣa. For example, in a place where several others were present, a Vedic teacher asked his student, “How many people do you see here?”

The student counted the teacher and eight others he could see and answered, “Nine.”

“No, think again.”

When the student could not understand what was wrong with his answer, the teacher explained, “There are ten. You are the tenth person.”

In this case a mistaken perception was immediately corrected by an authoritative statement. As soon as it entered the student's ears, his confusion was removed.

Pratyakṣa can render assistance to śabda as far as it is able, as in confirming the authoritative statement “Fire will melt ice.” But in other cases it can do nothing to help, as when a mother says, “My son, you were in my womb in the city of Mathurā.” Sabda can overrule pratyakṣa, as when a person is cured of a snakebite by potent mantras, one of which states, “You were bitten by a snake, but now there is no more poison in you.” Pratyakṣa cannot overrule statements of śabda, such as “Cow dung is pure.” A foreigner visiting India may perceive cow's feces as unclean and be puzzled when he sees it used for cleansing sacred temples, but the Indians all know from traditional authority that actually it is very antiseptic. Sabda alone is also the most effective pramāṇa for gaining knowledge of things that are difficult to see directly; astronomers gladly accept the authority of an ephemeris rather than bother to calculate for themselves the positions of each object in the sky they need to observe.

Someone might suggest that a better standard of truth than appeal to authority is “what everyone's shared perception establishes” (sarva-pratyakṣa-siddham). This definition of truth, however, is impossible to apply; everyone cannot be brought together in one place to share the same perceptions, and it is impossible even in
different locations to conduct a complete survey of everyone’s experience. If the definition is modified to “what the perception of many people establishes” (bahu-pratyakṣa-siddham), then truth can never be certain but will become an object of controversy whenever more knowledgeable judgment disagrees with the majority opinion.

Anumāna (inductive-deductive inference) is also sometimes erroneous, and so it also must yield the place of honor to sabda. An argument’s general premise can be faulty in various ways, as when reasoning involves visama-vyāpti, a too broad or too narrow generalization. One may posit “There is fire on this mountain because there is smoke,” unaware that the billowing smoke seen on the mountain is from a fire that has just a moment before been extinguished by rain. Sabda-pramāna makes up for this innate weakness in anumāna; someone who knows the actual situation better can explain, “My dear cold travelers, don’t expect to find any fire on this mountain, despite the smoke you observe. I just saw the rain extinguish the fire there. But over on that other mountain you will find a fire.”

Some logicians may disagree with this analysis, objecting that in this instance of arguing from smoke to fire the reason (smoke) is not actually present, a fault technically called hetv-ābhāsa (“a defective reason”) of the variety svarūpāsiddha (“inconclusive on the grounds of the cited reason not occurring in the situation”); when all the elements of an inference are free from defect, however, the conclusion is guaranteed to be true. We answer this objection is answered by pointing out that no matter how elegantly we define the theoretical distinctions of defective and nondefective reasons, in real life we can never be fully sure that the reason we give for drawing a conclusion is not defective. There may be any number of conditions under which the appearance of smoke is an insufficient hetu for inferring the presence of fire: what we think is smoke may really be fog, or the mountain may be exuding some poisonous gas. Indeed only after the fact, when we have seen the fire, can we sure that the reason was not defective; what is supposed to prove the conclusion must, conversely, be proven by the conclusion. This is a serious logical fault—mutual dependence of the proven and its proof, or in other words circular reasoning. In addition, the sense perceptions that must precede the construction of an inference may themselves be faulty. For both these reasons, even when one’s logic is formally sound the conclusions one draws may contradict reality.

Sabda-pramāṇa acts independently of anumāṇa in authoritative statements like “You are the tenth person.” Anumāṇa can assist sabda as far as its capacity allows. For example, those who have not heard of the special qualities of diamond may infer that, like other stones, it can be cut by steel. After hearing how exceptionally hard diamond is, however, these same persons will reformulate their argument: steel can cut most stones but not diamond.

Sabda sometimes overrules logic, as when we hear from medical experts that an infected burn should be treated by being cauterized, or that some bitter foods like ginger become sweet after being digested. Anumāṇa cannot contradict what sabda has established, as in a pharmaceutical dictum like “This herb eliminates excesses of all three dhātus.” Sabda can effectively inform us of things inaccessible to
anumāna, like the daily movements of heavenly bodies.

Since both pratyakṣa and anumāna are thus secondary in relation to śabda-pramāṇa, certainly the other recognized pramāṇas, all derivatives of these three, are also subordinate. Beginning with pratyakṣa, all the pramāṇas other than śabda are powerless to give anyone knowledge of the higher purposes of life. Human beings share these other pramāṇas with animals, who search for their food and other needs with the help of acute senses and simple reason. A cat knows that when it pretends to be affectionate its human masters provide everything; remembering and logically applying this general principle, the cat successfully manipulates its human family again and again. But animals never achieve spiritual realization from the knowledge gained by their pramāṇas, and neither do humans who have not recognized śabda-pramāṇa. It has been observed that infants develop real human understanding only when they receive verbal input from their parents; if they are raised without being talked to often, even with all other needs taken care of they grow up dull and inarticulate.

In his Sarva-samvādī Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī continues to describe the special nature of śabda-pramāṇa. This additional commentary is presented in Appendix 1 at the end of this book.

**Purport by BBT Translators**

The Vedas Are the Original Source of Knowledge

As already noted, direct perception and inference depend on sense perception, which is limited only to empirical objects and vitiated by the four human defects. Thus direct perception and inference are inadequate by themselves for completely understanding anything beyond our senses. By tracing the chain of causes in material creation, we can infer that something exists beyond our sense perception, but inference can take us no further, leaving us unable to identify it; nor can inference yield valid knowledge about abhidheya, the process for realizing it. We can acquire such knowledge only from revealed scripture, the Vedas, which are not the creations of mortal beings and so are free from the four defects of human nature. The Vedas appeared from the Supreme Lord at the dawn of creation, a fact confirmed in the Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad (6.8): yo brahmānam vidadhāti pūrvaṁ yo vai vedāṁ ca prahinoti taṁśai. “That Supreme Lord created Brahmā at the beginning of creation and gave him the Vedas.” The term anādi-siddha, as used in this Text, means that the Vedas were not written at a particular date but exist eternally, like the Lord. They first manifested in this universe within the heart of Lord Brahmā, the oldest created being: tene brahma hrdā ya ādi-kavaye (Bhāg. 1.1.1); then they were handed down through disciplic succession. The Vedas provide both material and spiritual knowledge. Knowledge about such common phenomena as the trees, water, land, and sky originally came from the Vedas, along with the knowledge of the divisions of duties for various people according to their psycho-physical natures. As the Manu-samhitā (1.21) states:
“Lord Brahmā learned the names of various objects and the duties of various classes of people from the words of the Vedas, and thus he could propagate the manifest divisions of names and duties.”

Over time, there developed different cultures and languages that obscured the original Vedic culture.

For acquiring transcendental knowledge, the Vedas (śabda-pramāṇa) is the only effective means. The Vedas inform us about the soul’s existence beyond the body, about the planets of the spiritual world, and about the Supreme Lord, His pastimes, and other matters. All these subjects are beyond the reach of our sensory and mental faculties. Without the method of śabda, such philosophers as the Buddhists,[DDB26] who do not accept the Vedas, cannot justifiably say anything positive about transcendence, let alone the way to attain it. Śabda-pramāṇa is so important that although Vaiṣṇavas count Lord Buddha among the incarnations of the Lord on the strength of Vedic testimony, they reject his philosophy because it was not based on śabda-pramāṇa.

All orthodox schools of philosophy in India, whether monistic or dualistic, consider the Vedas apaurusṛṣeya, not written by any mortal being. Many modern scholars, however, dispute the divine origin of the Vedas. They suggest various dates for the composition of the Vedas, and while most of them agree that the Vedas were composed before 1500 B.C., they disagree about the exact time of their composition. They have yet to arrive at a definitive conclusion.

Here Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī says that the Vedas are beginningless and are the source of various kinds of knowledge coming down through many schools of thought since time immemorial. The phrase sarva-puruṣa, “all persons,[DDB28]” indicates that the knowledge was passed on not only by human beings but also by superhuman beings, such as the demigods and divine sages. These traditions of thought all originate with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is infallible in all respects and thus completely untainted by the four human defects. Moreover, Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī has already shown (in Text 9) how unreliable are the alternatives to the Vedic authority. If, as he has established, only apaurusṛṣeya-śabda can give access to transcendental reality, how could the Vedas then have been written or compiled by human beings? If Jiva Gosvāmī allowed that human authors composed the Vedas, he would be contradicting his own previous dismissal of human knowledge as imperfect.

[DDB29] Those scholars who contest the apaurusṛṣeya origin of the Vedas, claiming that they are human compilations, have no conclusive proof to back up their claim. Refusing to consider the Vedas[DDB30] own statements about their origin and purpose, these scholars merely assume that the Vedas are not authoritative and speculate about their true origin. Their motive is clear, for accepting the Vedic version would put an end to the speculative philosophical
tradition; it would oblige them to accept the Vedic description of ultimate reality. On account of being too attached to the speculative, or ascending, method of knowledge, however, such scholars and philosophers rather insist that the Vedas are of human origin, regardless of their inability to produce any proof of their claim. Indeed, the theory that the Vedas [DDB31] have a human composer is a recent development advocated by persons who did not come in disciplic succession. They were mostly outsiders who refused to believe that India had much of importance to offer the world in the realm of philosophy and who had their own motive for minimizing the Vedic traditions—namely, their eagerness to convert India to Christianity. They certainly were not impartial judges of the Vedas [DDB32] origin.

On the other side, great scholars and saints like Śaṅkara-cārya, Madhvacārya, Rāmānuja-cārya, Kumārla Bhaṭṭa, and Rūpa Gosvāmī all accepted the Vedas as apauruseya and eternal. These exalted authorities are famed for their renunciation, knowledge, and selflessness. Contemporary mundane scholars who contest the divine origin of the Vedas naturally fail to place their faith in the opinions of these authorities, but, as we have p[DDB33]ointed out, such materialistic scholars are not free from ulterior motives, nor do their character and conduct compare favorably with those of the great ācāryas.

Another consideration, and an important one, is that the Vedas themselves repeatedly enjoin that one who wants to understand the spiritual knowledge they teach must first approach a guru in disciplic succession. Vedic knowledge is verifiable; it is not just a collection of abstract ideas. But to realize the truth of Vedic knowledge one must approach a bona fide guru. Mundane scholars, however, tend to be proud of their textbook knowledge and flout this requirement, all the while considering themselves authorities on Vedic knowledge. In reality, by not applying themselves to this knowledge in the prescribed way they ensure that for them the door to its mysteries will ever remain locked. The attempts of these hapless scholars to understand the Vedas without joining an authorized disciplic succession are like someone’s trying to taste honey by licking the outside of a honey-filled jar. Their labor is futile and their analysis and conclusions are useless.

By contrast, the great Vaisnava ācāryas all became Vedic authorities by virtue of their scrupulously following the injunction to surrender to a guru coming in disciplic succession. As far as sincerity and credibility are taken into account, therefore, the evidence weighs heavily in favor of the saintly ācāryas. In any case, a seriously interested person can always take up the Vedic process himself and personally verify the Vedic conclusions. Granted, this requires some effort, and it is of course much easier to offer glib speculations denying the Vedas’ authority than to discipline oneself and follow their instructions. Ultimately, however, the Vedas’ scholarly detractors can never prove their claims.

And even if someone proposes that just as modern science is evolving, so the Vedas evolved over a period of time, then the question arises, Why in recorded history have people stopped making further refinements of the Vedas? [DDB34] If the Vedas indeed have a human source, they should have been
revised and improved over time, and new, improved versions should be available; but this is not the case. [DDB36] Rather, North or South, East or West, the same standard readings of the Vedas are found, and no older or newer versions are seen anywhere. [DDB37] The Vedic saints have developed a meticulous system for protecting the word order of the Vedic texts. Changing even a single syllable is considered criminal. Thus the Vedas are rightly called śruti, or that which is heard from the guru unchanged, with proper intonation and accent of the syllables. [gpd38]

The Vedas are unique. Can one imagine that in a particular field of science or art we will reach the apex in knowledge and produce one standard book accepted by all, making all other books in that field obsolete? Is it conceivable that no one would[DDB39] make any further changes or additions to such a book, and that this book would[DDB40] become worshipable to the people interested in that field? The reasonable, unbiased answer is no, and yet this is precisely the case with the Vedas, for they are free of defects, having emanated from the perfect source, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. But if someone says yes, then there is no reason for debate over the authority of the Vedas.

In addition to the spiritual knowledge it contains, the Vedic literature has references to many modern scientific achievements. The Vedas have sections on astronomy, medicine, yoga, music, drama, dance, algebra, civil engineering, and so on. The list is long indeed. These are all arts and sciences that were practiced in India centuries before the dawn of their modern counterparts. His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Śrila Prabhupāda writes in his introduction to Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, “The authority of the Vedas is unchallengeable and stands without any question of doubt. The conch shell and cow dung are the bone and stool of two living beings. But because they have been recommended by the Vedas as pure, people accept them as such because of the authority of the Vedas.” It has been proven by scientific experiment that cow dung is antiseptic and medicinal. It would be simplistic, therefore, to brush aside the Vedas as manmade. Had this been the case, renowned thinkers and powerful logicians like Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmi and Śrīla Madhvācārya would have taken no stock in them.

Still one may question the eternal nature of the Vedas on the grounds that any scriptural references in support of them will necessarily come from the Vedas themselves. In logic, citing evidence that relies on itself for proof of legitimacy is called circular reasoning and is unacceptable. The Vedas may thus appear tainted with this defect of svāsraya, or begging the question, relying as they do on themselves to establish their own authority.

Circular reasoning would be a serious defect, but a closer look shows that the Vedas are an exception to this fallacy. That the Vedas rely on themselves to establish their authority is not a defect; rather it is logical and sensible. It simply affirms their absolute, transcendental nature, since if some other source were needed to confirm the authority of the Vedas, the authority of that new source would surpass that of the Vedas. In such a case an inquisitive person would be obliged to discard the Vedas and begin all over again analyzing the new source's
authenticity. Before long this new source would need confirmation from yet another source. This could go on ad infinitum. But the absence of such a superior source with reference to the Vedas shows that the authority of the Vedas as apauruseya-sabda-pramāṇa is final.

Logically, therefore, no other pramāṇa can substantiate the Vedas. And that is why the Vedas are traditionally accepted as “mother.” When a person wants to know who his father is, he cannot find out by direct perception, nor by inference or deduction. To know for sure who his father is he has to accept his mother’s testimony. We similarly have to accept the revealed knowledge of the Vedas to learn about the reality beyond our sensory and intellectual power.

The theories advanced by some scholars about the Vedas’ mundane origin are unreliable and untenable because these scholars have not studied the Vedas in a bona fide disciplic succession. Because of the scholars’ four human defects and their being impelled by ulterior motives—desires for degrees, reputation, research funding, and the like—divine arrangement has barred them from gaining real insight into the Vedas. These scholars will readily admit that to understand any complex material subject one needs the help of experts in that field, but somehow they reject the necessity of a bona fide guru for understanding the Vedas. They do not know that in the case of the Vedic literature submission to a guru is an absolute requirement. This prerequisite serves as a kind of password protecting the Vedas against insincere persons who would try to exploit or refute them. In the Bhagavad-gītā (7.25) the Supreme Lord affirms:

\[
\text{nāham prakāśaḥ sarvasya yoga-māyā-samāvrtah}
\text{mūḍha ūyam nābhijānātī loko mām ajam avyayam}
\]

“I am never manifest to the foolish and unintelligent. For them I am covered by My Yogamāyā, and therefore they do not know that I am unborn and infallible.”

This statement is relevant both when the Lord comes to this world in person and when He reveals Himself in scripture. The Lord has given the conditioned souls the method by which they can approach Him, and that method begins with taking knowledge from a bona fide disciplic succession. Those unwilling to thus qualify themselves can have no real access to Him, even if they study the Vedas on their own for many lifetimes.

In summary, owing to the absence of any conclusive proof of the Vedas’ being authored by a mortal being, and by the logic known as the law of the remainder (pārīśeṣya-nyāya), as well as on the authority of the great acāryas and saints coming in the bona fide disciplic successesions, and ultimately by accepting the testimony of the Vedas themselves, we reasonably conclude that the Vedas exist eternally and are an infallible source of knowledge.

Next, Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī shows that inference cannot be an independent means for understanding the Absolute Truth.
TEXT 11

tac cānumatam ‘tarkāpratishṭhānāt’ ity-ādau ‘acicintyāḥ khalu ye bhāvā na tāṁs tarkena yojayet ity-ādau ‘śāstra-yonitvāt’ ity-ādau ‘śrutes tu śabda-mūlatvāt’ ity-ādau pitṛ-deva-maṇuṣya-nām
devaś caṇskus taveśvara
śreyas tv anupaladbhe ‘ṛthe
sādhyā-sādhanayor api
ity-ādau ca.

Translation

Gopiparanadhana: The conclusion stated in Text 10 is corroborated in such statements as the following:
“Because logical conjecture is never conclusive” (V.s. 2.1.11).
“Logic cannot explain things that are inconceivable” (Mahābhārata, Bhīṣma-parva 5.22).
“Because scripture is the source of knowledge about [the Absolute Truth]” (V.s. 1.1.3).
“Because revealed scripture, on the other hand, is based on sabda-pramāṇa” (V.s. 2.1.27).
“For the forefathers, demigods, and human race, O Lord, the Vedas are your own perfect eye. They are the best instrument for seeing what cannot ordinarily be perceived and for ascertaining the goals and means of progressive life” (Bhāg. 11.20.4).

BBT: The following scriptural statements confirm this conclusion [Text 10]:
1. “Logic has no sure basis” [DDB44][Vedānta-sūtra 2.1.11].
2. “One should not use logic to try to understand what is inconceivable” [Mahābhārata, Bhīṣma-parva 5.22].
3. “Scriptures are the source of knowledge of the Absolute Truth” [Vedānta-sūtra 1.1.3].
4. “The Vedas are the source of knowledge of the Absolute Truth” [Vedānta-sūtra 2.1.27].
5. “O Supreme Lord, Your Veda is the supreme eye for the forefathers, demigods, and human beings. By it they can understand Your form and qualities, along with the highest goal of life and the means for attaining it, none of which can be ascertained otherwise” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.20.4].

Purport by Gopiparanadhana prabhu

The Vedas have no human author, but among human beings the most universally
respected authority on the Vedas is Śrīla Kṛṣṇa DvaipāyanaVyāsa. Just before the beginning of this Kali-yuga, five thousand years ago, he edited all the texts of the Vedas to make them accessible to the less intelligent people of our age. For this accomplishment he earned the title Veda-vyāsa, “editor of the Vedas.” In addition, as his personal contribution to Vedic understanding Vyāsadeva composed two great works, the Vedānta-sūtra and Mahābhārata. The Vedānta-sūtra is a systematic commentary on the essential Vedic knowledge contained in the Upaniṣads. In it Vyāsadeva proves that the Vedas focus on one goal consistently (samanvaya), namely realization of the Supreme Truth (Brahman); he describes the relationships between Brahman and His energies (sambandha), various spiritual practices for achieving association with Brahman (abhidheya), and the sublime results of these practices (prayojana). The Mahābhārata is a vast epic history primarily dealing with a civil war fought between factions of the Kuru dynasty during the time Śrī Kṛṣṇa was manifest on the earth, and it also includes narrations on hundreds of other topics. The chief heroes of the Mahābhārata are the five ideal sons of Mahārāja Pāṇdu; Lord Kṛṣṇa is also present throughout, but for the most part He remains in the background, allowing His devotees to take center stage in the drama.

To substantiate his proposition that the Vedas are the most perfect source of śabdaprāmāṇa, Śrī Jiva Gosvāmī here cites Dvaipāyana Vyāsa’s own opinions from these two works, plus a statement from another preeminent Vaiṣṇava, Uddhava. Tarkāpratīṣṭhānāt is part of an argument in the Second Chapter of the Vedānta-sūtra. Under considerations is an opposing claim that one can discover the Absolute Truth by logic.

Tarkāpratīṣṭhānāt is the answer to the opposition. The sūtra implies the unspoken words “No, logical conjecture is not sufficient for realizing the Supreme” and then continues “because it is never conclusive.” The word tarka in its more technical sense indicates the prelogical mental process of sorting out a number of possible premises, imagining the consequences of each one, and eliminating those that are obviously inappropriate. Here is an instance of tarka concerning our example of the fire on the mountain: “I want to prove that there is fire on this mountain. Why do I believe this? Because the air is getting warmer? No, the sun’s coming out from behind the clouds could cause that. Because there is smoke on the mountain? Well, if there weren’t any fire there wouldn’t be any smoke.” This kind of educated guessing may be fruitful in a limited range of logically analyzable situations, but it can never enter the materially immeasurable range of transcendence. As the Upaniṣads declare,

\[
\text{naīṣā tarkena matir āpaneyā}
\]

\[
\text{proktānyenaiva su-jñānāya preśtha}
\]

“My dear boy Naciketā, this understanding cannot be attained by tarka. To be realizable as spiritual truth it has to be spoken by someone with special authority” (Katha Up. 1.2.9).

In the verse from the Mahābhārata, acintya means “inconceivable” in the sense of
“impossible to explain materially because it is a phenomenon of a higher, transcendental nature.” Among the “things” (bhāvāḥ) of this inconceivable, spiritual nature are the Supreme Lord’s personal qualities and His playful activities. There are ways to know these, but tarka is not one of them.

Having cited these negative opinions, Śrī Jīva gives the next three statements to show the positive alternative. Sāstra-yonītvāt is the third sūtra of the Vedānta-sūtra. It resolves a doubt about how one should search out the object of devotional meditation, Lord Hari—whether by one’s own reason or by the direction of scripture. Some may argue that according to the Upaniṣadic statement gautamādyair mantavyāḥ (“Gautama and others realized Him mentally”), logic is suitable for realizing the Lord. “No,” this sūtra replies, “anumāna is not the means for knowing Him, because scripture is ‘His source.’” Yoni literally means “womb,” and in this context it signifies not “place of His generation” but “source of knowledge about Him.” Sāstra, Vedic scripture, is where He is revealed. This idea accords with the Brhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad’s prototypical inquiry tam tv aupaniṣadam puruṣam prcchāmi (“I want to ask about the Supreme Person, who is known from the Upaniṣads”; Brhad-āranyaka Up. 3.9.26).

Śrutes tu sabda-mūlatvāt is from the same section of the Vedānta-sūtra as tarkāpratiṣṭhānāt. Brahman is the creator of this world, but how does He avoid the fatigue and anxiety other creators suffer? Because He created everything simply by desiring to do so, as stated in the Taṅkīṛtya Upaniṣad (2.6): so ‘kāmayata bahu śām prajāyeya (“He desired, ‘Let Me become many; let Me create progeny.’”). But how can the scripture say something like this, which direct perception denies? [DDB45] Śrutes tu sabda-mūlatvāt: “Because revealed scripture, unlike sense perception, is based on śabda-pramāṇa.” Sabda-pramāṇa alone is the verification of the Vedas’ authority. When other pramāṇas seem to contradict what the Vedas say, the contradiction is only apparent. Vedic śruti is irrefutable.

Uddhava, the speaker of the verse from Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam quoted in Text 11, was one of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s closest friends and advisers in the Yadu capital, Dwārakā. As the best student of Brhaspati, the teacher and priest of the demigods, Uddhava was a renowned Vedic scholar. More importantly, however, he was an intimate devotee of the Personality of Godhead. Kṛṣṇa trusted him to convey His personal messages to the gopis, who were grieving in Vṛndāvana because of His absence. To meet and talk with the gopis as Kṛṣṇa’s representative, Uddhava must have been able to appreciate the most refined moods of love of God. Just before Lord Kṛṣṇa ended His pastimes on earth, He spoke extensively to Uddhava about the science of devotional service; these instructions are recorded as the Uddhava-gītā in the Eleventh Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. In this verse Uddhava declares that the the Vedas’ authority is superhuman because it is actually the authority of the Supreme Lord; through the Vedas the Lord reveals the deliberations of His own intelligence and offers the divine vision of His personal viewpoint to those who will accept it.

Purport by BBT Translators
The Authority of the Vedas

Here, using scriptural evidence, Śrīla Jīva G Gosvāmī confirms the conclusion about inferential knowledge he reached in the previous Text. Having argued that logic is not the most reliable means of acquiring knowledge, and having used logic to establish this conclusion, he now presents appropriate Vedic references as the final proof. Again, one should not think that Jīva Gosvāmī is guilty of circular reasoning because he resorts to the Vedas themselves to confirm an assertion about the Vedas. The Vedas are self-luminous like the sun. Just as the sun illuminates itself, independent of any other source of light, so only the Vedas can establish themselves as an infallible pramāṇa. As explained in the previous Text, this self-confirmation is not a defect in the process of śabda-pramāṇa, or verbal revelation, because if the Vedas indeed convey knowledge of the Absolute Truth, we can justifiably look to the Vedas themselves to confirm their own authority. And those who have approached Vedic knowledge in the prescribed way have corroborated by their own realization that the Vedas do describe the Absolute Truth.

Another consideration is that our objective is to know the inconceivable reality, and after analyzing all the sources of knowledge we find that no source but the Vedas affords us the opportunity for achieving this objective. If all the best logicians, nuclear physicists, astrophysicists, and other leaders in various departments of science and philosophy who lived in the past, live in the present, and will live in the future could somehow assemble and deliberate together, they would be unable to shed any light on the nature of transcendence. Any theory this assembly might propose would only be a subjective speculation, liable to endless refutations and counterrefutations. Understanding the futility of such endeavors, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has gone directly to the heart of the matter by citing Vedic authority.

Śrīla Vyasadeva presented the conclusion of all the Vedas in the concise aphorisms of the Vedānta-sūtra, also called the Brahma-sūtra. Sūtra 2.1.11 is tarkāpratiṣṭhānāt: “Reason has no sure basis.” In other words, logic has no absolute stance because its results are always subject to revision. [DDB46] Both deductive and inductive reasoning are based on human perception and intelligence, which are unreliable owing to the four inherent human defects mentioned earlier. And since different people have varying capacities and types of intelligence, the opinions they derive from their own intelligence also vary. Logical reasoning therefore has its limitations; it is inconclusive in transcendental matters except when supported by the scriptures. In his Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.1.46), Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī quotes a verse from Bhārtrhari’s Vākya-padiya (1.34) to this effect:

yatnenaṇḍito ’py arthah kuṣalair anumātrbhīh
dhiyukta-tarair anyair anyathaiva-pādyate

“Expert logicians may establish their proofs with great endeavor, but these proofs will simply be contradicted by stronger logicians establishing newer conclusions.”
The truth of this statement is confirmed in the fields of modern science and philosophy, where there is endless theorizing about the origins of the universe and the meaning of life.

[DDB47]Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī also cites the Mahābhārata’s claim that because logic is limited one should not use it to try to understand inconceivable realities. For example, by mere logic one will certainly fail to understand such childhood pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s as His dāma-bandhana-līlā, in which His mother bound Him up with ropes. When mother Yaśodā tried to tie Kṛṣṇa to a grinding mortar, she was amazed to find that when she joined all her ropes together the new length of rope was still too short! Yet the black thread around Kṛṣṇa’s waist did not break, nor did His waist become inflated. Such inconceivable behavior by the Absolute Person is entirely beyond the reach of all logical faculties; one can understand it only by accepting the authority of Vedic testimony, sabda-pramāṇa.

Still, although logical reasoning is not a reliable independent method in the quest for knowledge of the absolute, this does not mean all logic is useless. The very idea that logic is not fully reliable is itself known through the use of logic supported by scripture. We should certainly use our reason in trying to understand the statements of the Vedas. The Brhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad (2.4.5) thus states, ātmā vā are drastavyah śrotavyo mantavyo nididhyāsitavyo maitreyi: “The Self, my dear Maitreyi, should be realized, and so it should be heard about, reflected on, and deeply meditated on.” Here the word mantavyah refers to logical understanding. We should apply logic to properly understand the Vedic injunctions, but we should reject logic that runs counter to their conclusions. Mere logic can never supersede the opinions of the Vedas, which are free of the human defects.

While discussing this topic in his Sarva-samvādinī, Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī quotes the Kūrma Purāṇa:

\[
pūrvāparāvirodhena ko 'nv artho 'bhimato bhavet
ity-ādyam uhanam tarkah śuṣka-tarkam tu varjyayet
\]

“Conjecturing about the meaning of a scriptural passage by referring to the statements preceding and following it is called proper logic. One should abandon dry logic, however.”

We find excellent examples of dry logic among speculative philosophers. These thinkers generally use their reason to prove a preconceived opinion, and in their stubbornness they of course fail to maintain any objectivity. They disregard scriptural injunctions that do not support their conclusions. They have no success in applying their method to ultimate matters because no one can penetrate the inconceivable transcendental plane by any amount of speculation. [DDB48]The philosophical musings of such persons amount to no more than a futile mental exercise with no tangible result. No matter how profound and mesmerizing their vision, it is inevitable that some other powerful logician will eventually defeat them. The Vedas enjoin, therefore, that those who seek the Absolute Truth should abandon dry logic, but not all logic. Indeed, in the Bhagavad-gītā
(10.32) Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself declares that logic aimed at understanding the Absolute as it is presented in scripture is one of His opulences: vādah pravadatām aham. “[DDB49] Among logicians I am the conclusive truth.” Thus Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmi is right in accepting anumāna as one of the principal means of gaining valid knowledge.

Jiva Gosvāmi next cites two more Brahma-sūtras (1.1.3 and 2.1.27), which state emphatically that one can understand the Absolute Truth only from the revealed scriptures. He then concludes by quoting from Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam to show that not only human beings but even superhumans like the demigods need the Vedas’ help. Thus he emphasizes the need for everyone—humans, subhumans, and superhumans—to rely on the Vedas as the flawless means for understanding the Absolute Truth.

In the next Text Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmi begins his demonstration that the Purāṇas are even more important for us than the Vedas.

TEXT 12

TEXT 12.1:

tatra ca veda-sabdasya samprati duspratvād duradhi gamārthatvāc ca tad-artha-nirṇāyakānām muninām api paraspara-virodhād veda-rūpo vedārtha-nirṇāyakaś cetihāsa-purāṇātmakah sabda eva vicāraniyah. tatra ca yo vā veda-sabdō nātmaviditah so ’pi tad-drśtyānumeyo etvai samprati tasyaiva pramotpādakatvam sthitam.

Translation

Gopiparanadhana: We should consider that at present the authoritative statements of the Vedas are impossible for anyone to study completely, that their meaning is very difficult to construe, and that even the sages who have explained them in commentaries disagree among one another. For these reasons we would be well advised to turn our attention to the śabda-pramāna of the Itihāsas and Purāṇas, which are substantially nondifferent from the Vedas and which explain them definitively. Since by referring to the Itihāsas and Purāṇas one can decipher those Vedic texts whose purport is not self-evident, the Itihāsa-Purāṇa has been accepted as the appropriate source for correct knowledge in our times.

BBT: But at present it is difficult to study the Vedas in their entirety or to understand them. In addition, the great thinkers who have commented on the Vedas interpret them in contradictory ways. We should therefore study the Itihāsas and Purāṇas, since they are Vedic in nature and are conclusive in determining the Vedas’ meaning. Moreover, with the help of the Itihāsas and Purāṇas we can infer
the meaning of the unavailable portions of the Vedas. Thus at present only the Itihāsas and Purāṇas constitute the appropriate source of valid knowledge.

TEXT 12.2:

tathā hi mahābhārata māṇaviye ca ‘itihāsa-purānābhīyām vedām samupabṛṅhayet’ iti ‘pūrāṇāt purāṇam’ iti cānyatra. na cāvedena vedasya brhihanām sambhavati na hy aparipūrṇasya kanaka-valayasya trapunā pūrāṇam yujyate.

Translation

Gopiparandhana: Thus both the Mahābhārata [Ādi-parva 1.267] and the Manu-samhitā state, “One should complete the Vedas with the Itihāsas and Purāṇas.” And elsewhere it is said that “The name Purāṇa comes from the word ‘completion’ (pūrāna).” The Vedas cannot be made complete by what is not also Veda, just as one should not fill the missing part of a broken gold bangle with cheap tin.

BBT: This is why the Mahābhārata [Ādi-parva 1.267] and Manu-samhitā state, “One should complement one’s understanding of the Vedas with the help of the Itihāsas and Purāṇas.” And elsewhere it is stated, “The Purāṇas are called by that name because they complete (pūrāna).” One should not try to “complete” or explain the meaning of the Vedas with something that is not Vedic in nature, just as one should not finish an incomplete gold bracelet with lead.

TEXT 12.3:
nanu yadi veda-sabdah purānam itihāsam copādatte tarhi purānam anyad anvesaṇīyaṃ. yadi tu na tarhiitihāsa-purānayaḥ abheda vedena. ucyate visisťaitkārtha-pratipādaḥaka-pada-kadambasya-paurusecyatvād abhede ’pi svara-krama-bhedād bheda-nirdeso ’py upapadyate.

Translation

Gopiparandhana: [DDB50]“But,” someone may object, “if the Vedas include the Purāṇas and Itihāsas, we are going to have to identify as Purāṇa something different from the word commonly means. Otherwise the Itihāsas and Purāṇas will not be nondifferent from the Vedas.”

This objection is answered as follows: the Purāṇas and Itihāsas are in fact nondifferent because the whole unified collection of words, expressing one particular message, has apauruṣeya authority. Despite this nondifference, however, separate categories of texts have become designated in terms of differences of intonation and exact order.

BBT: But, one may object, if the Itihāsas and Purāṇas are actually included as part of the text of the Vedas, we need to identify some other Purāṇas than those we are familiar with; otherwise the Itihāsas and Purāṇas would not qualify as nondifferent from the Vedas.[DDB51]
To this we reply that the Itihāsas and Purāṇas are nondifferent from the Vedas inasmuch as both kinds of literary works have no human author and present the same detailed knowledge. Nonetheless, there is some difference between them with regard to intonation and word order.

**TEXT 12.4:**

rg-ādibhiḥ samam anayor āpauruṣeyatvenāḥbhedo mādhyandina-śrutāv eva vyajyate
e’vam vā are ’syā mahato bhūatsbya niḥśvasitam etad yad rg-vedo yajur-vedah sāma-
vedo ’tharvāngirasa itihāsah purānam’ ity-ādinā.

**Translation**

**Gopiparanadhana:** This nondifference of the Vedas and the Itihāsa-Purāṇa—on the grounds of the Itihāsa-Purāṇa being as āpauruṣeya as the Rg Veda and other Vedas—is implied in the passage of the Mādhyandina-śruti beginning “Thus indeed the breath of this Supreme Being constitutes the Rg Veda, Yajur Veda, Sāma Veda, Atharvāṅgirasa Veda, Itihāsa, and Purāṇa” [Bṛhad-āranyaka Up. 2.4.10].

**BBT:** The Mādhyandina-śruti [Bṛhad-āranyaka Up. 2.4.10] implies the oneness of the Itihāsas and Purāṇas with the Rg and other Vedas in terms of the āpauruṣeya nature all these works share: “My dear Maitreyi, the Rg, Yajur, Sāma, and Atharva Vedas, as well as the Itihāsas and Purāṇas, all appear from the breathing of the Supreme Being.”

**Purport by Gopiparanadhana prabhu**

Because the Vedic sound directly emanates from the intelligence of the Supreme Being, all the Vedas and their numerous supplements form a unified whole. They are expressions of one and the same consciousness. The intelligence of the Supreme is infinite and communicates with the variously limited intelligences of His countless creatures in an unlimited number of ways. In the words of Lord Kṛṣṇa in the Bhagavad-gītā (4.11), ye yathā mām prapadyante tāṁś tathaiva bhajāmy ahām: “I reciprocate with each soul exactly according to how that soul relates to Me”. Thus the Vedic literature appears as many separate books in a number of categories of texts that seem to have been written at different times, for different purposes, in different styles of language, and by authors with different convictions and different levels of knowledge. The Vedas explain themselves in another way, however, and if we are willing to look at the entire Vedic literature from its own point of view instead of with the attitude of critical analysis, then with some scrutiny we can see the true picture: the apparent diversity of the texts is in fact due not to their being written by different authors but to their being spoken for several different audiences.

Vedic literature is divided into two main kinds of texts, śruti and smṛti. Śruti (“what has been heard”) is eternal, revealed scripture received in this world by rṣis in their meditation and repeated unchanged through disciplic chains of teachers and disciples. Smṛti (“what has been remembered”) is literature composed by the
sages in their own words and reflecting the message of śruti without having to
maintain the same exact wording in the same order perpetually. The four Vedas are
considered śruti, including in each Veda the Samhitā collections of hymns and
incantations, the Brāhmaṇa ritual interpretations, the more esoteric interpretations
of the Āranyakas, and the philosophical Upaniṣads. To ordinary perception, the
language and contents of the Samhitās, especially of the Rg Veda Samhitā, seem the
most archaic. The Brāhmaṇas, Āranyakas, and Upaniṣads appear to be
afterthoughts, speculations by later generations about the meaning and purpose of
the Samhitās; they are written in a variety of successively “newer” dialects,
gradually approaching “classical” Sanskrit. The Upaniṣads seem an altogether
different sort of work, discussing as they do otherworldly concerns hardly touched
upon in the “older” ritual śruti. There are many superficial reasons, therefore, for
critical scholars to disregard the Vedas’ own claim to being a single, coherent
whole. Not understanding the methods of śabda-pramāṇa, the unfortunate
Indologists can only try to dissect the separate organs of the Vedic corpus,
unaware that the organism is actually alive.[DDB52]

From one viewpoint, a particular plant’s stages of growth—its seed, sprout, flower,
and fruit—are quite distinct events that occur at different times. Viewed another
way, however, the plant’s stages of growth are part of a timeless cycle: there have
been many earlier generations of plants of the same kind, and there will many
more in the future. Each new instance of the plant simply copies the permanent
 genetic plan. In essence, the seed of the species is no older than its fruit. Similarly,
we can understand that the eternal Vedas temporarily display parts of themselves
to human perception at various historical points in the cycle of ages. Śrīmad-
Bhāgavatam calls Śrī Kṛṣṇa svayam bhagavān, the “original Personality of
Godhead,” or in other words the oldest person; but the Bhāgavatam also describes
Lord Kṛṣṇa’s appearance on earth as an avatāra in the dynasty of the moon-god,
fifty-six generations after its founder. The Vedas, being co-eternal with the
Supreme Lord, also descend to earth at specific times. Thus the language of the Rg
Veda can appear to be an ancestor of “later” Sanskrit, though in reality the two are
simultaneously existing dialects of the same language, one liturgical and the other
vernacular.

Various sages composed different kinds of smṛtis. Some wrote handbooks to
explain the details of Vedic sacrificial performances—Srāuta-sūtras for major
sacrifices and Gṛhya-sūtras for rituals performed at home. Manu and others
compiled lawbooks, the Dharma-sūstras. But especially important for the spiritual
education of the general public are the Itiḥāsas (epics such as the Rāmāyaṇa and
Mahābhārata) and the Purāṇas. These works are written in simple, spoken Sanskrit
and aim at explaining all aspects of Vedic knowledge to nonspecialists, often
 through entertaining historical narrations. Although both the Itiḥāsas and the
Purāṇas describe the ancient history of the universe, the Itiḥāsas generally
concentrate on single heroes or events, while the Purāṇas deal with an assortment
of topics. There are eighteen major Purāṇas, including Śrīmad-Bhāgavata Purāṇa,
and at least as many secondary Purāṇas, or Upapurāṇas.

In Kali-yuga truly qualified brāhmaṇas are rare. Those who are brāhmaṇas in name
only or who belong to the less-educated classes cannot make much sense of the śruti scriptures. There are simply too many śruti texts for anyone in our less intelligent age to read through, what to speak of comprehend. Tens of thousands of years ago this world was a different place, where educated people could understand subtle topics that are unfamiliar and inscrutable to us today. Extant commentaries on the Vedas, such as Śāyana’s from the tenth century A.D., are too recent to provide reliable insight into the original intentions of the texts. The orthodox philosophical darsanas each claim Vedic connection, but all of them except Jaimini’s Mīmāṃsā and Dvaipāyana’s Vedānta merely pay lip service to apauruseya-sabda-prāmāṇa while in practice ignoring it. Mīmāṃsā minimizes the authority of the Upaniṣads and their approach to the Absolute Truth. Gauṭama’s Nyāya and Kanāda’s Vaiśeṣika are involved only with the logic and structure of the physical world. In opposition to the opinions of the Upaniṣads, the atheist Kapila’s Sāṅkhya and Patañjali’s Yoga consider material nature the prime cause of creation and the soul or God only a passive witness. In general, the standard darsanas disagree among one another on major points of epistemology and ontology. The existing commentaries on the ancient śūtras of each of these schools were all written within the last two thousand years, long after the actual Vedic civilization had ceased to exist.

Therefore in the modern age the Itiḥāsas and Purāṇas assume special value. Itiḥāsa-purāṇābhyaṁ vedaiṁ samupabhrayet: “One should complete the Vedas with the Itiḥāsas and Purāṇas.” Although the Vedas are complete in themselves, our modern understanding of them needs to be made more complete. As many authoritative sources attest, the Itiḥāsas and Purāṇas are faithful to śruti, so much so that the Upaniṣads call them the fifth Veda. They are available and not difficult to understand. They give us access to ways of ancient wisdom that would otherwise be closed off.

The opposing opinion addressed in Text 13.2 centers on the view of some ritualistic brāhmaṇas and impersonal Vedāntists who acknowledge the authority of śruti but not of most smṛti. According to them, when śruti texts mention Itiḥāsas and Purāṇas and enjoin reciting them, the reference is not to the more recent texts now called such but to certain passages of the original Vedas. Some Vedic passages fit the functional definition of Itiḥāsa narrations, such as the portion of the Rg Veda Samhitā describing a conversation between the demi-gods and Lord Brahmā (samyuṁ praajasaptiṁ devā abruvan . . . yo brāhmaṇāyāvaguretaṁ śatena yāyatet) and the portion of the Nrṣimha-tāpani Upaniṣad (7) describing [DDB53]xxx (avacanenaiva procāva . . .) Other passages describe the creation of the universe in Parānic fashion, as in the Taittiriya Upaniṣad’s descriptions yato vā imānī bhūtāṁ jāyante (“From that Supreme everything in existence was generated”; Taittiriya Up. 3.1) and etasmād ātmanaṁ ākāśah bhūtah (“From that Supreme Soul, the sky came into being”; Taittiriya Up. 2.1). The opponents argue that if the recently composed, popular smṛtis were the real Itiḥāsas and Purāṇas one could not correctly equate them with the perfect, eternal Vedas.

Śrila Jiva Gosvāmī replies by confirming that all the Vedic literature, from the Rg Veda through the Purāṇas, is essentially a single conception. Only because the
language of the śruti differs from that of the smṛti are they designated separately. The Vedic dialect pronounces each syllable with one of three intonations, which “classical” Sanskrit does not use. In śruti texts, the exact sequence of every syllable is perpetually fixed, whereas smṛti can be spoken again in different words in each new cycle of ages.

Concerning the references Śrila Jiva Gosvāmī cites in this text, the Brhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad is also referred to as the Mādhyandina-śruti because the recension cited most often belongs to the Mādhyandina branch of the Vājasaneyi White Yajur Veda. Since the Atharva Veda appeared in the meditations of two sages, Atharvā and Angirā, it is sometimes called the Atharvāṅgirasa Veda.

Purport by BBT Translators

Difficulties in Studying the Vedas

In the previous Texts Śrila Jiva Gosvāmī has established that the Vedas—Rg, Yajur, Sāma, and Atharva—constitute the valid means of acquiring knowledge about the Supreme. Here he points out the practical difficulties involved with studying them nowadays.

The first difficulty is the unavailability of the complete text of the Vedas. Originally the Veda was one, and at the advent of the current age, Kali-yuga, Śrila Vyāsadeva divided it into four: vyadadhād yajna-santatyai vedam ekam catur-vidham (Bhāg. 1.4.19). Then, as explained in the Kūrma Purāṇa (52.19–20), Vyāsadeva’s followers further divided the four Vedas into 1,130 branches:

eka-viṁśati-bhedena rg-vedam kṛtvān purā
sākhānām tu satenaiva yajur-vedam athākarot

sāma-vedam sahasreṇa sākhānām prabhibheda sah
Atharvāṇam ato vedaṁ bibheda navakena tu

[DDB54]“Formerly the Rg Veda was divided into 21 branches, the Yajur Veda into 100 branches, the Sāma Veda into 1,000 branches, and the Atharva Veda into 9 branches.” Each of these branches has 4 subdivisions,[DDB55] called Samhitā, Brāhmaṇa, Āranyaka, and Upaniṣad. So all together the Vedas consist of 1,130 Samhitās, 1,130 Brāhmaṇas, 1,130 Āranyakas, and 1,130 Upaniṣads, a total of 4,520 titles. By the influence of time, however, many texts have been lost. At present only about 11 Samhitās, 18 Brāhmaṇas, 7 Āranyakas, and 220 Upaniṣads are available. This constitutes less than 6% of the original Vedas.

The second difficulty one faces in trying to study the Vedas concerns their language. There are two varieties of Sanskrit, vādika (“Vedic”) and laukika (“worldly” or “ordinary”), and the Vedas contain only the former. Years of study are required to become an accomplished scholar of ordinary Sanskrit, but if such a scholar wishes to understand Vedic Sanskrit he has to learn extra rules of grammar.
and a different vocabulary, which may require years of additional study. And even when the language of the Vedic verses is fathomed, these verses are so cryptic that one cannot possibly decipher them without hearing them explained by a bona fide guru in disciplic succession.

Another difficulty: Even before studying the Vedas one must study their six corollaries, or “limbs,” called Vedāṅgas. These six limbs are śiśṇa, the science of pronunciation; kalpa, the process of performing sacrifice; vyākaraṇa, the rules of grammar; nirukta, the meanings and derivations of difficult words used in the Vedas; jyotisha, astronomy and astrology; and chandas, Vedic meters. Each of these limbs is extensive and requires serious study.

To further complicate matters, with the advent of Kali-yuga human memory has grown weaker. In former times there were no books: a student could assimilate all knowledge from his spiritual master simply by hearing and remembering. But this is no longer possible. In this age the food, water, air, and even the very ether are all polluted, and all these factors have taken their toll on human memory, making it difficult to study even the available 6% of the Vedic texts, what to speak of the entire four Vedas and their branches. Śrila Jiva Gosvāmi therefore concludes that although the four Vedas are perfect śabda-pramāṇa, in the present age it is impractical to study them thoroughly and thereby ascertain the Absolute Truth.

As an alternative, someone may suggest that since only a few of the Vedas are available and even they are difficult to understand, why not simply study the Vedānta-sūtra, the definitive summary of the Vedic conclusions? To this Jiva Gosvāmi replies that various thinkers differ about the meaning of the Vedānta-sūtra and so this method will likely just lead to confusion. Furthermore, important thinkers like Gautama, Kapila, and Jaimini adhere to other philosophies, so why should we accept only Vedānta rather than one of their theories?

For all these reasons we must admit that even with the help of the Vedas and Vedānta we will not be able to understand sambandha, abhidheya, and prayojana. To solve this dilemma Śrila Jiva Gosvāmi proposes an alternative: study of the Itihāsas and Purāṇas.

The Itihāsas and Purāṇas are easier to understand than the Vedas because they are written in laukika Sanskrit, which is spoken, rather than Vedic Sanskrit, which is not. Furthermore, the esoteric meanings of the Vedas are more accessible in the Itihāsas and Purāṇas because these works are narrated in story form. And whereas only the dvijas, the twice-born Vedic initiates, are permitted to study the Vedas, that restriction does not apply to the study of the Itihāsas and Purāṇas. [DDB56] anyone may read them. Even the Purāṇas’ original speaker, Śūta Gosvāmi, was not a twice-born brāhmaṇa. The Itihāsas and Purāṇas convey the same conclusions as the Vedas, and since they come from the same source, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, they are also free from the four human defects and thus qualify as perfect śabda-pramāṇa. The Itihāsas and Purāṇas should therefore be considered as reliable as the four Vedas.
But although the *Itiḥāsas* and *Purāṇas* are one with the *Vedas*, this does not mean they are literally identical with them. Otherwise the words *Itiḥāsa* and *Purāṇa* would simply be names for certain special parts of the *Vedas*. The *Vedas* are written in Vedic Sanskrit, which necessarily involves three different tone accents—*udāṭta* (high), *svarita* (intermediate), and *anudāṭta* (low). In the Vedic language one word can actually be changed to another if the accent is changed. We see an example of this in the history of the demon Vṛtra, who was created by the chanting of a *mantra* during a sacrifice. This demon was supposed to kill Indra, but during the sacrifice the priests pronounced the *mantra* *indra-śatro vivardhasva* with the wrong accent. The result was just the opposite of what was intended: Indra killed Vṛtra.

Another significant difference between the four *Vedas* and the *Itiḥāsas* and *Purāṇas* is the sequence of particular words, which is rigidly fixed in the *Vedas*. No one should change even one syllable of the Vedic texts, which have maintained their primeval arrangement of words since the beginning of creation. Techniques have been devised, such as *pada-pātha*, *krama-pātha*, *ghana-pātha*, and *jātā-pātha*, for keeping the word order intact. But while no rewording or rearrangement of words is allowed in the *Vedas*, the *Itiḥāsas* and *Purāṇas* need not be so rigidly preserved: their exact wordings are allowed to vary in different *yuga* cycles. Because no special techniques are used to keep the word order of the *Purāṇas* and *Itiḥāsas* intact, we find slight differences from edition to edition.

Śrīla Vyāsa compiled the *Itiḥāsa* called *Mahābhārata* for people of this age specifically because they are not qualified to understand the *Vedas*. This is explained in *Srimad-Bhāgavatam* (1.4.25):

*strī-sūdra-dvija-bandhūnām trayā na śruti-gocarā
carṇa-sreyasi śudhānām śreya eva bhaved iha
iti bhāratam ākhyānāṁ krpayā muninā kṛtām*

“Out of compassion, the sage thought it wise to do something that would enable those who were ignorant of how to act for their own welfare to achieve the ultimate goal of life. Thus he compiled the great historical narration called the *Mahābhārata* for women, laborers, and friends of the twice-born because they do not have access to the *Vedas*.”

Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī says that the *Purāṇas* are called so because they make the *Vedas* complete. Does he mean the *Vedas* are incomplete? No, but the *Purāṇas* are a form of explanatory, supplementary literature that help us understand the terse, cryptic message of the *Vedas*. Like the *Vedas*, they convey knowledge of the Absolute Truth, and to do so they must be transcendental like the *Vedas*. The *Skanda Purāṇa* (4.95.12) indicates the equal transcendental status of the *Purāṇas*, *Itiḥāsas*, and *Vedas* as follows:

*vede rāmāyane caiva purāṇe bhārate tathā
dāv ante ca madhye ca hariḥ sarvatra giyate*
“In the Vedas, Rāmāyana, Purāṇas, and Mahābhārata Lord Hari is glorified everywhere—in the beginning, middle, and end.”

The conclusion is that because the Itihāsas and Purāṇas emanate from the same source as the four Vedas and have the same purport, they are also equally authoritative.

Next Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmi explains more about how the Itihāsas and Purāṇas are not inferior to the Vedas.

TEXT 13

TEXT 13.1:

ata eva skānde prabhāsa-khaṇḍe:

purā tapaś cacārograya amarānāṁ pitāmahaḥ

āvīrbhūtās tato vedāḥ sa-śaṅ-ang-a-pada-kramaḥ

tataḥ purāṇam akhilām sarva-sāstra-mayaṁ dhrutam

nitya-sābda-mayaṁ punyam śata-koti-pravistaram

nirgataṁ brahmaṇo vaktrā́ tasya bhedāṁ nibodhata

brahmaṁ purāṇam prathamāṁ ity-ādi.

Translation

Gopiparanadhana: Therefore the Prabhāsa-khanda of the Skanda Purāṇa states, “In ancient times Brahmā, the grandfather of the immortal demigods, executed severe penances. As a result, the Vedas became manifest, along with their six supplements, their word-for-word glosses, and their reordered texts. There then appeared the entire Purāṇa, incorporating all scriptures. The Purāṇa is unchanging, consists of eternal sound, is auspicious, and includes as many as one billion verses. It emanated from Lord Brahmā’s mouth. Listen to the description of its divisions: First is the Brahma Purāṇa. . .”

BBT: The Prabhāsa-khanda of the Skanda Purāṇa [DDB57][2.3.5] therefore states: “Long ago, Lord Brahmā, the grandfather of the demigods, performed severe penances, and as a result the Vedas appeared, along with their six supplements and their pada and krama texts. Then the entire Purāṇa emanated from his mouth. Composed of eternal sound and consisting of one billion verses, it is the unchanging, sacred embodiment of all scriptures. You should know that of the various divisions of this Purāṇa, the Brahma Purāṇa is the first.”
TEXT 13.2:
atra śata-koti-sankhyā brahma-loke prasiddhītī tathoktaṁ tritiya-skandhe ca ‘rg-yajuh-sāmāthavākhyān vedān pūrvādībhīr mukhaṁ’ ity-ādi-prakarana:

itihāsa-purāṇāṁ pañcamam vedam iṣvarah sarvebhya eva vaktrebhyaḥ sasrjrā sarva-dārsanaḥ

ity api cātra sāksād eva veda-śabdah prayuktah purānetiḥāsayoh.

Translation

Gopiparanadhana: The figure of one billion mentioned here refers to the number of verses extant on Brahmā’s planet. In a passage similar to the one quoted above from the Skanda Purāṇa, the Third Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam has a passage that starts “Beginning from the front face of Brahmā, gradually the four Vedas—Ṛg, Yajur, Śāma, and Atharva—became manifest” [Bhāg. 3.12.37]. In this passage we find the statement “Then Brahmā created the fifth Veda—the Purānas and the histories—from all his mouths, since he could see all the past, present, and future” [Bhāg. 3.12.39]. Here also the word veda refers to the Purānas and Itihāsas.

BBT: The figure one billion cited here refers to the number of verses existing in Brahmā’s domain. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam’s Third Canto gives a similar description in the passage starting with the words ṛg-yajuh-sāmāthavākhyān vedān pūrva-dībhir mukhaṁ: “Beginning from the front face of Brahmā, gradually the four Vedas—Ṛg, Yajur, Śāma, and Atharva—became manifest” [Bhāg. 3.12.37]. In this passage we find the statement “Then Brahmā created the fifth Veda—the Purānas and the histories—from all his mouths, since he could see all the past, present, and future” [Bhāg. 3.12.39]. Here the word veda is used specifically in reference to the Itihāsas and Purānas.

TEXT 13.3:
anyatra ca ‘purāṇam pañcamo vedah’:

itihāsaḥ purāṇam ca pañcamo veda ucyate vedān adhyāpayāṁ āsa mahābhārata-pañcamamān

ity-ādau. anyathā vedān ity-ādāv api pañcamatvam nāvakañceta samāna-jātiya-niveśitatvāṁ sankhyāyāṁ.

Translation

Gopiparanadhana: Elsewhere we find similar statements to the effect that “the Purāṇa is the fifth Veda”: “The Itihāsas and Purānas are called the fifth Veda” [Bhāg. 1.4.20]. “He taught the Vedas along with the fifth of their number, the Mahābhārata” [Mahābhārata, Mokṣa-dharma 340.21]. If the Itihāsas and Purānas were not Vedic, they would not be specified as “the
fifth” in such statements as these, since counting necessarily involves things that belong to a same category.

BBT: And elsewhere it is said, “The Purāṇas are the fifth Veda,” “The Itiḥāsas and Purāṇas are called the fifth Veda” [Bhg. 1.4.20], and “He taught the Vedas along with the fifth of their number, the Mahābhārata” [M.Bh. Mokṣa-dharma 340.21]. If the Itiḥāsas and Purāṇas were not Vedic, it would have been inappropriate for the preceding verses to include them as the fifth Veda, since normally one counts together only objects of the same kind.

TEXT 13.4
bhaviṣya-purāṇe:

‘kārṣṇam ca pañcamam vedam yan mahābhāratam smṛtam’
itī. tathā ca sāma-kauthumiya-sākhāyām chāndogyopaniṣadi ca:

‘ṛg-vedam bhagavo ‘dhyaṇi yajur-vedam sāma-vedam ātharvamaṇ caturtham
itiḥāsam purāṇam pañcamam vedānāṃ vedam’

ity-ādi.

Translation

Gopiparanadhana: Moreover, the Bhaviṣya Purāṇa states, “The Veda written by Kuṛśṇa [Dvaipāyana Vyāsā] is the fifth Veda and is known as the Mahābhārata.” And the Chāndogya Upaniṣad of the Kauthumiya branch of the Sāma Veda states, “Sir, I have studied the Rg Veda, the Yajur Veda, the Sāma Veda, the fourth or Ātharva Veda, and the Itiḥāsa-Purāṇa, which is the fifth Veda.” And so on.

BBT: Also, the Bhaviṣya Purāṇa states, “The fifth Veda, written by Śri Kuṛśṇa-dvaiṣṇava Vyāsa, is called the Mahābhārata.”

Another reference is found in the Chāndogya Upaniṣad of the Kauthumiya school of the Sāma Veda: “Venerable sir, I have studied the Rg, Yajur, Sāma, and Ātharva Vedas, and also the Itiḥāsas and Purāṇas, which are the fifth Veda” [Kauthumiya Chāndogyopaniṣad 7.1.2].

TEXT 13.5

ata eva ‘asya mahato bhūtasya ity-ādi eva itiḥāsa-purāṇayos caturnām evantar-
bhūtatva-kalpanayā prasiddha-pratyākhyaṇam nirastam. tād uktam ‘brāhmam
purāṇam prathamam’ ity-ādi.

Translation

Gopiparanadhana: Thus is disproved the objection that denies the authenticity of the Itiḥāsas and Purāṇas as we know them by presuming that the Itiḥāsa and Purāṇa mentioned in the Brhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad’s statement about “the breath of this Supreme Being” are nothing more than certain parts of the four Vedas. The
same is said by the words beginning “First is the Brahma Purâna. . .”

BBT: Thus is refuted the frequently raised objection that the Itiḥāsas and Purānas, said in the Brhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad to emanate from the breath of the Supreme Being, are included in the four Vedas and therefore have no separate existence. The same is stated in the words “Brahma Purâna is the first . . .” (Skanda Purâna).

[DDB58]

Purport by Gopiparanadhana prabhu

These quotations from an assortment of sources, both smṛti and śruti, further justify the Itiḥāsas’ and Purānas’ reputation as equivalents of the Vedas. Smṛti references like the passage cited in Text 13.4 from the Chāndogya Upaniṣad are the primary evidence of the Itiḥāsas’ and Purānas’ status as the fifth Veda, but Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī is also drawing from the Purānas themselves for additional insight. How four-headed Brahmā manifests the Purānas along with the Vedas during his work of periodic re-creation is described in the verses from the Skanda Purâna quoted in Text 13.1. Lord Brahmā is the grandfather of the immortal (or more properly very long-lived) demigods, who descend from Marici and his other sons. Brahmā does not create ex nihilo the already existing material cosmos, which after the annihilation at the end of each of his days lies dormant in his sleeping body. Nor does he create the eternal Vedas. Therefore the account of the Third Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam concerning his production of the Vedas uses the verb sasrje, “he sent forth”.

According to the Skanda Purâna, from his mouths Brahmā first manifested the Vedas and their integral supplements—the six Vedāngas, the pada-pāṭhas, and the krama-pāṭhas. The six corollary texts known as the Vedāngas present scientific information needed to properly recite the Vedas, understand them, and use them in rituals. The Śiṣṭa-vedāṅga teaches correct pronunciation and intonation, as differently practiced by the schools of each Veda; Chandas is the theory of poetic meters; Vyākaraṇa is grammar; Nirukta is Vedic lexicography, which explains the meaning and etymology of less familiar words; Jyotisha is astronomy, used for calculating the correct times for performing sacrifices; and Kalpa describes the details of rituals. The pada-pāṭhas (“word-by-word readings”) help in studying the Samhitās by providing a transcription of each word and word-compound in the forms they theoretically had before the many euphonic sound changes. To better assure exact memorization, the Samhitās are also meant to be recited phrase by phrase in the krama-pāṭhas (“reordered readings”), where the words are repeated in groups of two, each second word of a pair becoming the first word of the next pair. For example, a sequence represented by abcd in a Samhitā becomes ab/bc/cd in the krama-pāṭha.

After manifesting the Vedas and these corollaries, Lord Brahmā produced all the Purānas at once. The Skanda Purâna describes them as summaries of the contents of all the Vedic scriptures (sarva-veda-mayam), unchanging (dhruvam) even though they are officially in the smṛti category, expressions of the same
transcendental sound of śabda-pramāṇa as the Vedas (nitya-śabda-mayam), and all of them beneficial to study (puniyam). The Purāṇas are said to contain altogether one billion verses (śata-koti-pravistaram); the eighteen Purāṇas known on earth, however, contain a total of only 400,000 verses, having been condensed by Śrīla Veda-vyāsa from the one original Purāṇa, which is still current on higher planets in its much longer version. (See Text 14.3.)

The statements cited from the Mokṣa-dharma and Bhavisya Purāṇa specifically call the Mahābhārata the fifth Veda. Of course, the Mahābhārata is one of the important Itihāsas, and more commonly all the Itihāsas and Purāṇas together are termed the fifth Veda. In any case, strictly speaking there are four Vedas; references to a fifth are more or less poetical, based on the special apaurusēya status of the Itihāsa-Purāṇa. The Bhavisya Purāṇa calls the Mahābhārata the Kārṣṇa Veda because it was written by Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa.

These statements put to final rest the objection previously discussed, that the Itihāsas and Purāṇas mentioned in śrutī cannot be the ones edited by Veda-vyāsa and open to the purview even of uneducated śādras. Hearing the Brhad-āraṇyaka Upanisad’s enumeration of scriptures that proceed from the breath of the Supreme (Text 12.4), one might feel free to say that the Itihāsas and Purāṇas mentioned there are not necessarily separate from the first-listed four Vedas. Now we see, however, that many other authorized scriptures place the Itihāsas and Purāṇas in a category of their own, equal but separate from the first four Vedas. The Skanda Purāṇa, for example, after describing the emanation of the Vedas and then the Purāṇas from Lord Brahmā, immediately lists the Purāṇas, beginning with the Brahma Purāṇa. These are unquestionably the eighteen major Purāṇas edited by Śrīla Vyāsadeva.

Purport by BBT Translators

The Itihāsas and Purāṇas Are Vedic

To substantiate the statement from the Brhad-āraṇyaka Upanisad quoted in Text 12.4 (B.a. Up. 2.4.10), which establishes the Vedic nature of the Itihāsas and Purāṇas, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī here cites more evidence from the Purāṇas, Itihāsas, and Upanisads. From these references the following is clear: The Purāṇas and Itihāsas have the same source as the four Vedas and are in fact called the fifth Veda.

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī here refers to the frequent objection that the Itihāsas and Purāṇas cannot be the fifth Veda because they are part of the four Vedas. While explaining the above-mentioned statement from the Brhad-āraṇyaka Upanisad, some followers of the Mitāmśakā school claim that the words Itihāsa and Purāṇa refer to historical passages found in some parts of the Vedas and not to separate works. Examples of śrutī statements sometimes considered Purāṇic are yato vā imāṁ bhūtāṁ jāyante (“from whom these beings take birth”; Taṅtārīya Up. 3.1) and sa brahmaṇaḥ srjāti rudreṇa vilāpayati harir ādir anādīḥ (“Lord Hari creates through Brahmā and destroys through Rudra, but He Himself is the beginningless source of
all”). These and similar passages are referred to as “[DDB59] Purāṇa” because they deal with creation and destruction, which are among the subjects treated in the Purāṇas.

Mimāmsakas further argue that over an immense period many of these original Purānic portions of the Vedas were lost and those that remained became difficult to understand. Therefore, the Mimāmsakas propose, Śrīla Vyāsa mercifully wrote new Itihāsas and Purāṇas for the benefit of the unintelligent people of Kali-yuga, and this is what is described in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.4.25). Hence the Itihāsas and Purāṇas mentioned in the Brhadārānyaka Upaniṣad are part of the Vedas, not independent books, and therefore it is incorrect to conclude that they are the fifth Veda. This is the Mimāmsakas’ argument.

Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī refutes this argument with references from the Vedas and also from the Itihāsas and Purāṇas themselves. These citations confirm the Itihāsas’ and Purāṇas’ status as the fifth Veda on the grounds that they emanated separately from Lord Brahmā’s mouths. If they were only parts of the Vedas, there would be no reason for these authoritative scriptures to call them the fifth Veda. Moreover, there are many statements about the apauruseya, Vedic nature of the Itihāsas and Purāṇas in the Vedic Samhitās, Brāhmaṇas, Āranyakas, Upaniṣads, Kalpa-sūtras, Dharma-sūtras, and Grihya-sūtras, as well as in the Purāṇas, Itihāsas, and other smṛti texts. Here are a few of these statements:

\[ rcaḥ sāmāṇi chandāṃsi purāṇam yajuṣā saha \\
ucchiṣṭaḥ jañīre sarve divi deva divi-śritāḥ \]

“The Rg, Sāma, Yajur, and Atharva Vedas appeared from the Supreme Lord along with the Purāṇas and all the demigods residing in the heavenly planets” (Atharva Veda 11.7.24).

\[ sa brhatim diśam anu vyacalat tam itihāsaś ca purāṇam ca gāthāś ca itihāsasya ca sa vai purāṇasya ca gāthānām ca nārāsamsinām ca priyām dhām bhavati ya evam veda. \]

“He approached the Brhati meter, and thus the Itihāsas, Purāṇas, Gāthās, and Nārāśamsis became favorable to him. One who knows this verily becomes the beloved abode of the Itihāsas, Purāṇas, Gāthās, and Nārāśamsis” (Atharva Veda 15.6.10, 12).

\[ evam ime sarve vedā nirmātāḥ sa-kalpaḥ sa-rahasyāḥ sa-brāhmaṇāḥ sopaniṣatkāḥ \\
setiḥsāh sānvakhyātāḥ sa-purāṇāḥ. \]

“In this way all the Vedas were manifested along with the [DDB60] kalpas, rahasyas, Brāhmaṇas, Upaniṣads, Itihāsas, anvākhyātas, and Purāṇas” (Gopatha Brāhmaṇa, Pūrva 2.10).

\[ nāma vā rg-vedo yajur-vedah sāma-veda atharvanaś caturtha itihāsa-purāṇah \\
paścamo vedānām vedah. \]
“Indeed Rg, Yajur, Sàma, and Atharva are the names of the four Vedas. The Itihàsas and Purànas are the fifth Veda” (Chàndogya Up. 7.1.4).

\[
\text{mimàmsate ca yo vedàn sadbhir angaih sa-vistaraih}
\]
\[
\text{itihàsa-purànàm sa bhaved veda-pàra-gah}
\]

“One who thoroughly studies the Vedas along with their six limbs and the Itihàsas and Purànas becomes a true knower of the Vedas” (Vyàsa-smrti 4.45).

In the next Text Śrīla Jiva Gosvàmī explains why the Itihàsas and Purànas are counted as the fifth Veda.

**TEXT 14**

**TEXT 14.1:**

\[
\text{pañcamatve kàraṇam ca vàyu-puràñe sùta-vàkyam}
\]

\[
\text{itihàsa-purànànàm vaktàram samyag eva hi}
\]
\[
\text{màm caiva pratijagràha bhagavàn iśvaraḥ prabhuḥ}
\]

\[
\text{eka āśid yajur-vedas taṁ caturdhà vyakalpayat}
\]
\[
\text{càturhotram abhùt tasmims tena yajñaṁ akalpayat}
\]

\[
\text{àdhvaryavàṁ yajurbhis tu rgbhir hotraṁ tathaiva ca}
\]
\[
\text{audgàtram sàmabhìś caiva brahmatvam càpy atharvabhih}
\]

\[
\text{àkhyànaiś càpy upàkhyànair gàthàbhìr dvija-sattamàh}
\]
\[
\text{puràna-samhitàś cakre purànàrtha-visàradah}
\]
\[
\text{yac chiśtaṁ tu yajur-veda iti śàstràrtha-nirnayah}
\]
Translation

**Gopiparanadhana:** These words spoken by Sūta Gosvāmī in the Vāyu Purāṇa [60.16–18, 21–22] describe why the Itiḥāsa and Purāṇa are considered the fifth Veda:

"The Personality of Godhead [Śrīla Vyāsadeva] then chose me as an authorized speaker of the Itiḥāsas and Purāṇas. At first there was only one Veda, the Yajur Veda. Vyāsadeva divided it into four parts. Within these were manifested the ritual activities of the four kinds of priests, on which basis he arranged for the performance of sacrifice. With the yajur-mantras he arranged the activities of the Adhvaryu priests, with the rg-mantras those of the Hotā priests, with the sāma-mantras those of the Udgātā priests, and with the atharva-mantras those of the Brahma priests…. O best of brāhmaṇas, out of the ākhyānas, upākhyānas and gāthas Vyāsadeva fashioned his summary of the Purāṇas, being thoroughly conversant with the purport of the Purāṇas. Whatever was left over [from the division of the Veda into four] is considered Yajur Veda. Such is the definitive word on understanding the revealed scriptures."

**BBT:** In the Vāyu Purāṇa [60.16–18, 21–22] Sūta Gosvāmī explains why the Itiḥāsas and Purāṇas are considered the fifth Veda:

"Śrīla Vyāsadeva, the almighty Supreme Lord, accepted me [Sūta Gosvāmī] as the qualified speaker of the Itiḥāsas and Purāṇas. In the beginning there was only one Veda, the Yajur Veda, which Śrīla Vyāsa divided into four parts. These gave rise to the four activities called cātur-hatra, by means of which Śrīla Vyāsa arranged for the performance of sacrifice.

“The adhvaryu priests carry out their responsibilities with yajur-mantras, the hotā priests with rg-mantras, the udgātā priests with sāma-mantras, and the brahma priests with atharva-mantras.”

Sūta Gosvāmī further states:

“O best of the twice-born, thereafter Śrīla Vyāsa, who best knows the meaning of the Purāṇas, compiled them and the Itiḥāsas by combining various ākhyānas, upākhyānas, and gāthās. Whatever remained after Vyāsa divided the Vedas into four parts was also Yajur Veda. This is the conclusion of the scriptures.”

**TEXT 14.2:**

brahma-yajñādyayane ca vinivyogoy draṣṭaye 'miśām 'yad brāhmaṇanātiitihāsā-purāṇānītīti. so 'pi navedatve saṃbhavati. ato yad āha bhagavān mātye:

kālenāgrahamām matvā purānasya dvijottamāh

vyāsa-rūpam aham kṛtvā saṁharāmi yuge yuge

iti pūrva-siddham eva purānam sukha-sangrahaṇāya saṅkalayāmīti tatrārthah.
Translation

Gopiparanadhana: We also see that the Itihāsas and Purānas are employed in the recitation of the Brahma-yajña, as is enjoined, "[The texts to be recited include] Brāhmaṇas, Itihāsas and Purānas" [Taittirīya Āranyaka 2.9]. This could not be the case if the Itihāsas and Purānas were not Vedic. The Supreme Lord says in the Matsya Purāṇa [53.8], "O best of brāhmaṇas, foreseeing that in the course of time the Purānas will be neglected, I appear as Vyāsa in each age and make an abridgement of them." According to what we have seen here, what the Lord means in saying this is "I edit the already existing Purāṇa for easier assimilation."

BBT: The Purānas are also used in the formal study of the Vedas called brahma-yajña: yad brāhmaṇāntiḥāṣa-purānānī. "The Itihāsas and Purānas are Vedas" [Taittirīya Āranyaka 2.9]. If the Itihāsas and Purānas were not Vedic, they would not be used this way in the brahma-yajña. Therefore in the Matsya Purāṇa [53.8–9] the Supreme Lord says, “O best of the twice-born, foreseeing that the Purāṇa will gradually be neglected, in every age I assume the form of Vyāsa and abridge it.” In other words, Śrīla Vyāsa condenses the already existing Purāṇa so that people can easily comprehend it.

TEXT 14.3:

tad-anantaram hy uktam:

catur-lakṣa-pramāṇena dvāpare dvāpare sadā
tad aṣṭādaśadhā kṛtya bhūr-loke 'śmin prabhāsyate

adyāpy amartya-loke tu śata-koti-pravistaram
tad-artha 'tra catur-lakṣaḥ sankṣepena nivesitah

iti.

Translation

Gopiparanadhana: Immediately after this the following is said: "In every Dvāpara-yuga I divide the Purāṇa into eighteen books totaling four hundred thousand verses, in which form they are disseminated on this earth. But even today on the planets of the demigods the Purāṇa contains one billion verses. The purport of that original Purāṇa is concisely incorporated in the four hundred thousand verse edition" [Matsya Pur. 53.9–11].

BBT: The Matsya Purāṇa [53.9–11] also states, “The Purāṇa consisting of four hundred thousand verses is divided into eighteen parts, in which form it is passed on by oral recitation here on earth in every Dvāpara-yuga. Even today the original Purāṇa of one billion verses exists in the worlds of the demigods. The essential meaning of that Purāṇa is contained in the abridged version of four hundred thousand verses.”
TEXT 14.4:

atra tu 'yac chiśtam tu yajur-vedah' ity ukttavat tasyābhidheya-bhāgaś catur-lakṣas tv
atra martya-loke sankṣepena sāra-sangrahena nivesito na tu rancanāntarenety arthah.

Translation

Gopiparanadhana: Since it has been stated that "Whatever was left over is considered Yajur Veda,” these four hundred thousand verses were not new compositions but the most useful portions of the original collected into an essential abridgement in this world of mortals.

BBT: Śūta's statement [quoted in Text 14.1] that “whatever remained after Vyāsa divided the Vedas into four parts was also Yajur Veda” indicates that the essence of the original Purāṇa formed the abridged version of four hundred thousand verses in the world of mortals. It is not a different composition.

Purport by Gopiparanadhana prabhu

Ugraśravā Śūta, the son of Romaharsana, learned the Purāṇas from his father, whom Krṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa chose from among his disciples to be the prime authority on Itihāsas and Purāṇas. It is known from accounts in the Purāṇas that Ugraśravā also studies the Purāṇas from Vyāsadeva directly. Therefore he says in the passage cited here from the Vāyu Purāṇa that it was Vyāsadeva who authorized him as a Purānic bard. This does not contradict Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam's account of his being later appointed by Lord Balarāma to replace his father as speaker at the great sacrifice at Naimiśāranya after Romaharṣana's unfortunate death there.

Ugraśravā here affirms the apauruṣeya authority of the Purāṇas by tracing out their Vedic origin. Before Śrīla Veda-vyāsa's editing, there was only one undivided Veda. The four different kinds of mantras comprising the four basic Vedas were then mixed together indiscriminately, along with other explanatory and historical texts. Intelligent brāhmaṇas before Kali-yuga were competent enough to locate the particular mantras they needed from the unordered collection. Only for the generally corrupt age of Kali is it necessary to divide the Vedas into separate books. The Bhāgavatam's analogy to explain this process is that of a rich man's collection of rare jewels. An owner of many diamonds, rubies, emeralds and sapphires who has been keeping them mixed in one box might have someone sort them out for him into four separate piles. After this has been done, nothing has changed substantially in the collection, only the order.

rg-atharva-yajuh-sāmnām/ rāśīr uddhṛtya vargaśah
catasrah samhiṭās cakre/ mantraṁ mani-ganāṁ iva

"Śrīla Vyāsadeva separated the mantras of the Rg. Atharva, Yajur and Sāma Vedas into four divisions, just as one sorts out a mixed collection of jewels into piles.
Thus he composed four distinct Vedic literatures" [Bhāg. 12.6.50].

Four categories of Vedic mantras exist eternally, each serving a different function through a different style of language. Rg-mantras praise the demigods who represent the personal powers of the Supreme Lord. The Hotā priests who use them in sacrifices are compared to the master of ceremonies and his assistants at a feast, who invite the special guests, greet them and make arrangements for their satisfaction. The Adhvaryu priests are magicians who conjure up the sacrificial environment from simple objects in ordinary space and time. The yajur-mantras they chant effect mystic transformations through the power of the language of evocation. Examples of this special, creative mode of speech are sometime found in mundane life, as when a judge declares "I now pronounce you man and wife" or "I sentence you to be hung until dead. May God have mercy on your soul." The sāma-mantras sung by the Udgātā priests are extremely complex musical modifications of selected rg-mantras. Thoroughly permuted and interpolated with non-significant syllables, hardly recognizable as music to human ears, the sāma songs accompany the more elaborate sacrifices in which soma is offered. The Brahma priests' atharva-mantras are mainly reserved for use when a mistake or inauspicious intrusion in the performance requires rectification. They are expressed in a language of incantation against various inimical forces.

According to this statement of the Vāyu Purāṇa, the original, combined Veda was known as Yajur Veda. One might question how this does not disagree with the Brhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad's description of the breathing of Lord Viṣṇu creating the Vedas one after another, the Rg Veda being first [Text 12.4]. Śrīla Rādhā-mohana Vācaspati, in his commentary on Śrī Tatvya-sandarbha--written not long after Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣana's commentary but without reference to Śrīla Baladeva's opinions--answers this objection. When the Rg and other Vedas are said to have appeared in distinct order from Mahā-Viṣṇu at the beginning of this cycle of creation, what is being referred to is only their periodic re-manifestation. Perpetually all four co-exist, and because the yajur-mantras are the most prominent, the complete corpus can be called Yajur Veda by the hermeneutic rule, ādhiyeyena vyapadesà bhavanti ("A name may be assigned according to the most prominent category of a mixed group.").

Following his division of the Veda into four, Śrīla Vyāsadeva fashioned portions of the remaining Yajur Veda material into the Itiḥāsas and Purāṇas. The Purāṇas and epics are thus not human creations but as authorless as the Vedas. Specifically, the portions Vyāsadeva used are called ākhyānas, upākhyānas and gāthas. Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣana defines these: Ākhyānas are Purānic texts according to the strict definition of five required topics. Upākhyānas are other historical accounts. Gāthas are specially composed musical poems. In Śrīla Baladeva's opinion, the words purāṇa-samhitās cakre mean that Vyāsadeva "fashioned his own summary of the Purāṇas," namely Mahābhārata. Mahābhārata is composed of ākhyānas, upākhyānas and gāthas as defined by Baladeva Vidyābhūṣana.

Rādhā-mohana Gosvāmi's opinion is different, that purāṇa-samhitā refers to all the Purāṇas as a body. The followers of Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣana in his
disciplic succession should acknowledge the first priority of his opinion. In any case, both interpretations confirm the Vedic status of the Purāṇas. Śrīla Rādhā-mohana Gosvāmī's commentary is considered also authoritative by knowledgeable Gaudiya Vaiṣṇavas, and he does not contradict Baladeva Vidyābhūṣana on crucial matters. But there are some misled Vaiṣṇavas who belittle Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣana with the idea that he does not truly represent Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu; they favor Rādhā-mohana's commentary for its supposedly rival views, even though the commentary itself shows no clear indication that he had the intention of being Śrīla Baladeva's philosophical adversary.

In the verse of the Matsya Purāṇa quoted in Text 14.2, the Supreme Lord says "I appear as Vyāsa in each age." "Each age" here means each cycle of ages. Krṣṇa-dvaipāyana Vyāsa advented near the end of Dwāpara-yuga, and as confirmed by the Viṣṇu Purāṇa, a different person is empowered by the Personality of Godhead to take the role of Vyāsa at the same time in each cycle of ages:

\[
\text{aṣṭāvimśati kṛtvā vai/ vedā vyastā mahārsibhiḥ} \\
\text{vaivasvate 'ntare hy asmin/ dvāparesu punah punah}
\]

\[
\text{veda-vyāsā vyatītā ye/ aṣṭāvimśati sattama} \\
\text{caturdhā yaiḥ krto vedo/ dvāparesu punah punah}
\]

"During this period of Vaivasvata Manu's reign, already twenty eight different exalted sages have edited the Vedas in one Dwāpara age after another. Twenty eight Veda-vyāsas have already come and gone, O best of souls, dividing the Veda into four parts in each Dwāpara-yuga" [Viṣṇu Pur. 3.3.9–10].

Text 14.2 mentions the sacrifice called brahma-yajña. This is one of the five "great sacrifices" (pańca-mahā-yajñāḥ) enjoined for every Vedic householder brāhmaṇa as daily atonment for the unavoidable violence he commits in the five "places of slaughter" in the house: the kitchen stove, the stone on which rice is ground, the broom, the spice mortar and the water pot. The demigods must be honored by deva-yajña, daily fire sacrifices. Revered forefathers are placated by pitṛ-yajña, xxxxxxxxxx. Human beings are satisfied by hospitality to guests. All living beings are shown respect by bhūta-yajña, the symbolic offering of a portion of food from one's plate at every meal. The Vedic sages are thanked by performing brahma-yajña, recitation from various scriptures at the time of chanting the Gāyatri mantra. The details of brahma-yajña are specified in various śrūtis such as the Satapatha Brāhmaṇa and Taṁśiriya Āraṇyaka.

Purport by BBT Translators

The Itihāsas and Purāṇas Are the Fifth Veda

The Itihāsas and Purāṇas are called the fifth Veda because they are derived from the original Veda, the Yajur Veda. This is explained in the section of the Vāyu Purāṇa that describes the cātur-hotra priests. There are four kinds of rtviks, or priests,
needed to perform a Vedic sacrifice, and their duties were originally all known from the Yajur Veda. But later on the Veda was divided into four parts for easy understanding and application. The duties of the four priests—adhvaryu, udgātā, hotā, and brahma—are known from each of these four divisions. The adhvaryu is associated with the Yajur Veda, and his duties include sanctifying the sacrificial paraphernalia and measuring the shape and size of the sacrificial arena. The udgātā priest studies the Sāma Veda and chants hymns during the sacrifice to propitiate the Lord. The hotā priest decorates the altar, invokes the demigods, pours oblations, and chants the Rg Veda. The brahma priest is a student of the Atharva Veda and acts as the supervisor and coordinator of sacrificial ceremonies.

After Śrīla Vyāsa compiled the four Vedas, there still remained one billion verses from the original Yajur Veda. These verses became the original Purāṇa, which is still available on the heavenly planets. Out of compassion for the people of Kali-yuga, Vyāsa extracted five hundred thousand essential verses from this original Purāṇa. Four hundred thousand of these He divided into the eighteen Purāṇas. The remaining verses formed the Itihāsa called Mahābhārata. The Itihāsa and Purāṇas are therefore called the fifth Veda because they were produced from the original Veda. Another reason the Purāṇas and Itihāsas are considered the fifth Veda, distinct from the other four, is that the priests of the four Vedas do not use the Purāṇas and Itihāsas in sacrificial ceremonies, even though these works are studied along with the Vedas.

In his commentary on the Viṣṇu Purāṇa (3.6.16), Śrīla Śrīdharā Svāmi defines the terms ākhyāna, upākhyāna, and gāthā:

svayam-dṛṣṭārtha-kathanam prāhur ākhyānakam budhāḥ śrutasyārthasya kathanam upākhyānam pracaksate gāthās tu pitr-prthivy-ādi-gītayah

“An ākhyāna is a narration of something witnessed by the speaker, while an upākhyāna is a narration of something the speaker has not witnessed but rather heard about. Gāthās are songs about the forefathers and earthly beings.”

The words yac chiṣṭam tu yajur-vedah (“The remaining part was also called Yajur Veda”; Vāyu Purāṇa 60.16.22) signify that the Itihāsas and Purāṇas are apaurusēya, not composed by any mortal; thus they have the same authority as the Vedas, having been compiled by Śrīla Vyāsa from the Supreme Lord’s very breath. While compiling the Purāṇas and Itihāsas He included some of His own statements to make the narration more easily comprehensible. For example, in the Bhagavad-gitā the words “Arjuna said” and “Krṣṇa said” are added by Śrīla Vyāsa to help the reader understand. But we should not consider even these added statements to have been written by a mortal being, since Vyāsa is an incarnation of the Supreme Lord. This is evident from the verse of the Matsya Purāṇa quoted in the text.

Someone might raise the objection that from the Brhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad (2.4.10) it is clear that the four Vedas individually appeared from the Supreme Lord. Why, then, is it said that Vyāsadeva divided the one Veda into four parts? We reply that while it is true that each Veda individually emanated from the Lord,
originally all four Vedas were collectively called the Yajur Veda because that Veda is much larger than the other three. Generally, the largest member of a set can represent the whole set. In Sanskrit this is called ādhiøyena vyapadesā bhavanti, or the law that the largest constituent represents the whole. A herd of cows with just a few buffaloes in it is still called a herd of cows, and the four fingers and one thumb are usually called the five fingers. Because the four Vedas had become disordered, Śrī Vyāsa rearranged the Vedic texts to help clearly define the duties of the four sacrificial priests. How the Vedas became mixed up because of a curse by Gautama Rṣi will be told in Text 16.

In the next Text Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī further substantiates his conclusion about the Vedic nature of the Itihāsas and Purāṇas, and he also explains the meaning of the name Veda-vyāsa.

TEXT 15

TEXT 15.1

tathaiva darśitam veda-saha-bhāvena śiva-purāṇasya vāyaviya-samhitāyām

sankṣipyat ca turo vedaṁ caturdhā vyabhajat prabhuh
vyasta-vedatayā khyāto veda-vyāsa iti smṛtaḥ

purāṇam api sankṣiptam catur-lakṣa-pramāṇatah
adyāpy amartya-loke tu śata-koṭi-pravistaram

iti. sankṣiptam ity atra teneti śeṣaḥ.

Translation

Gopiparanadhana: The same picture is drawn, describing the Purāṇas in conjunction with the Vedas, in the Vāyaviya-samhitā [1.1.37–38] of the Siva Purāṇa: "The great master condensed the four Vedas and divided them into four parts. Because he separated the Vedas into parts, he is called Veda-vyāsa. He also condensed the Purāṇa into four hundred thousand verses, although even today it contains one billion verses on the planets of the demigods." "Was condensed" (sankṣiptam) here implies "by him" to complete the idea.

BBT: Similarly, the Vāyaviya-samhitā of the Śiva Purāṇa indicates the Vedic nature of the Purāṇas by discussing their appearance along with the Vedas: “The ingenious Lord abridged the Veda and then divided it [vyasta] into four. Therefore He became known as Veda-vyāsa. He also summarized the Purāṇas in
four hundred thousand verses, but in the heavenly planets they still comprise one billion verses” [Śiva Purāṇa 7.1.1.37–38].
Here the word sankśiptam (“condensed”) implies “condensed by Him.”

TEXT 15.2

śkāndam ṛgneyam ity-ādi-samākhyaś tu pravacana-nibandhanāh kāthakādi-vad
anupārvā-nirmāṇa-nibandhanā vā. tasmāt kvacid anyayatva-sravanam tv āvirbhāva-
tirobhāvāpekṣayā.
tad evam itihāsa-purāṇayor vedatvam siddham.

Translation

Gopiparanadhana: The names of Purāṇas like Skanda and Agni, however, pertain to the Purāṇas’ speakers, in the same way as the names Kāthaka and so on. Or else, they pertain to the conventional order in which they were composed. Therefore when we sometimes hear that the Purāṇas are not eternal, this is only in reference to their visible manifestation and disappearance. Thus we have proven [in Texts 13–15.2] that the Itihāsas and Purāṇas are Vedic.

BBT: The name of a Purāṇa—Skanda, Agni, and so on—refers to its original speaker, as with the Kātha Upaniṣad, which was promulgated by the sage Kātha. Or else the name refers to the person who arranged the Purāṇa’s contents. The reason the Purāṇas are occasionally described as impermanent is that they are sometimes manifest and sometimes not. In this way the Vedic nature of the Itihāsas and Purāṇas is established.

TEXT 15.3

yathoktam prabhāsa-khaṇḍe:

madhura-madhuram etan maṅgalaṁ maṅgalāṇāṁ
sakala-nigama-valli-sat-phalam cit-svārupam

sakṛd api parītām śraddhayā helayā vā
bhṛgu-vara nara-mātram tārayet krṣṇa-nāma

iti.

Translation

Gopiparanadhana: That persons like Śāta Gosvāmī had the privilege to speak the Itihāsas and Purāṇas follows the pattern of the qualification for chanting the name Śrī Kṛṣṇa, which is the perfect fruit of the creeper of the entire Vedic śruti. As the Prabhāsa-khaṇḍa states, “This name Kṛṣṇa is the sweetest of the sweet, the most
auspicious of all auspicious things. It is the perfect fruit of the creeper of the entire Vedic śruti. In essence it is pure, living spirit. O best of the Bhrigu, any human being who just chants this name even once, whether with faith or neglectfully, will become liberated."

BBT: Yet Śūta and others who are not twice-born are qualified to recite the Purāṇas in the same way that every person is qualified to chant Lord Kṛṣṇa's holy name, the transcendental fruit of the creeper of all the Vedas. As stated in the Prabhāsa-khanda [of the Skanda Purāṇa]:

“O best of the Bhrigu dynasty, the holy name of Kṛṣṇa is the sweetest of the sweet and the most auspicious of the auspicious. It is the transcendental fruit of all the Vedas and is purely spiritual and conscious. Whoever chants it but once, whether with faith or with contempt, is liberated."

TEXT 15.4

yathā coktam viṣṇu-dharme:

rg-vedo 'tha yajur-vedah sāma-vedo 'py atharvanah
adhitās tena yenoktam harir ity aksara-dvayam

iti. atha vedārtha-nirṛtyakatvam ca vaisṇave:

bhārata-vyapadeśena hy āmāyārthah pradarṣitah
vedāḥ pratiṣṭhitāḥ sarve purāne nātra samśayah

ity-ādau.

Gopiparanadhana: And as the Viṣṇu-dharma also states, "One is considered to have studied the Rg Veda, Yajur Veda, Sāma Veda and Atharva Veda who has uttered the two syllables Ha-ri." The Viṣṇu Purāṇa, furthermore, states that the Itiḥāsas and Purāṇas explain definitively the meaning of the Vedas, in such verses as "On the pretext of writing the Mahābhārata, Śrīla Vyāsa has revealed the Vedas’ meaning. Without doubt all the Vedas are given a firm foundation in the Purāṇas."

BBT: The Viṣṇu Dharma Purāṇa states:

“A person who chants the two syllables ha-ri has already completed the study of the Rg, Yajur, Sāma, and Atharva Vedas.”

And the Viṣṇu Purāṇa affirms that the Purāṇas and Itiḥāsas establish the meaning of the Vedas:

“On the pretext of writing the Mahābhārata, Śrīla Vyāsa has explained the Vedas’ meaning. Without doubt all the ideas of the Vedas are given a firm foundation in the Purāṇas.”

TEXT 15.5
kim ca vedārtha-dipakānām śāstrānām madhyā-pātītābhyaupagane ’py āvirbhāvaka-
vaśiṣṭyāt tayor eva vaśiṣṭyam. yathā pādme:
dvaipāyanena yad buddham brahmādyais tan na budhyate
sarva-buddham sa vai veda tad-buddham nānya-gocaram

Translation

Gopiparanadhana: Even though we understand that the Itiḥāsas and Purāṇas are
just two types of śāstra among many which elucidate the meaning of the Vedas,
still these two are special on account of the special status of their promulgator. As
stated in the Padma Purāṇa, "Even Brahmā and other demigods do not know
everything Dvaipāyana Vyāsa knows. He understands everything known to anyone
else, but some things he knows no one else can comprehend."

BBT: Moreover, even if we count the Itiḥāsas and Purāṇas among the books
explaining the meaning of the Vedas, still they are unique because their compiler is
so glorious. The Padma Purāṇa says, "Brahmā and others do not know what
Bhagavān Veda-vyāsa knows. Indeed, He knows everything known to others, but
what He knows is beyond everyone else's grasp."

Purport by Gopiparanadhana prabhu

Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa is omniscient because he is an empowered incarnation of
God. "I appear as Vyāsa in each age" (Text 14.2). Therefore everything Vyāsadeva
has written and edited is self-evident truth. In Bhagavad-gītā (15.15) Lord Kṛṣṇa
claims that Vyāsadeva is His own expansion: vedānta-kṛd veda-vid eva cāham ("I am
the author of Vedānta-sūtra and the knower of the Vedas."). The Supreme Lord
does not present Himself as the author, only as the perfect knower, of the Vedas,
which are in fact co-eternal with Him.

Vyāsadeva did two things with the Vedas: he condensed and divided them. These
functions are expressed by two different verbs, śankṣipt and vyās. His condensing
the vast text of the Vedas did not violate their sanctity, but simply reflected the
natural process of the Vedas' concealing some of their own complexity from the
population of a less intelligent age. It is known from various sources that not all
the Vedic mantras are available at any particular time, especially in Kali-yuga: In
his Karma-mimāṃsā-sūtra, Jaimini Rṣi teaches methods for interpolating sacrificial
instructions that he assumes were once specified in no longer available passages of
the Brāhmaṇa ārūḍhas. As described in the Twelfth Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,
Yājñavalkya worshipped the sun-god to obtain a revelation of "new" yajur-mantras.
In general, Vedic rṣis receive mantras in their meditation. They are not authors,
but transmitters. Their service is essential to human society because from time to
time lost mantras need to be revived.

Both of his services of condensing and editing Śrīla Vyāsa also performed for the
Purāṇas. The Purāṇas are eternal like the Vedas, and like the Vedas they are periodically forgotten. Vyāsadeva's spiritual master Nārada specifically instructed him to recompile the Purāṇas in the form in which they are known on earth.

The Purāṇas are not original compositions of their namesakes. Only some of them are named after their speakers, others after the deities they glorify. In either case, the names are fixed by eternal convention; it is a timeless fact that the first Purāṇa is named after Brahmā, but only coincidental that a certain jīva assumes the role of Brahmā at the beginning of a cycle of creation to be the Purāṇa's object of worship. The same situation can be observed among the Vedic śrutis. One branch of the Yajur Veda is called Katha or Kāthaka, for example, because in each age a sage appears with the name Kaṭha to become the teacher of this recession and pass it on to his discipilic succession, the Kāthakas.

That only properly purified and trained brāhmaṇas should be allowed to teach the Vedas is not merely a prejudice of caste-conscious ritualists; Vaiṣṇava authorities also acknowledge this standard. Śri-śūdra-dvija-bandhūnmā/ trayī na śruti-gocarā: "Women, śūdras and unqualified members of brāhmaṇa families should not even hear from the three principal Vedas" (Bhāg. 1.4.25). A doubt may therefore arise: If the Itihāsas and Purāṇas are Vedic, why was a lower-class person invited by the sages at Naimiśāranya to speak them? Many of the most prominent sages in the universe had gathered at Naimiśa Forest at the beginning of Kali-yuga to perform a one-thousand-year soma sacrifice in an attempt to help minimize the ensuing corruption of human civilization. But didn't they instead advance the age's degradation by asking Ugrasravā Śūta, a half-caste descendent of a kṣatriya man and brāhmaṇa woman, to become in effect their preceptor? Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī replies, that just as all human beings are authorized to chant the holy names of Lord Kṛṣṇa even though these names are the most sacred essence of the Vedic hymns, the perfect fruit of the creeper of the entire nigama or śruti, similarly the Itihāsas and Purāṇas are open for the study of everyone. Hari-nāma, the holy names of God, are universally available on the authority of the orders of God Himself and the statements of revealed scripture; studying the epics and Purāṇas is authorized for all persons without restriction in the same way.

It is true that a mantra containing names of God is effective only when received by proper initiation from a representative of the mantra's discipilic succession, and that in previous ages the names of Kṛṣṇa and His internal pleasure potency were generally worshipped only by those who were already very purified, out of fear of the adverse effects of offenses against hari-nāma. Therefore the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra in particular is almost never mentioned openly in śruti or smrīti. Nevertheless, in our current age Caitanya Mahāprabhu has given automatic initiation to everyone by issuing His request that every man, woman and child in the universe chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra. He has offered to take on His own head the reactions of our offenses against hari-nāma when we chant according to His order.

Text 15.4 states that "Without doubt all the Vedas are given a firm foundation in the Purāṇas." According to Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣana, this means that the
Purāṇas help fortify the position of the Vedas by explaining parts of them that are difficult to understand and replacing other parts that are missing. Here the Mahābhārata and Purāṇas have again been mentioned together as virtually equivalent. The Itiḥāsas and Purāṇas are closely allied classes of literature, differentiated mostly by stylistic formalities. The Mahābhārata and Purāṇas share the distinction of having passed through the hands of Dvaipāyana Vyāsa, even though the Dharma-sūtras and Smṛti-sūstras compiled by lesser sages also present useful knowledge from the Vedas. Śrīla Vyāsadeva's unique genius was to find the eternal, universal essence of Vedic knowledge; the teachings of other sages was almost always limited in applicability to their own times and to certain social strata.

Verses have been cited here from the Vāyaviya-samhitā and the Prabhāsa-khanda. These are major sections of two large Purāṇas, the 24,000-verse Śiva and 81,000-verse Skanda Purāṇas.

Purport by BBT Translators

The Itiḥāsas, Purāṇas, and Vedas All Have the Same Origin

The word sankṣiptam in the verse cited here from the Śiva Purāṇa (7.1.1.37) is significant. It means “condensed,” not “composed.” Śrīla Veda-vyāsa, the literary incarnation of God, condensed the already existing Vedas. Then He took unused verses from that abridged portion and made them into the Purāṇas. Thus He did not create the Purāṇas as an original composition. This confirms that the Purāṇas, by virtue of their transcendental origin, are equal to the four Vedas. They are eternal and apauruṣeya.

One may protest that since the Purāṇas have names such as Skanda and Agni they must have been composed by these persons, and so they are neither eternal nor apauruṣeya. But if this were the case, the Vedas themselves would have to be considered noneternal compositions since their parts have names like Kaṭha Upaṇisad and Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, which refer to the sages Kaṭha and Aitareya. The explanation is that portions of the Vedas are named after certain sages not because the sages wrote those portions but because they were these portions’ main teachers and exponents. Since persons with names like Kaṭha and Aitareya appear in every millennium, one should not think that before the appearance of the known Kaṭha and Aitareya these names were meaningless words in the Vedas.

In the same way, several of the Purāṇas are named either after their first teacher or the person who rearranged them. It may sometimes be that over the course of time a certain Vedic work becomes less popular or is completely forgotten on this planet. Eventually some sage or demigod again speaks it, and then the book becomes known by his name. An example of this is given in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, where sage Yaṭāvalkya is described as receiving the Vājasaneyi-samhitā of the Yajur Veda from the sun-god: “Satisfied by such glorification, the powerful sun-
god assumed the form of a horse (vāja) and presented to the sage Yājñavalkya the yajur-mantras previously unknown in human society” (Bhāg. 12.6.73). Just as the Lord seems to take birth and disappear like a mortal being, the Vedic literature similarly becomes manifest and unmanifest. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam had become unmanifest at the end of the Dvāpara-yuga, five thousand years ago. At that time Nārada Muni instructed Vyāsa to again reveal the Bhāgavatam. If the Bhāgavatam had not existed before, Purāṇas older than the Bhāgavatam would not refer to it by name. In the Padma Purāṇa, Uttara-khända, Gautama advises Ambariṣa Mahārāja, who reigned in the Satya-yuga, to study Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.

Thus the Purāṇas are eternal, but sometimes they are manifest and sometimes unmanifest in human society. As the Lord is independent in His appearance and disappearance, so by His free will He speaks the revealed scriptures through the medium of various sages and gives these scriptures various names.

Another objection to the Itihāsas’ and Purāṇas’ Vedic status may be stated as follows: In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.4.25) Śūta Gosvāmi says, stri-sūdra-dvijabandhūnām traya na śruti-gocāra . . . iti bharatam akhyānām kṛpayā muninā kṛtam: “Women, laborers, and unqualified descendants of the twice-born have no access to the Vedas. . . . Therefore the sage [Vyāsa] mercifully compiled the Mahābhārata.” Since the Mahābhārata, the foremost of the Itihāsas, was written specifically for women and others with no access to the Vedas, how can the Itihāsas be part of the Vedas? Moreover, in Text 13 of the same chapter, Śaunaka Rṣi says to Śūta Gosvāmi, manye tvām viśaye vācām snātam anyatra chāndasāt: “We consider you expert in all subjects except the Vedas.” So if Śūta Gosvāmi was not expert in the Vedas yet was being requested to narrate the Purāṇas (specifically the Bhāgavata Purāṇa), how can the Purāṇas be part of the Vedas?

Anticipating these objections, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī compares the privilege of studying the Itihāsas and Purāṇas to that of chanting Kṛṣṇa’s holy name, the choicest fruit of the Vedas. The holy name of Kṛṣṇa is purely Vedic, yet anyone may chant it, including those who have no right to study the Vedas. Similarly, the Itihāsas and Purāṇas are also purely Vedic, yet even a sincere śūdra or outcaste can approach them, just as he or she may chant the holy name of the Lord. As one can gain all perfection simply by chanting Lord Kṛṣṇa’s holy name, which is the ultimate fruit of the Vedas, so one can learn the essence of the Vedas by studying the Itihāsas and Purāṇas, even without studying the Vedas themselves. If one could not do so, then knowledge of how to attain perfection would be inaccessible to those who are barred from studying the Vedas because they are not twice-born.

Finally, even if one were to include the Itihāsas and Purāṇas among other smṛti scriptures written by saintly sages to explain the meaning of the Vedas, the Itihāsas and Purāṇas occupy a unique place because of the eminence of their propounder, Śrīla Vyāsadeva, an incarnation of the Supreme Lord.

In the next Text Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī elaborates on how the Itihāsas and Purāṇas are superexcellent by virtue of their compiler’s divinity.
TEXT 16

TEXT 16.1

Skânda:

vyâsa-citta-sthitâkâsâd avacchinnâni kânicit
anye vyavaharanty etâny urñ-krtya grhâd iva

iti.

tathaiva drstam śrî-visor-purâne parâsara-vâkyam:

tato 'tra mat-suto vyâsa aștâvimśatime 'ntare
vedam ekañ catuñ-pâdañ caturdhâ vyabhajat prabhuḥ

yathâtra tena vai vyastâ veda-Vyâsena dhi-matâ
vedâs tathâ samastais tair vyâsair anyais tathâ mayâ

tad anenaiva vyâsânâm sâkhâ-bhedân dvijottama
çatur-yugeñu racitân samasteṣv avadhâraya

krûna-dvaiçayanam vyâsañ viddhi nàrâyanam prabhum
ko 'nyo hi bhuvi maitreya mahàbhârata-krd bhave

iti.

Translation

Gopiparanadhana: The Skanda Purâna says, "These others make use of small collections of ideas they have carved out from the infinite sky of Vyâsadeva's mind. They take advantage of these borrowed ideas like people who pick up things discarded from someone else's house." In the same vein is this statement of Parâsara Muni in Śrî Viṣṇu Purâṇa [3.4.2.–5]: "Then, during the period of the twenty-eighth Manu, the great master, my son Vyâsa, divided the one Veda with four divisions into four separate books. In the same way as he, the brilliant editor of the Vedas, arranged their entire text into various books, so have other Vyâsas in the past, including myself. O best of brâhmanas, you can understand that thus in each of the rotations of the cycle of four ages a different Vyâsa organizes the branches of the Vedas. But know that Krûna Dvaiçaya Vyâsa is the Supreme Lord Nârâyan Himself. Who else on this earth, Maitreya, could be the author of the Mahàbhârata?"
BBT: The *Skanda Purāṇa* states, “Just as a person picks up things in his own house and uses them, many people have taken knowledge from the sky of Vyāsa's heart for their own use.”

We find a similar statement in the *Visnu Purāṇa* [3.4.2–5], where the sage Parāśara says, “Thereafter, during the twenty-eighth manv-antara, the Lord in the form of my son Vyāsa took the one *Veda*, consisting of four sections, and divided it into four separate parts. Just as this intelligent Vyāsa divided the *Veda*, previously all other Vyāsas, including myself, also divided it. O best of the twice-born, understand that in every cycle of four *yugas* Vyāsas come and arrange the *Veda* into various branches. But know, O Maitreya, that Śrī Kṛṣṇa-dvaipāyana Vyāsa is Lord Nārāyaṇa Himself. Who else in this world could have written the great epic *Mahābhārata*?”

**TEXT 16.2**

skāṇḍa eva:

nārāyaṇaṁ vinispannāṁ jñānam kṛta-yuge sthitam
kiñcit tad anyathā jātam tretāyāṁ dvāpare 'khalam
gautamasya rṣeḥ sāpāj jñāne tv ajñānatām gate
sankīrṇa-buddhayo devā brahma-rudra-pūraḥsaraḥ

śaranyāṁ saranam jagmur nārāyanam anāmayam
tair viṁśpati-kāryas tu bhagavān puruṣottamaḥ

avatirno mahā-yogi satyavatyāṁ parāśarāṁ
utsannān bhagavān vedān ujjahāra hariḥ svayam

iti.

**Translation**

**Gopiparanadhana:** In the *Skanda Purāṇa* we read, "Knowledge in this world was original generated from Lord Nārāyaṇa. In the Kṛta-yuga it remained intact. In Tretā-yuga it became somewhat corrupt, and in Dvāpara-yuga altogether so. When knowledge had thus gradually transformed into ignorance because of Gautama Rṣi’s curse, the confused demigods headed by Brahmā and Rudra went to ask protection from Nārāyaṇa, the faultless provider of shelter. Informed of what they needed Him to do, He, the Personality of Godhead and greatest of mystics, descended to earth as the son of Parāśara in the womb of Satyavatī. In that form Lord Hari Himself restored the neglected *Vedas.*"

**BBT:** The *Skanda Purāṇa* further states, “In Satya-yuga the knowledge that emanated from Lord Nārāyaṇa remained pure. It became somewhat polluted in Tretā-yuga, and completely so in Dvāpara-yuga. When ignorance had covered that
knowledge because of Gautama Rṣi’s curse, the demigods became perplexed. Led by Brahmā and Rudra, they approached Lord Nārāyana, the Supreme Person and faultless protector, and told Him why they had come. On the request of the demigods, Lord Hari then descended as the great yogī Vyāsa, son of Satyavatī and Parāśara, and re-established the forgotten Vedas.”

TEXT 16.3

veda-sabdenātra purāṇādi-dvayam api grhyate. tad evam itihāsa-purāṇa-vicāra eva śreyāṁ iti siddham. tatrapī purāṇasyaiva garimā drśyate. uktam hi nāradye:

vedārthād adhikaṁ manye purānārtham varānane
vedāḥ pratiṃśhitāh sarve purāṇe nātra samśayah

purānan anyathā kṛtvā tiryag-yonim avāpnyat
su-dānto ’pi su-sānto ’pi na gatiṁ kvacid āpnyat

itti.

Gopiparanadhana: The word veda in this context also implies the Purānas and Itihāsas.
Thus we have established that the best way to proceed is to examine the Itihāsas and Purānas. Even among these two, moreover, there is evidence that the Purānas are more important. As stated in the Nārada Purāṇa, “O lovely one, I consider the message of the Purānas more important than that of the Vedas. Without doubt all the Vedas are given a firm foundation in the Purānas. Anyone who disrespects the Purānas will have to take his next birth as an animal; even if he is very self-controlled and peaceful, he will achieve no good destination.”

BBT: Here the word veda also indicates the Itihāsas and Purānas. Thus it is established that studying the Itihāsas and Purānas is supremely beneficial. And of these two, the Purānas are more excellent. As stated in the Nārādiya Purāṇa, “O lovely one, I consider the Purānas more important than the Vedas because the Purānas firmly establish all the Vedic meanings. There is no doubt of this. One who disrespects the Purānas will take birth as a subhuman; even if he can expertly control his senses and mind, he can attain no good destination.”

Purport by Gopiparanadhana prabhu

Just as infinite space is all-accommodating, so the mind of Veda-vyāsa encompasses everything there is to know. All Vedic rṣis are greater than ordinary mystics who comprehend something of the Absolute Truth and Its energies for their own self-realization, but cannot express their experiences coherently for the benefit of others. The Vedic sages are not only mystics but expert communicators as well; they systematically teach practical means by which persons entangled in material life can also become self-realized. Of these sages, Dvaipāyana Vyāsa is
incontestably the greatest. His own father, Parāśara Rṣi, student of Maitreya Rṣi and narrator of the Viṣṇu Purāṇa, attests to this. Previously, in the twenty-sixth Dvāpara-yuga of this Vaivasvata-manvantara, Parāśara himself wasVyāsa, editor of the Vedas. As an incarnation of Nārāyaṇa, however, Kṛṣṇa Dvāipāyana excels all the other Vyāsas. He best knows the whole purpose of the Vedas.

With the progression of the four ages, the intelligence of living beings naturally decreases, and their understanding of the Vedas gradually weakens. Gautama Rṣi's curse coincidentally helped accelerate this spontaneous process of degradation. Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣana has summarized the Varāha Purāṇa's account of this event: Gautama had once received a benediction that his fields would always produce abundant rice crops. So when the country surrounding his āśrama was struck by a severe drought he took the opportunity to host many learned brāhmaṇas and feed them. The drought eventually ended and the brāhmaṇas wanted to return to their villages, but Gautama did not want to let them leave. The brāhmaṇas created an illusion of a cow to fool Gautama. Gautama touched the false cow and it appeared to fall dead. His guests pretended to be struck with horror over Gautama's killing a cow and took this as their pretext for leaving. Gautama then strictly observed the prescribed atonement for such an inauspicious act, only afterwards discovering that he had been deceived by the brāhmaṇas. He angrily cursed them and all their colleagues to lose their Vedic knowledge.

The eternal Vedas never actually suffer corruption. But as the brāhmaṇa class, who are meant to study and teach the Vedas, fall from their standards of purity and neglect their responsibilities to society, true Vedic knowledge becomes more and more inaccessible. In its stead appear perverted forms of knowledge, materialistic and impersonal misinterpretations. This is described by the word uṭsāna in the Skanda Purāṇa passage cited in Text 16.2; the word carries the several meanings of "forgotten," "neglected," "falling apart," and "decaying."

As Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī previously stated, the Itihāsas and Purāṇas are especially important in Kali-yuga as means of access to Vedic knowledge. The Itihāsa epics and Purāṇas have the same apauruṣeya authority as the Vedas, and they faithfully explain the Vedas, in this way revealing the higher purposes of life. Lord Śiva in the verses cited from the Nārada Purāṇa tells his wife Pārvati that he considers the message of the Purāṇas more important than that of the Vedas. By this he means not that anything is lacking in the Vedas or that they can be improved on, but that the Purāṇa's simple explanations are less likely to be misunderstood.

Purport by BBT Translators

The Compiler of the Itihāsas and Purāṇas is Unique

To a large extent one can know the quality of a product by assessing the quality of the person who made it. By this criterion the Purāṇas and Itihāsas are supremely excellent, since they were compiled by Lord Nārāyaṇa Himself in the form of Śrīla Vyāsa-deva.
Here Śrīla Vyāsa's mind is compared to the unlimited sky, indicating that just as the sky accommodates all objects, so Vyāsa's mind contains all knowledge. Another significance of comparing Vyāsa's mind to the sky is that the sky is the medium for sound, which transmits knowledge. In other words, Vyāsa's mind is the medium for transcendental sound, which is the basis of all kinds of knowledge. All other thinkers, both on this planet and on higher planets, simply make use of the knowledge Śrīla Vyāsa has given. According to one Sanskrit saying, vyāsocchitam jagat sarvam: “The whole world tastes the remnants of Vyāsa's knowledge.” Any “new” idea one may find or conceive of already exists in His writings. Thus all the writers throughout history have borrowed from Him, directly or indirectly.

According to Parāśara Muni, at the beginning of each Kali-yuga in the repeated cycle of four yugas, a vyāsa, or “compiler,” arranges the Vedas. In the present reign of Manu, Parāśara himself was the twenty-sixth Vyāsa, and Śrī Kṛṣṇa-dvaiḍāyana is the twenty-eighth. Of the twenty-eight Vyāsas who have appeared until now, Kṛṣṇa-dvaiḍāyana is special because He is an incarnation of Lord Nārāyaṇa. He appeared on the request of the demigods at the end of the Dvāpara-yuga, after a curse spoken by Gautama Muni caused ignorance to cover the Vedic knowledge.

Chapter 171 of the Varāha Purāṇa relates how Gautama Muni underwent severe austerities during a famine to please Lord Brahmā. When Brahmā offered Gautama a boon, the sage asked that he would be able to feed all his guests. The boon was granted, and benevolent Gautama fed his many brāhmaṇa guests for the duration of the famine. When rains finally came, the brāhmaṇa wanted to leave his hermitage. As is the custom, however, Gautama asked them to stay a little longer, and they agreed. After some time they again wished to leave, but once again Gautama prevailed on them to stay a while longer. This happened a few times.

Finally the brāhmaṇas, determined to leave, devised a plan. They made an illusory cow and left it near Gautama’s āśrama. In the early morning, when the sage was going to bathe, the animal blocked his path, and to drive her away he threw a few drops of water at her. At the first touch of the water, the cow fell down dead. The brāhmaṇas immediately raised a hue and cry, declaring “We cannot stay here and accept food from a cow-killer!” and then they left for their respective residences. Later Gautama performed an atonement, and by his mystic power he could understand that he’d been tricked. So he angrily cursed the brāhmaṇas that they would lose all their Vedic knowledge. In this way the Vedic knowledge became covered by ignorance during the Dvāpara-yuga, and thus it was necessary for Vyāsa to send forth the Vedas again.

From Lord Śiva's statement that the Purāṇas are more important than the Vedas because they explain them, we should not conclude that absolutely no one should study the Vedas. Still, Vyāsa-deva's verdict is that in Kali-yuga people are not intelligent enough to understand the true message of the Vedas, especially since there exists no authentic disciplic succession through which to acquire this understanding. We find, in fact, that those who attempt nowadays to study only
the Vedas and Upaniṣads often end up taking to ordinary, fruitlet activities or else to meditation on the impersonal Brahman, with the aim of merging into it. They do not come to the Vaiṣṇava siddhānta, the perfect conclusion of Vedic understanding, which is realization of unalloyed devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The failure of modern-day students of the Vedas to understand their real message is proof that this message is not easy to discern in the present age. As Lord Kṛṣna says in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.3.44), parokṣa-vādo vedo 'yam: “The Vedas speak indirectly.” Therefore, if we wish to learn the true conclusion of the Vedas in this age, it is more practical to study the Purāṇas.

However, a serious student who wants to understand the Purāṇas' siddhānta must still seek out a guru in disciplic succession. This basic prerequisite of Vedic study is not waived when one approaches the Purāṇas. Indeed, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.3.21) emphatically declares, tasmād gurum prapadyeta jijnāsuh śreya uttāmam: “One who seriously wants to learn about the highest good in life must take shelter of a bona fide spiritual master.”

Next, Śrila Jīva Gosvāmī explains the three divisions of the Purāṇas.

**TEXT 17**

**TEXT 17.1**

skānde prabhāsa-khände ca:

veda-van niścalam manye purāṇārtham dvijottamāḥ
vedāḥ pratiṣṭhītāḥ sarve purāne nātra samśayah

bibhety alpa-śrutād vedo mām ayam cālayisyati
ithāṣa-purānais tu niścalo 'yam kṛtaḥ purā

yan na drṣṭam hi vedesu tad drṣṭam smṛtisu dvijāḥ
ubhayor yan na drṣṭam hi tat purāṇaiḥ pragyayate

yo veda caturō vedān śaṅgopaniśado dvijāḥ
purāṇam naiva jānāti na ca sa syād vicākṣanāḥ

iti.

Gopīparanadhana: And in the Prabhāsa-khanda of the Skanda Purāṇa [3.121–24] we find the statement, “O best of brāhmaṇas, I consider the purport of the Purāṇas as unquestionable as the Vedas themselves. Without doubt all the Vedas are given a
firm foundation in the Purāṇas. Some time in the past the Vedas became afraid that "These people are going to distort my meaning because they are inadequately trained in proper hearing." But at that time the Itihāsas and Purāṇas came forward to give the Vedas an unquestionable foundation. What cannot be found in the Vedas, O brāhmanas, is found in the smṛtis, and what cannot be located in either is clearly described in the Purāṇas. O brāhmanas, one who knows the Vedas along with their supplements and the Upaniṣads but does not know the Purāṇas is not really learned."

BBT: Furthermore, the Prabhāṣa-khanda of the Skanda Purāṇa [5.3.121–24] states: "O best of the twice-born, I consider the meaning of the Purāṇas to be as well established as that of the Vedas. Without doubt all the Vedas are given a firm foundation in them. Once, long ago, the Vedas became afraid of those who might hear from her insufficiently, and she thought, 'This sort of person will distort my meaning.' But then the Itihāsas and Purāṇas helped the Vedas by firmly establishing her meaning. What cannot be found in the Vedas is found in the smṛtī, and what cannot be found in either is clearly explained in the Purāṇas. A person is not considered learned if he does not know the Purāṇas, O learned brāhmanas, even if he has studied the four Vedas along with the Vedāṅgas and Upaniṣads."

**TEXT 17.2**

** atha purāṇānāṁ evaṁ prāmāṇye sthite ’pi teṣām api sāmastyena-pracarad-rūpatvān nānā-devatā-pratipādaka-prāyatvād arvācinaih kṣudra-buddhībhir artho duradhigama iti tad-avastha eva samśayaḥ. **

Gopiparanadhana: Even though we have thus settled the question of the Purāṇas’ authoritativeness, we need to next consider a doubt regarding their current status: Less intelligent people of modern times find it difficult to understand them because their original texts are not completely available and because for the most part they promote the worship of a variety of deities.

BBT: Next we must consider the following doubt concerning the status of the Purāṇas: Although their authority has been thus established [in the previous Texts], still it is difficult for the less intelligent men of the modern age to comprehend their ultimate meaning. The reasons for this difficulty are that the Purāṇas, like the Vedas, are only partially available and that in general the Purāṇas try to establish the supremacy of various deities.

**TEXT 17.3**

**yad uktāṁ mātsyey:**

** pañcāṅgam ca purāṇam syād ākhyānam itarat smṛtāṁ**
sāttvikeṣu ca kalpesu māhātmyam adhikām hareh
rājasesu ca māhātmyam adhikām brahmano viduh
tadvad agnes ca māhātmyam tāmasesu śivasya ca
sankirnesu sarasvatyāḥ pitṛnām ca nigadyate

iti.

Gopiparanadhana: As the Matsya Purāṇa [53.65, 68–69] states,"A historical text is a Purāṇa if it has the five defining characteristics; otherwise it is known as an ākhyaṇa. In Purāṇas describing days of Brahmā in the mode of goodness, the Supreme Lord Hari is mostly glorified. In those describing days in the mode of passion, there is especially glorification of Brahmā. In those describing days in the mode of ignorance, there is glorification of Agni and of Śiva. In those describing mixed days Sarasvatī and the Pitās are discussed."

BBT: As stated in the Matsya Purāṇa [53.65, 68–69]:
“А history is called a Purāṇa if it has the five defining characteristics; otherwise it is called an ākhyaṇa. The sāttvic Purāṇas primarily glorify Lord Hari; the rājasic Purāṇas, Lord Brahmā; and the tāmasic Purāṇas, Lord Śiva and Durgā, along with Agni. The Purāṇas in mixed modes glorify Sarasvatī and the Pitās.”

TEXT 17.4


Gopiparanadhana: Here glorification "of Agni [the fire-god]" means of Vedic sacrifices which are executed with offerings into various sacred fires. In the phrase "and of Śiva also," the word "also" implies "also of Śivā [his wife]." "During mixed days" means during the many days of Brahmā in which goodness, passion and ignorance are all prominent. "Of Sarasvatī" means of various demigods who are indirectly indicated by reference to her, since she is the presiding deity of various kinds of verbal expression. "Of the Pitās [celestial forefathers]" means of the ritual activities which lead to attaining them, in accordance with the śruti statement, "By Vedic rituals one achieves the world of the Pitās."

BBT: Here the word agni refers to the Vedic sacrifices performed by making offerings into various sacred fires. The word ca (“and”) in the phrase śivasya ca implies the wife of Lord Śiva. Sankirneshu (“in the mixed”) means “in the various Purāṇas in the mixed modes of sattva, rajas, and tamos combined.” Here sarasvatyāḥ (“of Sarasvatī”) means “of the presiding deity of speech” and, by implication, “of the various deities referred to in the numerous scriptural texts she embodies.” According to śruti, karmanā pitṛ-lokah: “By frutitive activities one can attain the abode of the forefathers.” Thus here the word pitṛnām (“of the
forefathers”) refers to the fruitful rituals meant for attaining to the planet of the forefathers.

**Purport by Gopiparanadhana prabhu**

It is impossible in Kali-yuga to understand the Vedas correctly without resort to the authority of the Purānas. In general in this age, even those who are supposed to be religious leaders are very often themselves victims of delusion and hypocrisy. We see this tendency all over the world. In India many apparently well educated and strictly religious brāhmaṇas are actually confused about the purpose of life and the means of achieving it, mainly because they have failed to approach the right sources of knowledge. Some brāhmaṇas claim to be purely Vedic, free from sentimental and fanatic idolatry; among these deniers of Purānic authority are the ritualists of the first millennium A.D. who followed the Jaimini-mimamsā interpretation of Kumārila and Prabhākara and the much more recent proponents of the Árya-samājā. These brāhmaṇas presume to have direct access to the Vedas through the commentaries of their teachers, even though the manifest fruits of their so-called Vedic education are arrogance, atheism and entanglement in sense gratification.

Therefore, as we are told here from the Skanda Purāṇa, the Vedas have just cause to fear abuse at the hands of the brāhmaṇas of our age. Hearing the Vedas’ call for help, the Purāṇas have come to their assistance. Their instructions are as trustworthy as the original words of the Vedas and are honored by every true brāhmaṇa, that is to say, by every honest person who has real intelligence and humility. What need is there for speculative commentaries on the Vedas when there their natural commentary is already available in the Purāṇas?

But this is the age of corruption, when even more definite guidance is needed to find the correct path of spiritual progress. Even the Purāṇas, which were easy enough to understand in earlier times, often bewilder their disoriented modern readers. Intended to appeal to people of many different natures, the Purāṇas encourage worship of demigods alongside that of the Supreme Lord. Demigod worship gradually purifies those who are too materialistic to be interested in pure devotional service. The actual history of the universe passes through varying cycles, "days of Brahma," during some of which the lower material modes of passion (rajas) and ignorance (tamas) are prominent. At those times the Supreme Lord gracefully allows Lord Śiva and other servants of His to defeat Him in competition and otherwise seem superior. Purāṇas which describe events of these rājasic and tāmasic kalpas thus superficially seem to raise demigods to the position of God. It is no wonder that imperfectly informed students of the Purāṇas cannot discern the unity of the Purāṇas' underlying message—that the powerful controllers and wonderful opulences of this universe are all energies of the supreme energetic, the Personality of Godhead. These readers have no capacity to appreciate the Hari-vamśa Purāṇa's judgment,

\[
\text{vede rāmāyane caiva/ purāne bhārate tathā}
\]
"Throughout the Vedaś and everywhere in the Rāmāyana, Purāṇas and Mahābhārata, from the beginning to the middle to the end, the praises of Lord Hari are sung" [Mahābhārata, Svarga-parva 6.93].

As a source of further confusion, not only are portions of the Purāṇas now missing, but in some cases these portions have been replaced with spurious substitutions. In recent centuries the brahminical community has become less and less familiar with several of the more rarely preserved Purāṇas, allowing unscrupulous scribes to distort the texts without detection. The only sure protection against such changed texts is the testimony of commentaries by reliable authorities. Over six hundred years ago Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī commented on both Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and the Viṣṇu Purāṇa, taking special care to certify the wording of almost every verse; no such commentaries by standard acāryas exist, however, for the other Purāṇas, only citations of isolated passages.

The verses cited from the Matsya Purāṇa enumerate the typical deities whose worship is promoted in each category of Purāṇa. Theoretically, kalpa could be translated instead as "written work," but the verses immediate following these in the Matsya Purāṇa show that "days of Brahmā" is the intended meaning:

< find these verses >

"<translation>" This is also confirmed by the way the word kalpa is used in the next anuccheda (Text 18.1).

All eighteen major were spoken by Śūta Gosvāmi at Naimiśāranya and accepted by the sages there as authentic, but at the same time they are meant for three basically different target audiences, defined according to the three modes of nature. The situation of the individual Purāṇas is more complex, most of them displaying some mixture of the modes. For example, the pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa and of Lord Rāmacandra, which must be considered in the pure mode of goodness, are both described to some extent in every one of the Purāṇas. Lord Śiva specifies the basic division of six Purāṇas belonging to each mode in the forty-third chapter of the Padma Purāṇa, Uttara-khaṇḍa (236.18–21):

vaiṣṇavam nārādiyam ca/ tathā bhāgavatam śubham
gārudaḥ ca tathā pādam/ vārāham śubha-darsane
sāttvikāni purāṇāni/ vijñeyāni subhānī vai

"O beautiful one, the Viṣṇu Purāṇa, Nārada Purāṇa, the auspicious Bhāgavata Purāṇa, and the Garuda, Padma and Vāraha Purāṇas belong to the mode of goodness. They are all considered auspicious.

brahmāndam brahma-vaiwartam/ mārkandeyam tathaiva ca
bhavisyam vāmanam brāhmaṃ/ rājasāni nibodhata

"Know that the Brahmānda, Brahma-vaiwarta, Mārkandeya, Bhaviṣya, Vāmana and
Brahmā Purāṇas belong to the mode of passion.

\[
mātsyam kaurmam tathā laingam/ śaivam skāndam tathaiva ca
āgneyam ca śaḍ etāni/ tāmasānī nibodhata
\]

"And know that these six Purāṇas belong to the mode of ignorance: the Matsya, Kūrma, Līnga, Śiva, Skanda and Agni Purāṇas."

The five topics which every Purāṇa should include will be discussed later in Śrī Tattva-sandarbha.

**Purport by BBT Translators**

Three Divisions of the Purāṇas

The verse from the Matsya Purāṇa cited in text 17.3 mentions the five subjects that characterize a Purāṇa. Another verse of the Matsya Purāṇa (53.65) lists those subjects:

\[
sargaḥ ca pratisargaḥ ca vanśo manvantarāṇi ca
vamśyānucaritam caiva purāṇam pańca-laksanam
\]

“The five subjects that characterize a Purāṇa are creation, dissolution, genealogy, reigns of Manus, and the activities of famous kings.” Texts 57 and 61 of Śrī Tattva-sandarbha discuss these five subjects in detail.

In the verses cited above from the Matsya Purāṇa, the word *kalpa* means “scripture” or “Purāṇa.” This is one of the various meanings of this word, as listed in the Medini Sanskrit dictionary (1.21.2): *kalpa sāstre vidhau nyāye samvarte brāhmaṇe dine.* “Kalpa means ‘scripture,’ ‘rule,’ ‘logic,’ ‘dissolution,’ and ‘day of Brahma.’”

The Purāṇas are divided according to the modes of material nature. The list of the Purāṇas belonging to each mode is given in the Padma Purāṇa, Uttara-khaṇḍa (236.18–21):

\[
vaṁśavam nārādiyam ca tathā bhāgavatam śubham
gāruḍam ca tathā pāḍam ca vṛāham śubha-darsane
\]

\[
sāttvikani purāṇāni vijñeyāni śubhāni vai
brahmāṇdām brahma-vāivartam mārkandeyām tathaiva ca
\]

\[
bhaviṣyām vāmanāṃ brāhmaṇām rājasāṇi nibodha me
matsyam kaurmam tathā laingam śaivaṃ skāndam tathaiva ca
\]

\[
āgneyam ca śaḍ etāni tāmasāṇī nibodha me
\]
“[Lord Śiva said:] ‘O beautiful lady, know that the Viṣṇu, Nārada, Bhāgavata, Garuḍa, Padma, and Varāha Purāṇas are in the mode of goodness, the Brahmānṛṛda, Brahma-vaiśvarta, Mārkandeya, Bhaviṣya, Vāmana, and Brahma Purāṇas are in the mode of passion, and the Matsya, Kūrma, Liṅga, Śiva, Skanda, and Agni Purāṇas are in the mode of ignorance.’”

The verses Śrīla Jiva cites from the Skanda Purāṇa imply that the Purāṇas are as good as the Vedas and should be accepted as such by anyone who accepts the Vedas’ authority. There are many commentaries on the Vedas, but the Purāṇas are the natural commentary because they were compiled by the Vedas’ compiler, Śrīla Vyāsa. Therefore one can understand the message of the Vedas by studying the Purāṇas alone, even without directly studying the Vedas. But study of the Vedas is incomplete in this age without study of the Purāṇas; therefore studying the Purāṇas is even more appropriate and practical for us than studying the Vedas. Furthermore, the statement from the Skanda Purāṇa quoted in text 17.1—that no one can become learned without studying the Purāṇas—suggests that the Purāṇas are also more important than the Itiḥāsas.

But just as we meet with difficulties in studying the Vedas in this age, we also encounter difficulties in studying the Purāṇas. The eighteen major Purāṇas and eighteen minor ones constitute a vast body of literature, and there are no current disciplic successions or authentic commentaries for most of these works. Portions of some Purāṇas are not available, and other Purāṇas have variant readings and interpolations. As with the Vedas, independent study of the Purāṇas yields no clear conclusion, because each Purāṇa seems to establish a different deity as the supreme. The Śiva Purāṇa proclaims Lord Śiva supreme, the Viṣṇu Purāṇa, Lord Viṣṇu, and so on. The result is confusion for one who studies them without proper guidance. Such a student will not know whether to worship Śiva, Viṣṇu, Devī, or some other deity.

Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmi gives the solution to this problem in the next Text.

TEXT 18

TEXT 18.1

tad evaṁ sati tat-tat-kalpa-kathā-mayatvenaiva māṁṣya eva prasiddhānāṁ tat-tat-purānānāṁ vyavasthā jñāpita. tāratamyam tu katham śyād yenetara-nirnayah hriyeta.
sattvādī-tāratamyenaiveti cet ‘sattvāṁ sañjāyate jñānam’ iti ‘sattvāṁ yad brahma-darśanam’ iti ca nyāyāt sāttvikam eva purāṇādikham paramārtha-jñānāya prabalam ity āyātam.

Gopīparanadhana: Such being the facts, we can understand that the Purāṇas mentioned in the Matsya Purāṇa are divided into natural categories according the kinds of days of Brahmā they contain narrations of. But how can we define a
hierarchy of these categories to determine which is superior? It might be suggested that this can be done with a hierarchy of the modes of nature—goodness, passion and ignorance. If so, we can conclude that Purânas and other scriptures in the mode of goodness have the most authority to teach us about transcendental reality, according to the reasoning of such statements as "From the mode of goodness knowledge develops" [Bg. 14.17] and "In the mode of goodness one can realize the Absolute Truth" [Bhág. 1.2.24].

BBT: This being the case[—that Purânas are in various modes of nature—] the Matsya Purâna classifies them in three divisions based on the stories found in them. But how can we determine the relative importance of the Purânas so that we can then learn about the other subjects under discussion, namely, sambandha, abhidheya, and prayojana? If we use the three modes of nature as the basis for categorizing the Purânas, depending on such statements as “the mode of goodness produces knowledge” [Bg 14.17] and “the mode of goodness leads to realization of the Absolute Truth” [Bhág. 1.2.24], we will conclude that the Purânas and other such literature in the mode of goodness are superior means for gaining knowledge of the Absolute Truth.

TEXT 18.2

tathâpi paramârthe 'pi nänâ-bhaṅgyâ vipratipadyamânanâm samâdhânâya kim syât. yadi sarvasyâpi vedasya purânastra cărtha-nirnâyāya tenaiva śrī-bhagavatā vyâsena brahma-sûtram krtam tad-avalokenaiva sarvo 'rtho nirnayo ity ucyate tarhi nânya-sûtra-kâra-muny-anugatair manyeta. kim cātyanta-gûdhârthânâm alpaśarânâm tat-sûtrânâm anyârthatvam kaścid âcâsita tatâh katarad ivâtra samâdhânâm.

Gopiparanadhana: Even so, what one standard can reconcile all these Purânas, which discredit one another with divergent opinions even when discussing the same Absolute Truth? Someone may point out that the powerful saint Śrī Vyāsa produced the Vedânta-sûtra just to accomplish this task of determining the purport of the entire Vedas and Purânas; therefore, this person will propose, the meaning of all these scriptures should be ascertained by reference to the Vedânta-sûtra. But then our conclusions will not be respected by followers of sages who wrote other sūtras. And apart from that, certain authors have interpreted the Vedânta-sûtra’s very esoteric and terse aphorisms in such a way as to distort their meaning. What authority, then, can actually serve to reconcile all of this?

BBT: But even then, how can we reconcile the different inconclusive views regarding the Absolute Truth that the various Purânas put forward? Someone may propose study of the Vedânta-sûtra as the solution, claiming that Bhagavân Vyâsadeva compiled the Vedânta-sûtra to present the decisive conclusion of both the Vedas and the Purânas concerning the Absolute Truth. But then the followers of sages who wrote other sūtras may be dissatisfied. Moreover, since the aphorisms of the Vedânta are terse and extremely esoteric, and since they are also subject to varying interpretations, someone will always express a contrary idea about them. What, then, can resolve disputes concerning the Vedânta-sûtra’s meaning?
TEXT 18.3

tad evam samādhīyaṁ yady ekatamam eva purāṇa-lakṣaṇam apauruṣeyaṁ śāstraṁ sarva-vedētihāsa-purāṇānāṁ artha-sāraṁ brahma-sūtrapajjivyaṁ ca bhavād bhuvi sampūrṇam praracard-rūpam syāt. satyam utkam. yata eva ca sarva-pramāṇānāṁ ca kalavarti-bhūtaṁ asmad-abhimataṁ śrimad-bhāgavataṁ evodbhāvitaṁ bhavatā.

Gopiparanadhana: We would have such a basis of reconciliation, one might comment, if there were one scripture which fit the definition of a Purāṇa, had apauruṣeya authority, contained the essential ideas of all the Vedas, Itiḥāsas and Purāṇas, gave support to the positions of the Brahma-sūtras and was currently available in full on the earth. Well said, because you have called to mind our own most preferred authority, the emperor of pramāṇas, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.

BBT: This problem could be solved if there were one scripture that had the characteristics of a Purāṇa, that had no human origin, that presented the essence of all the Vedas, Itiḥāsas, and Purāṇas, that was based on the Vedānta-sūtras, and that was available throughout the land in its complete form. Well said, sir, because you have reminded us about our revered Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, the emperor of all pramāṇas.

Purport by Gopiparanadhana prabhu

Faced with the bewildering complexity of the Purāṇas—the non-linear chronology cutting across millennia and universes, the thousands of prehistoric personalities and the pantheon of deities—critical scholars most often dismiss the whole body of literature as an incoherent collection of competing sectarian mythologies. Indologist are free to think in this way if they choose, but in fact this freedom of judgment is also under the control of material nature. The way in which scholars filter what they see and form their opinions, and the influence they have on the public, are all part of nature’s arrangement for keeping the secrets of transcendence concealed from the intrusions of material intelligence. Only by accepting the means of sabda-pramāṇa on its own terms can anyone begin to penetrate these secrets.

yasya deve parā bhaktir/ yathā deve tathā gurau
tasyaite kathitā hy arthāḥ/ prakāśante mahātmanah

"If someone has unalloyed devotion for the Supreme Lord and equal devotion for his own spiritual master, then his intelligence becomes broad and everything described in these texts reveals itself clearly to him" (Śvetāśvatara Up. 6.23).

As we have already discussed earlier, Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī is not interested in answering the skepticism of critical scholars in his Sandarbhas. He assumes that his readers are already convinced of the authority and consistency of the Vedic literature, an attitude which is much more likely to develop from the qualities of honesty and humility in one's heart than from the scrutinizing analysis of masses of information.
If we assume that there is a coherent purpose to the Purāṇas, our practical problem at this point is how to discover it. We need to identify a prime authority according to which all the other texts can be reconciled. In this anuccheda Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī first limits the candidates for primacy to the Purāṇas addressed to persons in the mode of goodness. These sāttvic Purāṇas glorify the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu and His incarnations. But the mode of goodness in the material world is rarely found unmixed with the lower modes, and this is reflected in the Purāṇas. Several of the Purāṇas classified as sāttvic describe mixed modes of worshiping God rather than pure devotional service. After reading all the sāttvic Purāṇas one may therefore be left uncertain as to whether Lord Viṣṇu is ultimately a person with real qualities, or impersonal and formless, or a manifestation of the universal mind, or even a product of matter.

Casual readers of the Samhitās of the four Vedas usually see in them an unorganized assortment of praise and appeals offered to a large number of demigods. Many of these incompletely individualized deities seem nothing more than convenient personifications of forces of nature. Their personalities often overlap to the extent that it is difficult to clearly separate their identities. The Upaniṣads of each Veda correct this misunderstanding by elucidating the underlying reference throughout the Vedas to the one Absolute Truth, Brahman. The various deities of the Vedas and the energies of nature are shown in the Upaniṣads to be all integrally related to Brahman as Its expansions, borrowing Its own names, forms and functions:

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seyam devataikṣata hantāham imās tisro devatā anena
jivenātmānupraviṣya nāma-rūpe vyākaravāṇi. tāsām
tri-vṛtāṁ tri-vṛtam ekaikām karavāṇi.
```

"That Lord looked and said, 'Ah, let me enter these three lords along with this jīva soul, and expand names and forms. I will manifest each being's threefold nature'" (Chāndogya Up. 6.3.2–3). The "three lords" indicated in this text are the three principles of created existence--the controlling demigods, the enjoying jīvas, and their controlled and enjoyed bodies. Entering into this raw substance of creation, the Supreme distributed His own names and forms. Śrī-nārāyaṇādīnī nāmāni
vināyāni rudrādhībhyo harir dattavāṇ "(Lord Hari gave away His own names to Rudra and others, with the exception of certain names like Śrī Nārāyaṇa."). In the later phase of creation, the demigod Brahmā periodically completes this work on behalf of His creator, using the eternal Vedas as his blueprint:

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nāma-rūpaṁ ca bhūtānāṁ/ kṛtyānāṁ ca prapañcanam
veda-sabdabhyo evādau/ devādināṁ cakāra sah
```

"In the beginning Brahmā expanded the names, forms and activities of all creatures from out of the words of the Vedas" [Viṣṇu Pur. 1.5.63].

Because the Upaniṣads provide this insight into the essential meaning of the Vedas, they are called Vedānta, the culmination of the Vedas. Krṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa
commented on the major *Upaniṣads* and reconciled their apparent contradictions in the concise codes of his *Vedānta-sūtra*. By this composition, he established the Vedānta school of Vedic theology in our age. It was the standard style of the founders of orthodox brahminical philosophies to write in aphoristic *sūtras*, leaving it to disciples who have been personally instructed to elaborate further explanations. But compared to the relatively mundane level of discourse of others *sūtras*, like Gautama Rsi's *Nyāya-sūtra* on epistemology and logic, the contents of Vyāsadeva's *Vedānta-sūtra* are particularly difficult. His aphorisms are virtually impossible to decipher without a commentary, and thus also easily misinterpreted. Earlier in Kali-yuga there existed a strong tradition of Vaisnava theistic interpretation of *Vedānta-sūtra*, led by several prominent teachers like Bodhāyana who are now known only from fragments quoted by Rāmānuja Ācārya and others in their later *Vedānta* commentaries. The prime reason for these earlier explanations being forgotten is that they were completely eclipsed by the popularity of Śaṅkara Ācārya's *Śārīraka-bhāṣya*.

Written around 700 A.D. from the monistic Advaita point of view, in which the personal concept of Godhead is relativized as an inferior aspect of an ultimate Supreme beyond name and form, Śaṅkara's commentary imposed a monopoly on the school of Vedānta for some centuries, until the great Vaiṣṇava ācāryas Rāmānuja and Madhva responded with their own commentaries in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. They and other Vaiṣṇavas like Nimbarka and Viṣṇu Śvāmi vigorously criticized Śaṅkara's interpretation as not faithfully adhering to the *Upaniṣads'* intentions. Among the Śaṅkara Advaitists and all four Vaiṣṇava *sampradāyas*, even up to modern times the main philosophic activity of both explanatory and polemic authors has been to present updated sub-commentaries on the *Vedānta-sūtra*. On this basis the debate between the Advaita and Vaiṣṇava camps has been continuing for over a thousand years.

When he established the Gauḍīya branch of the Madhva-sampradāya, however, Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu chose to forgo having a *Vedānta* commentary written as the keystone of His new theistic school. He preferred focusing attention on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, which He considered the natural commentary by the *Vedānta-sūtra*’s own author. Only in the early eighteenth century was Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa commissioned by Śrīla Viṣvanātha Cakravartī to compose a *Vedānta* commentary to answer the complaints of critics who demanded that the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas defend themselves on the evidence of *Vedānta-sūtra*.

Proposing *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* as the one *Purāṇa* which can reconcile all scriptures and perfectly represent the philosophy of Vedānta, Śrī Jiva Gosvāmī will now proceed to reveal the glories of the *Bhāgavatam* in the rest of this *Sandarbhā* and the others.

**Purport by BBT Translators**

*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* Is the Best *Purāṇa* of All
The Matsya Purāṇa, Chapter 53, gives the number of verses in each Purāṇa and describes the benefits of donating each one on special days. In that same chapter Śūta Gosvāmī speaks two and a half verses containing a formula for dividing the Purāṇas into three classes according to which one of the three modes of nature predominates. These three classes of Purāṇas glorify various deities, and commentators often try to establish their own favorite among these deities as supreme, arguing on the basis of logic and apparently conclusive scriptural references. One consequence of this partiality is that commentators tend to denigrate Purāṇas in a category different from their own: proponents of tāmasic Purāṇas tend to reject the authority of the rājasic and sattvic Purāṇas, and proponents of rājasic and sattvic Purāṇas likewise reject the Purāṇas outside their group. But there cannot actually be several Absolute Truths; therefore the question of which Purānic deity is the one Supreme Truth remains to be settled.

For the unbiased seeker of the truth, Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī shows how to resolve the matter. He explains that sattva, or the mode of goodness, is clearly superior to passion and ignorance, as Lord Kṛṣṇa confirms in the Bhagavad-gītā (14.17):

sattvāt sañjāyate jñānam rajaso lobha eva ca
pramāda-mohau tamaso bhavato 'jñānam eva ca

“From the mode of goodness, real knowledge develops; from the mode of passion, greed develops; and from the mode of ignorance develop foolishness, madness, and illusion.” Śrimad-Bhāgavatam (1.2.24) also states, tāmasas tu rajas tasmāt sattvam yad brahma-darśanam: “Passion is better than ignorance, but goodness is best because it can lead to realization of the Absolute Truth.” In the passage where this verse appears, Śūta Gosvāmī is explaining which form of worship produces the ultimate good. His opinion is that one can achieve the ultimate good only by worshiping Lord Kṛṣṇa, the personification of pure goodness. The citation from the Matsya Purāṇa in the previous Text states that the sattvic Purāṇas glorify Lord Hari, Kṛṣṇa. By contrast, the rājasic and tāmasic Purāṇas recommend worship of other deities. Such worship is in the lower modes of nature and does not lead to realization of the Absolute Truth.

Thus one can tell the modal quality of a Purāṇa by seeing which deity it recommends for worship. Another way to tell is by seeing how it opens. In a sattvic Purāṇa the questioner will approach a learned speaker and inquire from him about the Absolute Truth. In this vein the questioner may ask the speaker to elaborate on the nature of ultimate reality, the supreme religion for all, the ultimate benefit a human being can aspire for, how one should prepare for death, and so on. These questions allow the Purāṇa’s speaker full freedom to explain these topics; as a self-realized teacher, free from all gross and subtle material desires and concerned only with the welfare of the inquirer and those who will hear the discourse, either then or in the future, the speaker replies with answers that are specific and unambiguous, leaving no room for misinterpretation or confusion. Examples of such sattvic Purāṇas include the Padma Purāṇa, the Viṣṇu Purāṇa, and, most prominently, the Bṛāgavata Purāṇa, or Śrimad-Bhāgavatam.
In the rājasic and tāmasic Purāṇas, however, the questioners inquire about limited topics, those that do not address the ultimate concerns of life. In the Linga Purāṇa, for example, the sages at Naimiśāranya ask Śūta Gosvāmi to narrate the glory of Linga, Lord Śiva. Although Śūta Gosvāmi has fully realized the Absolute Truth and is perfectly competent to explain it, the questions here restrict him to speaking on the particular topic of Linga. He is not free to explain the deeper meaning of life. Since all rājasic and tāmasic Purāṇas have this shortcoming, they cannot be reliable sources of knowledge about the essential topics of sambandha, abhidheya, and prayojana.

The Purāṇas were arranged in different modes in response to the various desires and interests of the conditioned souls. Nevertheless, every Purāṇa contains glorification of Lord Ṣaṅkarasvāmin, the Absolute Truth. Śrīla Veda-vyāsa included this glorification so that even persons in the lower material modes could gradually develop interest in the Supreme Personality of Godhead by hearing or reading the tāmasic and rājasic Purāṇas.

Someone might object that the statement cited above concerning the classification of the Purāṇas according to the modes does not itself come from a sāttvic Purāṇa and so should not be taken as authoritative. We reply that this classification is supported by numerous other statements as well, including some from such sāttvic scriptures as the Padma Purāṇa, which we have already cited in the previous Text. Nor is it true that the Purāṇas in the lower modes give no valid knowledge at all, since even they give some insight into absolute reality, what to speak of the insights they give into lesser topics. In addition, no statement in the Vedic literature specifically contradicts the verses cited here classifying the Purāṇas according to the modes of nature, and so we are left with no compelling reason to doubt the authenticity of this classification.

From this analysis we can conclude that in our quest for the ultimate sabda-pramāna we need consider only the sāttvic Purāṇas. As the Padma Purāṇa states, sāttvikā mokṣa-dāh proktāh: “The Purāṇas in the mode of goodness lead to liberation.”

But even these sāttvic Purāṇas have been understood in many ways by great thinkers. Some interpreters have found that they glorify the path of yoga as the best, others have concluded that they recommend bhakti as the highest path, and yet others have found that they promote the path of jñāna (knowledge) as supreme.

Next Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmi suggests the Vedānta-sūtra as a possible basis of reconciliation. The Vedānta-sūtra, written by Vyāsadeva, certainly incorporates the essential understanding of the Vedas and the Purāṇas. But we must also consider that the dedicated followers of other sages who wrote philosophical sūtras, such as Gautama and Patanjali, might not accept the Vedānta-sūtra’s ideas. Even if these followers of other philosophers could somehow be convinced to change their minds by logical proof of the greater authority of the Vedānta-sūtra, the situation is
still problematic: The sūtras of the Vedānta being terse and esoteric, ācāryas of various persuasions have commented on them, and so it is difficult to decide whose opinion agrees with that of Śrīla Veda-vyāsa, the author.

For the seeker who has come this far along the way but finds himself sinking in the marshy confusion created by the various scriptures and their myriad commentators, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī finally points out the high ground of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. The Bhāgavatam has the ten characteristics of a major Purāṇa (discussed in Text 56); it is apauruṣeya; it is the natural commentary on the Vedānta-sūtra and thus constitutes the purport of all the Vedas, Itihāsas, and Purāṇas; it is available in its entirety; it is respected by all Vaisnava ācāryas, and also many others; it is the most popular of the Purāṇas; it has an intact tradition of Vaisnava commentaries; and it is the culmination of Śrīla Veda-vyāsa’s literary output, composed in His maturity.

By establishing Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam as the last word in Vedic scripture, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī fulfills the will of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who accepted the Bhāgavatam as “the spotless Purāṇa,” the supremely authoritative text.

In the next Text Jīva Gosvāmī explains that Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam has not been composed by a mortal and that it is the natural commentary on the Vedānta-sūtra.

**TEXT 19**

**TEXT 19.1**

yat khalu sarva-purāṇa-jātam āvirbhāvyā brahma-sūtram ca pranītyāpy aparītustena
tenā bhagavatā nīja-sātṛanām akṛtrima-bhāṣya-bhūtam samādhi-labdhām
āvirbhāvitam yaśmin eva sarva-sāstra-samanvayo drśyate sarva-vedārtha-sūtra-
laksanān gāyatrim adhikṛtya pravartitvatāt.

Gopiparanadhana: After bringing all the Purāṇas to light and compiling the Vedānta-sūtra, the powerful sage Vyāsa was still not satisfied. Therefore he then manifested as a product of mature meditation this Bhāgavatam, the natural commentary on his own sūtras. The coherent overview of all scriptures is found in this work, inasmuch as it begins under the auspices of the Gāyatrī mantra, which is distinguished as the foundational text for the purport of all the Vedas.

BBT: Indeed, Lord Vyāsa was not satisfied even after compiling all the Purāṇas and the Vedānta-sūtra. He therefore wrote Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, which was revealed to Him in trance, as the natural commentary on His own sūtras. In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam we find the consistent reconciliation of all scriptures. That the Bhāgavatam gives the essence of all scriptures is shown by its opening with the Gāyatrī mantra, the essential text incorporating the message of all the Vedas.
TEXT 19.2

tathāpi tat-svarūpaṁ mātye:

yatradhikṛtya gāyatrīṁ varnyate dharma-vistarāh
vrtrāsura-vadhopetaṁ tad bhaṅgavatam isyate

likhītvā tac ca yo dadyāḥ dhema-simha-samanvitam
praūṣṭhapaṇyāṁ paunāmāsyāṁ sa yāti paramāṁ gatīṁ
aṣṭādaśa-sahasrāṇi purāṇam tat prakṛtitam
iti.

Gopiparanadhana: In just this manner the Matsya Purāṇa depicts the identity of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam: “In the beginning of one of the Purāṇas the Gāyatrī mantra is the focus of discourse. In it all the ramifications of true religion are delineated, and the killing of the demon Vṛtra is described. The Purāṇa which has these characteristics is known as Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. A person who transcribes a copy of the Bhāgavatam, places it on a gold lion-throne and gives this as a gift to someone on the full moon day of the month Prauṣṭhapada will achieve the supreme goal of life. This Purāṇa is said to have eighteen thousand verses" [Matsya Pur. 53.20–22].

BBT: The characteristics of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam are further described in the Matsya Purāṇa (53.20–22): “That Purāṇa is known as Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam which explains the topmost principles of religion with reference to the Gāyatrī mantra and which tells of the killing of the demon Vṛtra. This Purāṇa has eighteen thousand verses. Whoever writes out a copy of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, places it on a golden lion-throne, and presents it to someone on the full-moon day of the month of Bhādra (August-September) will attain the supreme goal.”

TEXT 19.3

atra gāyatrī-śabdena tat-sūcaka-tad-avyabhicāri-dhīmahi-pada-sānvalita-tad-artha
evayate sarvesāṁ mantrāṇāṁ adi-rūpāyāṁ tasyah sāksīṁ kathanānārhatvāt. tad-
arthatā ca 'janmādy asya yatah' 'tene brahma hṛdā' iti sarva-lokāsrayatva-buddhi-
vṛtti-prerakatvādi-sāmyāt. dharma-vistara ity atra dharma-sabdah parama-dharma-
parah dharmaḥ projihita-kaitavo 'tra paramah' ity atraiva pratipāditvatvāt. sa ca
bhagavad-dhyānādilaksana eveti purastād vyakti-bhavisyati.

Gopiparanadhana: The word gāyatrī here indicates the basic meaning of Gāyatrī, along with the one word dhīmahi, which alludes to the Gāyatrī texts and invariably occurs within them; it would improper to utter in this context the actual Gāyatrī, the primeval form of all Vedic mantras. The meaning of Gāyatrī is found in the phrases “from whom proceed the generation, maintenance and destruction of this universe” and “He imparted the transcendental sound of the Vedas from within the heart” [Bhāg. 1.1.1]. These two phrases express ideas identical to ideas contained in Gāyatrī, that the Supreme Truth is the shelter of all
the worlds and that He is the inspirer of intelligence. In the phrase "all the ramifications of religion," the word "religion" (dharma) means "the supreme religion," since the Bhágavatam [1.1.2] states, "In this work the supreme religion is described, to the exclusion of all kinds of cheating religion." Such activities as meditation on the Personality of Godhead are the specific features of this supreme religion, as we will make evident later on.

**BBT**: Here the word gáyatrí indicates the meaning of the Gáyatrí mantra, which includes the word dhímahi. Dhímahi is an indicator of Gáyatrí, implying its purport; it would be improper to directly utter Gáyatrí itself, the origin of all Vedic mantras. The first verse of Śrímad-Bhágavatam [1.1.1] alludes to the meaning of Gáyatrí by the phrases janmādy asya yathā (“by Him this universe is created, maintained, and destroyed”) and tene brahma hṛdā (“He revealed Vedic knowledge in the heart”). These phrases express the same meaning as Gáyatrí, describing the Lord as the basis of all the universes and as He who inspires everyone’s intellect.

The word dharma in the compound dharma-vistara refers to the supreme religion, as expressed in the Bhágavatam’s words, dharmaḥ projhitākaitava ‘tra paramah [Bhág. 1.1.2]: “the supreme religion, devoid of all cheating propensities.” And, as will become clear in upcoming Texts, this dharma is indeed characterized by meditation on the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

**Purport by Gopiparanadhana prabhu**

Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsadeva is the literary incarnation of the Supreme Lord. Thus he is often called Bhagavān, a title reserved for Lord Viṣṇu and for specially empowered servants of Viṣṇu like Lord Śiva. Nevertheless, Vyāsadeva accepted the pastime of experiencing doubt. After organizing all the śrutis and composing the Vedānta-sūtra and Mahābhārata, he felt dissatisfied. He doubted how people in Kali-yuga would understand the mysteries of the Personality of Godhead’s opulence and all-attractiveness, since in all the works he had produced these were never fully revealed.

kim vā bhagavatā dharma/ na prâyena nirūpitāh
priyāḥ paramahamsānām/ ta eva hy acyuta-priyāḥ

"I think I mostly failed to describe the principles of devotional service to the Supreme Lord, which are dear both to perfect beings and to the infallible Lord" [Bhág. 1.4.31]. Although Śrīla Vyāsa thus knew already what the source of his dissatisfaction was, he needed to hear confirmation of this from his spiritual master Nārada, and specific instructions on how to remedy the problem.

śri-nārada uvāca
bhavatānudita-prāyam/ yaśo bhagavato ‘malam
yenaivāsau na tusyeta/ manye tad dārşanam khilam

"Śrī Nārada said: You have not actually broadcast the sublime and spotless glories of the Personality of Godhead. That philosophy which does not satisfy the transcendental senses of the Lord is considered worthless" [Bhág. 1.5.8].
"O highly fortunate one, your vision is completely perfect. Your good fame is spotless. You are firm in vow and situated in transcendence. You should think of the pastimes of the Lord in trance for the liberation of the people in general from all material bondage" [Bhāg. 1.5.13].

tvam ātmanātmānam avery amogha-drk
darasya puṁsaḥ paramātmānaḥ kalām
ajam prajātām jagataḥ śivāya tan
mahānbhāvābyudhayo ‘dhiganyatām

"Your Goodness has perfect vision. You yourself can know the Supersoul Personality of Godhead because you are present as the plenary portion of the Lord. Although you are birthless, you have appeared on this earth for the well-being of all people. Please, therefore, describe the transcendental pastimes of the Supreme Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa more vividly" [Bhāg. 1.5.21].

Even pure devotees of the Lord suffer apparent forgetfulness of His presence and directions while living in this world in the mood of separation from Him. Thus sometimes a fully surrendered devotee thinks that he should first accomplish some business in this world before becoming a full-time preacher of the Lord's glories. Humbly feeling unqualified to assume the position of Vaiṣṇava ācārya, he makes plans for success as a businessman or scholar. But because he is sincere, the Lord arranges at the right time for him to be reminded of his higher duty. Śrīla Vyāsađevar followed this pattern in his transcendental pastimes, busyng himself for a long time in teaching the worldly principles of ritualistic religion, material acquisition, sense enjoyment and impersonal liberation. When he finally realized the inadequacy of all he had done, he was ready to be redirected by his spiritual master.

Following Nārada's advice, Vyāsađeva sat in meditation at his āśrama in the Himalayas on the bank of the Sarasvatī River. What he saw in his trance became the basis of the eighteen-thousand-verse Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, the most natural commentary on his Vedānta-sūtra for the simply reason that an author best knows the purpose of his own work. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is equivalent to the Vedānta-sūtra because it also presents the definitive reconciliation of all scriptures. Both the Vedānta-sūtra and Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam delimit the supreme tattva, the unifier of all truths--sarve vedā yat padam āmananti, "that reality which all the Vedas affirm" (Kātha Up. 2.15). Only the Bhāgavatam, however, fully explains that Supreme Truth in a way that every honest and sensible person can understand, irregardless of birth, training and past behavior.

Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī nexts highlights how Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam embodies the purport
of the sacred Vedic mantra known as Gāyatrī. Every twice-born brähmana is
enjoined to chant this mantra at the three junctures of the day—sunrise, noon and
sunset. Gāyatrī is a direct expansion of the original Vedic syllable om, and from
her expand all the other mantras; therefore she is known as the mother of the
Vedas. There are twenty-four syllables in Gāyatrī, divided into three sections of
eight syllables each. Like other Vedic and tantric mantras, Gāyatrī should be
chanted only by those who have been properly initiated into it by a representative
of an authentic disciplic succession. Sampradāya-vihiṇā ye/ mantrās te nisphalā
matāh: "It is understand that whatever mantras you might chant will be fruitless if
they have not been received through a bona fide sampradāya" [Padma Purāṇa
<refs>]. Thus as a general rule scriptures avoid giving away mantras gratuitously by
quoting them verbatim; almost always some words or syllables are inverted or left
out in citations. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam in fact never directly quotes the Gāyatrī
mantra, either in the first verse or anywhere else in its Twelve Cantos. Neither the
original Brahma-gāyatri or any of its variants appear anywhere in Śrīmad-
Bhāgavatam, there are not even any verses in the twenty-four syllable Gāyatrī
meter. The only literal fragment of Gāyatrī visible in the opening verse of the
Bhāgavatam is the one word dhimahi ("let us meditate").

tat savitur varenrmat bhargod evasya dhiyoyo yo naḥ pracodayāt.

"Let us meditate on the all-worshipful effulgence of the Supreme Lord, the giver of
life. May He inspire our intelligence" [Brahma-gāyatri, without the prefixed
prāṇava and vyāḥṛti].

\begin{verbatim}
jannādy asya yato 'nvayād itarataś cārtheśv abhijñāḥ sva-rāt
tene brahma hrād ya ādi-kavaye muhyanti yat sārayāh
  tejo-vāri-mṛdām yathā vinimayo yatra tri-sargo 'nrṣā
dhāmnā svena sadā nirasta-kuhakaṁ satyam param dhimahi
\end{verbatim}

"Let us meditate upon Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa because He is the Absolute Truth and the
primeval cause of the all causes of the creation, sustenance and destruction of the
manifested universes. He is directly and indirectly consious of all manifestations,
and He is independent because there is no other cause beyond Him. It is He only
who first imparted the Vedic knowledge unto the heart of Brahmājī, the original
living being. By Him even the great sages and demigods are placed into illusion, as
one is bewildered by the illusory representations of water seen in fire, or land seen
on water. Only because of Him do the material universes, temporarily manifested
by the reactions of the three modes of nature, appear factual, although they are
unreal. We therefore meditate upon Him, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is eternally existent
in the transcendental abode, which is forever free from the illusory representations
of the material world. We meditate upon Him for He is the Absolute Truth" [Bhāg.
1.1.1].

Meditation on the Personality of Godhead, indicated by the injunctive verb
dhimahi, comprises the essence of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the path of unalloyed
devotional service. It is the same means of achieving the perfection of human life
taught by the Vedas and Vedānta.
"My dear Maitreyi, one should realize the Supreme Soul and come to see it directly. One should hear about that Soul, carefully think about It, and deeply meditate upon It" [Brhad-āranyaka Up. 4.5.6]

\[
\text{vedāham etam purusam mahāntam} \\
\text{āditya-varnam tamasah parastāt} \\
\text{tam eva viditvāti mṛtyum eti} \\
\text{nānyah panthā vidyate 'yanāya}
\]

"I have realized this Supreme Person, effulgent like the sun, beyond the darkness of material illusion. One who knows Him goes beyond death. There is no other path to perfection" [Svetāsvatara Up. 6.15].

**Purport by BBT Translators**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the Natural Commentary on the Vedānta-sūtra

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam contains the story of its own appearance as the crowning achievement of Śrīla Vyāsadeva’s literary efforts. First Śrīla Vyāsadeva arranged the four Vedas, and then He composed the great epic Mahābhārata for the benefit of women, śūdras, and others who cannot study the Vedas. Next He compiled the Purāṇas, the natural commentary on the Vedas, and then He provided the essence of the Vedas and Purānas in His Vedānta-sūtra. But even after all this literary output, Veda-vyāsa felt discontented, although He did not know why. Then His spiritual master, Nārada Muni, came to His rescue:

\[
\text{jjñāsitam su-sampannam api te mahad adbhutam} \\
\text{krivān bhāratam yas tvam sarvārtha-paribhāṣhitam}
\]

“Your inquiries were full and your studies were also well fulfilled, and there is no doubt that you have prepared a great and wonderful work, the Mahābhārata, which is full of all kinds of Vedic sequences elaborately explained” (Bhāg. 1.5.3).

\[
yathā dharmādayas cārthā muni-variṇukirtitāḥ \\
na tathā vāsudevasya mahīṁ ha anuvartitaḥ
\]

“Although, great sage, you have very broadly described the four principles beginning with religious performances, you have not in the same way described the glories of the Supreme Personality, Vāsudeva” (Bhāg. 1.5.9.).

Following Nārada Muni’s instruction, Śrīla Vyāsa meditated, and while He was in trance Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam was revealed to Him. Thus it is clear that Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, which gave solace to Vyāsadeva, is knowledge descended from the transcendental realm. In upcoming Texts Śrī Jiva will show that it is also the
Various Purāṇas mention the relationship between Śrimad-Bhāgavatam and the Gāyatri mantra. Considered the essence of the Vedas, Gāyatri is supposed to be recited at dawn, noon, and dusk by every twice-born person (brāhmaṇa, ksatriya, and vaiśya). According to Śridhara Svāmī in his Bhāvārtha-dīpikā, Śrimad-Bhāgavatam begins with the Gāyatri mantra. Commenting on the first verse of the Bhāgavatam, he writes, dhīmaḥ iti gāyatryā prārambhena ca gāyatry-ākhya-brāhma-vidyā-rūpam etat purāṇam iti darsitam: “That the Gāyatri phrase indicated by the word dhīmaḥ begins this Purāṇa shows that this work has the nature of the brahma-vidyā [Vedic knowledge of the Supreme] called Gāyatri.” Because Śrimad-Bhāgavatam is based on Gāyatri, the cream of the Vedas, it explains the topmost principles of religion. The Bhāgavatam (1.1.3) thus calls itself “the ripened fruit of the wish-fulfilling tree of the Vedas” (nigama-kalpa-taror galitam phalam).

The recitation of Gāyatri and other Vedic mantras is governed by strict rules regarding the person, time, and place, and also the purity of the chanter, but such restrictions do not apply to Śrimad-Bhāgavatam. Since anyone may read the Bhāgavatam, strictly speaking it would be improper for the Gāyatri mantra to appear there in its original form. Gāyatri is among the Vedic mantras, which only the twice-born are allowed to chant. That is why Śrila Vyāsadeva expressed the form and idea of Gāyatri in the Bhāgavatam without using the actual mantra. Only one word from Gāyatri, dhīmaḥ, has been kept to indicate his intention, because it is a compulsory word in the mantra and carries its essence.

Another reason Vyāsa did not write the original Gāyatri in Śrimad-Bhāgavatam is that doing so would have invited misinterpretation. Various schools of thought have explained Gāyatri differently—as a meditation on impersonal Brahman, on the sun, on the fire-god, on Lord Śiva, and so forth. Only rarely is it understood to be a meditation on the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Vāsudeva. But in Śrimad-Bhāgavatam, Śrila Vyāsadeva’s own commentary on the Vedānta-sūtra, Vyāsadeva delivers the complete and unambiguous meaning of Gāyatri in the opening verse. He reveals that Gāyatri is a meditation on the Supreme Personality of Godhead and His eternal consort, Śrī Rādhikā. This meditation is indeed the highest dharma. In the 105th Text of Śrī Paramāṭma-sandarbha, Śrila Jīva Gosvāmī will explain the Gāyatri mantra in detail, and in the Krṣṇa-sandarbha he will thoroughly analyze the Bhāgavatam’s first verse and show it to be a meditation on Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Krṣṇa.

In the next Text of the Tatvā-sandarbha, Śrila Jīva Gosvāmī further introduces the Śrimad-Bhāgavatam, describing its distinguishing features and supporting his statements with scriptural references.
TEXT 20.1

evam skände prabhāsa-khanḍe ca `yatradhikṛtya gāyatrīm' ity-ādi

sārasvatasya kalpasya madhye ye syur narāmarāh
tad-vṛttāntodbhavam loke tāc ca bhāgavatam smṛtam

likhitvā tāc ca...

ity-ādi ca.

aṣṭādaśa-sahasrāni purāṇam tat prákrititam

iti. tad evam agni-purāne ca vacanāni vartante.

Gopiparanadhana: Similarly, the Prabhāsa-khanḍa [1.2.39–42] of the Skanda Purāṇa contains the statements, "Where the Gāyatrī mantra is the focus of discussion...", "Among the various scriptures known on earth, that one which recounts the histories of the humans and demigods who lived during the Sārasvata-kalpa is called the Bhāgavatam, and "A person who transcribes a copy of the Bhāgavatam... This Purāṇa is said to have eighteen thousand verses." There are also similar statements in the Agni Purāṇa.

BBT: In the Skanda Purāṇa, Prabhāsa-khanḍa [7.1.2.39–42] we find a description of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam similar to the one in the Matsya Purāṇa:

“The Purāṇa known as Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam recounts the deeds of humans and demigods in the Sārasvata-kalpa, explains the supreme religion in terms of Gāyatri, and narrates the slaying of Vṛtrasura. It has eighteen thousand verses. . . Whoever writes out a copy of the Bhāgavatam, places it on a golden lion-throne, and presents it to someone on the full-moon day of the month of Bhādra will attain the supreme destination." These verses are also found in the Agni Purāṇa [272.6, 7].

TEXT 20.2

ṭīkā-krdbhiḥ pramāṇi-kṛte purānāntare ca:

grantho 'ṣṭādaśa-sahasro dvādaśa-skandha-sammitah
hayagriva-brahma-vidyā yatra vṛtra-vadhah tathā
gāyatryā ca samārambhās tad vai bhāgavatam viduh

iti.

Gopiparanadhana: Another Purāṇa cited as authority by the commentator [Śrīla Śrīdharā Svāmī] also states, "That book is known as the Bhāgavatam which contains eighteen thousand verses in twelve cantos, in which are described the meditation on the Supreme taught by sage Hayagrīva and the killing of Vṛtra, and which begins with Gāyatri."
BBT: Yet another Purāṇa, cited by the Bhāgavatam commentator Śrīdhara Svāmī, describes the characteristics of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam thus: “The Purāṇa known as Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam has eighteen thousand verses divided into twelve cantos, begins with Gāyatrī, describes the Hayagrīva-brahma-vidyā, and narrates the slaying of Vṛtrāsura.”

TEXT 20.3

atra ‘hayagrīva-brahma-vidyā’ iti vrtra-vadhya-sahacaryena nārāyana-varmaivyocytate. hayagrīva-sabdenārāva-sirā dadhīcīr evocytate. tenaiva ca pravartita nārāyana-varmākhyā brahma-vidyā. tasyāśva-sirastvam ca saṣṭhe `yad vā aśva-sīro nāma’ ity atra prasiddham nārāyana-varmano brahma-vidyātvam ca:

etac chrutvā tathovāca dadhyānā atharvānḥ tayoḥ pravargyam brahma-vidyām ca sat-kṛto `satya-śankitah

iti svāmī-ṭikothāpita-vacanena ceti.

Gopiparanadhana: Here the "meditation on the Supreme taught by Hayagrīva" means the "Armor of Nārāyaṇa" prayer, since it is mentioned alongside the killing of Vṛtra. The name Hayagrīva here refers to the sage Dadhīcī, who had a horse's head. He initiated the meditation on the Supreme (brahma-vidyā) known as the Nārāyaṇa-varma. That he had a horse's head is established in the Bhāgavatam's Sixth Canto [6.9.52] by the words "he who was called Horse-head (Aśva-sirā)." That section of the Bhāgavatam indeed presents the Nārāyaṇa-varma as a brahma-vidyā, and this identification is also confirmed by a verse cited by Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī in his commentary, "Hearing this and feeling honored, Dadhīcī the descendent of Atharvā, anxious not to break his promise, taught the two Aśvinī-kumāras the pravargya method and the meditation on the Supreme."

BBT: The Hayagrīva-brahma-vidyā mentioned here (meaning “the doctrine of the Supreme taught by Hayagrīva”) is “The Armor of Nārāyaṇa” (Nārāyana-varma), since it is narrated in the same context as the killing of Vṛtra. The word hayagrīva here refers to Dadhīcī, the sage with a horse’s head. He taught the knowledge of Brahman called Nārāyana-varma. His accepting a horse’s head and receiving the name Aśvaśirā (“horse-headed one”) are mentioned in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam’s Sixth Canto [6.9.52], where these words are spoken: “he who has the name Aśvaśirā.” From a verse Śrīdhara Svāmī cites in his commentary on this Bhāgavatam text we get further confirmation that the Nārāyana-varma is in fact a standard teaching about the Absolute: “Upon hearing this and feeling honored, Dadhīcī, anxious not to break his promise, instructed the twin Aśvini-kumāras in the knowledge of the Pravargya sacrifice and Brahma-vidyā.”

TEXT 20.4
śrīmad-bhāgavatasya bhāgavatpriyatvena bhāgavatābhīṣṭatvena ca parama-
sāttvikatvam. yathā pādme ambariṣaṁ prati gautama-praśnah:
purāṇam tvāṁ bhāgavatam pathaṁ purato hareḥ
caritraṁ daitya-rajaśya prahlādasya ca bhū-pate
tatraiva vañjuli-mahātmye tasya tasmīn upadeśah

raṭrau tu jāgarah kāryah śrotavyā vaiśnavi kathā
gītā nāma-sahasram ca purāṇam śuka-bhāṣitam
pāṭhitavyam prayatnena hareḥ santoṣa-kāraṇam

Gopiparanadhana: Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is most perfectly in the mode of goodness because it pleases the Personality of Godhead and is very much preferred by the devotees of Godhead. As we find in the Padma Purāṇa [Uttara-khanda 22.115], in the questions posed to Ambariṣa by Gautama, "O ruler of the earth, do you sit in front of the Deity of Lord Hari and recite the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, including the story of Prahlāda, the king of the demons?" Also in the Padma Purāṇa, in the section glorifying Vañjuli Mahā-dvādaśi, Gautama instructs Ambariṣa, "One should stay awake through the night, hearing narrations related to Lord Viśnu—the Bhāgavad-gītā, the Thousand Names of Viśnu and the Purāṇa spoken by Śukadeva. These should be read aloud with careful attention to give satisfaction to the Supreme Lord Hari."

BBT: Since Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is pleasing to the Supreme Lord and is His devotees' favorite book, it is the supremely sāttvic scripture. As stated in the Padma Purāṇa, in Gautama Rṣi’s question to Mahārāja Ambariṣa, “O lord of the earth, do you recite the Bhāgavata Purāṇa before the Deity of Lord Hari, especially the history of the king of the demons, Prahlāda Mahārāja?” (Padma Pur., Uttara-khanda 22.115).

Again in the Padma Purāṇa, Gautama further instructs Ambariṣa, in the section glorifying the vow ofVyāsjuli Mahā-dvādaśi:
“One should stay awake throughout that night and hear scriptures that narrate stories of Lord Viṣṇu and His devotees, especially the Bhagavad-gītā, the thousand names of Lord Viṣṇu, and the Purāṇa narrated by Śukadeva [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam]. One should recite these with care, since they are pleasing to Lord Hari.”

TEXT 20.5
tatraivanyatra:
ambaraśa śuka-proktam nityam bhāgavatam śṛṇu
pathasva sva-mukhenāpi yadīcchasi bhava-kṣayam

skānde prahlāda-samhitāyāṁ dvārakā-mahātmye:
Gopiparanadhana: Elsewhere in the same work is the statement, "My dear Ambarișa, you should listen regularly to the Bhāgavatam spoken by Śukadeva. Recite it with your own mouth also, if you want to see the end of your material life." And in the Prahlāda-sanhitā of the Skanda Purāṇa, in the section describing the glories of Dvārakā, "One who remains awake all night in front of the Deity of Hari reciting Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam with devotion will go to the Supreme Lord's abode with all his family."

BBT: And elsewhere in the Padma Purāṇa we find this statement:  
"O Ambariṣa, if you wish to end your material existence, then every day you should hear the Bhāgavatam that was narrated by Śukadeva, and you should also recite it yourself.
Finally, we find the following statement in the Prahlāda-sanhitā of the Skanda Purāṇa, in the section describing Dvārakā’s glories:  
“A person who stays up [on the night of Ekādaśi] and recites Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam with devotion before the Deity of Lord Hari goes to the Lord’s abode along with all his family members.”

Purport by Gopiparanadhana prabhu

There is no doubt that the Bhāgavatam is one of the main Purāṇas, since several Purāṇas included it in their lists of the eighteen Purāṇas, and no such lists exclude it. However, tantric worshipers of Devī, the consort of Lord Śiva, have raised a controversy over exactly which Bhāgavatam is the one listed. They claim that their Devī-bhāgavata is the real Bhāgavatam among the eighteen major Purāṇas. Without directly embroiling himself in this controversy, Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī here cites several statements from other Purāṇas which include convincing evidence of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam’s place on the Purāṇic list of eighteen.

Actually, there are two Devī Purāṇas, both of which have been at times given the title Bhāgavata on the grounds of their being dedicated to Bhāgavatī (Devī). Only one of two, the one called Devī-bhāgavata, has features that lend some credibility to the idea that it may be the real Bhāgavatam. It is eighteen thousand verses long in twelve cantos. It begins with a form of the Gāyatrī mantra: sarva-caitanya-rūpam tām adyām vidyām ca dhimahi/ buddhim yā naḥ pracodayāt ("Let us meditate on that primal energy of knowledge, who embodies all living beings. May she inspire our intelligence."). A few episodes in the life of Prahlāda are described in the Fourth Canto, although without revealing much of his true saintly character. Canto Six tells about the killing of Vṛtra. Thus five of the characteristics of the Bhāgavatam mentioned in the Purānic verses quoted in anucchedas 19 and 20 are found in the Devī-bhāgavata as well as in the Vaiṣṇava Bhāgavatam.

These verses list four other special characteristics, however, which the Devī-bhāgavata fails to exhibit: 1) The Bhāgavatam discusses events which occurred in
the Sārasvata-kalpa, also known as the Śveta-varāha-kalpa, the day of Brahmā in which Lord Viṣṇu's incarnation as a boar had a white body. 2) It describes the Brahma-vidyā taught by Hayagrīva. 3) It was spoken by Śukadeva. 4) It is a narration of Vaiṣṇava character and should be recited in front of a Deity of Lord Viṣnu.

The two verses cited from the Matsya Purāṇa (Text 19.2) and the Skanda Purāṇas' Prabhāsa-khaṇḍa (Text 20.1) share some of the same phrases, as does also the following verses from the Agni Purāṇa [272.6–7]:

yatṛādhikṛtya gāyatrimā,/ kīrtyate dharma-vistarāh
vrtrāsura-vadhopotam/ tad bhāgavatam ucyate

sārasvatasya kalpasya/ prosthapadyāṁ tu tad dadet
aśādaśa-sahasrāṇiḥ/ hema-simha-samanvitam

"In the beginning of one of the Purāṇas the Gāyatri mantra is the focus of discourse. In it all the ramifications of true religion are enunciated, and the killing of the demon Vṛtra is described. The Purāṇa which has these characteristics is called Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. It deals with the Sārasvata-kalpa and has eighteen thousand verses. One should give it as a gift on a gold lion-throne in the month of Prauṣṭhapada."

The unidentified Purāṇic verse cited by Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī specifies that the Bhāgavatam describes the Hayagrīva-brahma-vidyā. Although Hayagrīva is also the name of an incarnation of Lord Viṣṇu who appeared with a horse's head and spoke the Vedas to Lord Brahmā, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī here explains that this Hayagrīva is different. He is the sage Dadhici, who taught the Aśvinī-kumāras two specific vidyās, or systematic meditations on the Supreme for aspirants on various levels of realization. The Upaniṣads give instruction on several such vidyās, among them the pravargya taught by Dadhici, otherwise known as the prāṇa-vidyā, a meditation on the Supreme in the form of the air of life. The prāṇa-vidyā is introduced in a passage of the Chāndogya Upaniṣad (1.11.4–5):

katāmā devateti. prāṇa iti hovāca, sarvāṇi ha vā imāni bhūtāni prāṇam evābhisamviśanti prāṇam abhyujjhate sāśā devatā.

"Which is the controlling deity?" He answered, "It is prāṇa, the air of life. All beings which exist enter within prāṇa, and all rise up again from prāṇa. That is the controlling deity." In the Vedānta-sūtra (1.1.23), Śrīla Vyāsa offers the aphorism ata eva prāṇah to prove that the prāṇa-vidyā is a not just a depiction of a subtle physical energy but a transcendental meditation on Brahman. Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa explains in his Vedānta commentary, Govinda-bhāṣya: prāṇo 'yam sarveśvara eva na tu vāyu-vihārah. kutah? ata eva sarva-bhūtotpatti-pralaya-hetutvārūpād brahma-lingād eva. "This prāṇa is the Lord of all, not simple a transformation of the element air. Why? Because it is characterized as the Supreme, in terms of its being the cause of all beings' generation and destruction."
The second vidyā which the Aṣvinis learned from Dadhici is the Nārāyana-kavaca, a meditation on God in many of His personal forms for protection from various kinds of danger. The same Nārāyana-kavaca is recited in the eighth chapter of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam's Sixth Canto (Texts 12–34), although in that instance it is being taught by a grand-disciple of Dadhici, the sage Viśvarūpa, to Lord Indra. His Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda gives more information on the story of Dadhici's teaching the brahma-vidyā in a purport to his translation of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam [6.9.52):

"The following story is narrated by many ācāryas in their commentaries:....The great sage Dadhici had perfect knowledge of how to perform fruitful activities, and he had advanced spiritual knowledge as well. Knowing this, the Aṣvini-kumāras once approached him and begged him to instruct them in spiritual science (brahma-vidyā). Dadhici Muni replied, 'I am now engaged in arranging sacrifices for fruitful activities. Come back some time later.' When the Aṣvini-kumāras left, Indra, the King of heaven, approached Dadhici and said, 'My dear Muni, the Aṣvini-kumāras are only physicians. Please do not instruct them in spiritual science. If you impart the spiritual science to them despite my warning, I shall punish you by cutting off your head.' After warning Dadhici in this way, Indra returned to heaven. The Aṣvini-kumāras, who understood Indra's desires, returned and begged Dadhici for brahma-vidyā. When the great saint Dadhici informed them of Indra's threat, the Aṣvini-kumāras replied, 'Let us first cut off your head and replace it with the head of a horse. You can instruct brahma-vidyā through the horse's head, and when Indra returns and cuts off that head, we shall reward you and restore your original head.' Since Dadhici had promised to impart brahma-vidyā to the Aṣvini-kumāras, he agreed to their proposal. Therefore, because Dadhici imparted brahma-vidyā through the mouth of a horse, this brahma-vidyā is also known as Aśvaśirā."

**Purport by BBT Translators**

The Characteristics of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam

In this Text Jiva Gosvāmi gives special attention to establishing that the Bhāgavatam glorified in the Purāṇas is Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. He does this because some scholars of his time held that the Deī Bhāgavatam, rather than Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, was actually the Bhāgavatam glorified in the Purāṇas. Like Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, the Deī Bhāgavatam is a Purāṇa with twelve cantos, 18,000 verses, and an account of Vṛtra’s death, although its account of how Vṛtra was killed differs from the one in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. Also, when some traditional scholars read in the Purāṇas that on the full-moon day of the month of Bhādra one should donate the Bhāgavatam mounted on a golden lion (hema-simha), they take this to mean the Deī Bhāgavatam. This seems quite fitting, since Deī, or Durgā, rides on a lion. (In the case of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, hema-simha is understood to mean “golden lion-throne.”)

Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmi solves the controversy by citing references that list distinctive
features of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam: it begins with the Gāyatrī mantra, it contains the Hayagriva-brahma-vidyā, the events it narrates happened in the Sārasvata-kalpa, and it was first spoken by Śrī Sukadeva Gosvāmi to Parīkṣit Mahārāja. Jīva Gosvāmī further supports his opinion by quoting from the Bhāvārtha-dipikā, Śrīdharā Svāmī's commentary on Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.

The Devī Bhāgavatam opens with a statement that appears to be based on Gāyatrī: om sarva-caitanya-rūpam tām ādyam vidyām ca dhīmahi, buddhim yā naḥ pracodayāt. There are two reasons this statement should not coincide with Gāyatrī: First, nothing in it corresponds to the words savituh, varenyam, and bhargas from Gāyatrī. (By contrast, in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.1.1 there is such a correspondence.). Second, this statement is a meditation on Devī, but as Śrī Jīva will show in the next Text, the object of meditation in Gāyatrī is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Viṣṇu.

Like Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, the Devī Bhāgavatam narrates the killing of Vṛtraśura, but in its account Indra kills Vṛtra with ocean foam empowered by Devī. Vṛtraśura performed severe penances for hundreds of years to please Lord Brahmā. When Brahmā appeared before him and offered a boon, Vṛtra asked that he would not be slain by any weapon made of iron or wood, or one that was dry or wet. After Lord Brahmā granted this boon, Vṛtra attacked Indra and defeated him. Indra subsequently took help from Lord Viṣṇu, who entered Indra’s thunderbolt and also advised him to take the help of Devī and make a truce with Vṛtra. Indra then apparently befriended Vṛtraśura. But one day at dusk Indra surprised Vṛtraśura on a beach and slew him with his thunderbolt covered with foam, which was not a weapon of iron or wood and was neither wet nor dry.

The Devī Bhāgavatam also makes no mention of the Hayagriva-brahma-vidyā (the Nārāyana-varma). For all these reasons it is clear that the Bhāgavatam referred to in the verse cited by Śrīdharā Svāmī is not the Devī Bhāgavatam.

Hemādri, Ballālsaṇa, Govindānanda, Raghunandana, Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmi, and Saṅgata Gosvāmi have each written noteworthy dharma-sāstras (books and essays on religious duties), in which they quote frequently from Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam but never from the Devī Bhāgavatam. Ballālsaṇa states in his Dānā-sāgara that only a few verses of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam specifically recommend acts of charity. In contrast, the entire thirteenth chapter of the Devī Bhāgavatam’s Ninth Canto deals exclusively with the glory of giving various kinds of charity. In addition, with the exceptions of Rāmānuja-cārya and Niśācanthacārya, all the great saintly commentators on Prasthāna-trayīl either wrote about Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam directly or at least cited it as a standard reference in their books. By contrast, neither Śāṅkara, Madhvacārya, Vallabha, Lord Caitanya-deva, or any other notable acārya ever cited the Devī Bhāgavatam to support or prove any important statement.

The ninety-sixth chapter of the first part of the Nārādiya Purāṇa lists the topics of all twelve cantos of the Bhāgavatam in order. This list fits Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam but not the Devī Bhāgavatam. And the Padma Purāṇa (Uttara-khanda 193.3), states:

purāṇesu tu sarvesu śrīmad-bhāgavatam param
yatra prati-padam krṣno giyate bahudharsibih

“Among all the Purāṇas, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the best. In every line great sages glorify Lord Kṛṣṇa in various ways.” All this leaves no doubt that the Bhāgavatam mentioned in the quoted Purānic verses is Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and other Purāṇas mention a demon named Hayagriva, and there is also an incarnation of Lord Viṣṇu called Hayagriva, who had a horse's head. But because the Hayagriva mentioned in this section of the Tattva-sandarbha is connected with the slaying of the demon Vṛtra, Śrila Jiva Gosvāmi has identified him as the sage Dadhīci. As told in the Sixth Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, after Vṛtra had conquered the demigods they approached Lord Viṣṇu for help. The Lord advised the chief of the demigods, Indra, to approach Dadhīci and ask him for his body, which had been made firm by vows, penances, and knowledge of Brahman. The Lord told Indra to fashion from Dadhīci's bones a thunderbolt strong enough to kill Vṛtrāsura.

Dadhīci had previously taught the knowledge of Brahman to the Aśvini Kumāra twins, although Indra had earlier forbidden him to teach them transcendental knowledge on the grounds that their medical profession disqualified them from learning it. Indra had threatened to behead Dadhīci if he disobeyed, but Dadhīci had already promised to teach the twins. The Aśvini Kumāras had solved Dadhīci's dilemma surgically: they severed his head and grafted a horse's head in its place, knowing that Indra would eventually cut off that head and enable them to restore Dadhīci's original head. Dadhīci then instructed them through the horse's head. Dadhīci became known as Hayagriva or Aśvaśīrā (“horse-headed one”), and the transcendental knowledge he imparted became famous as the Hayagriva-brahma-vidyā. As planned, Indra later severed Dadhīci's horse head and the Aśvini Kumāras restored his original head. Then, on the request of the demigods Dadhīci offered his body to Indra, who used his bones to make a thunderbolt with which he killed Vṛtrāsura. Earlier Dadhīci had taught Tvaśtā the same knowledge he had previously taught the Aśvini Kumāras, and Tvaśtā in turn taught it to his son Viṣvarūpa. Viṣvarūpa taught it to Lord Indra as the Nārāyan Armor, which helped Indra defeat Vṛtrāsura. Thus the Hayagriva referred to here is Dadhīci, and the Brahma-vidyā is the Nārāyan Armor. This is all described in the Sixth Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and in the Bhāgavatam commentaries of the Vaiṣṇava ācāryas.

Text 20.5 contains the term śuka-proktam, “recited by Śrī Śuka.” From this term we should not infer that verses Śukadeva Gosvāmi did not speak, such as the First Canto, are not part of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. The Bhāgavatam Vyāsa revealed was complete, including future events and future statements by Śūta and Śaunaka. Since Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam has been identified as having eighteen thousand verses and opening with a verse based on the Gāyatrī mantra, it must be that its first verse begins with the words janmādy asya yataḥ and its last one ends with tam namāmi harim param.

Of the eighteen Purāṇas, six are meant for persons in the mode of ignorance, six for those in the mode of passion, and six for those in the mode of goodness. But
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam occupies a place of honor even among the sāttvic Purāṇas. It is considered nondifferent from Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and therefore it is *parama-sāttvika*, a manifestation of pure goodness without any tinge of the material modes. *Hareḥ santosa-kāramāt*: it is pleasing to Hari, the transcendental Lord, who cannot be pleased by anything material. It is relished by His devotees, who scoff at the bliss of liberation, what to speak of the pleasure derived from reading something mundane. For this reason the sage Gautama recommends reciting Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam on Ekādaśī, which is also called Hari-vāsara, the day of Lord Hari. As the Skanda Purāṇa (*Viṣṇu-khaṇḍa* 6.4.3) states:

śrīmad-bhāgavatasyāthā śrīmad-bhāgavataḥ sādā
svarūpam ekaṁ evāsti sac-cid-ānanda-lakṣaṇam

“Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and the Personality of Godhead are always of the same nature—possessed of eternal existence, full knowledge, and complete bliss.” And the Padma Purāṇa (*Uttara-khaṇḍa* 198.30) confirms, śrīmad-bhāgavatākhyo ‘yam pratyakṣaḥ kṛṣṇa eva hi: “Without a doubt Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is directly Lord Kṛṣṇa.”

That Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is nondifferent from Lord Kṛṣṇa is confirmed in the Bhāgavatam itself (1.3.43), where Śūta Gosvāmī states that after the Lord’s disappearance the Bhāgavatam appeared as His representative to enlighten the benighted people of Kali-yuga. The Padma Purāṇa also confirms the oneness of the Bhāgavatam and the Lord with this passage equating the Bhāgavatam’s cantos with Kṛṣṇa’s limbs:

pādau yadiyau prathama-dvitiyau
trīya-turyau kathitau yad-ārū
nābhis tatāh pañcama eva śaṣṭho
bhujāntaram dor-yugalam tathānyau

kaṇṭhas tu rājan navamo yadiyo
mukhāravindam daśamān praphullam
ekāḍasa yaś ca lalāṭa-paṭṭam
śiroma ‘pi yad dvādaśa eva bhāti

namāmi devaṁ karunā-nidhānanṁ
tamāla-varnāṁ suhitāvatāram
apāra-samsāra-samudra-setum
bhajāmahe bhāgavata-svarūpam

“The Bhāgavatam’s First and Second Cantos are Lord Kṛṣṇa’s feet, and the Third and Fourth Cantos are His thighs. The Fifth Canto is His navel, the Sixth Canto is His chest, and the Seventh and Eighth Cantos are His arms. The Ninth Canto is His throat, the Tenth His blooming lotus face, the Eleventh His forehead, and the Twelfth His head.

“I bow down to that Lord, the ocean of mercy, whose color is like that of a tamāla
tree and who appears in this world for the welfare of all. I worship Him as the bridge for crossing the unfathomable ocean of material existence. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam has appeared as His very self."

Next Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmi demonstrates that Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the natural commentary on the Vedānta-sūtra.

TEXT 21

TEXT 21.1
gārude ca:

...pūrṇah so 'yam atiśayah
artha 'yam brahma-sūtraṇām bhāratārtha-vinirñayaḥ
gāyatrī-bhāṣya-rūpo 'sau vedārtha-paribhrinhitah
   purāṇānām sāma-rūpaḥ sāksād bhāgavatoditah
dvādaśa-skandha-yukto 'yam śata-viccheda-sāmyutah
   grantho 'stādaśa-sāhasram śrī-bhāgavatābhidhah

iti.

Gopiparanadhana: The Garuda Purāṇa states, "This is the most complete [of the Purāṇas]. It is the purport of the Vedānta-sūtra, establishes the meaning of the Mahābhārata, is a commentary on Gāyatrī, and completes the message of the Vedas. It is the Śāma Veda among the Purāṇas, spoken directly by the Personality of Godhead. This work with twelve cantos, hundreds of chapters and eighteen thousand verses is called Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam."

BBT: And the Garuda Purāṇa states:
"This Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the most perfect Purāṇa. It is the natural commentary on the Vedānta-sūtra, it establishes the meaning of the Mahābhārata, it is a commentary on Gāyatrī, it explains and expands the meaning of the Vedas, it is the Śāma Veda of the Purāṇas, and it was spoken by the Supreme Lord Himself. It has twelve cantos, hundreds of chapters, and eighteen thousand verses."

TEXT 21.2

brahma-sūtraṇām arthas teṣām akṛtrima-bhāṣya-bhūta ity arthaḥ. pūrvam sākṣmatvena manasy avirbhātam tad eva sāṅś Joey sūtraṇa punah prakāṣṭitaṁ paścād vistirṇatvena sākṣat śrī-bhāgavatam iti. tasmāt tad-bhāṣya-bhūte svataḥ-siddhe
Gopiparanadhana: Saying that the Bhāgavatam is the purport of the sūtras of Vedānta means that it serves as their natural commentary. [Śrīla Vyāsadeva] first conceived of this in subtle form within his mind, then he summarized it as the Vedānta-sūtra, and later he manifested Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam directly in its fully elaborated form. Inasmuch as this Bhāgavatam has already appeared as the Vedānta-sūtra’s self-effulgent commentary, we can infer that the commentaries other, more recent authors have produced from their own heads are only worth paying attention to when they are faithful to the Bhāgavatam.

BBT: Here the words brahma-sūtrānam arthat mean that Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the natural commentary on the Vedānta-sūtra. First the Bhāgavatam appeared in the heart of Śrī Vyāsadeva in a subtle form. He then summarized it in the form of the Vedānta-sūtra, and later He expanded it into Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam as we know it. Since the Vedānta-sūtra already has a natural commentary in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, whatever else more recent commentators have produced from their own brains should be taken seriously only when it is faithful to the version of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.

TEXT 21.3

bhāratārtha-vinirnayā

nirnayaḥ sarva-sāstrānām bhāratam parikṛtītām
bhāratam sarva-vedāca ca tulām āropitāḥ purā
devair brahmādibhiḥ sarvair ṛṣibhiḥ ca samanvitaḥ
vyāsasyaivājñāyā tatra tv atiricyata bhāratam
mahattvād bhāra-vattvāc ca mahābhāratam ucyate
ity-ādy-ukta-lakṣanasya bhāratasyārtha-vinirnayo yatra saḥ.

Gopiparanadhana: "It establishes the meaning of the Mahābhārata" means that in it is ascertained the meaning of the Mahābhārata, whose characteristics are as stated: "It is said that the Mahābhārata establishes the purport of all scriptures. Once long ago, Vyāsadeva made the demi-gods headed by Brahmā and all the sages place both the Mahābhārata on one side of a scale and all the Vedas on the other. They found that the Mahābhārata weighed more. Because it is so great (mahattvāt) and so weighty (bhāra-vattvāt), it is called Mahābhārata."

BBT: Concerning the phrase bhāratārthā-vinirnayā ("Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam establishes the meaning of the Mahābhārata"), we find the following verses describing the Mahābhārata’s importance in the Mahābhārata itself [Ādi-parvā 1.272–74]:

“The Mahābhārata is glorified because it contains the conclusions of all scriptures. Long ago, on the request of Śrīla Vyāsa, Lord Brahmā and the other demi-gods
came together with all the great sages and placed the Mahābhārata on one side of a scale and the entire Vedas on the other. The Mahābhārata, it turned out, weighed more because of its greatness (mahattva) and heaviness (bharga-vattva). For this reason it is called Mahā-bhārata." The message of the Mahābhārata, whose importance is as described here, is made clear in the text of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.

**TEXT 21.4**

śrī-bhagavaty eva tātparyam tasyāpi. tad uktam mokṣa-dharne nārāyaniye śrī-veda-vyāsam prati janamejayena:

idam śata-sahasrād dhi bhūratākhyāna-vistarāt

āmathya mati-manthena jñānoddhānām anuttamam

nava-nitam yathā dadhno mañau canadnam yathā

āranyam sarva-vedebhya oṣadhibhyo 'mrtaṃ yathā

samuddhrtam idam brahman kathāmrtam idam tathā
tapo-nidhe tvayoktam hi nārāyaṇa-kathārayam

iti.

**Gopiparanadhana:** The Mahābhārata also has its purport in the divine Personality of Godhead. Janamejaya states this to Śrī Veda-vyāsa in the Mokṣa-dharma section of the Mahābhārata, in the Nārāyaniya sub-section, "This Nārāyaniya is an unexcelled ocean of knowledge, churned from the vast expanse of the Mahābhārata's hundred thousand verses of stories with the churning rod of your wisdom. O brahman, like yogurt churned from new butter, sandalwood brought from the Malaya Hills, the Āranyakas from the whole body of Vedas, or the nectar of life from medicinal herbs, so this immortal nectar of narrations has been distilled. It was spoken by you, O storehouse of austerity, and is full of descriptions of Lord Nārāyana."

**BBT:** Another way in which Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam establishes the meaning of the Mahābhārata is that the message of both culminates in the Supreme Lord alone. That the Mahābhārata's message culminates in the Lord is evinced in the Nārāyaniya section of the Mahābhārata's Mokṣa-dharma portion [170.11–14], where Janamejaya says to Śrīla Vyāsadeva:

"O brahma, abode of austerities, just as butter can be extracted from yogurt, sandalwood from the Malaya mountains, the Upaniṣads from the Vedas, and life-giving nectar from herbs, so by Your churning the ocean of the highest knowledge with the rod of Your intelligence, this Nārāyaniya has been extracted from the Mahābhārata's hundred thousand verses. The Nārāyaniya's narrations are related to Lord Nārāyana and are sweet like nectar."

**Purport by Gopiparanadhana prabhu**
All Vedic literatures, including the *Purāṇas*, are auspicious. They are all meant for the improvement of human civilization.

\[ \text{tatah purāṇam akhilam sarva-śāstra-mayam dhruvam} \]
\[ \text{nitya-sabda-mayam punyam śata-koti-pravistaram} \]

"After these appeared the entire *Purāṇa*, incorporating all scriptures. The *Purāṇa* is unchanging, consists of eternal sound, is auspicious and includes as much as one billion verses" (Skanda *Purāṇa*, Prabhāsā-khanda, quoted in Text 13.1). Each *Purāṇa* has its own special suitability for some particular class of people, and thus each has a right to advertise its own excellence. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* also takes many opportunities to declare its own glories. *Nigama-kalpa-taror galitam phalam:* "This *Bhāgavatam* is the ripened fruit of the desire tree of the Vedas" [Bhāg. 1.1.3].

\[ \text{nimna-gānāṁ yathā gāṅgā/} \]
\[ \text{devānām acyuto yathā} \]
\[ \text{vaisnāvānāṁ yathā sambhuḥ/ purānānām idam tathā} \]

"Just as the Gāṅgā is the greatest of rivers, Lord Acyuta the supreme among deities and Lord Sambhu [Śiva] the greatest of Vaiṣṇavas, so *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the greatest of all *Purāṇas*" [Bhāg. 12.13.16].

It is only natural that each *Purāṇa* encourages its own readers to take advantage of its teachings. Very remarkable about *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, however, is the unique praise it receives in works that might be expected to be the *Bhāgavatam*’s rivals, like the Skanda, Padma and Garuda *Purāṇas*. Those who see the *Purāṇas* competing for the adherence of the faithful unjustifiably assume that the Vedic literature is not a coherent whole. But as a thorough study of the whole literature under proper guidance shows, the *Purāṇas* do present the true viewpoint of the Vedas and Vedānta. That the apparently conflicting voices of all these texts are in fact in perfect harmony should be a cause of reverence and amazement, of appreciation for the complex elegance of the Supreme Truth’s personal incarnation in eternal sound, the total body of the revealed scriptures, *sabda-brahma*. In spite of all the promotion of demigods, the essential principles of eternal service to the one Supreme Lord are never contradicted in the *Purāṇas*. Demigods are allowed to display apparent superiority only by the sanction of their absolute master. Every *Purāṇa*, in fact, shows respect to the Personality of Godhead by including some narration of the pastimes of both Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Lord Rāmacandra. In the ultimate issue, due credit is given to the supreme controller Viṣṇu and to the supreme Vaiṣṇava scriptural authority in the pure mode of goodness, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

According to the statement cited here from the Garuda *Purāṇa*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* elucidates the meaning of the Vedas, all the *Purāṇas*, the *Vedānta-sūtra*, *Mahābhārata* and the Gāyatrī mantra; in addition, it is said to have been spoken by the Supreme Lord and be the Purānic equivalent of the Sāma Veda. These qualities are substantiated one after another in this and the next anucceda.

*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* "establishes the meaning of the *Mahābhārata*," which is a more appropriate source of knowledge for people of our age than the Vedas themselves,
because in an interesting to read and easily understandable way it provides a digest of every important principle of Vedic knowledge. Its very name signifies its importance: Mahābhārata is so called by virtue of its "greatness" (mahattva) and "weightiness" (bhāravattva). It is an extremely elevated narration of the greatness of the noble dynasty of King Bharata, especially of the five sons of Pāṇḍu and their friend Śrī Krṣṇa. It is "heavy" in the literal sense of its size, containing over 75,000 verses even in its shortest recession, and known on higher planets in a full form of six million verses.

The confidential essence of the Mahābhārata is its revelation of the Personality of Godhead, which is found in a few of its sections, including the Bhagavad-gītā, Visnu-sahasra-nāma and Nārāyanīya. In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam this same essence of the Vedas is amplified and expanded into a complete programmed course on the science of God consciousness. The Bhāgavatam's importance and usefulness is thus proportionately greater than even that of the Mahābhārata, in which the discussions of theistic topics are only isolated diversions from the main story. Therefore the ācāryas following in the line of Caitanya Mahāprabhu judge that Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is higher authority than the Mahābhārata, and that its version should be accepted when there is apparent contradiction between the two. For example, in the Ādi-parva of the Mahābhārata, King Parīksit reacts to the news that he has been cursed to die from a snakebite in seven days by trying to protect himself in a castle surrounded by moats. This must be reconciled with the account of the Bhāgavatam, according to which Parīksit refuses to do anything to avoid the result of the curse. It is necessary to explain the Parīksit of the Mahābhārata as a different person who had the same name in a previous day of Brahmā.

Purport by BBT Translators

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam Is the Natural Commentary on the Vedānta-sūtra

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is one of the eighteen Purāṇas, but Śrīla Vyāsadeva wrote it after compiling the essence of the Vedas in the Vedānta-sūtra and also composing the Mahābhārata and Purāṇas. But, one might ask, if the eighteen Purāṇas had already been compiled, does this make Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam the nineteenth Purāṇa? In Text 21.2 Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī explains that this is not the case. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam appeared first to Śrīla Vyāsa in a concise and subtle form, as one of the eighteen Purāṇas. Śrīla Vyāsa composed the Vedānta-sūtra on the basis of this first edition of the Bhāgavatam. Later, when He sat in trance in pursuance of Nārada Muni’s order, the expanded form of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam was revealed to Him as the natural commentary on the Vedānta-sūtra. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and the Vedānta-sūtra share the same subject, the Absolute Truth, and they describe the same principles of sambandha (the relationship between the soul and God), abhidheya (the process of attaining the supreme goal), and prayojana (the supreme goal, perfect devotion to the Lord). Many ācāryas and scholars wrote later commentaries on the Vedānta-sūtra, but only those that agree with Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam—such as those given by Rāmānujācārya, Madhvācārya, and Baladeva Vidyābhūṣana—are bona fide.
Sūta Gosvāmi alludes to Veda-vyāsa's composing two editions of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam:

sa samhitām bhāgavatim krtvānukramaṁ cātmajam
śukam adhyāpayāṁ āsa nivrūti-niratam munih

“The great sage Vyāsadeva, after compiling Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and revising it, taught it to His own son, Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmi, who was already absorbed in self-realization” (Bhāg. 1.7.8). Commenting on this verse, Śrila Viśvanātha Cakravartī Thākura writes, atas tādaiva pūrva-nirmiśayaiva śrī-bhāgavatasyānukrakaṁ: “The word anukrama in this verse means that Veda-vyāsa compiled a new edition of the already existing Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.”

Text 21.3 relates how the Mahābhārata was once shown to be literally heavier than the Vedas. This heaviness came about because the Mahābhārata, using simple narrations, elaborated upon and lucidly explained the concise and cryptic subject matter of the Vedas. Vyāsadeva makes this point in the Mahābhārata itself (Ādi Parva 1.62):

brahman veda-rahasyaṁ ca yac cānyat sthāpitam mahā
saṅgopaniśadadām caiva vedānām vistara-kriyaṁ

“O Lord Brahmā, in this great work [Mahābhārata] I have included the secret essence of all the Vedas and of all other scriptures as well. It explains in detail the Vedas' six corollaries and the Upaniṣads.”

Originally the Mahābhārata had six million verses, but at present only one hundred thousand are available on earth. The rest can be found on higher planets, where people have life spans and memories suitable for absorbing such large amounts of information. The distribution of the Mahābhārata's verses is also mentioned in the Mahābhārata itself (Ādi-parva 1.106–107):

saṣṭīṁ sata-sahasrāṇi cakārayām sa samhitāṁ
triṁśac chaṭa-sahasraṁ ca deva-loke pratiśhitam

pitrre pañcadaśa proktam gandharveṣu caturdaśa
ekāṁ sata-sahasram tu mānuseṣu pratiśhitam

“They then Śrīla Vyāsadeva compiled another samhitā [Mahābhārata], containing six million verses. Of these, three million are present in the heavenly planets, one and a half million on the planet of the forefathers, and one million four hundred thousand on the planet of the Gandharvas. The remaining one hundred thousand verses are available among human beings.”

Although abridged, the version of Mahābhārata on this planet is the longest epic ever written here. So, due to the profundity of its topics (mahattva) and its great weight (bhāra-vatva) it is known as Mahābhārata. The Mahābhārata is more versatile than the Vedas because the restrictions that apply to studying the Vedas are absent with the Mahābhārata. Anyone may read and enjoy the Mahābhārata, regardless of social position or gender. However, only the Mokṣa-dharma and a few other sections of the Mahābhārata directly glorify
Lord Nārāyaṇa as supreme. Other sections mainly deal with a mixture of topics, such as fruitful rituals, politics, and charity. By contrast, the entire Bhāgavatam speaks only about the glories of the Supreme Lord, and this exclusive focus makes it superior to the Mahābhārata. Thus it has been said, “Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam establishes the meaning of the Mahābhārata.”

In the next Text, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī cites further proof that the Bhāgavatam is the essence of all Vedic literature and the topmost pramāṇa.

TEXT 22

TEXT 22.1

tathā ca tṛṣṭye:

munir vivaśur bhagavad-guṇānāṁ
sakhāpi te bhāratam āha kṛṣṇah
yasmin nṛnāṁ grāmya-kathānuvādair
matir grhitā nu hareḥ kathāyām

iti.

Gopiparanadhana: The Bhāgavatam’s Third Canto also says, “Your friend, the great sage Kṛṣṇa-dvaipāyana Vyāsa, has already described the transcendental qualities of the Lord in His great work the Mahābhārata. But the whole idea is to draw the attention of the mass of people to kṛṣṇa-kathā through their strong affinity for hearing mundane topics” [Bhāg. 3.5.12].

BBT: Similarly, the Third Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam [3.5.12] confirms [that the Bhāgavatam establishes the meaning of the Mahābhārata]:

“Your friend, the great sage Kṛṣṇa-dvaipāyana Vyāsa, has already described the transcendental qualities of the Lord in His great work the Mahābhārata. But the whole idea is to draw the attention of the mass of people to topics concerning Kṛṣṇa through their strong affinity for hearing mundane topics.”

TEXT 22.2


Gopiparanadhana: Therefore Bhāgavatam "serves as a commentary on Gāyatrī." So
it is also that in the Visnu-dharmottara and other Purānas elaborately describe the Personality of Godhead while explaining the Gāyatrī mantra. Later we are going to explain the verse janmādy asya [Bhāg. 1.1.1] along these same lines. Vedārtha-paribrhmhitā means "by which the Vedas' message is made complete," as is expressed in such statements as "One should complete the Vedas with the Itihāsas and Purānas."

BBT: That Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is a commentary on Gāyatrī is shown in the Visnu-dharmottara Purāṇa, which elaborately demonstrates, in its explanation of the Gāyatrī mantra (Prathama-khaṇḍa [165]), that the object of meditation in the Gāyatrī is the Supreme Lord. We shall provide similar proofs of this when we comment on the first verse of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (beginning janmādy asya).

TEXT 22.3

‘purānānāṁ sāma-rūpah’ vedesu sāma-vat sa tesu śreṣṭha ity arthaḥ. purānāntara-rānāṁ kesāṇcic āpattato rajas-tamasī jūsamānais tat-paratvāpratītāvte ‘pi vedānāṁ kānda-traya-vākyatikā-vākyatāyām yathā sāmnā tathā tesām śrī-bhāgavatena pratipādye śrībhagavaty eva paryavasānam iti bhāvaḥ. tad uktam:

vede rāmāyane caiva purāne bhārate tathā
adāv ante ca madhye ca harih sarvatra gīyate

iti pratipādayisyate ca tad idām paramātma-sandarbhe.

Gopiparanadhana: "The Sāma Veda among the Purāṇas" means the best of them, just as the Sāma is the best of the Vedas. Persons who are circumstantially influenced by the material modes of passion and ignorance may not see some of the other Purāṇas as being dedicated to the Personality of Godhead. But just as the Sāma Veda reconciles into a single, consistent message all the various statements of the three divisions of Vedic texts, similarly all the Purāṇas ultimately glorify the same Śrī Bhagavān whose glories the Bhāgavatam establishes. This is as said, "Throughout the Vedas and everywhere in the Rāmāyaṇa, Purāṇas and Mahābhārata, from the beginning to the middle to the end, the praises of Lord Hari are sung" [Mahābhārata, Svarga-parva 6.93]. This we will demonstrate later, in the Paramātma-sandarbha.

BBT: Vedārtha-paribrhmhitah means that Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam explains and expands the Vedas. Purānānāṁ sāma-rūpah (“the Sāma among the Purāṇas”) means that just as the Sāma Veda is supreme among the Vedas, so Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is supreme among the Purāṇas.

[gpd91]Therefore the Skanda Purāṇa, Visnu-khaṇḍa, says:

“In Kali-yuga what is the value of collecting hundreds of thousands of other scriptures if one does not keep Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam at home? How can a person be considered a Vaishnava in Kali-yuga if Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam finds no place in his house? Even if he is a learned brāhmaṇa, such a person should be considered lower than a dog-eater. O learned brāhmaṇa Nārada, wherever Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is present in Kali-yuga, there the Supreme Lord goes along with the demigods. A
person who faithfully recites one verse of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam every day, O sage, attains the fruit of reading the eighteen Purāṇas” (Skanda Purāṇa, Viṣṇu-khanda 5.16. 40–42, 44, 33).

TEXT 22.4

‘sāksād bhagavatoditah' iti 'kasmai yena vibhāsito 'yam' ity upasamhāra-vākyānusāreṇa jñeyam. 'sata-vaiccheda-saṁyutah' iti vistara-bhiyā na vivriyate. tad evam śrī-bhāgavatam sarva-śāstra-cakravarti-padam āptam iti sthite 'hema-sīṁhasamānanvitam' ity atra 'suvarna-sīṁhasanāraudham' iti tīkā-kāraṇair vyākhyātam tad eva yuktam. ataḥ śrīmad-bhāgavatasya-vābhya-sāvyasyakatvam śreṣṭhavām ca śāṅkē nirnītam.

Gopiparanadhana: "Directly spoken by the Personality of Godhead" can be understood in accordance with the summarizing verse "This [Bhāgavatam] was spoken by the Lord to Brahmā" [Bhāg. 12.13.19]. "Including hundreds of chapters" we will not elaborate on out of concern for not increasing too much the length of this discussion. Thus we conclude that Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam indeed deserves the status of emperor of all scriptures, and that thus the commentator [Śrīdhara Svāmī] was correct to explain "together with a gold lion" [Bhāg. 12.13.13] as meaning "placed upon a gold lion-throne." For these reasons the Skanda Purāṇa has determined that Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam alone needs to be studied and that it is the best of scriptures.

BBT: The phrase śata-vaiccheda-saṁyutah ("having hundreds of divisions") implies that the Bhāgavatam has three hundred and thirty-five chapters. The meaning of the rest of the passage [quoted at the beginning of Text 21] is obvious. Thus we conclude that at the present time those who want to know the highest goal of life should deliberate on Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam alone.

TEXT 22.5

ata eva skānde:

śataśo 'tha sahasraś ca kim anyaiḥ śāstra-saṅgrahaiḥ na yasya tiṣṭhate gehe śāstraṁ bhāgavataṁ kalau

kathāṁ sa vaisnava jñeyah śāstrāṁ bhāgavatāṁ kalau grhe na tiṣṭhate yasya sa vipraḥ śva-pacādhamāḥ

yatra yatra bhaved vipra śāstraṁ bhāgavataṁ kalau
tatra tatra harir yāti trīdāsaṁ saha nārada

yah pathet prayaṇo nityam ślokam bhāgavatam mune

aśṭādaśa-purāṇanāṁ phalam prāṇoti mānavaḥ

iti. tad evam paramārtha-vivitsubhiḥ śrī-bhāgavatam eva sāmpratam vicāraṇīyam
iti sthitam.

**Gopiparanadhanā:** So the Skanda Purāṇa says, "What is the use of collecting hundreds or thousands of other scriptures? If someone living in this Kali-yuga does not have the scripture Bhāgavatam in his home, how can he be considered a Vaiṣṇava? In fact, in Kali-yuga a brāhmaṇa who does not have the scripture Bhāgavatam in his home is worse than a dog-eater. O brāhmaṇa Nārada, wherever in Kali-yuga the scripture Bhāgavatam is present, there Lord Hari will go along with the thirteen principal demigods. Anyone human being who daily reads with devotion even one verse of the Bhāgavatam, O sage, will obtain the benefits of studying all eighteen Purāṇas." [Skanda Pur., Viṣṇu-khanda 5.16.40, 42, 44, 331] Therefore those who want nowadays to understand the supreme goal of life should study Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.

**BBT:** In his Catur-varga-cintāmani, Vṛata-khaṇḍa [1.28], Hemādri cites the following verse and attributes it to Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam:

"Out of compassion, the great sage thought it wise to do something that would enable even those who were ignorant of how to act for their own welfare to achieve the ultimate goal of life. Thus He compiled the great historical narration called the Mahābhārata for women, laborers, and friends of the twice-born because they do not have access to the Vedas" (Bhāg. 1.4.25).

Hemādri uses this verse to demonstrate that the Mahābhārata is as valuable as the Vedas, and thus the phrase bhāratārtha-viṁśayāḥ (“Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam establishes the meaning of the Mahābhārata”) should be explained, in accordance with this view, as saying that Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the scripture in which the Mahābhārata’s message is conclusively defined and is shown to be equal to that of the Vedas.

**Purport by Gopiparanandhanā prabhu**

In the same way as Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam establishes the meaning of the Mahābhārata, by presenting the complete science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, it also completely explains the Gāyatrī mantra. According to the Agni Purāṇa, Viṣṇudharmottara Upapurāṇa and other sources, the lord of the sun worshipped in the Gāyatrī mantra is only superficially the jīva who rules over our visible sun in the material world. Understood on a higher level, Gāyatrī is addressed to the Supersoul of the sun-god, the Supreme Lord in the form of Śūrya-nārāyaṇa. When brāhmaṇas chant the Brahma-gāyatrī, they are praising the light (bhargas) of the effulgent sun (deva), who is the inspirer of all life (savita). Physically, savitā is the sun in the sky which everyone sees, but intelligent people recognize according to Vedic authority that more essentially Savitā is the name of a powerful demigod, the soul of this external body. And those who are the most intelligent understand that the original Savitā is the Personality of Godhead, Supersoul of the sun-god and all other souls.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam was first spoken at the beginning of creation, by Lord
Garbhodakaśayī Viṣṇu to Brahmā, at that time the only creature in the universe. When there was no one else present to act as Brahmā's spiritual master, the Supreme Lord Himself spoke the transcendental knowledge of the Bhāgavatam to him within the heart. Tene brahma hrđā ya ādi-kavaye [Bhāg. 1.1.1]. Hearing this first, capsule version of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam in four verses, Brahmā became ādi-kavi, the original scholar of the science of God. Brahmā later expanded the Bhāgavatam into several hundred verses for his son Nārada, and Nārada inspired Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa to receive in his meditation the fully developed Bhāgavatam of eighteen thousand verses in three hundred and thirty five chapters.

Some manuscripts and printed editions of Śrī Tattva-sandarbha include several additional sentences in this anuccheda, dealing further with the Mahābhārata and then at length with the Agni Purāṇa's explanation of Gāyatri. Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣana, however, does not say anything about this section in his commentary. The passage repeats a few phrases found elsewhere in the anuccheda and seems to interrupt the flow of the argument. We have chosen not to include it in our text on the grounds that it was probably inserted later as someone else's comment. Another two redundant sentences near the end of this anuccheda have also been removed. These deleted passages are reproduced in Appendix 2 of this volume, which gives the longer version of anuccheda 22. The third Sandarbha, Śrī Paramātma-sandarbha, will turn its attention to the Gāyatri mantra in its 105th anuccheda, explaining it at some length as a meditation on the Personality of Godhead with reference to various scriptures.

*** Note carefully the comments in the above paragraph ***

Purport by BBT Translators

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam Is the Essence of All Vedic Literature

In the previous Text, Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī quoted three verses from the Garudapurāṇa. He explained the first of these in that Text, and now he explains the other two. First he quotes a Bhāgavatam verse (3.5.12), and then another (1.4.25), which also appears in Hemādri's Catur-varga-cintāmaṇi, an authoritative 13th-century work on Dharma-śāstra dealing with such subjects as vratas (vows), dāna (charity), srāddha (memorial rituals), and kāla (considerations of time). Jiva Gosvāmī's intention in quoting these verses is to show that the Mahābhārata is equal to the Vedas. In this part of the Čatur-varga-cintāmaṇi, Hemādri raises a question about the salvation of those who are not twice-born: Since they do not have access to the Vedas, which give knowledge about Brahman, and since knowledge of Brahman is required for salvation, how can they be saved? To resolve this question he quotes Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam's description (in verse 1.4.25) of Śrīla Veda-vyāsa's writing Mahābhārata to solve this very problem.

The first of the two Bhāgavatam verses cited (3.5.12) also states that Śrīla Vyāsa compiled the Mahābhārata to attract common people toward the glories of the Personality of Godhead by enticing them to listen to seemingly mundane stories.
To fulfill this plan He included the Bhagavad-gītā in the Mahābhārata. Since the Mahābhārata is considered equal to the Vedas in purpose, as is evident from the second verse (Bhāg. 1.4.25), and as corroborated by Hemādri, we can deduce that the Vedas also aim at glorifying the Supreme Lord.

This being so, the Gāyatri mantra, which represents the essence of the Vedas, should also refer to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. It is with this understanding that the Skanda Purāṇa says that Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, which glorifies the Lord at every step, is based on Gāyatri. Indeed, as we have seen, this is one of the distinctive characteristics of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.

In the Paramāṭha-sandarbha, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī will analyze the first verse of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam in terms of its being an explanation of the Gāyatri mantra. Gāyatri is explained in the concluding verses of the Bhāgavatam as well. This combination of indications from beginning and ending verses makes it indisputably clear that Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam’s purpose is to explain the Personality of Godhead.

The prevalent understanding among traditional Vedic scholars is that Gāyatri is meant for worshiping either the sun-god or impersonal Brahman. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī here establishes, however, that the real meaning of Gāyatri is the worship of Lord Viṣṇu, who is nondifferent from Lord Kṛṣṇa. To support his opinion he cites the Agni Purāṇa, which gives Śrīla Vyāsa’s opinion on the meaning of Gāyatri. In the Viṣṇu-dharmottara Purāṇa (165th chapter, Prthama Khaṇḍa), King Vajra asks Mārkandeya Rṣi why Gāyatri is chanted in Vaiṣṇava sacrifices if its presiding deity is the sun-god. Mārkandeya replies that Gāyatri refers to Lord Viṣṇu, and then he proceeds to show how each word of Gāyatri is related to Lord Viṣṇu. His explanation concludes with this verse:

\[
kāma-kāmo labhet kāmam gati-kāmam tu sad-gatim
akāmās tu tad avāpnoti yad viṣṇoḥ paramaṁ padam
\]

“A person desiring material gain or liberation in the next life can achieve either by chanting Gāyatri, but the worshiper who is devoid of desires attains the supreme abode of Lord Viṣṇu.” It would not be possible to attain the Lord’s abode by meditating on Gāyatri if it did not in fact express worship of Lord Viṣṇu; this accords with the Lord’s own statement in the Bhagavad-gītā (9.25) that “Only My worshiper attains Me.” Thus Gāyatri and the first verse of the Bhāgavatam are in complete agreement because they are both meditations on the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

The verse cited from the Agni Purāṇa in Text 22.8, advising us to meditate on Brahman as nondifferent from ourselves, is also in agreement with the Bhāgavatam and Gāyatri. The verse is meant to remind us of our spiritual nature, to teach us a meditation that removes our bodily identification and thus helps us worship the Supreme Lord. In the later Texts of the Tattva-sandarbha Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī will discuss in more detail the qualitative oneness of the jīva-Brahman with the Supreme Brahman.
In Texts 22.9–11, Śrīla Jīva GOSVĀMĪ discusses the relationship between Gāyatrī and the sun. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (12.6.67–72) records the sage Yājñavalkya’s prayers in praise of the sun or sun-god, among which texts 67–69 explain the three legs of the Gāyatrī mantra. From these prayers it may seem that Gāyatrī is also meant for glorifying the sun-god, but Śrīla Jīva GOSVĀMĪ explains that Yājñavalkya is not worshipping the sun-god independently; rather, he is worshipping the Supersoul dwelling within the sun-god. Generally people hail a taxi driver by calling out “Taxi!”, not “Taxi driver!”, for they regard the driver and his taxi as one unit. Similarly, Yājñavalkya worships the sun-god while considering “the vehicle” (the sun-god) and “the driver” (the Supersoul) as one. This explanation by Jīva GOSVĀMĪ finds confirmation in Śrī Śaunaka’s question to Śūta GOSVĀMĪ that led to the recitation of Yājñavalkya’s prayers. Śaunaka explicitly requests “to hear about Lord Hari, the Supersoul of the sun” (Bhāg. 12.11.28).

Brāhmaṇas customarily chant Gāyatrī at dawn and at dusk while facing the sun. In this way they meditate on the Supreme Lord through His energies. The logical principle at work here is called candra-sākṣa-nyāya, or “the example of the branch and the moon.” The idea is that to show someone the moon you may first ask him to look at a tree branch, from which you may then draw his attention to the moon beyond the branch. Similarly, the process of meditating on the Lord may include allowing one’s attention to be drawn to the Lord through His energies, such as the sun. It is not always practical or advisable for a twice-born brāhmaṇa to carry an actual Deity of the Lord, but still he must perform his daily duty of meditating on the Lord at dawn and dusk. So the Vedas enjoin that he should meditate on the Lord through the medium of the ever-present sun, always remembering that beyond the effulgent sun is Lord Viṣṇu. This is called pratiṣṭopāsanā.

Śrīla Jīva GOSVĀMĪ concludes his discussion of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam’s relationship with Gāyatrī in Text 22.13, where he quotes a statement from the Agni Purāṇa that Gāyatrī is so called because it sings (gāyati) or illuminates the glories of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and protects (trāyate) the chanter by fixing his mind on the Lord. Gāyatrī is related with the sun because one of the words used in Gāyatrī is Savitā, a name for the sun-god. Moreover, another name for Gāyatrī is Sāvitrī, the daughter of the sun-god. Gāyatrī is also Sarasvatī, the presiding deity of speech, because it is the sound representation of the Supreme Lord. The Skanda Purāṇa therefore states (as quoted in Text 20.1) that the Bhāgavatam is based on Gāyatrī (Sarasvatī), that it is the sound representation of Kṛṣṇa, and that it recounts events which occurred during the Sārasvata-kalpa. All this implies that the Bhāgavatam’s narrations glorify only Kṛṣṇa.

In Text 22.4 Śrīla Jīva GOSVĀMĪ resumes his analysis of each phrase of the verse from the Garuda Purāṇa quoted in Text 21. In these verses Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is described as “the Sāma Veda among the Purāṇas.” Lord Kṛṣṇa makes a similar statement in the Bhagavad-gitā (10.22), where He says, “Of all the Vedas I am the Sāma Veda.” Here Kṛṣṇa indicates that since the Sāma Veda is the best of all the Vedas, containing beautiful prayers glorifying the Supreme Lord, it therefore represents Him. Such glorification of the Lord is after all the ultimate purpose of
the Vedas, as Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.2.28) states: vāsudeva-parā vedāḥ. The karma-
kāṇḍa and jñāna-kāṇḍa portions of the Vedas glorify Kṛṣṇa indirectly, while the
Sāma Veda glorifies Him directly, and therefore it is the most important of the
Vedas. Like the Vedas, the Purāṇas also glorify various deities, although their
underlying purpose is Kṛṣṇa’s glorification, and Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the Sāma
Veda among the Purāṇas because it focuses exclusively on Kṛṣṇa. It reconciles the
other Purāṇas just as the Sāma Veda reconciles the Vedas’ various kāṇdas. Thus, the
Skanda Purāṇa declares, by studying Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam one gets the benefit of
studying all the Purāṇas.

The very name of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam reveals its superior position. Śrīmat means
“beautiful,” and bhāgavata means “related to the Supreme Lord.” Śrīmad-
Bhāgavatam is thus the most beautiful literary creation because it describes the
beautiful pastimes of the Supreme Person. Śrīmat also means “opulent.” Śrīmad-
Bhāgavatam is most opulent because it is identical with Bhagavān, the Personality
of Godhead replete with all opulences.

Śata-viccheda-sanyuta literally means that the Bhāgavatam “has hundreds of
sections.” Although Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī does not comment in detail upon this
phrase here, we may point out that most editions of the Bhāgavatam have 335
chapters, divided into twelve cantos, but some Vaiṣṇava commentators
acknowledge only 332 chapters. They claim that chapters Twelve, Thirteen, and
Fourteen of the Tenth Canto are interpolations. However, such great authorities as
Śrīdhara Svāmī and Vopadeva have accepted these three chapters as authentic and
commented on them, and Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī has done so as well. The three
chapters in question describe the killing of Aḡāṣura and Lord Brahma’s
bewilderment by Kṛṣṇa. In Chapter Twelve of the Twelfth Canto, Śūta Gosvāmī
gives a list of the Lord’s pastimes, and in the twenty-eighth text of that list he
mentions the killing of Aḡāṣura and Lord Brahma’s bewilderment. This inclusion
of the pastimes from the three disputed chapters clearly indicates that these
chapters have a place in the Bhāgavatam. Thus in the opinion of Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī
the Bhāgavatam contains 335 chapters, since otherwise it would fall short of the
required eighteen thousand verses.

Commenting on the phrase hema-simha-samanvitam (Bhāg. 12.13.13), which
literally means “together with a golden lion,” Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī says that simha
(lion) indicates a simha-āsana, or Deity’s throne. In other words, Śrīmad-
Bhāgavatam recommends that one mount the Bhāgavatam on a golden throne and
then donate it. A golden throne is not recommended for any other Purāṇa. Śrīla
Jiva Gosvāmī concludes, therefore, that just as the lion is the emperor of all
animals, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the sovereign ruler of all scriptures. Consequently
it is also the sovereign ruler among all pramāṇas, and, as the Skanda Purāṇa
recommends, a person wishing to understand the absolute reality need not study
any other scripture.

Next Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī describes how all the great ācāryas and scholars of the past
held Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam in the highest esteem.
TEXT 23

TEXT 23.1


Gopiparāndhana: Thus it has been said, even though there are many other revealed scriptures, "This Purāṇa has now arisen like the sun for those who have lost their sight in the age of Kali" [Bhāg. 1.3.43]. From this comparison to the sun we can deduce that without the help of the Bhāgavatam other scriptures cannot accurately depict reality. In the course of Śrī Ḥayaśirṣa Paṇcarātra's description of various scriptures, the tantra called Tantra-bhāgavata is listed as a kind of commentary on Śrimad-Bhāgavatam. Quite a few actual commentaries on the Bhāgavatam are currently available, including Śrī Hanumad-bhāṣya, Vāsanā-bhāṣya, Sambandhokti, Vidvat-kāmadhenu, Tattva-dipikā, Bhāvārtha-dipikā, Paramahamsa-prīyā and Sūka-hrdayā, as well as a number of monographs on specific topics--Muktā-phala, Hari-līlā, Bhakti-ratnāvalī and so on. These prominent works have been composed by various enlightened authorities, each commenting according to the opinions of his own school.

BBT: Thus while there are many authoritative scriptures, only Śrimad-Bhāgavatam has been glorified with the statement “For the blind souls of Kali-yuga, this Purāṇa has now risen like the sun” (Bhāg. 1.3.43). This comparison of the Bhāgavatam to the sun indicates that without its help other scriptures cannot illuminate the Absolute Truth.

The Ḥayaśirṣa Paṇcarātra, in its chapter classifying various scriptures, describes the Tantra-bhāgavata as essentially a commentary on Śrimad-Bhāgavatam. Among the Bhāgavatam’s direct commentaries are the Hanumad-bhāṣya, Vāsanā-bhāṣya, Sambandhokti, Vidvat-kāmadhenu, Tattva-dipikā, Bhāvārtha-dipikā, Paramahamsa-prīyā, and Sūka-hrdayā;2 there are also many works written about Śrimad-Bhāgavatam, such as Muktā-phala, Hari-līlā, and Bhakti-ratnāvalī. All these works have been produced by the most eminent thinkers of their respective philosophical schools.

TEXT 23.2
yat eva ca hemādri-granthasya dāna-khande purāṇa-dāna-prastāve mastya-purāṇiya-
tal-lakṣana-dhṛtyā prasastam. hemādri-pariṣesa-khandasya kāla-nirnaye ca kali-
yuga-dharma-nirnaye `kalim sabhājayanty āryāḥ' ity-ādi̇kam yad-vākyatvenottāpya
yat-pratipādita-dharma eva kalāv angi-krtaḥ, samvatsara-pradipe ca tat-kaṁrā
`sataso `tha sahasraś ca' ity-ādi̇kam prāg-dāraśītam śānḍa-vacana-jātam utthāpya
sarva-kāla-doṣataḥ pāvītryāya katicīt sīr-bhāgavata-vacanāni lekhyaṇīti likhitāni.

Gopiparanadhana: The section on "Charity" in Hemādri's book, while discussing
the giving of Purāṇas as presents, praises the Bhāgavatam by quoting the Matsya
Purāṇa's enumeration of its special features. And in the Appendix of his work,
under the heading of "Defining the significance of various times," Hemādri cites,
while defining the principles of religious life for Kali-yuga, the text which begins
"Advanced souls have great respect for Kali-yuga" [Bhāg. 11.5.36]; identifying this
as a verse of the Bhāgavatam, he acknowledges that only the religious principles
enunciated in the Bhāgavatam are suitable for the Kali age. In another work of his,
Samvatsara-pradīpa, Hemādri quotes the passage of several verses cited by us above
from the Skanda Purāṇa beginning, "What is the use of hundreds or
thousands...", and then inserts in his text several verses of the Bhāgavatam which
he recommends for copying out by hand to purify oneself from all the defects of
this age.

BBT: Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is also glorified in the Dāna-khandya section of Hemādri's
Catur-varga-cintāmaṇi. His chapter entitled "Giving Purāṇas in Charity" praises
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam by noting that it possesses the defining characteristics
specified in the Matsya Purāṇa (53.20–22).

In the Pariṣesa-khandya of the same book, in the Kāla-nirnaya section, where
Hemādri defines the appropriate religion for Kali-yuga, he quotes the Bhāgavatam
verse beginning kalim sabhājayanty āryāḥ (11.5.36). In this way he recognizes as
appropriate for this age only the religious principles established in Śrīmad-
Bhāgavatam.

TEXT 23.3

atha yad eva kaivalyam apy atikramya bhakti-sukha-vyāhārādi-lingena nijam-
matasyāpy upari virājamānārtham matvā yad apauruṣeyaṁ vedānta-vyāhāyām
bhāyād acālayataiva śaṅkarāvatāratayā prasiddhena vakṣyamāṇa-sva-gopanādi-
hetukābhagavad-ājñā-pravartitādvaya-vādenāpi etan-mātra-varnita-visva-rūpa-
darsana-krta-vrajeśvari-vismayā-śrī-vraja-kumāri-vasana-cauryādikām
govindāstakādau varnayatā taṭa-sthi-bhūya niya-vacah-sāphalāyā sprṣtāṁ iti.

Gopiparanadhana: Śaṅkarācārya, known to be an incarnation of Lord Śaṅkara,
considered the message of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam far superior to his own conception
of merging with the Supreme, inasmuch as it reveals the pleasure pastimes of pure
devotion and other special truths. Because the Personality of Godhead wanted to
hide Himself and accomplish other purposes, Śaṅkarācārya on His order
promulgated the philosophy of Oneness, which we will discuss later on.
Nonetheless Śaṅkarācārya was anxious not to disturb the Bhāgavatam, the original
authorless commentary on the Vedânta. By depicting in his Govindâstaka and other works events described only by the Bhâgavatam--such as the Queen of Vraja's amazement at seeing the total form of the universe and Krṣṇa's stealing the clothes of the unmarried girls of Vraja--he kept himself at a respectful distance and merely touched the Bhâgavatam to assure the success of his own words.

**BBT:** It is widely acknowledged that Śrī Śankarācārya is an incarnation of Lord Śiva. Śankarācārya understood the importance of Śrīmad-Bhâgavatam, which, with its statements about the bliss of pure devotional service surpassing even the joy of impersonal liberation, proves superior to his doctrine of impersonalism. He dared not interpret the Bhâgavatam, for he recognized it as an exposition of Vedânta philosophy that is without human author. As we shall explain later, on the Supreme Lord's order Śankarācārya taught his doctrine of monism to conceal the Lord's identity. But still, to make his own words successful by saying something about Śrīmad-Bhâgavatam, he touched on it indirectly, describing in his Govindâstaka and other hymns certain pastimes of Lord Krṣṇa's that are related only in the Bhâgavatam. These include Mother Yaśodâ's amazement at seeing Krṣṇa's universal form, and His stealing the clothes of the young damsels of Vraja.

**Purport by Gopiparanadhana prabhu**

Just as the constant sun makes its reappearance every morning, removing the darkness of sleep and inspiring everyone to engage once more in the purposeful activities of their lives, so the eternal Śrīmad-Bhâgavatam especially manifests itself in the ignorant age of Kali as the one transcendental sun of spiritual enlightenment. Only through the light of the Bhâgavatam can the real purpose of life be known in Kali-yuga. In the beginning of the Bhâgavatam, the sages at Naimiśâranya asked Śûta Gosvâmî,

brūhi yogeśvare krṣṇe/ brahmanye dharma-varmanī
svām kāṣṭhāṁ adhunopete/ dharmah kam śaranam gataḥ

"Since Śrī Krṣṇa, the Absolute Truth, the master of all mystical powers, has departed for His own abode, please tell us to whom the religious principles have now gone for shelter" (Bhâg. 1.1.23). Śûta answered them,

krṣṇe sva-dhâmopagate/ dharma-jñānâdibhiḥ saha
kalau naṣṭa-drśām eṣa/ purâṇârko 'dhunoditäḥ

"This Bhâgavata Purâṇa is as brilliant as the sun, and it has arisen just after the departure of Lord Krṣṇa to His own abode, accompanied by religion, knowledge, etc. Persons who have lost their vision due to the dense darkness of ignorance in the age of Kali shall get light from this Purâṇa" (Bhâg. 1.3.43).

Many ages ago, when Lord Brahmā was first contemplating his unbegun work of creation, the Personality of Godhead spoke to him a synopsis of Śrīmad-Bhâgavatam
in four verses, which are recorded in the Second Canto of the Bhāgavatam (2.9.33-36). After hearing these verses, Brahmā was completely educated; he was awakened to pure devotional service and remembered from his past life everything needed for reconstructing the universe. For his most spiritually qualified son, Nārada, Lord Brahmā amplified the four-verse Bhāgavatam into a narration of about 140 verses (Bhāg. 2.5.9–2.7.53). Under Nārada's instructions, Vyāsadeva discovered in his meditation the complete, eternal Bhāgavatam, which he then taught to his son Śukadeva. Śukadeva spoke this full Bhāgavatam again to Parīkṣit Mahārāja in the last seven days of Parīkṣit's life. Finally, Śūta Gosvāmī, who was present at the passing away of Parīkṣit, repeated the Bhāgavatam to the sages present at the great soma sacrifice at Naimisāranya. From one angle of view it appears that each of these speakers added something of his own to the text, at least some introductory and connecting verses here and there. It should also be understood, however, that because Vyāsadeva is tri-kāla-jña, an infallible seer of past, present and future, it was not at all impossible for him to include in his own recitation statements not yet made by Śukadeva, Parīkṣit, Śūta and Śaunaka.

kasmai yena vibhāsito 'yam atulo jñāna-pradipah purā
tad-rūpena ca nāradāya munaye kṛṣṇāya tad-rūpinā
yogindrāya tad-ātmanātha bhagavad-rātāya kārunyatas
tac chuddham vimalam viśokam amṛtam satyam param dhīmahi

"I meditate on that pure and spotless Supreme Absolute Truth, who is free from suffering and death and who in the beginning personally revealed this incomparable torchlight of knowledge to Brahmā. Brahmā then spoke it to the sage Nārada, who narrated it to Kṛṣṇa-dvāipāyana Vyāsa. Śrīla Vyāsa revealed this Bhāgavatam to the greatest of sages, Śukadeva Gosvāmī, and Śukadeva mercifully spoke it to Mahārāja Parīkṣit" (Bhāg. 12.13.19).

A living being is always growing, at least up to the point of his full maturity. Even past the Bhāgavatam's reaching maturity in its recitation by Śukadeva Gosvāmī, it continued to expand its glories through the ongoing process of commentary by self-realized Vaiṣnava acāryas. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī mentions in this anuccheda a number of commentaries by acāryas of various sampradāyas which were known to him in the sixteenth century. Unfortunately, several of these are no longer identifiable. The Tantra-bhāgavata is not in the normal category of commentaries because it is eternal śrutī and therefore has no human author. It is known from citations from it by Śrīla Madhvācārya, and there is one old manuscript copy of it in the library of the Asiatic Society of Calcutta which may be authentic.

Bhāvārtha-dipīka, by Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī, is probably the oldest extant Bhāgavatam commentary. Because Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu respected Bhāvārtha-dipīka as standard authority, commentators in the line of Lord Caitanya often used Śrīdhara Svāmī's explanations of Bhāgavatam verses as the basis upon which they elaborated. Lord Caitanya's followers are obliged to accept the Lord's opinion, as recorded in Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Ādi 7.133, 135),

śrīdhara-svāmī-prasāde 'bhāgavata' jāni
"Śrīdhara Svāmī is the spiritual master of the entire world because by his mercy we can understand Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. I therefore accept him as a spiritual master."

śrīdharera anugata ye kare likhana
saba loka mānya kari' karibe grhaṇa

"One who comments on Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam following in the footsteps of Śrīdhara Svāmī will be honored and accepted by everyone."

Among the followers of Lord Caitanya who wrote Bhāgavatam commentaries were Śrīnātha Cakravartī, Sanātana Gosvāmī, Jīva Gosvāmī, Viśvanātha Cakravartī and Baladeva Vidyābhūṣanā. Culminating this venerable tradition are the Bhaktivedanta Purports of the Founder-Acārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. In these purports to Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam by His Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda, the priceless treasure of all these great Vaiśṇavas' cumulative realizations, going back to the Bhāgavatam's original speakers, are transmitted to us in the language of our own times.

The commentary Paramahamsa-priyā and two other works based on Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Muktā-phala and Hari-nilā, were written by the Maharashtrian Vaiśṇava scholar Vopadeva in the thirteenth century A.D. Vopadeva is known as the author of numerous influential books on grammar, medicine, literature and religious principles of behavior. Muktā-phala consists of about eight hundred verses of the Bhāgavatam arranged topically, with only a few additional verses of introduction and final summary composed by the author. Hari-nilā is a simple listing of the Bhāgavatam's contents. In the early nineteenth century the British Indologists Colebrooke and Wilson misinterpreted Vopadeva’s having written three books on the Bhāgavatam to mean that he was the author of the Bhāgavatam itself. This wrong idea continued to have some supporters even into the twentieth century.

Viṣṇu-bhakti-ratrāvali is a work of Viṣṇu Puri, written about one hundred and fifty years before the appearance of Lord Caitanya. Its author was a sannyāsī in the Madhva-sampradāya, a disciple of Jayadharma Tirtha; he is different from the Viṣṇu Puri who lived with Caitanya Mahāprabhu in Jagannātha Puri. Viṣṇu-bhakti-ratrāvali is also a collection of verses from the Bhāgavatam, with a few verses added by the author and a few taken from other Purāṇas and from the Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya. It is so arranged as to very clearly explain the nine processes of devotional service to Kṛṣṇa, from hearing and chanting to full self-surrender.

Even authorities on mundane matters like Hemādri sometimes acknowledge the greatness of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. In his Catur-varga-cintāmanī and other textbooks for smārtā-brāhmaṇas, Hemādri corroborated the Bhāgavatam’s opinion that sankirtana, the congregational chanting of God's names, is the appropriate form of religious practice in Kali-yuga.
Śripāda Śaṅkarācārya is one of the greatest devotees of Śrī Kṛṣṇa because he is a direct incarnation of his namesake, Lord Śiva. Vaiśṇavānāṁ yathā śambhuḥ. He is not even a finite soul like other demigods, but is in a special category of his own, inbetween the jīvas and God. On behalf of the Supreme Lord he contacts the Lord's material energy Māyā and becomes her consort. He presides over the varieties of material illusion created by Māyā's three modes, especially the lower mode of ignorance. One of his special assignments in Kali-yuga, delegated to him personally by Lord Kṛṣṇa, is to appear as a brāhmaṇa teacher on earth and propogate an impersonal misinterpretation of the Upaniṣads and Vedānta-sūtra. When he fulfilled this order in his appearance some thirteen hundred years ago, he succeeded in replacing the Buddhist nihilism then prevalent in India with a similar philosophy which reestablished the authority of the Vedas. Although his mission required committing violence to the correct understanding of the Vedānta-sūtra and other sacred texts like Bhagavad-gītā, Śaṅkarācārya refrained from openly commenting on Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. He honored the Bhāgavatam by referring to pastimes described by the Bhāgavatam in certain of his works—the Govindaśṭaka, Yamunāśṭaka, Prabodha-sudhākara and Sarva-siddhānta-saṅgraha. Only later did some of Śaṅkara's followers dare take advantage of the Bhāgavatam for their own contrary purposes.

**Purport by BBT Translators**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam Is Luminous Like the Sun

Although there are numerous works of Vedic literature, when Śaunaka Rṣi questioned Śrī Śūta Gosvāmi about where religion would take shelter now that Lord Kṛṣṇa had returned to His own abode, Śūta compared Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam to the sun because it shines the light of the Absolute Truth so brightly that it can dissipate the dense darkness of the Kali Age. When the sun rises, rogues and thieves hide and ordinary people become fearless and active. Similarly, when Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is read, lust and greed leave one's heart and one becomes qualified to engage in the service of the Supreme Lord. Hence great saints and thinkers have revered Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam by writing commentaries and essays on it.

This practice continues in modern times. Among such contemporary saintly persons, the most noteworthy is His Divine Grace Om Viśṇupāda Paramahamsa Parivrājakācārya A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda, who was not only a scholar of the Bhāgavatam but a perfect embodiment of its teachings. He tirelessly imparted its philosophy up to the last moments before he passed away. By presenting Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam in English with an elaborate commentary, he made the message of the Bhāgavatam both unmistakably clear and widely accessible for the first time. Through his efforts, many souls indulging in every sort of roguish vice have had a chance to read the glorious Bhāgavatam and have thus undergone a change of heart. They have left their degraded life and taken to the devotional service of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This practical evidence leaves no room for doubting the potency of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatī Purāṇa.
Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī again refers to the *Catur-varga-cintāmani* (Dāna-khanda 7) of Hemādri, who recommends that one donate *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* after mounting it on a golden throne, and who glorifies it for having the defining characteristics described in the *Matsya Purāṇa* (see Text 19). While determining the religion for this age in the fourteenth chapter of his *Catur-varga-cintāmani*, *Pariśeṣa-khanda*, Hemādri quotes a *Bhāgavatam* verse (11.5.36):

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kalim sabhājayanty āryā guna-jnāh sāra-bhāginah
yatra sankirtanenaiva sarvah svārtho bhilabhya	e
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Those who are actually advanced in knowledge are able to appreciate the essential value of this Age of Kali. Such enlightened persons worship Kali-yuga because in this fallen age all perfection of life can easily be achieved by the performance of sankirtana.”

Commenting on the word sankirtana, Hemādri declares that hari-sankirtana is the only way to reach perfection. Then he quotes the next verse (11.5.37):

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na hy atah paramo lābho dehināṁ bhrāmyatāṁ iha
 yato vindeta paramāṁ sāntim naśyati sansṛtiḥ
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“Indeed, there is no higher possible gain for embodied souls forced to wander throughout the material world than the Supreme Lord’s sankirtana movement, by which one can attain the supreme peace and free oneself from the cycle of repeated birth and death.”

In this way Hemādri recognizes the authority of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in the matter of establishing the principles of religion for Kali-yuga.

Śankaracārya respected *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* both by not commenting on it and by composing prayers based on its narrations. One such prayer is his *Govindāṣṭaka*:

```
satyam jñānam anantam nityam anākāśam paramākāśam
goṣṭha-prāṇaṇa-ringana-lolam anāyāsam paramāyāsam
māyā-kalpita-nānā-kāram anākāram bhuvanākāram
kṣamāya nātham anātham pranamata govindam paramānandam
```

“Please bow down to Govinda, supreme bliss personified. He is the Absolute Truth, as well as unlimited and eternal knowledge. Though different from the sky, He Himself is the supreme sky. Though it was with effortless ease that He rolled and frolicked in the courtyards of Vraja, He appeared to become tired. Though formless, He manifests in various forms fashioned by Māyā, including the form of the universe. Though He shelters all the universes, He appears to need shelter.”

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mṛtsnām atsiheti yaśodā-tāḍana-saśava-santrāsaṁ
vyādita-vaktrālokita-lokāloka-caturāsta-lokālim
```
loka-traya-pura-mūla-stambham lokālokam anālokam 
lokeśam parameśam pranamata govindaṃ paramāṇandam

“Please bow down to Govinda, supreme bliss personified. Though He is the supreme master of the universe, He seemed to become frightened like an ordinary infant when Mother Yāsodā chastised Him. When she asked, “Are You eating mud?” He opened His mouth to prove He had not—and showed her the fourteen planetary systems, including Lokāloka Mountain. He is the supporting pillar for this citylike universe of three worlds. Though He is beyond all vision, He is the source of everyone’s vision.

traśṭapa-ripu-vira-ghnam ksiti-bhāra-ghnam bhava-roga-ghnam 
kaivalyam navanāhārām anāhārām bhuvanāhāram 
vaimalya-sphuta-ceto-vṛtti-viśeṣābhasam anābhāsam 
sāvām kevala-sāntam pranamata govindaṃ paramāṇandam

“Please bow down to Govinda, supreme bliss personified. He relieves the earth of its burden by killing the demigods’ enemies, the demons, and He grants liberation by curing the disease of materialism. Though He never needs to eat, still He eats butter, and He also devours the whole universe at the time of annihilation. Though distinct from all the shadow manifestations of this world, He manifests in the sanctified desires of a pure heart. He is most auspicious and peaceful.”

gopālam bhā-lālāvīgraḥa-gopālam kula-gopālam 
gopi-khelana-govardhana-dhīra-lilā-lālita-gopālam 
gobhir nigadita-govinda-sphuta-nāmānām bahu-nāmānām 
gopi-gocara-dūram pranamata govindaṃ paramāṇandam

“Please bow down to Govinda, supreme bliss personified. That protector of cows appeared in the form of a cowherd among the cowherds to perform His pastimes on earth, such as lifting Govardhana Hill to protect the cowherds and dallying with the cowherd damsels. Even the cows called Him by the name Govinda. He has unlimited names, is distinct among the cowherd boys, and is beyond the reach of the gopīs’ senses [when He goes to the forest during the day, or when He resides in Mathurā or Dwārakā].”

gopi-mandala-gōsthi-bhedam bhedāvastham abhedābham 
śāsvad go-khura-nirñītoddhat-dhūli-dhūśara-saubhāgyam 
śraddhā-bhakti-grhitānandam acintyam cintita-sad-bhāvam 
cintāmaṇim ahimānām pranamata govindaṃ paramāṇandam

“Please bow down to Govinda, supreme bliss personified. He enters the assembly of cowherd damsels and divides them into groups for His pastimes. He is simultaneously different from and one with everything. He considers it His good fortune to be always smeared with the dust raised by the cows’ hooves. He is pleased by faith and devotion. Though He is inconceivable, His pastimes are the object of meditation. He is like a transcendental touchstone.”
snāna-vyākula-yosid-vastram upādāyāgam upārūdhān
vyādītsantar atha dig-vastrā hy upadātam upākarsantam
nirdhūta dwaya-soha-vimoham buddham buddher antah-stham
sattā-mātra-sariram prāṇamata govindam paramānandam

“Please bow down to Govinda, supreme bliss personified. He stole the bathing
damsels’ clothes and climbed a tree with them, and when the naked maidens asked
for their clothes back, He told them to come closer. He dispels lamentation and
delusion. He is knowledge personified, realized by intelligence, and is also the
personification of pure existence.”

kāntam kārana-kāranam ādīm anādim kālam anabhāsam
kālindī-gata-kālīyā-sirasi muhur muhuh sunrtyantam
kālam kāla-kalattītam kalitāśesam kāli-dosa-ghnam
kāla-traya-gati-hetum prāṇamata govindam paramānandam

“Please bow down to Govinda, supreme bliss personified. He is most beautiful. He
is the original cause of all causes, and He has no cause. He is free from all
superimpositions of illusion. He danced wonderfully on the hoods of the Kāliya
serpent in the Yamunā. Though He is time, He is beyond all divisions of time. He
knows everything, He destroys the defects of Kali-yuga, and He is the source of
past, present, and future.”

vṛndāvana-bhūvi vṛndāraka-gana-vṛndārādhyaṃ vande ānām
kundābhāmala-manda-smera-sudhānandam suhrd-anandam
vandyāśesa-mahā-muni-mānasa-vandyānanda-pada-dvandvam
vandyāśesa-guṇābdhim prāṇamata govindam paramānandam

“Please bow down to Govinda, supreme bliss personified. He is the reservoir of all
worshipable qualities. All worshipable saintly persons worship His blissful lotus
feet within their hearts. He is my worshipful Lord. All the demigods, and Śrīmati
Vṛndādevī as well, worship Him in the land of Vṛndāvana. His pure and beautiful
smile emanates bliss like a kunda flower pouring forth nectar. He gives
transcendental ecstasy to His cowherd friends.”

govindāṭṣṭakaṃ etad adhitē govindāṛpita-cetā yo
govindācyuta mādhava viṣṇo gokula-nāyaka kṛṣṇeti
govindāṅghri-sarajā-dhyāna-sudhā-jala-dhauta-samastāgho
govindam paramānandāṃrtam antah-sthaḥ sa samāhyeti

“Anyone who who recites this Govindāṭṣtaka, who fixes his mind on Govinda, and
who sweetly chants, ‘O Govinda, Acyuta, Mādhava, Viṣṇu, Gokula-nāyaka, Kṛṣṇa,’
thus cleansing away all his sins with the ambrosial water of meditation on the
lotus feet of Lord Govinda—such a soul will certainly attain Lord Govinda, the
supreme, everlasting bliss of the heart.”

The Personality of Godhead Govinda ordered Lord Śiva to take birth as
Śaṅkara to propagate impersonalism. Then from the Māyāvāda viewpoint
Śaṅkarācārya wrote commentaries on the *Vedānta-sūtra*, eleven of the principal *Upanisads*, the *Bhagavad-gītā*, and Śrī Viśṇu-sahasra-nāma. He did not interpret Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, however, because he considered it very dear to the Lord and His devotees, and also nondifferent from the Lord. There can be no doubt about Lord Śiva’s appreciation of the *Bhāgavatam*, since in the Twelfth Canto Śiva is described as the greatest Vaiṣṇava. As such, he must be fully aware that it is the supreme *pramāṇa*, and so out of respect he did not interpret it.

From the *Padma Purāṇa* (*Uttara-khanda* 71.107) we learn how Lord Viṣṇu ordered Śiva to propagate monism:

\[
\text{svāgamaḥ kalpitais tvam ca janān mad-vimukhān kuru}
\]
\[
\text{mām ca gopāya yena śyāt srṣṭir esottarottāra}
\]

“[Lord Viṣṇu said:] O Śiva, make people averse to Me by writing speculative scriptures and thus hiding My glories. In this way the world’s population will increase.”

The import of this order is as follows: When Lord Buddha’s teachings were predominant in India, people grew contemptuous of the *Vedas* and Vedic rituals. They became *sūnyavādins*, or voidists, and Vedic religious practices decreased almost to nil. In this condition the people were not prepared to hear seriously about the personality of the Supreme Lord, His transcendental, eternal, blissful form, or His variegated abode. They would have simply blasphemed these teachings, and then they would have been left with no way to purify their hearts. So the first task in bridging the wide gap between voidism and personalism was to reawaken people’s faith in the *Vedas*. It was for this purpose that Śaṅkarācārya introduced his Advaita version of monism, a philosophy intermediate between voidism and personalism. Going from the Buddhist *nāstī* to the Māyāvāda *neti, neti*—from “The Absolute is nothing” to “The Absolute is something but contains nothing”—is a simple, incremental move, for the difference between these two ideas is hardly noticeable. Still, because Śaṅkara based his philosophy on the *Upaniṣads*, *Vedānta-sūtra*, and other Vedic works, that one step was critical in bringing the populace back to accepting the authority of the *Vedas*.

Later in the *Uttara-khanda* of *Padma Purāṇa* (236.7) Lord Śiva himself describes Advaita monism as veiled Buddhism: *māyā-vādam asac-chāstram pracchanam bauddham ucya-te. “Māyāvāda philosophy is an improper explanation of the scriptures; indeed, it is veiled Buddhism.” Śaṅkarācārya’s propagation of Māyāvāda philosophy was planned by his Lord, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who recognized that until conditioned souls regained access to the *Vedas’* spiritual knowledge they could only speculate about transcendent reality and would have no hope of being delivered from the material world.

Once Advaita Vedānta had replaced Buddhism and faith in the *Vedas* had been re-established, people could be brought further along the path of knowledge to an appreciation for the glories of the Personality of Godhead. This would be
accomplished by counteracting the appeal of impersonalism with true Vaiṣṇava philosophy. Thus stalwart Vaiṣṇava acāryas like Rāmānujācārya, Madhvācārya, and Śrīdharā Svāmī came one after another to drive out impersonalism. In its place they re-established the principles of pure devotional service as the true spirit and intent of the Vedas and its corollary scriptures. For his part, Śrīdharā Svāmī helped the impersonalists get a taste for Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam by writing a commentary that also appealed to them.

Still later, the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself came in the garb of a devotee, as Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and went even further. He taught that even more advanced than vaśīt-ḫakti, the path of regulated devotional service, is rāga-ḫakti, the path of spontaneous loving devotion to Kṛṣṇa, which one can traverse by following in the footsteps of Vrndāvana’s residents. He also taught that this rāga-ḫakti, which is elaborately explained in the Tenth Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, is the ultimate expression of prema, love of God. Since Caitanya Mahāprabhu is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who can contest His siddhānta? Rather, the gradual progression from voidism to monism to personalism to rāga-ḫakti was all the Lord’s plan for mercifully saving the conditioned souls, an arrangement by which they could end the otherwise endless cycle of birth and death. Without a doubt, therefore, the Lord was not acting cruelly or capriciously when He instructed Lord Śiva to appear as Śaṅkara and spread the false doctrine of the individual soul’s absolute oneness with the Supreme. To the contrary, He did so out of His limitless mercy.

In later Texts, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī will point out many inconsistencies between Śaṅkara’s teachings and the actual conclusion of the Vedas. In the next Text he shows us the glories of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam that the Bhāgavatam itself reveals.

**TEXT 24**

**TEXT 24.1**

_yad eva kīla drṣṭvā sāksāt tac-chisayatām prāptair api śrī-madhva-cārya-caranaīr vaisnava-mate praviśya vaisnavāntarānānām tac-chisayāntara-punyāranyādī-ritika-vyākhyā-praveśa-saṅkaya-tatra tātāparyāntaram likhadhbir vartmopadeśa kṛta iti ca sātvatā varṇayanti._

**Gopiparaṇadhana:** Śrī Madhva-cārya-carana was a direct disciplic descendant of Śaṅkara-cārya. Becoming an adherent of Vaisnava thought after reading Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, he was concerned that other Vaisnavas might be influenced by the kind of commentaries on it written by other followers of Śaṅkara like Punyāranya. According to the accounts of saintly devotees, Śrī Madhva therefore wrote his own explanation of the Bhāgavatam’s intended message to show the correct way of understanding it.
BBT: Devotees of Lord Viśnū recount that although Śrī Madhvācārya-carana belonged to the direct disciplic line of Śaṅkara-carana, upon reading the Bhāgavatam Madhvācārya changed his allegiance to the Vaiṣṇava school. Then, concerned that other Vaiṣṇavas might be influenced by the commentaries of other disciplic descendants of Śaṅkara, such as the commentary by Punyāranya, Śrī Madhvācārya wrote Bhāgavata-tātparyaya, a gloss on Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam that showed the proper method of interpretation.

TEXT 24.2

tasmād yuktam utkam tatraiva prathama-skandhe:

tad idam grāhayāṁ āsa sutam ātma-vatāṁ varam
sarva-vedetihāsānāṁ sāram sāram samuddhṛtam
dvādaśe:
sarva-vedānta-sāram hi śrī-bhāgavatam isyate
tad-rasāmṛta-trptasya nānyatra syād ratīḥ kvacit

Gopiparanadhana: Thus the Bhāgavatam itself appropriately states, in the First Canto, "Śrī Vyāsadeva delivered Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam to his son, who is the most respected among the self-realized, after extracting the cream of all Vedic literatures and histories of the universe" [Bhāg. 1.3.41]. And in the Twelfth Canto, "Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is declared to be the essence of all Vedānta philosophy. One who has felt satisfaction from its nectarean mellow will never be attracted to any other literature" [Bhāg. 12.13.15].

BBT: For all these reasons, therefore, the following statements in the Bhāgavatam are appropriate. In the First Canto [1.3.41]:
“After extracting the cream of all the Vedas and Itihāsas, Śrī Vyāsadeva imparted this Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam to his son Śukadeva, the best of the self-realized souls.”
In the Twelfth Canto [12.13.15]:
“Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is declared to be the essence of all Vedānta philosophy. One who has felt satisfaction from its nectarean mellow will never be attracted to any other literature.”

TEXT 24.3

tathā prathame:

nigama-kalpa-taror galitam phalam
śuka-mukhām amrta-drava-samyutam
pibata bhāgavatam rasam ā-layam
muhur aho rasikā bhuvī bhāvakāḥ

ata eva tatraiva:
yah svānubhāvam akhila-śruti-sāram ekam
adhyātma-dipam atititṛṣatām tamo 'nāham
samsārināṁ karunayāha purāṇa-guhyām
tam vyāsa-sānum upayāmi gurum muninām

iti śri-bhāgavata-matam tu sarva-matānāṁ adhibā-ṛipam iti sūcakam.
(sarva-muinināṁ sabhā-madhyam adhyāṣya upadesṛtvena teṣām sarva-muinināṁ
gurutvam api tasya tatra su-vyaktam. – in BBT Version here, but in next verse in
Gopi’s version)

Gopiparanadhana: Again in the First Canto, "O expert and thoughtful men, relish Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, the mature fruit of the desire tree of Vedic literatures. It emanated from the lips of Śukadeva Gosvāmī. Therefore this fruit has become even more tasteful, although its nectarine fruit was already relishable for all, including liberated souls" [Bhāg. 1.1.3]. And in the same canto, "Let me offer my respectful obeisances unto him [Śuka], the spiritual master of all sages, the son of Vyāsadeva, who, out of his great compassion for those gross materialists who struggle to cross over the darkest regions of material existence, spoke this most confidential supplement to the cream of Vedic knowledge, after having personally assimilated it by experience" [Bhāg. 1.2.3]. These statements imply that the opinions of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam rule sovereign over all other opinions.

BBT: And in the First Canto [1.1.3]:
"O expert and thoughtful men on the earth, relish Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, the mature fruit of the desire tree of Vedic literature, up to liberation and beyond. It emanated from the lips of Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī. Therefore this fruit has become even more tasteful, although its nectarine juice was already relishable for all, including liberated souls.”
Thus in the same canto [1.2.3]:
“Let me offer my respectful obeisances unto him [Śukadeva], the spiritual master of all sages, the son of Vyāsadeva, who, out of his great compassion for those gross materialists who struggle to cross over the darkest regions of material existence, spoke this most confidential supplement to the cream of all Vedic knowledge, the transcendental torchlight of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, after having personally assimilated it by experience.”
These verses imply that the teachings of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam rule over all other philosophies. (They also clearly indicate that Śrī Śukadeva, by taking the speaker’s seat amidst the assembled sages as the Bhāgavatam’s preceptor, became the guru of everyone present. – in next verse in Gopiparanadhana’s version)

**Purport by Gopiparanadhana prabhu**

Srīla Madhvācārya, whom the members of his sampradāya most commonly call by his sannyāsa name, Ānanda Tirtha, revived the Brahma-sampradāya in this age. By the time of his birth in the thirteenth century, the Brahma-sampradāya had become practically indistinguishable from the Māyāvāda school following Śāṅkara. Śrī Madhva's predecessors had the sannyāsa title Tirtha, which Madhva accepted
and passed on to his disciplic descendants. Technically, however, this is one of the
ten names assigned by Śāṅkarācārya to the sannyāśīs of his Advaita sampradāya,
and is not included in the traditional list of 108 names meant for Vaiṣṇava
sannyāśīs. Madhva considered the Advaita viewpoint of his initiating guru and
other teachers unacceptable, and took upon himself the mission of re-establishing
the true teachings of bhāgavata-dharma as originally inculcated by Brahmā, Nārada
and Veda-vyāsa.

Madhvācārya gave his commentary on Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam the name Bhāgava-
tātparyya-nirṇaya, signifying that his intention was to show the definitive way of
understanding what the Bhāgavatam has to say. In this and in all of his writings,
Śrī Madhva uncompromisingly opposed the Māyāvādīs' confusion of the separate
identities of the Supreme Person, the jīva, material nature, time and karma. He
especially did not want devotees of Lord Viṣṇu to entertain any conjectures about
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam's possibly aiming at an impersonal, formless conception of the
Supreme. Because Madhva and his followers were so staunch in their defiance of
impersonalism, Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu choose to formally affiliate Himself
with their sampradāya by becoming a disciple of Śrī Īśvara Puri, who was a great-
grand-disciple of the eminent Madhvite acārya Vyāsa Tirtha. Thus, out of deep
respect for the founder-acārya of the Madhva-Gaudiya-sampradāya, Śrīla Jīva
Gosvāmī here refers to him in the grammatically plural form (śrī-madhvācārya-
caranaith).

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam contains only the most choice substance (sāram sāram)
carefully selected from all the srutis and smṛtis. It embodies the essence of the
Upaniṣads' mysteries. It is the final, perfect fruit of the gradual revelation of Vedic
thought through its immature phases of worldly rituals, demigod worship and
impersonal meditation. It is the source of divine light for all who are willing to
have it in this age of darkness. Of his numerous disciples, Śrīla Vyāsadeva chose
one, his son Śukadeva, to receive this Bhāgavatam. Śukadeva is like a parrot (also
called suka in Sanskrit) not only for his perfect repetition, but because in the same
way as a fruit whose skin has been broken by a parrot's beak ripens more sweetly,
its pulp becoming soft and sugary, so Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam became all the more
relishable after emanating from Śukadeva's mouth. Śukadeva's meeting Parīksit
and reciting the Bhāgavatam to him was an act of sheer kindness to the
unfortunate souls of Kali-yuga. For this one accomplishment of speaking Śrīmad-
Bhāgavatam, the sages assembled with Parīksit at the Ganges' bank and with Śūta
and Saunaka at Naimisāranya unanimously acknowledged him as their spiritual
preceptor.

Purport by BBT Translators

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam Is the Topmost Vedic Scripture

Here Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī explains Madhvācārya's reason for commenting on Śrīmad-
Bhāgavatam. Śāṅkarācārya wrote poems glorifying Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes as told in
the Bhāgavatam, but some of his followers, not understanding his true intention,
took this as a license to try to include the Bhāgavatam as part of the Māyāvāda
canon. Of those who tried to do this, a few wrote commentaries on the
Bhāgavatam and somehow managed to screw out an impersonal interpretation.
One such commentary was Punyāranya’s, which is now lost. Śrīla Madhvācārya,
wanting to protect Vaiṣṇavas from being misled, wrote a gloss called Bhāgavata-
tātparya.

Since Jiva Gosvāmi has already shown that Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the topmost
pramāṇa, he can now cite it directly to demonstrate its own stature. Such citations
will only increase a sincere reader’s faith in the Bhāgavatam, and so from this point
on Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmi relies on the Bhāgavatam itself as the principal source for his
analysis. Here he also reveals the eminence Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam enjoys by virtue of
the status of its brilliant speaker, Śukadeva Gosvāmi. Vyāsadeva taught the
Bhāgavatam to Śukadeva, his most brilliant student, and Śukadeva chose to study
Bhāgavatam because it is the most brilliant of books.

Although Śrīla Vyāsadeva had many disciples, He gave the Bhāgavatam only to
Śukadeva. Vyāsa did this not because He was partial toward his son but because
Śukadeva was atmahatānam varṇam, “the best of the self-realized.” In other words,
Śukadeva had no ulterior, material motives, and therefore he could understand the
true purport of the Bhāgavatam, the essence of the Vedas, Vedānta, and Itihaśas.

The most important part of a tree is its sweet, juicy fruit, and so Śrīmad-
Bhāgavatam has been compared to the succulent fruit of the tree of Vedic
literature. And this Bhāgavatam fruit is even more exceptional because it has no
skin or pit. In other words, there is nothing to discard in the Bhāgavatam. In this
Text Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmi quotes two verses from the Bhāgavatam, 1.1.3 and 1.2.3, to
show its importance for both liberated and conditioned souls. Because Śukadeva
was completely free of selfish motives, he fully realized the Bhāgavatam’s
significance and so was elected to speak, even in an assembly of learned sages that
included his guru and his guru’s guru. The choice of Śukadeva as speaker implies
that his qualifications for reciting Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam made him superior to all the
other assembled sages. This is one more indication that Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the
foremost of scriptures and that it alone should be analyzed to know sambandha,
abhidheya, and prayojana.

Next Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmi shows the importance of the speaker, Śrī Śukadeva
Gosvāmi.

TEXT 25

TEXT 25.1
sarva-munināṁ sabhā-madhyaṁ adhyāsyā upadeśtrtvena teśāṁ sarva-munināṁ
gurutvam api tasya tatra su-vyaktam. yatah:

tatopajagmur bhuvanam punānā
dhānubhāvā munayaḥ sa-sisyāḥ
prāyena tirthābhīgamāpadesāiḥ
svayam hi tirthānī punanti santah

atrīr vasīṣṭhaḥ cyavanāḥ saradvān
ariṣṭanemir bhṛgur angirāś ca
parāśaro gāḍhi-suto 'tha rāma
utathya indrapramadehmvāhau

medhātīthīr devala ārṣṭiṇeno
bharadvājo gautamah pippalādaḥ
maitreyā urvah kavasah kumbha-yonir
dvaipāyano bhagavān nāradaś ca

anye ca devarsi-brahmarsi-varyā
rājarsi-varyā arunādayaś ca
nānārṣeya-pravarāṁś tāṁ sametāṁ
abhyaṛcya rājā śirasā vavande

sukhopaviśṭeṣv atha tesaḥ bhūyah
krte-pranāmah sva-cikirṣitaṁ yat
vijñāpayāṁ āsa vivikta-cetā
upasthito 'gre niṅghita-pānīḥ

ity-ādy-anantaram:

tataś ca vah prcchyam idam viprčche
viśrabhya viprā iti-kṛtyatāyām
sarvāttmanā mriyamāṇaiś ca kṛtyāṁ
suddham ca tatrāṁrśatābhīyuktāḥ

iti prcchati rājñī:

tatrābhavad bhagavān vyāsya-putro
yadrcchayā gām atamāno 'napeksah
alaksya-lingo nija-lābha-tuṣṭo
vrtaś ca bālaṁ avadhūta-veṣaḥ

Gopiparanadhana: It is a well-known fact that Śukadeva was placed on the
instructor’s seat in the assembly of all sages, assuming the role of their guru. This
is as described, “At that time all the great-minded thinkers, accompanied by their
disciples, arrived there. On the plea of making a pilgrim’s journey, such sages
verily sanctify a place of pilgrimage just by their presence. From different parts of
the universe there arrived great sages like Atri, Cyavana, Saradvān, Ariṣṭanemi,
Bhṛgu, Vasīṣṭha, Parāśara, Viśvāmitra, Angirā, Paraśurāma, Utathya, Indrapramada,
Idhmabâhu, Medhâtithi, Devala, Ārṣīsena, Bhāradvāja, Gautama, Pippalâda, Maitreyâ, Aúrva, Kâvâsa, Kumbhayoni, Dvâipâyana, and the great personality Nârada. There were also many other saintly demigods, kings, and special royal orders called arunâdayas [a special rank of râjârsis] from different dynasties of sages. When they all assembled to meet the emperor [Parîksit], he received them properly and bowed his head to the ground. After all the râśis and others had seated themselves comfortably, the king, humbly standing before them with folded hands, told them of his decision to fast until death” [Bhâg. 1.19.8-12].

Then the king said:
“O trustworthy brâhmanas, I now ask you about my immediate duty. Please, after proper deliberation, tell me of the unalloyed duty of everyone in all circumstances, and specifically of those who are just about to die” [Bhâg. 1.19.24].

Then, after the king’s query:
“At that moment there appeared the powerful son of Vyâsadeva, who traveled over the earth indifferent and satisfied within himself. He did not manifest any symptoms of belonging to any social order or status of life. He was surrounded by women and children, and he dressed as if others had neglected him” [Bhâg. 1.19.25].

BBT: Thus it is said [in Śrīmad-Bhâgavatam 1.19.8–12]:
“At that time all the great-minded thinkers, accompanied by their disciples, arrived there. On the plea of making a pilgrim’s journey, such sages verily sanctify a place of pilgrimage just by their presence. From different parts of the universe there arrived great sages like Atri, Cyavana, Sârâdvân, Aritânemi, Bhûru, Vasîśtha, Parâsara, Viśvâmîtra, Angirâ, Pârashurâma, Utâthya, Indrapramada, Idhmabâhu, Medhâtithi, Devala, Ārṣīsena, Bhâradvâja, Gautama, Pippalâda, Maitreyâ, Aúrva, Kâvâsa, Kumbhayoni, Dvâipâyana, and the great personality Nârada. There were also many other saintly demigods, kings, and special royal orders called arunâdayas [a special rank of râjârsis] from different dynasties of sages. When they all assembled to meet the emperor [Parîksit], he received them properly and bowed his head to the ground. After all the râśis and others had seated themselves comfortably, the king, humbly standing before them with folded hands, told them of his decision to fast until death.”

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Then, after the king’s query:
“At that moment there appeared the powerful son of Vyâsadeva, who traveled over the earth indifferent and satisfied within himself. He did not manifest any symptoms of belonging to any social order or status of life. He was surrounded by women and children, and he dressed as if others had neglected him” [Bhâg. 1.19.25].

TEXT 25.2

tataś ca `pratyutthitās te munayah svāsanebhyāḥ' ity-ādy-ante:
Gopiparanadhana: Then “the sages all rose from their seats to honor him.” And finally:
“Śukadeva Gosvāmī was then surrounded by saintly sages and demigods just as the moon is surrounded by stars, planets, and other heavenly bodies. His presence was gorgeous, and he was respected by all” [Bhāg. 1.19.30].

BBT: Then the sages all rose from their seats to honor him. And finally:
“Śukadeva Gosvāmī was then surrounded by saintly sages and demigods just as the moon is surrounded by stars, planets, and other heavenly bodies. His presence was gorgeous, and he was respected by all” [Bhāg. 1.19.30].

Purport by Gopiparanandhana prabh

Śukadeva Gosvāmī had no material credentials. He had not even taken brahminical initiation. Still, the sages who came to witness King Parīkṣit’s passing away all deferred to his authority without question. Three categories of rṣis came to be with Parīkṣit while he fasted and waited for his death on the bank of the Ganges-Yamunā outside his capital city, Hastināpura. The demigods were represented by Nārada, many elevated brāhmaṇas led by Vyāsadeva attended, and a number of saintly kings like Parīkṣit also came to listen. Although any of these wise sages could have instructed Parīkṣit expertly, they had all arrived there in their wanderings for the specific purpose of hearing Śukadeva speak Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. Even in the company of their disciples, they were glad to humbly take the role of Śukadeva’s audience. Parīkṣit was himself already fully God conscious, but he and everyone else participating in this assembly were thinking of the welfare of the future inhabitants of this deluded world.

Parīkṣit Mahārāja first offered his sincere respect to all the sages together. Addressing them as vipras, learned brāhmaṇas, he asked any or all of them to inform him what he, a person facing death, should now do. In the presence of so many great authorities including Nārada and Vyāsa, a cultured Vaiśṇava like Parīkṣit could not avoid asking for their advice. But almost everyone there was aware by mystic insight that Śukadeva Gosvāmī was meant to answer the king’s questions, and indeed at that very moment Śukadeva appeared unannounced. As soon as they saw Śukadeva, everyone immediately recognized him and stood up from their seats. Without any need for deliberation, he was at once offered the speaker’s chair.

Śukadeva came there of his own pure will; he had no motive of profit or reputation to satisfy by speaking to Parīkṣit in front of the sages. Parīkṣit also came there
freely, without material purpose, as did the rest of the hearers. This is the attitude with which Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam should best be approached: the speaker should as much as possible be of the standard of Sukadeva Gosvāmī, and the hearers should be as renounced and surrendered as Parīkṣit and the great sages.

**Purport by BBT Translators**

Śrī Sukadeva Gosvāmī Is the Best Scholar of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam

After Śrṅgī cursed Mahārāja Parīkṣit, the king renounced his kingdom and took a vow to fast until death on the bank of the Ganges. At that time sages of all classes and orders came from various parts of the universe and assembled there. Among them were even incarnations of the Lord like Parasūrāma and Vyāsadeva. When Parīkṣit Mahārāja inquired from them about the duties of a human being, especially one who is about to die, no one gave him a definitive answer. At that time the most noble Sukadeva Gosvāmī arrived, and he was unanimously chosen as the right person to answer Mahārāja Parīkṣit's query.

In the previous Text Jīva Gosvāmī said that all the sages accepted Sukadeva as guru. In this section Jīva Gosvāmī cites the references to support his claim. Since the sages accepted Sukadeva as guru and it was Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam that he spoke in response to Parīkṣit Mahārāja's questions, we should understand that the Bhāgavatam's philosophy was accepted by all the assembled sages, who included propagators and followers of various other philosophies. Just as Śrīla Sukadeva Gosvāmī shone like an effulgent moon among the starlike sages, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam shines in the same way among all other scriptures.

Next Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī shows that Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the representative of Lord Krṣna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

**TEXT 26**

**TEXT 26.1**


**Gopiparanadhana:** Both Śrīla Vyāsadeva and Nārada were present. Although they were Sukadeva's spiritual master and grand spiritual master, still Śrīmad-
**Bhāgavatam** as it emanated from his mouth seemed to them as if something they had never heard before. Thus, it is understood, Śukadeva acted as preceptor even for the two of them. It has been said that "by being touched by Śuka's mouth this fruit has become soft and full of nectar" [Bhāg. 1.1.3]. For this reason also Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is superior to all other scriptures. What we hear of the Matsya and other Purāṇas being the greatest is only relative. Indeed, why do we need to say any more? Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the exact image of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself.

**BBT:** Śrī Vyāsadeva and Nārada Muni were present in that assembly. Although these two sages were Śrī Śuka's guru and grand-guru, respectively, when they heard Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam issuing from his lips, they felt as if they had never heard it before. For this reason it is said here that he taught this most significant wisdom even to them. As mentioned earlier, suka-mukhād amṛta-drava-samyutam: “The Bhāgavatam is enriched with nectarean juice from the mouth of Śuka” [Bhāg. 1.1.3]. Thus in this sense also Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is more glorious than any other scripture. Statements about the superiority of other Purāṇas, such as the Matsya Purāṇa, are only relatively true. What more needs to[DDB99] be said! Indeed, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the very representation of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

**TEXT 26.2**

yata uktam prathama-skandhe:

krṣne sva-dhāmopagate dharma-jñānādibhiḥ saha
kalau naṣṭa-drśām esa purānārko dhunoditatāḥ

iti. ata eva sarva-guṇa-yuktatvam asyaiva drṣṭam 'dharmaḥ projjhita-kaitavo 'tra' ity-ādinā,

vedāh purāṇam kāvyam ca prabhum mitram priyeva ca
bodhayantiti hi prāhūs tri-vṛd bhāgavatam punah

iti muktā-phale hemādri-kāra-vacanena ca.

**Gopiparanadhana:** As said in the Bhāgavatam’s First Canto, “This Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is as brilliant as the sun, and it has arisen just after the departure of Lord Kṛṣṇa to His own abode, accompanied by religion, knowledge, etc. Persons who have lost their vision due to the dense darkness of ignorance in the Age of Kali shall get light from this Purāṇa” [Bhāg. 1.3.43]. Therefore we see that this scripture is uniquely endowed with all good qualities; this is shown by such statements as “Completely rejecting all religious activities which are materially motivated, this Bhāgavata Purāṇa propounds the highest truth” and, in the words of Muktā-phala and Hemādri’s smṛti, “The Vedas, Purāṇas and poetry give instruction like a master, a friend and a lover respectively. The Bhāgavatam, however, teaches in all three ways.”

**BBT:** As the First Canto states:

“This Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is as brilliant as the sun, and it has arisen just after the
departure of Lord Kṛṣṇa to His own abode, accompanied by religion, knowledge, etc. Persons who have lost their vision due to the dense darkness of ignorance in the Age of Kali shall get light from this Purāṇa” [ Bhāg. 1.3.43].

In this way we can see that only Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is full with all virtues, as stated in the second verse of the First Canto: “Here the supreme religion is explained and all cheating propensities are rejected.”

The supremacy of the Bhāgavatam is also confirmed by the words of both Vopadeva (in his Muktā-phala) and Hemādri:

“The Vedas, Purāṇas, and poetic works instruct one like a master, friend, or beloved, respectively, but Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam instructs like all three.”

TEXT 26.3

tasmān manyantāṁ vā kecit purāṇāntaresu vedasya sāpeksatvam śrī-bhāgavate tu

tathā sambhāvanā svayam eva nirastety api svayam eva labdham bhavati. ata eva

parama-sruti-rūpatvam tasya. Yathoktaṁ:

katham vā pāndaveyasā rājarṣer muninā saha

samvādaṁ samabhūt tāta yatraiśa sātvat śrutīṁ

iti. atha yat khalu sarvam purāṇa-jātam āvirbhāvyety-ādiṁ paṁ puṁs uktaṁ tat tu

prathama-skandha-gata-śrī-vaśāsa-nārada-samvādenaiva prameyam.

Gopiparanadhana: So even if, as some people think, other Purāṇas are subordinate to the authority of the Vedas, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam directly denies this idea in regards to itself. In other words, the Bhāgavatam claims its own authority independently. Thus its position is that of the highest śruti authority, as is stated, “How did it so happen that King Parikṣit met this great sage, making it possible for this śruti text for the pure Vaiṣṇavas to be manifest?” [ Bhāg. 1.4.7]. What we stated earlier, that first all the other Purāṇas were revealed and then the Bhāgavatam, is supported by the evidence of Śrī Vyāsadeva's and Nārada's conversation in the First Canto.

BBT: Consequently, while some may think that other Purāṇas need the support of the Vedas' authority, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam itself explicitly refutes the possibility that it may be dependent in this way; we thus receive the Bhāgavatam on its own authority alone. For this reason it is in fact the highest manifestation of śruti [the original Vedas]. As it is said:

“How did it so happen that King Parikṣit met this great sage, making it possible for this Vedic text for the pure Vaiṣṇavas (sātvat śrutīḥ) to be sung to him?” [ Bhāg. 1.4.7].

That Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam was compiled after the other Purāṇas, as mentioned earlier, is known from the dialogue between Śrī Vyāsa and Nārada Muni in the First Canto.

Purport by Gopiparanadhana prabhu
Vyāsadeva and Nārada were both familiar with the text of the Bhāgavatam, the same text which Sukadeva spoke to Parīkṣit. "Still Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam as it emanated from his mouth seemed to them as if something they had never heard before."

Sukadeva's simple repetition of the Bhāgavatam was appreciated by the great sages present as a profound act of interpretation. In a way perfectly suiting the time and place, Sukadeva brought the almost forgotten Bhāgavatam into this world once again in a new life. A few years later, Śūta Gosvāmī gave birth to it in yet another, even more public reincarnation, and after this, many Vaiṣṇava commentators brought forth new interpretations for one generation after another. As the general level of culture naturally modulated over the centuries, primarily in the direction of decreasing intelligence, the ācāryas adjusted their explanations for their own students' understanding. As a rule, the weaker intelligence of each new generation in Kali-yuga made necessary more and more thorough commentary. Most recently, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda achieved another masterful feat of interpretation--comparable in its creative boldness only to Sukadeva's recitation--by lucidly rendering the text of the Bhāgavatam and its commentaries into English, a language ordinarily not very suited for expressing the subtleties of Vedic theology. All along, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam has suffered no distortion from its faithful handlers, assuming only different external appearances in the changing light of time and place.

The Vedaṣ give instructions as a master instructs a servant. Vedic injunctions are not dictatorial commands, however. They are always given as recommendations, addressed to mature humans capable of deciding for themselves what to do. No one is forced to obey Vedic authority involuntarily, by threats of eternal hell or any other coercion. The Purāṇas speak in a more friendly voice than the authoritarian Vedaṣ; by telling stories and offering reasonable arguments they patiently encourage their readers to accept their good advice. Fine poetry attempts to speak with yet another voice, that of a cherished lover. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam speaks fluently and convincingly in all these three languages, in the voices of authority, of friendly persuasion and of uncritical adoration.

Various Purāṇas present rival claims of superiority, which may all be true relatively, in comparison to other, even less sāttvic Purāṇas. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam's status, however, is absolute. No higher authority exists with the power to relativize the teachings of the Bhāgavatam.

rājante tāvad anyāni/ purāṇāni satām gane
yāvad bhāgavatam naïvai/ śṛṣṭe ’ṁrtā-sāgaram

"All other Purānic scriptures shine forth in the assembly of saintly devotees only as long as that great ocean of nectar, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, is not heard" [Bhāg. 12.13.14]. The authority of other Purāṇas is dependent on the verification of Vedic śruti, but Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is independent. Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī even suggests that despite the Bhāgavatam's officially belonging along with the other Purāṇas to the secondary category of smṛti, Vaisnavas can be privy to the confidential fact that Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the most exalted śruti scripture. Therefore Śrīla Jiva calls the Bhāgavatam the pratinidhi-rūpa of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, His direct reflection; because God and
His image are nondifferent, this implies that Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the full incarnation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead in sound.

**Purport by BBT Translators**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam Is Self-Sufficient

Vedic tradition recognizes three ways of teaching—like a ruler, like a friend, and like a lover. The Vedas speak in an imperative voice, like an overlord: satyam vada dharmam cara. “Speak the truth and be religious” (Taittiriya Up. 1.11). The Vedas do not need to offer logical reasons for following their instructions. One is expected to obey without question. The Purāṇas instruct like a friend, narrating stories with moral conclusions and providing reasoned explanations when required. Kāvyā, or poetic literature, gives counsel like a beloved lady, speaking sweetly but indirectly. Instructions are expressed in an aesthetically pleasing way to attract the reader or hearer. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam uses all three of these methods to convey its teachings.

Just as a phrase or song becomes more significant when an eminent personality quotes or sings it, so the Bhāgavatam has increased in significance because the eminent Sukadeva Gosvāmī recited it. He narrated the Bhāgavatam in such a marvelous way that both his guru, Śrīla Vyāsadeva, and his param guru, Śrī Nārada Muni, were amazed. They felt as if they had never heard it before.

The customary etiquette is that a disciple should neither sit higher than his teachers nor speak as an authority in their presence. Sukadeva Gosvāmī’s speaking Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam from an elevated seat in the presence of his gurus is one of the rare exceptions. Because his gurus consented to it, however, Śrī Śuka is faultless, as Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Thākura points out in his commentary on Bhāgavatam 1.17.29, which describes Śuka’s accepting the speaker’s seat. From the narrations of the Mahābhārata we learn that Nārada and Vyāsa were often called upon to address various audiences on the subjects of karma, yoga, and jñāna. They rarely had an opportunity to hear such extraordinarily pure Bhāgavata discourse. So they were moved to great ecstasy when the nectarlike juice of topics concerning the Supreme Personality of Godhead issued from the lips of Śrī Śuka, their qualified disciple.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam’s special greatness is thus due to its unparalleled author, its eminent speaker, and its elevated audience. No other scripture in recorded history has ever had such an audience, except perhaps when Grandfather Bhīṣma instructed King Yudhishthira from his bed of arrows after the Kurukṣetra War. Bhīṣma’s main purpose, however, was to convince Yudhishthira to begin managing his kingdom. By contrast, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam was spoken in just the opposite context: King Parīksit, having renounced his kingdom, simply wanted to hear kṛṣṇa-haṭhā and in this way discharge the only duty of a dying man. Śrī Sukadeva thus had no need to dilute his narration with talk of lower religious principles. Therefore Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the most perfect and complete transcendental
scripture. It does not even depend on the support of the Vedas.

Indeed, the sunlike Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the very representation of Lord Kṛṣna. The Lord possesses all good qualities, as Śrila Rūpa Gosvāmī explains in his Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (2.1.17) while analyzing various devotional mellow:

nāyakānām sīro-ratnam kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam
yatra nityatayā sarve virājante mahā-guṇāḥ

“Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the original Personality of Godhead, is the crest jewel of all heroes. All wonderful qualities are eternally present in Him.” Since Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is nondifferent from Kṛṣṇa, it is also a reservoir of all good qualities.

When Lord Kṛṣṇa appeared,[DDB100] He destroyed many demons and protected His saintly devotees. In the same way, the Bhāgavata Purāṇa uproots the demoniac influence in society and protects saintly persons with its ambrosial narrations. Other scriptures speak about fruitive activities, impersonal Brahmā, or yoga, and they may or may not say something about the transcendental path of love of Godhead. But the Bhāgavatam kicks out all types of inferior, cheating religions like refuse. Only explanations of the absolute reality find a place in its pages.

Having established Bhāgavatam as the supreme pramāṇa, in the next Text Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī explains his method of analyzing it.

TEXT 27

TEXT 27.1
tad evam parama-nihśreyasa-nīscayāda śrī-bhāgavatam eva paurvāparyāvirodhena
vicāryate. tatrāśmin sandarba-saṭkātmake granthe sūtra-sthāṇyam avatārikā-
vākyam viṣaya-vākyam śrī-bhāgavata-vākyam. bhāṣya-rūpa tad-vyākhyā tu sampratī
madhya-desādau vyāptān advaita-vādino nānām bhagavan-mahimānam avagāhāyitum
tad-vādena karvurita-lipinām parama-vaiṣṇavānām śrīdhara-svāmi-caranaṇām
suddha-vaiṣṇava-siddhāntānugatā cet tarhi yathāvad eva vilikhyate.

Gopiparanadhana: Therefore to ascertain what is actually the highest good in life we should focus our investigation on Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, carefully reconciling its statements with what precedes and follows them. With this aim, in this work consisting of six Sandarbhas the introductory sentences [in each anuccheda] will serve the function of sūtras. The quotations from Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam will be the scriptural texts under consideration. Śrīdhara Svāmī’s explanation of the Bhāgavatam will serve as our primary commentary. Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī is a perfect Vaiṣṇava. But to entice the Advaita-vādins---nowadays prominent all over Madhya-deśa and other parts of the country---to
become absorbed in the glories of the Supreme Lord, he mixed some traces of their theories into his writings. We will cite Śrī Śvāmī-carana’s commentary verbatim when its agrees with the conclusions of pure Vaiṣṇava philosophy.

**BBT:** So it is that we shall focus our attention on studying Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam to determine what is the ultimate good in life. While conducting this study, we shall take into consideration how Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam’s statements harmonize with their preceding and following texts. In these Six Sandarbhas, the statements with which we introduce our explanation of the Bhāgavatam verses will serve as the sūtras, the Bhāgavatam verses themselves will serve as the scriptural text to be analyzed, and the explanations of these verses given by the great Vaiṣṇava Śrīdhar Svāmī will serve as the commentary on the sūtras. Sometimes he inserted Māyāvādī ideas into his writings to make the glories of the Personality of Godhead more attractive to the minds of the impersonalists, who are now quite prevalent, especially in central India. When Śrīdhar Svāmī’s commentary accords with strict Vaiṣṇava principles, we shall quote it verbatim.

**TEXT 27.2**

kvacit teṣām evānyatra-drṣṭa-vyākhyānusāreṇa dravidādi-deṣa-vikhyāta-parama-
bhāgavatānāṃ teṣām eva bāhūlyena tatra vaisṇavatvena prasiddhatvāt śrī-bhāgavata
eva

kvacit kvacin mahā-rāja dravidesu ca bhūrisāh

ity anena pramita-mahimnāṃ sāksāc-chṛt-prabhṛtitah pravṛttā-sampradāyānāṃ śrī-
vaisṇavabhidhānāṃ śrī-rāmānuja-bhagavat-pāda-viracita-śrī-bhāṣyādi-drṣṭa-mata-
prāmānyena mūla-grantha-svārasyaena cātyathā ca. advaita-vyākhyānam tu
prasiddhatvān nātivitāyate.

**Gopiparanadhana:** Our explanation of certain Bhāgavatam verses will be based on comments given by Śrīdhar Svāmī on other verses. Sometimes our explanation will be based on statements by the exalted devotees of the Lord known as Śrī Vaiṣṇavas. They are famous throughout the Dravida-deṣa and in other regions, and their sampradāya was founded by the goddess Śrī herself. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam attests to the greatness of these devotees, affirming their numerical strength in South India and their reputation as Vaiṣṇavas: "[In Kali-yuga there are indeed Vaiṣṇavas] scattered here and there, but they are especially abundant in the Dravida regions" [Bhāg. 11.5.39]. The statements of the Śrī Vaiṣṇavas we cite are certified by the authority of Śrī Rāmānuja Bhagavat-pāda's opinions, found in his Śrī-bhāṣya and other works written by him. Sometimes we will simply follow the self-evident meaning of the original Bhāgavatam texts, and sometimes we will base our explanations on other authorities. Since the explanations of the Advaita-vādīs are already so well-known we will not bother to elaborate on them much.

**BBT:** Sometimes we shall follow the views Śrīdhar Svāmī has expressed in writings other than his Bhāgavatam commentary. In other cases we shall follow the
original meaning of the text by basing our explanations on the authoritative opinions of the venerable Rāmānujācārya Bhagavatpāda, expressed in such works as Śrī-bhāṣya. He is the renowned leader of the Vaisnava of the Śrī-sampradāya, which originated directly with Goddess Laksñi. These great devotees are famous throughout India's southern region (Dravida-deśa) and elsewhere. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam itself states that they are well known as devotees of Viśnu in the south:

“O king, a few Vaisnavas can be seen here and there in this age, but they can be found in abundance in the Dravida country” [Bhāg. 11.5.39].

Since the principles of Advaita-vāda are already well known, we shall not discuss them at length.

**Purport by Gopiparanadhana prabhu**

Śrī Tattva-sandarbha can be considered logically divided into two parts, although Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmi did not specifically indicate this division. The first twenty four anucchedas prove the authority of the Bhāgavatam on the basis of reason and various scriptural authorities. This having been done, the Bhāgavatam itself has now become the prime source of verification, and will continue to be so throughout the rest of the Six Sandarbas. The second part of the Tattva-sandarbha, beginning from anucueda 25, ascertains the general nature of the Supreme Truth, or tattva, revealed in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. Panditas sometimes call the two parts of Tattva-sandarbha the Pramāṇa-khanda and Prameya-khanda; pramāṇa means "source of valid knowledge" and prameya means "object of pramāṇa," so in other words the two parts deal with epistemology and ontology respectively.

In anucchedas 27 and 28 Śrī Jiva Gosvāmi discusses some details of his methodology. The principle object of study in the Sandarbas will be texts of the Bhāgavatam, not in artificial isolation, but examining the verses with carefully consideration of the systematic intent of the whole work and the verses' immediate and extended contexts. Each Sandarbha deals with an individual main topic, and within each Sandarbha relevant secondary topics are dealt with in regular order. The choice of Bhāgavatam verses to be considered is thus going to made on a topical basis.

Text 27.1 describes the formal organization of the individual anucchedas, which is modeled after the logical structure of the Vedānta-sūtra. In the Vedānta-sūtra, Dvaipāyana Vyāsa groups short, complete arguments into anukaranas of one or more sūtras. The sūtras themselves are usually resolutions of doubts about the correct understanding of particular statements of the Upaniṣads. These viṣaya-vākyas, or śruti texts under consideration, are left unspoken, and are only known on the testimony of an authoritative commentary (bhāṣya). Each school of Vedānta relies on the bhāṣya of its own founder-ācārya, together with any number of sub-commentaries (tikās) by followers. Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmi plans to introduce his anucchedas with statements of his own which will serve the function of sūtras. He will quote a Bhāgavatam verse, or sometimes a few, as the viṣaya-vākyas to be
discussed. Then he will comment on the meaning of the verse. As he states here, much of this commentary will be drawn directly from Śrīdhara Svāmī's Bhāvārtha-dipikā on Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, sometimes quoted verbatim.

Another principle source of explanation will be statements by teachers of the Rāmānuja-sampradāya. Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas are in some respects closer philosophically to the Śrī Vaiṣṇavas coming from Rāmānujācārya than to the Madhvītes with whom they are officially affiliated. Lord Caitanya's followers cannot agree with some of Madhvācārya's teachings on the nature of the finite souls, especially his opinion that only some jīvas are constitutionally in the mode of pure goodness and that only this minority is eligible for liberation from material existence. The Caitanya Vaiṣṇavas only major disagreement with Śrī Vaiṣṇava opinion concerns the jīvas after liberation: Śrī Vaiṣṇavas deny that individual relationships with God are fixed, on the grounds that having only one kind of relationship would impose a limitation on the freedom of liberation.

The Advaita-vādīs' comments on the words of the Personality of Godhead and His pure devotees in Bhagavad-gītā and Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam are meant to obliterate Him as an absolute person, to relativize Him to the position of another aspect of illusion. Even if this view acknowledges Him to be the highest form of illusion, it is extremely repugnant to pure Vaiṣṇavas. Therefore Vaiṣṇavas disparagingly refer to the Advaita Vedāntists as Māyāvādīs, proponents of the theory that everything with name and form is a creation of Māyā, even God. Without being rude, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī here offers a mild excuse for not citing Advaita explanations of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam in the Sandarbhas.

**Purport by BBT Translators**

**Methodology of the Sat-sandarbha**

Here Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī explains his method of analyzing Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. He plans to follow a format similar to the one Śrīla Vyāsadeva uses in the Vedāṇta-sūtra. In the Sandarbhas, the introductory statements are like the sūtras in the Vedāṇta-sūtra, the statements of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam constitute the subject to be analyzed, and Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī's comments on the Bhāgavatam's statements are like the commentary (bhāṣya) on the sūtras. Jīva Gosvāmī also indicates that his explanations are not his personal opinion or products of his imagination but are given strictly according to the opinions of the previous Vaiṣṇava acāryas, such as Rāmānujācārya and Śrīdhara Svāmī.

Although Śrīdhara Svāmī accepted the renounced order of life in Śaṅkara's sampradāya, which opposes the personalism of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, his commentaries on Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, the Bhagavad-gītā, and the Viṣṇu Purāṇa make it obvious that he was a great Vaiṣṇava. He clearly states in his commentaries that the Lord's form, qualities, abode, associates, and names are all transcendental and eternal, and that devotion to the Lord continues even after liberation. These key philosophical points are opposed to Advaita monism and reveal Śrīdhara
Svâmi’s true stance.

Śrī Caitanya Mahâprabhu also accepted sannyâsa in Śankara’s line, but from the beginning His teachings refuted the Mâyâvâda doctrine. Hence Śrī Caitanya’s great respect for Śrîdharma Svâmî and his Bhâgavatam commentary is proof enough that Śrîdharma Svâmî was not a Mâyâvâda sannyâsi at heart, any more than Śrī Caitanya Mahâprabhu was. Caitanya Mahâprabhu considered all Mâyâvâdîs offenders at the lotus feet of Kṛṣna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, yet he would not tolerate even mild or indirect criticism of Śrîla Śrîdharma Svâmî. When Vallabha Bhaṭṭa told Lord Caitanya he had written a Bhâgavatam commentary that surpassed Šrîdharma Svâmî’s, Lord Caitanya rebuked Vallabha and refused to hear it (see Caitanya-caritâmṛta, Antya 113–37). From this incident we can understand the exalted status of Śrîdharma Svâmî as a surrendered, pure devotee of the Lord. We can also be certain that Jiva Gosvâmî, as a loyal follower of Lord Caitanya’s, held Šrîdharma Svâmî’s Bhâgavatam commentary, Bhâvârtha-dipikâ, in high esteem. Thus Śrîla Jiva Gosvâmî refers to Šrîdharma as pârâma-vaiṣṇava, a topmost devotee.

In this Text Śrîla Jiva Gosvâmî tells why Šrîdharma Svâmî inserted some Mâyâvâdî ideas into his Bhâvârtha-dipikâ commentary. Some of Śankara’s followers developed a taste for Śrîmad-Bhâgavatam after reading his devotional poems based on the Bhâgavatam, but these followers still maintained their overall impersonal outlook. To attract these sannyâsîs toward the path of devotion, Šrîdharma Svâmî wrote a mixed commentary on the spotless Purâṇa. Just as a fisherman uses bait to catch fish, occasionally Šrîdharma Svâmî would present monistic opinions about some Bhâgavatam verses in order to attract the Mâyâvâdîs who liked to read the Bhâgavatam. This was merely part of his preaching strategy; it doesn’t make him a Mâyâvâdî.

Nevertheless, although Jiva Gosvâmî understands Šrîdharma Svâmî’s motives, in the Sandarbhas he chooses not to cite the impersonal explanations found in the Bhâvârtha-dipikâ. In fact, throughout the Sandarbhas Śrîla Jiva Gosvâmî takes every opportunity to demolish the Mâyâvâda view. Clearly he does not consider the Mâyâvâdîs his primary audience, as Šrîdharma Svâmî must have when he wrote his commentary. Jiva Gosvâmî’s intended audience is apparent from his declaration in the sixth Text of the Tattva-sandarba, where he says that no one should read this book who is averse to serving Lord Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet.

Jiva Gosvâmî’s intended audience comprises those who are already on the path of Kṛṣṇa consciousness or at least interested in taking to it. Naturally, therefore, he says here that he will quote from Šrîdharma Svâmî’s commentary only when it accords with strict Vaiṣṇava principles. This statement has caused some modern scholars to criticize Jiva Gosvâmî for not respecting the liberal sentiments of Śrî Caitanya Mahâprabhu, but this criticism arises from a superficial understanding of Lord Caitanya’s real attitude.

Šrîdharma Svâmî was not a Mâyâvâdî, although for the reason mentioned above he did give a monistic slant to some parts of his Bhâgavatam commentary. Considering why Šrîdharma Svâmî did this in his Bhâvârtha-dipikâ, why should Śrîla
Jiva Gosvami, in an entirely different work meant for an entirely different audience, cite those explanations of Sridhara's that oppose the true conclusion of the Bhagavatam and even Sridhara Svami's own convictions? Sri Jiva has already established Srihad-Bhagavatam as the supreme authority, and from this point on in his Sandarbhas he will not deal with any opinions that contradict it. He makes his policy explicit: He respects the purports of Sridhara insofar as they follow the spirit and intent of the Srihad-Bhagavatam itself. In this way Sri Jiva Gosvami remains true to the Vaisnavism of Sri Jiva Gosvami and also to his own Gaudiya-sampradaya.

At the end of this Text, when Jiva Gosvami says he is not going to describe the details of the Advaita monistic doctrine because they are already well known, he implies that Mavavada, though popular, only apparently explains the meaning of the sastras and is not really worth discussing, and he also intends that he refutes it.

Next Sri Jiva Gosvami describes the sources of evidence other than Srihad-Bhagavatam that he plans to cite in the Sat-sandartha.

TEXT 28

TEXT 28.1

atra ca sva-darshitarthaviisha-pramanyayaiva na tu shridad-bhagavata-vakyaprmananyaya pramanani sruti-purandavidacanani yathadarsham evodharaaniyani.


Gopiparanadhana: In this book I will be citing various statements from sruti, Puranas and other scriptures, quoting the exact words which I have seen written. I will do this to provide evidence for my own ideas, rather than to verify what Srihad-Bhagavatam says. Sometimes I have not myself seen the original scriptures from which I cite passages; these citations I borrow from from various works of Sri Madhvacarya-carana, including Sri Bhagavata-tatparya, Mahabhara-tatparya and Brahma-sutra-bhasya. Sri Madhva is the spiritual master of the Tatvapada school. He is an old, standard authority. Although he origianlly belonged to the disciplic line directly descending from Shrmat Shankaracarya, he separated himself from Sankara's school and joined the party of the Vaisnavas. His special Vaisnava doctrine has been preached widely. Among his disciples and later followers, renowned in South India and elsewhere, are Sri Vijayadhvaja Tirtha, Brahmanyad Tirtha and Vyasa Tirtha, all of whom are very eminent scholars of the Vedas and their purports.
BBT: Here in the Ṣat-sandarbha I will quote from the Vedas, Purāṇas, and other such scriptures, just as I have seen them. I will quote these passages to verify my own interpretations, not the statements of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. Some of the verses quoted here I have not seen in their original texts but have gleaned from citations in the Bhāgavata-tātparya, Bhārata-tātparya, Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya, and other works by the venerable Madhvācārya, the prolific preacher of the distinct Vaiṣṇava philosophy of Tattva-vāda. [Although coming originally in the disciplic line of Śrīmān Śankarācārya, he became an adherent of Vaiṣṇavism and severed his connection with the Advaitins.][drav101] In his line have appeared such disciples and grand-disciples as Vijayadhvaja Tīrtha and Vyāsa Tīrtha[drav102]; very famous in the south, they are most eminent scholars of the Vedic literature and its interpretation.

TEXT 28.2
taiś caivaṃ uktām bhārata-tātparye:

śastraṃtaraṇī sañjānana vedāntasya prasādatah
deśe deśe tathā granthāṃ drṣṭvā caiva prthag-vidhān

yathā sa bhagavān vyāsah sāksāṃ nārāyanaḥ prabhuh
jagāda bhāratādyeṣu tathā vakṣye tad-ikṣayā

iti. tatra tad-uddhṛtya śrutis tātur-veda-sikhādyā purānam ca gārudādīnāṃ sampratī sarvatrāpracarad-rūpam ansādikam saṃhitā ca mahā-saṃhitādikān tāntram ca tāntra-bhāgavatādikam brahma-tarkādikam iti jñeyam.

Gopiparanadhana: Thus in his Mahābhārata-tātparya [2.7.8] Śrī Madhva says, "It is by the mercy of the Vedānta-sūtra that I have correctly understood other scriptures, having engaged myself in studying many different kinds of books located in various places. Here I will speak my opinions according to the views of Bhagavān Vyāsa, the Supreme Lord Nārāyana in person, as he has expressed them in his Mahābhārata and other works." It is useful to know that Madhvācārya has cited śrutis texts such as the Catur-veda-sikhā, portions of the Garuda and other Purānas which are now not available everywhere, saṃhitās like the Mahā-saṃhitā, and tantras like the Tantra-bhāgavata and Brahma-tarkā.

BBT: In his Bhārata-tātparya Śrī Madhvācārya states:

“Having understood other scriptures with the help of the Vedānta-sūtra, and having looked at various kinds of scriptures in different parts of the country, I shall give my explanation in accordance with what Śrī Vyāsadeva, who is none other than the Supreme Lord Nārāyana, has spoken in His Mahābhārata and other works. In this description I will carefully adhere to His viewpoint” (Bhārata-tātparya 2.7.8).3

The texts we will cite from the works of Śrī Madhvācārya will include portions from such Vedic śrutis as the Catur-veda-sikhā, Purānic texts from unavailable parts of the Garuda Purāṇa and other works, saṃhitā texts from the Mahā-saṃhitā
and similar works, and tantra texts from the *Tantra-bhāgavatam, Brahma-tarka*, and so on.

**Purport by Gopiparanadhana prabhu**

Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī throughout his life was famous for his strict honesty. A life-long celibate, he was renounced in his habits even as a child. It is said that he never spoke anything which could not be verified to be true, even in his dreams. In the *Sandarbhās* he will carefully corroborate his interpretation of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* by the trustworthy evidence of *sābda-pramāṇa*. This is the standard of brahminical scholarship:

\[
\text{tasmāc chāstraṁ pramāṇam te/ kāryākārya-vyavasthitau}
\]

\[
\text{jñātvā sāstra-pramāṇoktam/ karma kartum ihārhasi}
\]

"You should therefore understand what is duty and what is not duty by the regulations of the scriptures. Knowing such rules and regulations, you should execute your prescribed duty in this world" [Bhagavad-gītā 16.24]. An honest *brāhmaṇa* will always reflect first on the opinion of *sāstra* (scripture) before doing anything and before forming and expressing any opinion.

Whenever possible, Śrī Jiva has directly consulted copies of the primary sources he cites. In some cases when this was not possible, he has borrowed citations from the works of Madhvācārya. Śrī Madhva conducted extensive research in various parts of India to locate little-known texts to help elucidate the Vaiṣṇava understanding of Vedānta theology. Over two hundred of the many scriptures which he quotes with references by name in his thirty-three works are so rare that no copy of them is known to exist anywhere today. Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī, however, trusts the word of Śrī Madhva and has no doubt that these references are authentic.

We might ask, if Vaiṣṇava ācāryas like Rāmānuja and Madhva are accepted as perfectly honest authorities, how is it that the followers of Caitanya Mahāprabhu do not agree with some of their opinions? The answer lies in the fact that beyond the basic qualification of honesty, spiritual authorities can vary in their degree and kind of realization of the Absolute Truth. We can understand Śrīla Rāmānujācārya as representing the mood of Vaikuṇṭha, where Supreme Lord Nārāyaṇa is worshiped reverentially. The eternally liberated devotees of Vaikuṇṭha mostly enjoy relationships of servitude and respectful friendship with the Personality of Godhead; they have great appreciation for the more intimate moods of equal friendship, parenthood and conjugal love, but are not themselves living in these. Thus in the Tamil poetry of the ancient Śrī Vaiṣṇava Ālvārs we see the poet expressing himself in emulation of the mood of a gopī on one page and in the mood of Hanumān on the next. It is natural that Vaiṣṇavas in the spirit of Vaikuṇṭha do not restrict themselves to meditation on only one kind of relationship of God, because while serving the Lord mostly in awe and reverence they relish contemplating His dealings with His more confidential devotees. Śrīla
Madhvācārya was an incarnation of one of the three sons of the wind-god Vāyu, along with Hanumān and Bhima. He naturally represented the attitude of the demigods. Śrī Madhva's philosophy is called Tattva-vāda because he emphasized that Lord Viṣṇu is the Absolute Truth and that all the energies of creation which are controlled and sustained by Him are real. But, faithful to the viewpoint of the demigods, he also postulated that the demigods headed by Brahmā are the best devotees of Viṣṇu.

Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu presents a viewpoint which transcends that of the demigods and the devotees of Vaikuntha, namely the viewpoint of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself. With due respect to the worshipable Vaiṣṇava ācāryas who preceded Him in Kali-yuga, only Lord Caitanya could reveal the Absolute Truth fully in its highest aspects. Ārādhya bhagavān vrajeśa tanayās tad-dhāma vṛndāvanam: He taught that the original form of God is Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana, and that Nārāyaṇa and all other appearances of the Supreme Lord emanate from Him. Ramyā hācit upāsanā vraja-vadhū-vargena yā kalpitā:

Futhermore, purer and more elevated than the worship offered to the Lord in Vaikuntha or in this world by the demigods is the intimate service rendered Him by the young cowherd girls of Vṛndāvana.

**Purport by BBT Translators**

The Source of References

Since Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī has proven Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam to be the supreme pramāṇa, it needs no further validation. Therefore, as he mentions here, from this point onward he will quote scripture only to support his own interpretations, not the Bhāgavatam's statements. He will cite sources he has read in his own library and elsewhere, and he will also borrow references from the writings of Śrī Madhvācārya, who lived a few centuries before Jiva. Madhvācārya often quotes from books that by Śrī Jiva's time had already been lost.

In Madhvācārya's time (the twelfth century A.D.) there were no printing presses. Madhvācārya traveled the length and breadth of India collecting scriptures and philosophical books and copying them by hand at the various temples and libraries he visited. He was renowned for his photographic memory, so when he was not allowed to copy the books he found, he read them and later reproduced them from memory. In this way he amassed an immense library at his headquarters in Udupī, in Karnāṭaka. Some say his library had no equal. Unfortunately, it was destroyed by fire, and many of the books he refers to in his writings were lost forever. In several places in the Sandarbhās Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī has to make do with the references from lost works cited by Madhvācārya in his books. [DDB103]

Madhvācārya's Tattva-vāda is by definition the philosophy that “everything is real”: sarvam vastu satyam iti tattva-vādah. The Advaita monists say that only Brahman is real and that everything else is a manifestation of Māyā. Madhvācārya soundly defeated the Māyāvāda philosophy with his Tattva-vāda, both in his
writings and in public debates with the leading Māyāvādīs of his time.

By relying on books by Śrīla Madhvācārya and his eminent followers as a principal source of evidence, Jīva Gosvāmī shows his indebtedness to them. Jīva Gosvāmī is, however, a follower of Lord Caitanya, whose teachings differ from Madhvācārya’s. In his Sandarbhas Śrī Jīva plans to draw from those ideas of Madhvācārya that agree with Lord Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s Acintya-bhedabheda philosophy. When examined impartially, the Acintya-bhedabheda philosophy proves the best and most comprehensive explanation of Vedic knowledge. It is the perfect synthesis of all the Vedic literature because its creator, Śrī Caitanya, is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. When the Supreme Lord creates a philosophy, it naturally surpasses all other systems of thought.

Here the pramāṇa section of Śrī Tattva-sandarbha ends. Having established sabda-pramāṇa as the only independently valid means of knowledge, and having established Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam as the topmost form of sabda-pramāṇa, in the next section Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī will begin his discussion of the prameya, or what we come to know by resorting to the topmost pramāṇa.

TEXT 29

TEXT 29.1

atha nāmas-kurvann eva tathā-bhūtasya śrīmad-bhāgavatasya tātparyam tad-vaktur hrdaya-niśthā-paryālocanayā sāṅka-petas taeva nirdhārayati:

sva-sukha-nibhir-ctās tad-vyudastānya-bhāvo
'py ajita-rucira-lilākṛṣṭa-sāras tadiyam
vyātanuṭa kṛpayā yaḥ tattva-dipam purāṇam
tam akhila-vṛjina-ghanam vyāśa-sūnum nato 'ṣmi

Gopiparanadhana: So now let us look at a verse which offers homage to the speaker of this Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and briefly defines the Bhāgavatam’s message by reflecting on the attitude of the speaker's heart: “Let me offer my respectful obeisances unto Śukadeva Gosvāmī, my spiritual master, the son of Vyāsadeva. It is he who defeats all inauspicious things within this universe. Although in the beginning he was absorbed in his own happiness of Brahman realization, giving up all other types of consciousness, he became attracted by the pleasing, most melodious pastimes of Lord Ajita. He therefore mercifully spoke this supreme Purāṇa, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, which is the bright light of the Absolute Truth and which describes the activities of the Lord” [Bhāg. 12.12.69].

BBT: Such being the status of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Śūta Gosvāmī concisely defines
its basic message by turning our attention to the disposition of the heart of its speaker while offering him obeisances:

“Let me offer my respectful obeisances unto Śukadeva Gosvāmi, my spiritual master, the son of Vyāsadeva. It is he who defeats all inauspicious things within this universe. Although in the beginning he was absorbed in the happiness of Brahman realization, giving up all other types of consciousness, he became attracted by the pleasing, most melodious pastimes of Lord Ajita. He therefore mercifully spoke this supreme Purāṇa, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, which is the bright light of the Absolute Truth and which describes the activities of the Lord” [Bhāg. 12.12.69].

TEXT 29.2


Gopiparanadhana: Here is Śrīdha Svāmī’s commentary on this verse: “He [Śūta Gosvāmi] offers obeisances to his spiritual master. [Sva-sukha-nibhrita-cetāḥ means] he whose heart was full with his own happiness. Therefore he had given up all thoughts of anything else. Even though this was his condition, the gravity of his inner happiness was deflected by the charming pastimes of Lord Ajita. I bow down to him, who expounded Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, the light of the truth, that is to say, the scripture which reveals the supreme goal of life.”

BBT: Śrīdha Svāmī explains in his commentary:

“Śūta Gosvāmi pays obeisances to his spiritual master [Śrī Śuka], whose mind was filled only with the bliss of the self and who had thus put aside all other thoughts. But even at that elevated stage his mind was drawn to the enchanting pastimes of Lord Ajita, and this attraction caused him to abandon his sober attachment to impersonal bliss. I offer my obeisances unto him, the speaker of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, which illuminates the supreme goal of life.”

TEXT 29.3

Gopiparanadhana: In the same regard we can examine the three verses in the Second Canto, spoken by Śukadeva himself, which begin "Most sages, O King..." [Bhāg. 2.1.7-9]. "All inauspicious things" in the verse under consideration [Bhāg. 12.12.69] we can understand as meaning everything inimical or irrelevant to that mentality. Thus this verse indicates that the sambandhi-tattva, the truth with which one should establish contact, is something greater than the bliss of Brahan, namely Śrīmān Ajita, who is especially qualified by His charming pastimes. That this Lord is fully and literally realized by the name of Kṛṣṇa is going to be shown in Śrī Bādarāyana Vyāsa's trance. The goal of human life, termed prayojana, is also described here; it is the happiness of pure love for Him, which produces strong bonding to Him. From this can be inferred the abhidheya or process for achieving this goal, specifically the practice of worshiping Him, which generates such pure love for Him. The phrase "son of Vyāsa" in the verse implies, as we know from the Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa, that Śukadeva was free from all influence of Māyā from his very birth because of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's benediction. The verse under discussion was spoken by Śrī Śūta to Śrī Śaunaka.

BBT: Similarly worth examining are the three verses Śrī Śūka speaks in the Second Canto that begin with the verse whose first line is prāyaṇa munayo rājan [Bhāg. 2.1.7–9]. In the verse under discussion [Bhāg. 12.12.69] we should understand that the words akhila-vrjīnam ("all inauspicious things") indicate everything contrary or irrelevant to devotional service. Therefore the subject of this book (sambandhi-tattva) is Śrīmān Ajita, who transcends the ecstasy of impersonal realization and is distinguished by His enchanting pleasure pastimes. Later, in the context of our discussion of Śrīla Vyāsa's trance, it will be made clear that in His fullest manifestation Lord Ajita is primarily named Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Similarly, the final goal (prayojana-tattva) is the happiness of love for Him, which leads to the sort of attachment to Him that Śrī Śūka experienced. And thus our means (abhidheya) is service to Him, characterized by such devotional processes as hearing His divine pastimes, an activity that generates love for Him, as it did in the case of Śrī Śūka. The identity of each of these three principles (sambandha, abhidheya, and prayojana) follows as a natural logical consequence. The phrase vyāsa-sūnum ("son of Śrī Vyāsa") in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 12.12.69 alludes to something described in the Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa—namely, that Śukadeva, because of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's benediction, remained untouched by Māyā from his very birth. The verse under discussion [Bhāg. 12.12.69] was spoken by Śrī Śūta to Śrī Śaunaka.

Purport by Gopiparanadhana prabhu

Having demonstrated the authority of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and having outlined his methodology, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī now begins his exposition of the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness on the basis of statements from Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. He first presents a basic conspectus of the science, touching each of the three major phases of realization in Kṛṣṇa consciousness (sambandha, abhidheya and prayojana), by
looking at Sūta Gosvāmi’s praise of Śrīla Śukadeva in the next-to-last chapter of the Bhāgavatam. This verse helps us begin to understand the primary concerns of Śrimad-Bhāgavatam by showing us something about the concerns of its speaker; certainly, at least, the Bhāgavatam's attitude should not be contradicted by that of its speaker.

Before hearing Śrimad-Bhāgavatam from his father, Śukadeva was already a self-realized impersonalist. The satisfaction he enjoyed within himself was something very few people in this world ever experience. Even a vague perception of the Supreme Lord’s transcendental existence, lacking any focus on His all-attractive personality, His beauty and His charming pastimes, is still adequate to motivate impersonalists to abandon all material interests. The actual taste of God consciousness, however, is much more satisfying, as the conversion of an advanced Brahma-vādī like Śukadeva proves.

Even before birth from his mother’s womb, Śukadeva had renounced the material world. In fact, he stayed in her womb for sixteen years, refusing to take birth. Finally, Vyāsadeva had to ask His friend Lord Kṛṣṇa to coax his son into entering this world. Kṛṣṇa came over a thousand miles from His capital Dvārakā to the āśrama of Vyāsa. He promised Śukadeva in the womb that if he agreed to come out, the deluding power of Māyā would never touch Him. Thus assured by the Supreme Lord, Śukadeva took his birth, but then immediately left home. The measures Śrīla Vyāsadeva had to take to entice Śukadeva back home will be described later in Śrī Tattva-sandarbha (anuccheda 49).

Sūta Gosvāmi’s characterization of Śukadeva’s heart is confirmed by Śukadeva’s own words in the Second Canto:

prāyena munayo rājan nivṛttā vidhi-sedhatah
nairgunya-sthā ramante sva gumāṅukathane hareh

idan bhāgavatam nāma purāṇam brahma-sammitam
adhitavān dvāparādau pitur dvaiśāpanād aham

pariniṣṭhito ’pi nairgunya uttama-slokā-lilayā
gṛhitā-cetā rājarṣe ākhyānam yad adhitavān

“O King Pariksit, most topmost transcendentalists, who are above the regulative principles and restrictions, take pleasure in describing the glories of the Lord. At the end of the Dvāpara-yuga I studied this great supplement of Vedic literature named Śrimad-Bhāgavatam, which is equal to all the Vedas, from my father, Śrīla Dvaiśāpana Vyāsadeva. O saintly King, I was certainly situated perfectly in transcendence, yet I was still attracted by the delineation of the pastimes of the Lord, who is described by enlightened verses. Therefore I studied this narration” [Bhāg. 2.1.7-9].

Purport by BBT Translators
An Analysis of Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī’s Faith

In the preceding Texts, Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī compared and contrasted the Vedas, Vedānta, Itihāsas, and Purānas to show that Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the topmost pramāṇa for all time. Now, at the commencement of his analysis of the Bhāgavatam itself, he again performs māṇgalācarana to further invoke auspiciousness for his sacred undertaking of writing the Sat-sandarbha. Once again he uses a Bhāgavatam verse as his invocation. By quoting from Śūta Gosvāmī’s prayers to Śukadeva, Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī himself reveres Śukadeva Gosvāmī to invoke his blessings, so that Jiva may present the purport of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam without any deviation. Then he points out the tattvas of sambandha, abhidheya, and prayojana in the quoted verse.

Unlike commentators who twist the Bhāgavatam’s statements to support their own ideas, Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī has no interest in forcing any private opinions on us. He wants to explain Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam as it is. To this end he uses a flawless technique, one that leaves us no room for doubting the correctness of his conclusions. First he has us consider the heart of the original writer, Śrīla Vyāsa-deva, and also the hearts of the speakers, Śukadeva Gosvāmī and Śūta Gosvāmī. Then he analyzes the text of the Bhāgavatam in light of that examination, incontrovertibly establishing the purpose of this topmost pramāṇa.

In the verse quoted from Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam in Text 29.1, Śūta Gosvāmī reveals something about the life of Śukadeva Gosvāmī, describing how he became enchanted by the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa even while absorbed in the bliss of Brahman. Śūta’s purpose is to show the firm conviction Śukadeva had in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam when he narrated it to Parīkṣit Mahārāja. Śukadeva was self-realized even while in the womb. Indeed, he was so absorbed in the bliss of Brahman that he wanted to stay there to avoid being attacked by Māyā. He left the womb only when Lord Kṛṣṇa personally assured him that Māyā would not capture him. (Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī informs us that this description is found in the Brahma-vaiśvarta Purāṇa.) As we learn from Chapter Seven of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam’s First Canto and from the texts that Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī will quote below, as soon as Śukadeva took birth he left his father’s hermitage for the forest. Later, when he heard a few of Vyāsa-deva’s disciples reciting some selected Bhāgavatam verses, his mind became so enthralled that he abandoned his impersonal meditation on Brahman and began studying the Bhāgavatam under his great father. Despite all this, however, some Māyāvādīs insist that because Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī was attached to impersonal Brahman realization even before his birth, he must have remained fixed in this ideal. Therefore, they conclude, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam in fact promotes Advaita impersonalism. The prayer of Śūta Gosvāmī quoted here refutes this speculation.

Another reason Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī quotes Śūta’s prayer is to reveal the essential purport of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam: The happiness of Kṛṣṇa consciousness surpasses all other kinds, including that enjoyed by merging into God’s impersonal effulgence. In the Second Canto (Bhāg. 2.1.7–9), Śukadeva Gosvāmī himself confirms the superiority of the bliss of bhakti:
prāyena munayo rājan nivrťa vidhi-śedhataḥ
nairgunya-sthā ramante sma gūnānuucchini hareḥ
idam bhāgavatam nāma purāṇam brahma-sammitam
adhitavān dvāparādau pitur dvāpāyanād aham
pariniṣṭhito ’pi nairgunya uttama-śloka-lilayā
gṛhita-cetā rājāre ākhyānām yad adhitavān

“O King Pariksit, mainly the topmost transcendentalists, who are above the
regulative principles and restrictions, take pleasure in describing the glories of the
Lord. At the end of the Dvāpara-yuga I studied this great supplement of Vedic
literature named Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, which is equal to all the Vedas, from my
father, Śrila Dvaipāyana Vyāsadeva. O saintly King, I was certainly situated
perfectly in transcendence, yet I was still attracted by the delineation of the
pastimes of the Lord, who is described by enlightened verses. Therefore I studied
this Purāṇa.”

This incident from Śukadeva’s life demonstrates the wonderful potency of Śrīmad-
Bhāgavatam—that it was able to captivate[DDB104] the heart of a highly
advanced Brahman-realized soul.

In the next Text Śrila Jiva Gosvāmi begins analyzing the heart of Śrila Vyāsadeva.

TEXT 30

TEXT 30.1
tādṛṣam eva tātparyam karisyāmāna-tad-grantha-pratipādyta-tattva-nirmaya-krte tat-
pravakṛ-śrī-bādarāyaṇa-krte samādhāv api sankṣepata eva nirdhārayati:

bhakti-yogena manasi samyak pranihiṣṭe ‘male
apaśyat purusam pūrnam māyāṁ ca tad-apāśrayāṁ

yayā sammohito jīva ātmānam tri-guṇātmakam
paro ’pi manute ‘nartham tat-krtem cābhhipadyate

anarthopaśamam sāksād bhakti-yogam adhokṣaje
lokasyājānato vyāsaś cakre sātvata-samhitāṁ

yasyām vai śrūyamānāyām kṛṣṇe parama-pūruse
bhaktir utpadyate puṁsāḥ soka-moha-bhayāpahā
Gopiparanadhana: The same message is also briefly defined in the description of Śrī Bādarāyaṇa's trance. In this meditation Vyāsadeva, the earlier speaker of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, ascertained the truth (tattva) which was to be propounded in his book he was about to write: “Thus he fixed his mind, perfectly engaging it by linking it in devotional service [bhakti-yoga] without any tinge of materialism, and thus he saw the Absolute Personality of Godhead along with His external energy, which was under His full control. Due to this external energy, the living entity, although transcendental to the three modes of material nature, thinks of himself as a material product and thus undergoes the reactions of material miseries. The material miseries of the living entity, which are superfluous to him, can be directly mitigated by the linking process of devotional service. But the mass of people do not know this, and therefore the learned Vyāsadeva composed this Vedic scripture [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam], which is in relation to the Supreme Truth. Simply by one's giving aural reception to this Vedic scripture, the feeling for loving devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, sprouts up at once to extinguish the fire of lamentation, illusion, and fearfulness. The great sage Vyāsadeva, after composing the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and revising it, taught it to His son, Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī, who was absorbed in renunciation” [Bhāg. 1.7.4–8].

BBT: Śrī Śūta Gosvāmī elucidates the same basic message of Bhāgavatam while describing the meditative trance of its author, Śrīla Vyāsadeva. What Vyāsadeva experienced indicates the principles he will later establish in his book, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. Śrī Śūta describes this trance in brief:
“Thus he fixed his mind, perfectly engaging it by linking it in devotional service [bhakti-yoga] without any tinge of materialism, and thus he saw the Absolute Personality of Godhead along with His external energy, which was under full control. Due to this external energy, the living entity, although transcendental to the three modes of material nature, thinks of himself as a material product and thus undergoes the reactions of material miseries. The material miseries of the living entity, which are superfluous to him, can be directly mitigated by the linking process of devotional service. But the mass of people do not know this, and therefore the learned Vyāsadeva composed this Vedic scripture [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam], which is in relation to the Supreme Truth. Simply by one's giving aural reception to this Vedic scripture, the feeling for loving devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, sprouts up at once to extinguish the fire of lamentation, illusion, and fearfulness. The great sage Vyāsadeva, after composing the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and revising it, taught it to His son, Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī, who was already engaged in self-realization” [Bhāg. 1.7.4–8].

TEXT 30.2

tatra:

sa vai nivrīti-nirātah sarvatropekṣako munih
kasya vā brhatim etām ātmārāmaḥ samabhyaṣat
iti śaunaka-praśnānantaram ca:

ātmārāmāḥ ca munayo nirgranthā apy urukrame
kurvanṭy ahaitukiṁ bhaktim ittham-bhūta-guno harih

harer gunāksipta-matir bhagavān bādarāyaniṁ
adyagān mahād ākhyaṇām nityam viśṇu-jana-priyah

bhakti-yogena premnā:

astv evam anga bhajatāṁ bhagavān mukundo
muktir dadāti karhicit śma na bhakti-yogam

ity atra prasiddheḥ.

Gopiparanadhana: In that same passage Śaunaka asks, “Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī was already on the path of self-realization, and thus he was pleased with his own self. So why did he take the trouble to undergo the study of such a vast literature?” [Bhāg. 1.7.9].

To this Śūta Gosvāmī replies, “All different varieties of ātmārāmas [those who take pleasure in ātmā, or spirit self], especially those established on the path of self-realization, though freed from all kinds of material bondage, desire to render unalloyed devotional service unto the Personality of Godhead. This means that the Lord possesses transcendent qualities and therefore can attract everyone, including liberated souls. Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī, the son of Śrīla Vyāsadeva, was not only transcendentally powerful. He was also very dear to the devotees of the Lord. Thus, his mind captivated by the enchanting qualities of Lord Hari, he underwent the study of this great narration [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam]” [Bhāg. 1.7.10–11].

"In devotional service (bhakti-yogena)" [Bhāg. 1.7.4] means "in pure love of God;" this is the conventional meaning of the word as used in the following verse: “My dear King, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Mukunda, sometimes grants liberation to those who are engaged in getting His favor, but He rarely grants bhakti-yoga, pure love for Him” [Bhāg. 5.6.18].

BBT: Śaunaka Rṣi then inquires:
“Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī was already on the path of self-realization, and thus he was pleased with his own self. So why did he take the trouble to undergo the study of such a vast literature?” [Bhāg. 1.7.9].

Śūta Gosvāmī replies:
“All different varieties of ātmārāmas [those who take pleasure in ātmā, or spirit self], especially those established on the path of self-realization, though freed from all kinds of material bondage, desire to render unalloyed devotional service unto the Personality of Godhead. This means that the Lord possesses transcendent qualities and therefore can attract everyone, including liberated souls. Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī, the son of Śrīla Vyāsadeva, was not only transcendentally powerful. He was also very dear to the devotees of the Lord. Thus, his mind
captivated by the enchanting qualities of Lord Hari, he underwent the study of this
great narration [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam]" [Bhāg. 1.7.10–11].
The phrase bhakti-yogena ("through devotional service," [in Bhāgavatam 1.7.4])
means "through love of God," since the same meaning is conveyed in the
following statement:
"My dear King, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Mukunda, sometimes grants
liberation to those who are engaged in getting His favor, but He rarely grants
bhakti-yoga, pure love for Him" [Bhāg. 5.6.18].

TEXT 30.3

prāṇihite samāhite 'samādhinānusmara tad-viceśītām' iti tam prati śrī-nāradopadeśāt.
pūrṇa-padasya mukta-pragrahāyā vṛttyā:

bhagavān iti sābdo 'yam tathā puruṣa ity api
vartate nirupādhiḥ ca vāsudeve 'khilatmani

iti pādmatāra-khanda-vacanāvāṣṭambhena, tathā:

kāma-kāmo yajet somam akāmāh puruṣam param

akāmāh sarva-kāmo vā mokṣa-kāma udāra-dīhi
ktvṛṇa bhakti-yogena yajeta puruṣam pārṇam

ity asya vākyā-dvayasya pārva-vākye 'puruṣam paramātmanam prakṛty-ekopādhīm
iśvaram' uttara-vākye 'puruṣam pārṇam param nirupādhiṁ' iti īśkānusāreṇa ca
pārṇah puruṣo 'tra svayam bhagavān evocyate.

Gopipuranadhana: "Fixed" (prāṇihite) means "fixed in meditative trance"
(samāhite), in accordance with Nārada's instruction to him [Vyāsadeva], "Please
remember the Lord's exceptional activities by meditating in trance (samādhī)"
[Bhāg. 1.5.13]. The "Absolute Person" (pūrṇa-puruṣa ) mentioned in this passage
is the original Personality of Godhead, for these reasons: The word "complete"
(pūrṇa) can be understood here in its ultimate sense, free from all restrictions. The
Padma Purāṇa’s Uttara-khanda offers the supporting evidence of the statement,
"Both this word 'Personality of Godhead' (bhagavān) and the word 'Supreme
Person' (puruṣa) refer in their literal, unconditioned sense to Lord Vāsudeva, the
Soul of all beings." And there are two verses: "One who desires sense gratification
should worship the moon. But one who desires nothing of material enjoyment
should worship the Supreme Person (puruṣaṁ pārṇam)" [Bhāg. 2.3.9], and "A
person who has broader intelligence, whether he be full of all material desire,
without any material desire, or desiring liberation, must be all means worship the
Supreme Person [Bhāg. 2.3.10]; the commentary [of Śrīhara Śvāmī] to the first of
these two verses says that "Puruṣa means the Supersoul, the Supreme Lord when
the total material nature is the single conditioning limitation (upādhi) of His
manifestation," and the commentary to the second says that "the puruṣa here is
'full' (pārṇam), meaning 'supreme' (param), that is to say, 'without any
conditioning limitation.'"
BBT: The word *pranīhīte* (“fixed”) means “concentrated in meditation.”
Previously, Nārada Muni had instructed Vyāsadeva to “experience the pastimes of
Lord Kṛṣṇa in trance” [Bhāg. 1.5.13]. The word *pūrṇa* (“complete”) should be
understood here in its full, unrestricted sense, as corroborated by the Padma
Purāṇa [Uttara-khanda 226.68]:
“The words *bhagavān* and *puruṣa*, when free from limiting modifiers, refer to Lord
Vāsudeva [Kṛṣṇa], the Supersoul of all.”
This is further verified in Śrīdhara Svāmī’s commentary on the following two
verses:
“One who desires sense gratification should worship the moon, but one who
desires nothing of material enjoyment should worship the Supersoul. A person
who has broader intelligence, whether he be full of material desires, without any
material desires, or desiring liberation, must by all means worship the supreme
whole, the Personality of Godhead” [Bhāg. 2.3.9–10].
Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī states that the word *puruṣa* in the first of these two verses
indicates the Supersoul, whose *upādhi* (apparently limiting qualification) is
material nature, while the same word in the second verse indicates the complete
Personality of Godhead, who is free from all *upādhis*. Thus the phrase *pūrṇa-puruṣa*
in [Bhāgavatam 1.7.4, quoted in Text 30.1] refers to the original Personality of
Godhead.

**Purport by Gopiparanadhana prabhu**

Although Śrīla Vyāsadeva did not compose the *Bhāgavatam* as a new creation of his
own, and Śukadeva Gosvāmī was not the first to recite it, nonetheless the eternal
text of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* immortalizes them as its author and primary speaker.
Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī thus called Śukadeva the *Bhāgavatam*’s speaker (*vaktā*) in the
previous *anuccheda*, and here he calls Vyāsadeva its original speaker (*pravaktā*). These roles are their transcendental pastimes, in which they have been empowered
by the supreme will to manifest for our age the perfect science of Kṛṣṇa
consciousness. By their grace only do we have access to the secrets of *bhāgavata-
dharma*.

Śrīla Vyāsadeva manifested *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* on the basis of his vision of the
Supreme Lord and His energies. When he sat down to enter into a state of totally
concentrated meditation (*samādhi*), he was properly qualified in several ways to do
this. He was not making a whimsical attempt, but was following a direct
instruction from his spiritual master, Nārada. His mind was pure (*amala*), free
from attraction to sense enjoyment and from material motives. He entered
meditation in a mood of unalloyed devotion for the Supreme (*bhakti-yoga*). Thus
prepared, he was able to see the Absolute Truth directly in his heart and record his
vision in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Vyāsadeva's experience is described in the Seventh Chapter of *Śrīmad-
Bhāgavatam*’s First Canto. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī considers this passage [Bhāg. 1.7.4–
11] essential for gaining a general, preliminary understanding of the absolute
tattva which is the Bhāgavatam's subject. He devotes a good part of Śrī Tattva-
sandarbha, anucchedas 30 through 49, to analyzing these few verses.

The term bhakti-yoga, which His Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda chose to regularly
translate as "devotional service," can have two different meanings. The first is the
regulated practice of service to the Supreme Lord, and the second is the perfection
of ecstatic love for God. Bhakti-yoga in practice naturally develops into perfect
bhakti-yoga:

\[
\text{smarantah smārayantasya ca mitho 'ghaughha-haram harim bhaktyā sañjātaye bhaktyā bibhraty utpulakām tanum}
\]

"The devotees of the Lord constantly discuss the glories of the Personality of
Godhead among themselves. Thus they constantly remember the Lord and remind
one another of His qualities and pastimes. In this way the devotees please the
Personality of Godhead, who takes away from them everything inauspicious. By
their devotion to the principles of devotional service, the devotees awaken to pure
love of Godhead (bhaktyā sañjātaye bhaktyā), and their bodies exhibit the ecstatic
symptoms such as standing of the bodily hairs on end" [Bhāg. 11.3.31].

The tattva which Vyāsadeva saw in his trance is described as puruṣam pūrnam, the
Complete Personality of Godhead. Both these words, "complete" (pūrṇa) and
"person" (puruṣa), can indicate other, more ordinary senses, but Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī
argues here that in the context of Vyāsadeva's trance the two words should be
allowed to express their fullest denotation. The original person (puruṣa) is God; all
other persons only partially reflect His complete personality. Many situations can
be conceived of as relatively complete (pūrṇa), but to find absolute completeness
we must look to the Personality of Godhead. Even the Supersoul (Paramātmā), the
expanded presence of God in every creature's heart, is a less complete
manifestation of the original Godhead, because this Paramātmā appears to
conform to the limitations of material existence. Instead of displaying His own
transcendental pastimes, He serves as witness and adviser to conditioned souls in
their deluded pursuit of happiness.

The comments of Śrīla Śrīdharā Svāmī cited here use one difficult philosophical
term, upādhi, which we will have to deal with several more times in the remaining
anucchedas of Śrī Tattva-sandarbha. Technically, an upādhi is an apparent rather
than real qualification of some thing; it can be an apparent quality of the thing, or
else a second thing which apparently belongs to the first in some sort of
relationship like part and whole or cause and effect. To illustrate this idea,
consider that we are examining a certain object. We can vaguely identify it as
"something," but the specific existence of this thing is qualified in various ways
that differentiate it from other things. First of all, we can recognize that it is some
kind of stone. "Mineral" is a real category which the item belongs to. We can then
determine that the substance of the stone is quartz; this is another real
qualification. Any number of other real qualities can be ascertained, such as the
stone's mass, specific gravity and color. But further suppose that this translucent
piece of quartz appears to our eyes red, and not because that is its real color, but
due to some red flower's standing behind it. The stone's redness is a merely apparent quality, an upādhi. The red color is real, but our perception of the relationship of that quality to the stone is false. Continuing to observe the stone, we might then perceive yet another upādhi, imagining that actually there is a red flower inside the stone, and conclude that this flower is an integral part of it. We might even propose a theory of cause and effect, that this kind of stone naturally gives birth to red flowers.

In the same way, God has no material qualities. His spiritual qualities--such as His personal form, names, specific desires and activities--are all real, but any material quality which may be ascribed to Him is an artificially imposed qualification, an upādhi. When Śrī Kṛṣṇa was present on this earth five thousand years ago, persons who envied Him saw ordinary human faults in His character; these were upādhis effecting the vision of those who misunderstood the Lord.

The verses of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam cited in this anuccheda show two minor differences from the text published by the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust. These are vyāsās cālre instead of vidvān cālre in Text 1.4.6 and purusam pārnam instead of purusam pāram in Text 2.3.9. Neither of these variations change the meaning in any significant way.

**Purport by BBT Translators**

Analysis of Śrīla Vyāsadeva’s Trance, Part I

To understand the meaning of a profound book like Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, it is important to understand the author’s faith and experience. These two factors guide his writing, and, as in this case, if the subsequent speaker of the book shares the author’s faith and experience, then the author’s ideas will be accurately conveyed. To understand Śrīla Vyāsadeva’s mind, or heart, Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmi analyzes Vyāsa’s trance, which is the source of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and reveals its essential idea. With this analysis accomplished, Jiva makes it the basis for his explication of the whole Bhāgavatam in his Sañ-sandarbhā. He has therefore dedicated twenty Texts of the Tattva-sandarbhā (30–49) just to explore the inner purpose of Śrīla Vyāsadeva’s heart and show how Śukadeva Gosvāmi’s heart perfectly reflects it.

In the previous Text Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmi described Śukadeva’s heart even before beginning to analyze Śrīla Vyāsadeva’s. Jiva did this to invoke the blessings of Śrī Śuka, from whom even Śrīla Vyāsadeva was eager to hear the Bhāgavatam. The description of Śukadeva in the previous Text, moreover, was based on a single verse Śūta Gosvāmi spoke in glorification of his guru. By contrast, Vyāsadeva’s trance is described in six verses. It was thus also more convenient for Jiva Gosvāmi to discuss Śukadeva’s mood before Vyāsadeva’s. In doing so he follows the sūcikatāha-nāyā, or “the principle of the needle and the kettle,” which means that when faced with a complex undertaking one should execute the smaller tasks first.

In Bhāgavatam 1.7.4 (quoted in Text 30.1) the term bhakti-yogena means “[DDB105]by prema, or pure love of Godhead,” because only in the state of
pure love of Godhead can one see the Supreme Personality of Godhead along with His potencies. That bhakti-yogena means “by prema” is confirmed by the word amala, meaning “pure” and referring to the condition of Śrīla Vyāsadeva’s heart.

According to Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī in his Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.2.1), bhakti is of three varieties: sa bhaktih sādhanam bhāvah premā ceti triḥṣudītā. “Bhakti is of three types—sādhana, bhāva, and prema.” One who attains prema-bhakti realizes Kṛṣṇa both within and without, and this realization vanquishes both his ignorance about the self and his material miseries. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī further describes prema-bhakti as follows: sāndrāṇanda-viśeṣātmā śrī-kṛṣṇākarsinī ca sā. “[Prema-bhakti] is specially characterized by the experience of intense bliss, and it can attract Śrī Kṛṣṇa” (Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.1.17).

Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī concludes, therefore, that it was by the influence of this prema-bhakti alone that Śrīla Vyāsa realized in his trance the bhagavat-tattva along with the māyā-tattva, jiva-tattva, and bhakti-tattva. In other words, he saw the original Personality of Godhead, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, along with His external, marginal, and internal potencies. This material creation is the manifestation of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s external potency, and the living entities constitute His marginal potency. The living entities tend to be overcome and bewildered by Māyā, the Lord’s external potency.

In his pure state the living entity is completely free from the external potency’s influence, but when under Māyā’s control he considers himself material. This attitude compels him to suffer the repetition of birth and death, an unnatural, diseaselike condition for the living being. Vyāsadeva saw in his trance the solution to this predicament—bhakti-yoga, or devotional service unto Lord Adhokṣaja, beginning with hearing about Him. Since most of human society is ignorant of this solution, Vyāsadeva composed Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam to propagate it.

The term bhakti-yoga mentioned in Bhāgavatam 1.7.6. refers to sādhana-bhakti, which is the stage of devotional service in practice. This stage is based on strict following of devotional regulations. In prema-bhakti, the advanced stage of bhakti-yoga, because one is free of all material contamination one surely and steadily engages in devotional service with spontaneous affection. The devotee who has reached this stage of advancement generally still follows the sādhana principles, but inwardly his heart is bathed in waves of blissful emotion rising from his spontaneous mood of loving service. Śrīla Vyāsadeva composed the Sātvata-sanhitā,5 Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, to explain the principles of bhakti-yoga in the sādhana and prema phases, along with the intermediate phase of bhāva-bhakti, “devotional service with developing ecstasy.”

In the next Bhāgavatam verse (1.7.7), bhakti means prema-bhakti because, as the verse states, only at that stage is one completely free from lamentation, delusion, and fear. The word utoṭpadyate literally means “is generated,” but here it means “becomes manifest” because prema-bhakti cannot be generated, being the internal potency of the Supreme Lord; rather, it manifests within the heart of an advancing
Srila Jiva Gosvami goes on to explain that although there are various purusa incarnations of the Supreme Lord who create, maintain, and destroy this world, the term purusam purnam in Bhagavatam 1.7.4 indicates the original Personality of Godhead, Sri Krsna. Every word in a language has its own energy,[DDB106] by which it conveys its meaning. Words can take on varied meanings depending on whether they exhibit their primary or their secondary energies. Each word has one primary meaning and may have several secondary meanings. When a word is not restricted by its context, one should accept its primary meaning. With the term purna-purusa in Bhagavatam 1.7.4, the unrestricted meaning (mukhya-vrtti) of the word purna (literally “complete” or “perfect”) indicates Lord Sri Krsna, who is free of all limitations. Lord Visnu’s purusa incarnations are also supreme and perfect, but They appear limited in some ways, and these limitations distinguish them from the purna-purusa. This distinction is implied in the Bhagavatam statement ete caṁsa-kalāḥ punaḥ kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam: “All of the above-mentioned incarnations [listed in the preceding verses] are either plenary portions or portions of the plenary portions of the Lord, but Lord Sri Krsna is the original Personality of Godhead” (Bhāg. 1.3.28). In the Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (2.1.43) Srila Rupa Gosvami explains how Krsna has four qualities that none of His expansions possess, namely His wonderful pastimes, His extraordinary associates, His enchanting flute-playing, and His unsurpassed beauty. This explanation of the word purna is further supported by the use of the phrase kṛṣne parama-pūruse in Bhagavatam 1.7.7. Here parama-pūruse is in apposition to the name Krsna, clearly indicating equivalence. Commenting on the use of a virtually identical term—purusam param—in the Second Canto of the Bhagavatam (2.3.10), Sridhara Svami says that it refers to the pūrṇa-purusa, or Complete Person.

Etymologically, purusa means “one who lies down in the city,” the city here being a metaphor for the body. Thus the word purusa indicates the Supersoul within each person’s body. The Supersoul is the controller of the material energy, but He is never influenced by it. Lord Sri Krsna, on the other hand, is never [DDB107] directly involved with the material nature at all, though He controls it through His purusa expansions.

Sridhara Svami uses the word nirupādhi (“free from all limiting adjuncts”) in reference to Krsna, who is not the mere purusa but the pūrṇa-purusa. Unlike the Supersoul, [DDB108] who is seemingly limited by the upādhi of involvement with the material energy, Krsna is free from all upadhis. This term, upadhi, is difficult to grasp and therefore difficult to render into English. Sometimes it is translated as “conditioning,” “limitation,” “false designation,” or “modifier.” In its strict philosophical usage it means “limiting adjunct,” because an upadhi’s effect is to apparently modify the natural state of an object by its proximity or association, though in fact it has no integral or natural relationship with the object.

For example, a naturally colorless crystal will appear reddish when held before a red flower. The reddish tinge is not part of the crystal’s nature; rather, because the
crystal is near the red flower, the flower “conditions” the crystal to appear reddish. In this way the flower’s redness is an upādhi, or limiting adjunct, superimposed on the crystal. Similarly, the material body is an upādhi superimposed on the jīva soul. The soul is like a crystal in that he is easily influenced, or “colored,” by his association. Thus the soul’s proximity to the material body causes the soul to become mired in material existence and conditioned by the modes of nature. In reality both the soul and Supersoul are nirupādhi, without any limiting adjuncts, just like the Personality of Godhead.

One might conclude that this nirupādhi condition of the soul implies his absolute identity with the impersonal Supreme. This conclusion is negated by the word yajeta (“should worship”) in the statement yajeta puruṣam param, “One should worship the Supreme Person” (Bhāg. 2.3.10). The root yaj means “to worship a Deity.” It would be absurd to advise someone to worship a Deity who is an impersonal entity devoid of attributes. Therefore the meaning of pūrṇa-purusa is clear without our resorting to the impersonal conception of the Supreme to try to explain it.

When Śrīdhara Svāmī says that the Supersoul, the purusa, has material nature as His upādhi, one should not take this statement to mean that material nature conditions the [DDB109]Supersoul as it does the jīva. The intended meaning is that He controls material nature without coming into contact with it or being influenced by it, but that His very involvement with material nature seems to be an upādhi[DDB110]. The Supersoul is always transcendental to material nature, even while residing within it, just as a head of state always remains a free man, even when he visits the state prison.

In his comment on Bhāgavatam 2.3.10, Śrīdhara Svāmī interprets the word puruṣa to mean the Supreme Personality of Godhead, not the Supersoul, because that Supreme Person is worshiped by advanced souls desiring liberation, souls who are becoming fit to enter the spiritual planets, beyond the jurisdiction of even the Supersoul.

The word adhoksaja in Bhāgavatam 1.7.6 also refers to Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Etymologically this word means “one who is beyond sense perception,” but it is also a name Lord Kṛṣṇa received after killing the demoness Pūtanā. The Hari-vamša Purāṇa (Viṣṇu-parva 101.30–32) confirms this:

adhō ’nena sayānena sākatāntara-cārīṇā
rākṣasi nihatā raudrā śakuni-vesa-dhārīṇī

pūtanā-nāma ghorā sā mahā-kāyā mahā-balā
viśādīdham stanam raudram prayacchanti janārdane

dadrṣur nihatām tatra rākṣasīṁ vana-gocarāh
punar jātō ’yam ity āhur uktas tasmād adhoksajah

“When baby Kṛṣṇa was sleeping in a cradle under the axle of a cart, a demoness
came as the flying witch called Pūtanā to kill Him. She gave her poisoned breasts to baby Krṣṇa, but Krṣṇa killed her. The residents of Vraja saw Pūtanā, who was gigantic, powerful, and terrible to look at, lying dead in the forest. But Lord Krṣṇa was safe, and the people therefore called Him Adhokṣaja, ‘He who has taken another birth under a cart’s axle.’

The verses describing Veda-vyāsa’s trance (Bhāg. 1.7.4–7) briefly present the quintessence of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, and with it the main elements of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava philosophy. Therefore Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī says more about these verses in the next Text.

TEXT 31

TEXT 31.1

pūrvam iti pāthe ‘pūrvam evāham ihāsam’ iti ‘tat puruṣasya puruṣatvam’ iti śrūta-
nirvacana-viṣeṣa-puruṣātman ca sa evocate. tam apaśyat śrī-veda-vyāsa iti svarūpa-
sakti-mantam evety etat svayam eva labdham. pūrṇam candram apaśyad ity ukte kānti-mantam apaśyad iti labhyate.

Gopiparanadhana: If we take the alternative reading of pūrvam [instead of pūrṇam in Bhāg. 2.3.10], still the same Supreme Lord is being referred to, as the specific usage of śruti scripture shows in the passage “‘I alone was present in the beginning (pūrvam).’… This is why the puruṣa is called puruṣa.” When it is said that Śrī Veda-vyāsa saw that Lord, it is automatically understood that he saw Him along with His internal energy. When we say that someone saw the moon, we understand that the person saw the moon along with its effulgence.

BBT: Even if we consider the alternative reading of pūrvam instead of pūrṇam in the verse quoted above [Bhāgavatam 1.7.4], still the reference here will be to the Personality of Godhead. This is shown by the statements of Vedic śruti: “[The Lord said,] I existed here prior (pūrvam) to everything else” and “That [existence prior to everything else] is the essential characteristic of the Lord (puruṣa).” When it is said that Śrī Vyāsa saw the Lord, we should automatically understand that in addition Vyāsa saw His svarūpa-sakti, or internal potency, just as when it is said that a person sees a full moon, the implication is that he also sees its effulgence.

TEXT 31.2

ata eva:

tvam ādyah puruṣah sāksād īśvarah prakṛteḥ parah
mâyām vyudasya cic-chaktyā kaivalyeye sthita ātmani

ity uktam. ata eva 'mâyām ca tad-apāśrayām' ity anena tasmin apa apakrṣṭa āśrayo yasyā niliya sthitavād īti māyāyā na tat-svarūpa-bhūtavam ity api labhyate. vakyate ca 'mâyā paraity abhimmukhe ca vilajjamāna' īti.

Gopiparanadhana: Therefore it is said, “You are the original Personality of Godhead, who expand Yourself all over the creations and are transcendental to the material energy. You have cast away the effects of the material energy by dint of Your spiritual potency. You are always situated in eternal bliss and transcendental knowledge” [Bhāg. 1.7.23]. And thus the words “along with His external energy, which was under His full control” (mâyām ca tad-apāśrayām) imply that Māya is under His shelter in an inferior role. She is not His internal energy, since she runs away from Him and keeps at a distance; this is stated later in the Bhāgavatam [2.7.47] “Māya, feeling ashamed, flees the Lord’s direct presence.”

BBT: Thus it is said:
“You are the original Personality of Godhead, who expand Yourself all over the creations and are transcendental to the material energy. You have cast away the effects of the material energy by dint of Your spiritual potency. You are always situated in eternal bliss and transcendental knowledge” [Bhāg. 1.7.23]. Therefore we understand the phrase mâyām ca tad-apāśrayam [in Bhāgavatam 1.7.4] to mean that Māya takes shelter of Him in an inferior position, hiding from His sight; thus she does not constitute His svarūpa, or essential nature. As it is said later on, “Māya, feeling ashamed, runs away from the Lord’s direct presence” [Bhāg. 2.7.47].

TEXT 31.3
svarūpa-saktir iyam atraiva vyakti-bhaviṣyati `anarthopäsamam sākṣād bhakti-yogam adhoksaje' ity anena 'ātmārāmaś ca' īty anena ca. pūrvatra hi bhakti-yoga-prabhāvah khalv asau māyābhībhhāvatayā svarūpa-sakti-vr̥ttītena gamyate paraatra ca te gunā brahmānandasyāpy upari-caratayā svarūpa-sakthe parama-vr̥ttītam evāhantīti. māyādhiṣṭhātr-purusas tu tad-āmśatvena brahma ca tadiya-nirvīśeśāvibhāvātvena tad-antar-bhāvenāpr̥thak-dr̥ṣṭatvā pr̥than nokte iti jñeyam. tad etac ca dvitiya-trītya-sandarbhayoh suṣṭhu pratipatsyate. ato 'tra pūrvā-vad eva sambandhi-tattvām nirdhāritam.

Gopiparanadhana: We will describe this internal energy of the Lord's later, in our discussion of the texts “The material miseries of the living entity, which are superfluous to him, can be directly mitigated by the linking process of devotional service” [Bhāg. 1.7.6] and "All different varieties of ātmārāmas" [Bhāg. 1.7.10]. In the first of these texts, the influence of devotional service is understood to be a function of the Lord’s internal energy by the fact of its overcoming the power of illusion. In the second, the qualities of the Lord prove themselves the highest functions of His internal energy by their superiority to even the bliss of Brahman. The reason why the Purusa and Brahman are not separately mentioned [in the description of Śrīla Vyāsadeva's trance] is that they are both implicitly included
within the Personality of Godhead--the Puruṣa, as the predominator of Māyā, is a partial appearance of the Supreme Lord, while Brahman is the manifestation of His formless, impersonal aspect. This will be fully elucidated in the second and third Sandarbhās. So thus we have again ascertained, as before [Text 29.3], the sambandhi-tattva.

**BBT:** We shall explain the Lord’s svarūpa-sākṣi when we discuss the two verses beginning anarthopasamam sākṣad bhakti-yogam adhokṣaje and ātmārāmas ca [Ādi-Pada 1.7.6 and 10, respectively]. From the statement in the first of these two verses that devotional service can subdue the material energy, Māyā, we can infer that the power of devotional service is a function of the Lord’s internal energy. The second verse implies that the qualities of Lord Hari constitute the svarūpa-sākṣi’s highest function, superior even to the bliss of Brahman. These verses do not separately mention either Paramātmā, the Supreme Lord’s plenary portion who controls Māyā, or Brahman, the Supreme Lord’s nondifferentiated aspect. The reason for this omission is that one is meant to infer that both the Paramātmā and Brahman are included within the Personality of Godhead. Thus here, as before, the sambandhi-tattva, the essential topic of discussion in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, has been defined.

**Purport by Gopiparanadhana prabhu**

Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī was aware that some manuscripts of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam read yajeta puruṣam pūrvam instead of yajeta puruṣam param in Text 2.3.10. This variant also refers to the same Personality of Godhead. The Complete Person (puruṣam pūrṇam), Supreme Person (puruṣam param) and Primeval Person (puruṣam pūrvam) are one and the same. To substantiate this, Śrī Jiva Gosvāmī presents two related statements of śrutī. In the first, the Personality of Godhead declares that previous to the creation of this universe, He alone was present. In the second, a comment is drawn from this, that the Lord's existence prior to everything else is what distinguishes Him as the Supreme Puruṣa. His being "alone" does not contradict the eternal existence of His spiritual kingdom, inhabited by His countless associates and servants; it simply denies the existence of anything material in the dormant period between creations.

According to Śrīdharā Svāmī's explanations cited in Text 30.3, the title Puruṣa can refer to the Personality of Godhead in more than one way. In one sense the Puruṣa is the Godhead in His original fullness, as manifest in the spiritual world:govinda ādi-puruṣaṁ tam aham bhajāmi ("I worship Govinda [Krṣṇa], the original Puruṣa."). In addition, the Puruṣa is also Lord Govinda's specific expansion as the creator of this world. There are three Puruṣa expansions of the Supreme Lord--Kāranodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu and Kṣirodakaśāyī Viṣṇu--the creators who lie in the Causal Ocean, the Fetal Ocean of the universal egg and the Milk Ocean. The first Puruṣa, lying on the serpent bed of Ananta Śeṣa within the boundary region between the spiritual and material realms, initiates the generation of the material world merely by glancing once at Māyā, His personal external energy. From His body emanate the egg-like shells of numerous
universes; He then expands once into each of these universes to lie down again as the second Purusa. When all forms of life are then sent forth into creation, the Lord becomes the third Purusa, entering along with each living soul into their material bodies. In this way, the Supreme Person as the Purusa expands Himself to become the Paramatma; Garbhodakaashayi Visnu is the Supersoul of the total universe (samaati-paramatma) and Ksrodakaashayi Visnu is the Paramatma accompanying each individual soul (vaisti-paramatma).

Srila Radha-mohan Gosvami points out that lexicographers have explained the derivation of the word purusa in similar terms. One etymology of purusa is pura asit (“He existed previously.”) and another is puri sharire sete (“He sits down in the pur, the material body.”). Nara Muni also speaks like this in Srimad-Bhagavatam (7.14.37):

\[
\text{purany anena srtani/ nr-tiryag-rsi-devatah} \\
\text{sete jivena rupeha/ puruso puruso hy asau}
\]

"The Supreme Personality of Godhead has created many residential places [pura] like the bodies of human beings, animals, birds, saints and demigods. In all of these innumerable bodily forms, the Lord resides [sete] with the living beings as Paramatma. Thus He is known as the Purusa avatara."

The impersonal conception of the Supreme is only a partial realization by those who cannot understand Him as a person, a possessor of creative energies. Two primary energies of the Supreme are discussed in this anuncheda, His internal svartupa-sakti and His external Mayaa. The Lord's svartupa-sakti is in essence His female counterpart, the source of His personal pleasure. She provides Him the satisfaction of loving reciprocations with Herself in Her original form of Sri matai Radharani, in Her unlimited spiritual expansions which join each of the expanded forms of Godhead, and in the devotional service of liberated jivas. When Mahav Visnu lies down to create the material world in His mystic sleep (yoga-nidra), He is actually enjoying within Himself with His internal pleasure potency: atman Mayaa re me tyaka-kalaati sirkasaya (Brahma-samhita 5.7, "As He intends to send forth His separated energy, He continues enjoying with His internal consort.").

Mayaa is also a personal energy of the Lord, an expansion of Srimati Radharani, but her function is inferior. She creates and rules the world of illusion, where the Personality of Godhead appears to be absent. Because of her association with the contamination of rebellious souls, the Lord makes no contact with her after His initial glance, and she keeps herself out of His sight. Srla Baladeva Vidyabhushana offers an analogy to the difference between the internal and external energies of the Supreme: one is like an emperor's favorite queen while the other is like a menial maidservant who always remains outside his quarters.

**Purport by BBT Translators**

Some editions of Srimad Bhagavatam have the word purva (“existing before”) in
place of pūrṇam in text 1.7.4. This difference does not change the import of the verse, however. The word puruṣa can also mean “He who existed prior to the creation”; pura āṣīt iti puruṣah. This phrase refers to the Supreme Lord as the source of everything. And this Supreme Lord is Kṛṣṇa, as He confirms in the Bhagavad-gītā (10.8): aham sarvasya prabhavah. “I am the source of everything.” Being the source of everything is the essential characteristic of the puruṣa. Since existing prior to everything else is the idea conveyed by the adjective pūrvam, the phrase puruṣam pūrvam is equivalent to puruṣam pūrṇam insofar as indicating the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa.

Śrī Vyāsa saw the Lord’s potencies along with the Lord Himself, just as one always sees the effulgent moonlight along with the full moon. The energies of the Lord are always present along with Him, inasmuch as an object’s attributes are always present along with the object. In the Viṣṇu Purāṇa (6.5.79) the attributes of Bhagavān, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, are listed:

jnāna-sakti-balaisvarya-virya-tejāmsya aseṣatah
bhagavac-ḥabda-vācyaṁ vim hasayair guṇādibhiḥ

“The word bhagavān indicates knowledge, sensory power, strength, wealth, prowess, and valor—all without limit, and all completely devoid of material qualities and their effects.” The Supreme Person has multifarious potencies, of which three are primary. As the Viṣṇu Purāṇa (1.12.69) states, hladini sandhini samvit tvayy ekh sarva-samsraye: “The hladini, sandhini, and samvit potencies exist only in You [the Supreme Lord], who are the shelter of everything.” Hladini is the Lord’s pleasure potency, sandhini His supporting potency, and samvit His cognition potency. These three potencies constitute the Lord’s svarūpa, or His [DDB111] essential, internal nature. Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmi will give a detailed explanation of these potencies in the Bhagavat-sandarbha.

In the spiritual sky these potencies are inherent in the Lord’s own person, but they are also present in the individual personal forms of His associates. In Text 47 Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmi will identify the form of the Supreme Lord [DDB112] seen by Śrīla Vyāsadeva as Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana, where the Lord is always present with His most intimate devotees. Śrīmati Rādhārāṇi is Lord Kṛṣṇa’s personified pleasure potency, and with Her the Lord performs His most intimate pastimes. Therefore it should be understood that in his trance Śrīla Vyāsa also saw Śrīmati Rādhikā along with Her associates, for the Lord is never separated from His internal potencies.

Besides the Lord’s three internal potencies, Vyāsa saw His external potency (Māyā) and His marginal potency (the jivas). Māyā is not part of the Lord’s svarūpa. She is personally present in His entourage, but she chooses to remain out of His sight. Therefore she can never influence the Lord or His internal potencies. Generally a female influences a male by appearing before him, but Māyādēvi, the female, external energy of the Supreme, cannot influence the Lord. Therefore it is said that she remains out of His view. As it is said (Bhāg. 2.7.47), māyā paraity abhimukhe ca vilajjamanā: “Māyādēvi keeps away from the Lord, feeling ashamed to come before
[DDB113] Him.” Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣana compares Māyā to a maidservant who discharges her duties outside the king’s inner quarters. She does not have the same privileges as his queens, who are like the Supreme Lord’s internal potencies in that they can directly associate with their master at all times.

Māyā, the Lord’s external energy, is inferior to both His svarūpa-śakti and His marginal energy, the jīvas. Still, she can subdue the jīvas. This vulnerability of the jīvas to illusion is stated in Bhāgavatam 1.7.5:

\[
yayā sammohito jīva ātmānām tri-guṇātmakam \\\nparo ’pi manute ’nartham tat-kr̥tam cāhipadyate
\]

“Bewildered by that external energy, the living entity, although transcendental to the three modes of material nature, thinks of himself as a material product and thus undergoes the reactions of material miseries.”

Although both the individual soul and the Supersoul are conscious and reside in the same material body, only the jīva is bewildered by Māyā and suffers the material miseries. Māyā cannot affect the Lord because He is her master; by His inconceivable power He remains forever beyond her influence.

In the Bhagavad-gitā (7.5) Lord Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna that His marginal energy, the jīva, is superior to His separated, material energy, Māyā. One may then ask, How does the superior jīva come under the control of the inferior nature, Māyā? The answer is twofold: because the jīva is infinitesimal, and also because Māyā can transcend logic in her actions. In the Third Canto of Śrimad-Bhāgavatam (3.7.9), Maitreya Muni responds to a question from Vidura as follows:

\[
seyaṁ bhagavato māyā yan nayena virudhyate \\\niśvarasya vimuktasya kārpanyam uta bandhanam
\]

“The illusory energy of the Supreme Lord acts contrary to logic [i.e., her behavior cannot be understood simply through logic]; otherwise, how is it possible that the living entity, who is conscious and liberated, becomes bound and miserable?”

Commenting on this verse, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravarti Thākura gives an analogy: Although the sun is powerfully effulgent, still the cloud, generated from the sun’s potency, can cover [DDB114] our vision of it. Similarly, although the jīva is by nature superior to Māyā, she still has the power to cover him.

Another important point made in this section is that the description of Vyāsa’s trance does not explicitly mention either the Supersoul or the impersonal Brahman effulgence. The Supersoul (Paramātmā) is the expansion of the Lord who presides over the affairs of the material energy. In the Bhagavad-gitā (9.10) Lord Kṛṣṇa says, mayādhyakṣena prakṛtiṁ sūyate sa-carācaram: “This material nature is working under My direction, producing all moving and nonmoving beings.” Here “My” means “My Paramātmā expansion’s,” since it is through His Paramātmā feature that Lord Kṛṣṇa regulates the workings of the material world. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī
points out that since the Paramātmā expands from Krṣṇa and is entirely dependent on Him, the description of Vyāsadeva’s trance need not mention the Paramātmā separately. The same holds true for Brahmaṇ, which is nothing but the effulgence emanating from the Lord’s transcendental body. Like the Paramātmā, Brahmaṇ has no existence independent of the Lord. Krṣṇa confirms this in the Bhagavad-gītā (14.27): brahmano hi pratiṣṭhāham. “I am the basis of the impersonal Brahmaṇ.” According to the Nirukti dictionary, pratiṣṭhīyat e asmin iti pratiṣṭhā: “Pratiṣṭhā means ‘shelter’ or ‘basis.’” Just as the sun globe is the basis of the sunshine, so Krṣṇa is the basis of the Brahmaṇ effulgence.

From this analysis of Veda-vyāsa’s trance, it is clear that the central subject of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the Personality of Godhead, Lord Śrī Krṣṇa, and that the process for attaining Him is bhakti-yoga. Brahmaṇ and Paramātmā, being dependent manifestations of the Lord, cannot be separated from Him, but these two features are not the objects of Vyāsadeva’s trance and so cannot be the central subjects of His greatest work, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. We should nonetheless note that one who realizes Bhagavān, Lord Krṣṇa, automatically realizes Brahmaṇ and Paramātmā, in the same way that one who acquires a million dollars automatically possesses all smaller [DDB115]sums.

In the next section Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī discusses how the living entity comes to be bound up by Māyā.

**TEXT 32**

**Text 32.1**

atha prāh pratīpādītasyaiva bhidheyasya prayojanasya ca sthāpakaṁ jīvasya svārūpata
eva parameśvarād vailaksanyam apaśyad īty āha yayeti. yayā māyayā sammohito
jīvah svayam cid-rūpavatena tri-guṇātmakād jadāt paro ‘py ātmānāṁ tri-guṇātmakām
jadaṁ dehādi-sanghātam manute tan-manaṁ-kṛtam anartham samsāra-vyāsānam
cāhāpadyate.

The process (abhidheya) and the goal (prayojana), as we have defined them, are based on the essential difference between the Lord and the living entity. That Śrī Vyāsa saw this distinction is shown by the verse beginning yayā [Bhāg. 1.7.5]. Although the living entity is by nature pure spirit, transcendental to the three inert material modes, when deluded by Māyā he considers himself a product of those modes, the inert material body. This delusion causes the living entity to suffer unwanted consequences, namely the miseries of repeated birth and death.

**Text 32.2**

tad evam jīvasya cīd-rūpāte ‘pi yayā sammohito iti manute iti ca svārūpa-bhūta-
(jñāna-sālītvam vyanakti prakāśaika-rūpaṣya tejasah sva-para-prakāśana-ṣakti-vat.
ajñānenāvṛtam jñānam tena muhyanti jantavah

iti śrī-gitābhyaḥ. tad evam upādher eva jīvatvam tan-nāsasyaiva mokṣatvam iti matāntaram parihṛtavān. atra yayā sammohita ity anena tasyā eva tatra kartṛtvam bhagavatās tatrodāśinatvam (matam)[NEW116].

Furthermore, not only does the living being consist of pure spiritual consciousness, but he also possesses consciousness as a component of his essential nature, just as light, which consists of nothing but illumination, also possesses the capacity to illumine itself and other things. That the living entity possesses consciousness is implied [in Bhāgavatam 1.7.5] by the words yayā sammohitah (“deluded by that [Māyā]”) and manute (“he considers”) and confirmed by the following words [in Bhagavad-gitā 5.15]:

“Living beings are bewildered because their consciousness is covered by ignorance.”

Thus is refuted the contrary opinion that the jīva exists only as an upādhi of Brahman and that liberation is simply the elimination of this upādhi. Here [in Bhāg. 1.7.5] the phrase yayā sammohito shows that Māyā alone is responsible for deluding the living being; the Lord remains uninivolved.

Text 32.3

vakṣyate ca:

vilajjamāṇayā yasya sthātum īkṣā-pathe ‘muyā
vimohitā vikathante mamāham iti durdhiyāh

iti. atra vilajjamāṇayā ity anenedam āyāti, tasyā jīva-sammohanam karma śrī-bhagavate na rocata iti yady api sā svayam jānāti tathāpi bhayam dvitiyābhinivesaṭaḥ syād īsād apetasya iti disā jīvanām anādi-bhagavad-ajñāna-maya-vaimukhyam asahamāna vairūpaḥvaram asvarūpāvesaṃ ca karoti.

Later Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam [2.5.13] states:

“The illusory energy of the Lord cannot stand in front of Him, being ashamed of her position, but those who are bewildered by her always talk nonsense, being absorbed in thoughts of ‘I’ and ‘mine.’”

Here we can infer from the phrase “being ashamed” (vilajjāmāṇayā) that although Māyā knows her work of bewildering the living beings does not please the Supreme Lord, still she cannot tolerate that they have turned their backs on Him because of their ignorance of Him, which is beginningless. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam [11.2.37] describes the result of the jīvas’ turning from the Lord: “When the living beings are attracted to something other than the Lord, they become fearful.” Therefore Māyā covers their real nature and entices them to identify with matter.

COMMENTARY
The Living Entity Is Distinct from the Lord

In this Text Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī shows how service to the Lord is the process of self-
realization (abhidheya) and how eternal love of God is the goal (prayojana). Since love of God is eternal, the Supreme Lord and the living entities must be eternally distinct, because wherever there is service or love, the server and the served or the lover and the beloved must be separate individuals.

According to the Māyāvāda impersonalists this distinction of individual selves exists only in the conditioned (vyāvahārika) stage. In the liberated (pāramārtthika) stage all such distinctions dissolve because on that level Brahman alone exists. Impersonalists insist that since Brahman and the living being are absolutely one and the same, there can be no distinction of identities in the reality of Brahman. The Māyāvādīs go on to say that when Brahman contacts Māyā, Māyā acts as its upādhi and Brahman is then known as īśvara (God) and the jīvas. Apart from these appearances arising from Brahman’s proximity to Māyā, neither īśvara nor the jīvas exist. Concerning the jīvas, featureless Brahman enters into delusion and displays the jīvas[DDB117] masquerade forms and personalities birth after birth—and all for no reason other than Brahman’s adulteration by Māyā. And this same deluded Brahman will be redeemed when he simply gives up his false designations on the strength of acquired knowledge of Brahman.

All this goes counter to what Vyāsadeva actually saw in His trance. He saw that the jīvas are intrinsically eternal spiritual entities, separate individuals in their own right. He further saw that Māyā overcomes only the jīvas, not Brahman (īśvara, the Personality of Godhead); indeed, He saw that Māyā, far from overcoming the Supreme Lord, could not even bare to face Him. He also saw that God Himself is not directly involved with deluding the jīvas. In sum, Vyāsadeva realized that the Lord,[DDB118] the jīvas, and Māyā are all eternal, and that the Lord supports the other two.

In Bhāgavatam 1.7.5 the words sammohitah (“becoming deluded”) and manute (“he then thinks”) are applied to the jīva, indicating that delusion and its effects, ignorance and misery, are not part of his original nature. These two words also indicate that the jīva is both consciousness and the possessor thereof.[DDB119] As a light bulb simultaneously illuminates itself and the objects around it, so the jīva is simultaneously conscious of himself and objects outside himself. In other words, cognition is an intrinsic aspect of his nature, not a temporarily acquired capacity, which is what the Māyāvāda doctrine implies by positing that the jīva’s attributes are only apparently real (as is the jīva himself) and that to gain salvation he has to acquire knowledge of his oneness with Brahman.

The theistic understanding of the jīvas’ situation in this world, gleaned from analyzing Śrīla Vyāsadeva’s trance, is that Māyā cannot tolerate the jīvas’ refusal to serve her Lord, and so she covers the knowledge of such rebellious jīvas and imprisons them in material bodies. Māyā’s principal functions are to punish and to rectify the jīvas who have turned away from the Personality of Godhead. Her motive is not to inflict suffering but to encourage the fallen jīvas to accept rectification by inquiring into transcendental knowledge. Lord Kṛṣna therefore says in the Bhagavad-gitā (4.37) that transcendental knowledge burns all the bonds of karma in the same way that fire burns fuel, because once a person attains
transcendental knowledge, Māyā need no longer punish him.

Sometimes, from our mundane point of view there appears to be a contradiction between the writings of the great ācāryas. An example of this arises from Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī’s use in this Text of the term anādi (“beginningless”) to describe Māyā’s bewilderment of the jīvas. From the way Jīva Gosvāmī uses this word elsewhere in the Sandarbhās, it appears that he intends for his readers to understand the word literally—that Māyā’s conditioning of each jīva has no beginning but ends when a jīva becomes Krṣṇa conscious. Śrīla Prabhupāda, however, took the word anādi to mean “from time immemorial” in similar scriptural contexts, indicating that he understood the jīva’s conditioning to have an untraceable beginning. He expresses his understanding of this issue in his translation of and commentary on a verse in the Caitanya-caritāmṛta that Lord Caitanya spoke to Sanātana Gosvāmī (Cc. Madhya 20.117):

\[ \text{krṣṇa bhuli' sei jīva anādi-bahirmukha} \\
\text{ataeva māyā tāre deya samsāra-duḥkha} \]

“Forgetting Krṣna, the living entity has been attracted by the external feature from time immemorial. Therefore the illusory energy [Māyā] gives him all kinds of misery in his material existence.” Purport: “When the living entity [the jīva] forgets his constitutional position as an eternal servant of Krṣna, he is immediately entrapped by the illusory, external energy. The living entity is originally part and parcel of Krṣṇa and is therefore the superior energy of Krṣṇa. . . . [However,] he is sometimes attracted by the external, illusory energy, . . . and this is the beginning of his material life. When he enters the material energy he is subjected to the threefold time measurement—past, present, and future. Past, present, and future belong only to the material world; they do not exist in the spiritual world. The living entity is eternal, and he existed before the creation of this material world. Unfortunately he has forgotten his relationship with Krṣṇa. The living entity’s forgetfulness is described herein as anādi, which indicates that it has existed since time immemorial. One should understand that due to his desire to enjoy himself in competition with Krṣṇa, the living entity comes into material existence.”

A[DDB120] deluded jīva retains his capacity to know the Supreme Lord. His condition is somewhat like that of a covered light bulb: the bulb’s light may not be visible beyond the covering, but it still shines within. Similarly, although the conditioned jīva’s ability to know the Lord is covered, it still exists. In this conditioned state the jīva misuses his mind and senses and misdirects his natural propensity to serve. Thus he suffers. But when he uses his mind and senses properly by practicing sādhanā-bhakti, his true nature begins to emerge, and if he continues on the path of bhakti he attains his original identity and is established in the unending bliss of prema-bhakti. In the Paramātma-sandarbha, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī discusses in more detail this and other aspects of the jīva’s nature.

One may ask why the all-powerful Lord does not stop Māyā from bewilderment of the jīva. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī answers this question in the next Text.
TEXT 33

Text 33.1

śrī-bhagavānś cānādita eva bhaktāyāṃ praṇaṅcādhikārīnyāṃ tasyāṃ dāksīnyam langhitum na saknoti. tathā tad-bhayenāpi jīvānām sva-sāmmukhyām vānchann upadīṣati:

daivi hy esā guna-mayī mama māyā duratyayā
mām eva ye prapadyante māyāṃ etāṃ taranti te

satāṁ prasaṅgān mama vīrya-samvīdo
bhavanti hṛt-karna-rasāyanāḥ kathāḥ
taj-joṣanād āsv apavarga-vartmani
śraddhā ratir bhaktir anukramisyati

iti ca.

For His part, the Supreme Lord cannot withdraw His favor from Māyā, whom He has delegated as the controller of the material creation and who has always been His devotee. Still, He wants the jīvas to turn favorably toward Him, even if they must do so out of fear of Māyā, and therefore He instructs them [in Bhagavad-gītā 7.14]:

“This divine energy of Mine, consisting of the three modes of material nature, is difficult to overcome. [DDB121]Only those who have surrendered unto Me can easily cross beyond it.[DDB122]”

And [in Bhāgavatam 3.25.25]:

“In the association of pure devotees, discussion of the pastimes and activities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is very pleasing and satisfying to the ear and the heart. By cultivating such knowledge a person gradually becomes advanced on the path of liberation, and thereafter he is freed, and his attraction becomes fixed. Then real devotion and devotional service begin.”

Text 33.2

lilayā śrīmad-vyāsa-rūpena tu viśistatayā tad upa表达tavān ity anantaram evāvyāsyati
anarthopaśamam sākṣad iti. tasmād dvayor api tat tat samāṇjasam jñeyam. n māyā
khalu śaktih śaktiś ca kārya-kṣatram tacent ca dharma-viśesah, tasyāḥ katham
lajjādikam.  ucayate evam satyapi bhagavati tāsām sāktinām adhiṣṭhāt-devyah
śrīyante yathā kenopaniṣadī mahendra-māyayoh samvādah. tad āstām prastutam
prastūyate.

In His pastime form of Śrī Vyāsa[DDB123], the Lord has very explicitly
instructed the living beings in this way [namely, that they should surrender to Him so they can transcend Māyā]. This we shall see shortly, in our discussion of the verse beginning anarthopaśamam sāksād [Bhāg. 1.7.6]. Thus both the Lord and Māyā have acted quite properly.

But, one may object, if Māyā is only an energy and an energy is the capacity to do some work and is moreover just a quality possessed by some entity, how then can Māyā feel ashamed and have other, similar characteristics? The answer is that although Māyā is in fact an energy, we do hear from the Vedic scriptures about female deities who preside over energies residing in the Supreme Lord. We see an example of this in the dialogue between Lord Indra and Māyā in the Kena Upaniṣad. In any case, we shall now let this matter stand and return to the main topic of our discussion.

COMMENTARY
Māyā Is a Devotee of the Lord

As Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī explained in the previous Text, the Supreme Lord is not pleased that Māyā has to delude the jīvas; therefore Māyā feels too embarrassed to face the Lord. One may ask, “If the Lord is all-powerful, why does He not intervene?” Our answer is that the Lord has appointed Māyā the presiding deity of the material creation and she has been performing this service faithfully since time immemorial. Because she is His devotee, He kindly does not interfere with her service.

But this reply may lead to a further doubt: Besides being all-powerful, the Supreme Lord is said to be unlimitedly merciful, always thinking of everyone’s welfare. Why then does He fail to stop Māyā from harassing the jīvas? To this Jiva Gosvāmī replies that even though the Lord does not stop Māyā, He teaches the jīvas how to get free from her clutches by surrendering to Him. Māyā will never again harass any jīva who has taken full shelter of the Supreme Lord.

Still a puzzle remains: Why does the Lord allow Māyā to create obstacles for the jīva even when he wants to surrender to Him? Why does He allow her to repeatedly present various allurements that prevent the jīva from discriminating between proper and improper action and in this way[DDB124] baffle his attempts at surrendering?

Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī answers this question by citing the verse beginning satām prasāṅgān mama virya-saṁvido, which Lord Kapila speaks in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.25.25). This verse explains that devotees of the Lord associate favorably with one another and always relish talking about the Lord’s pastimes, which are a tonic for the hearts and ears of the sick and weak jīvas. This tonic immunizes them against the disease of material illusion and gradually brings them back to the healthy condition of life, namely the Supreme Lord’s devotional service. The Lord’s only activity in the spiritual world is enjoying loving exchanges with His devotees, and His enjoyment would be disturbed by the intrusion of unhealthy jīvas—that is, souls who have not become completely purified of material desire and reawakened their pure love for the Lord.[DDB125] Māyā therefore employs
various means to make sure no unfit souls bother the Lord. Because this is her
assigned service to Him, He does not interfere.

The Personality of Godhead has not, however, employed Māyā just to inflict
miseries on the jīvas. She does that, but as mentioned earlier, her real purpose is to
chasten the jīvas, to encourage them to turn to the Lord. The punishment she
metes out serves three purposes: to give the living entities the reactions for their
sinful deeds, to deter them from further transgressions, and to impel them to
search for a way out of this world of suffering. Since this punishment ultimately
benefits the jīvas by uniting them with the Personality of Godhead, He generally
does not choose to come between the jīva and Māyā. The governor of a state will
usually not interfere when the court system sends a criminal to prison. On the
contrary, he may commend the policemen who captured the wrong-doer. People
do not think the governor is cruel to employ such able policemen, and in the end,
when the criminal is rehabilitated and freed on parole, the former lawbreaker
himself may thank the governor.

So God's motive for creating the prison house of this material world is actually to
induce the rebellious jīvas to surrender to Him and take up loving service to Him.
Only in this way can they gain liberation from Māyā's clutches. In Śrīmad-
Bhāgavatam (10.87.2) Śrī Sukadeva Gosvāmī confirms that this is the purpose of
the creation:

buddhindiya-manah-prānān janānām asrjat prabhuḥ
mātrārtam ca bhavārtam ca atmane 'kalpanāya ca

“The Supreme Lord manifested the material intelligence, senses, mind, and vital
air of the living entities so that they could indulge their desires for sense
gratification, take repeated births to engage in fruitive activities, become elevated
in future lives, and ultimately attain liberation.”

One may still object that even if the Supreme Lord is not actively cruel, He is
indifferent to the plight of the jīvas. This is another mistaken notion. Far from
being indifferent to the jīvas' suffering, the Lord frequently appears in this world
to enlighten the fallen populace on the pretext of educating such intimate associates
of His as Arjuna and Uddhava. Sometimes He incarnates as Veda-vyāsa or as
another instructor to preach the message of bhakti and uplift the wretched jīvas.
All this He does out of His causeless mercy upon the fallen jīvas[DDB126], who,
as we have learned from the pramāṇa portion of Śrī Tattva-sandarbha, can
never understand anything beyond the material world by their own endeavors.

So it is out of His causeless mercy that the Supreme Lord gives the entrapped jīvas
access to spiritual knowledge through the Vedas. Later on, as the Kali-yuga begins
and the jīvas all but lose their ability to comprehend spiritual knowledge, He
further helps them by explaining the same message in the Itihāsas and Purāṇas.
Finally, He reveals the essence of all knowledge in the form of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.
So it can hardly be said that the Lord is indifferent to the plight of the jīvas.
Once a jiva takes advantage of the Lord’s arrangement for spiritual education and comes to the point of transcendental realization, he need not fear any punishment for his previous misdeeds, no matter how dreadful they were. As the Lord says in the Bhagavad-gitā (4.37):

*yathāidhāṃsi samiddho ’gnir bhasma-sāt kurute ’rjuna
jnānāgniḥ sarva-karmāni bhasma-sāt kurute tathā*

“As a blazing fire turns firewood to ashes, O Arjuna, so does the fire of knowledge burn to ashes all reactions to material activities.” Thus the Lord confirms that the punishment of the jivas is meant not for inflicting suffering on them but for awakening them to the knowledge that will lead them to freedom from all suffering and to eternal life in the spiritual world.

Yet another doubt may be raised: If the punishment inflicted on the jivas is for their ultimate good, why are they also allowed to enjoy in this world? If they were simply thrown into an ocean of ceaseless misery, they would have no choice but to quickly take complete shelter of the Personality of Godhead.

We address this doubt with a twofold reply: First, we point out that ceaseless misery is not good for developing transcendentl understanding because one’s mind becomes too disturbed to contemplate scriptural truths. Second, ceaseless misery is not necessary because any jiva with even a little rudimentary transcendental knowledge will realize that there is no real happiness in this material world. In the Bhagavad-gitā (8.15) Lord Kṛṣṇa characterizes this world as temporary and devoid of happiness: anityam asukham lokam. The so-called happiness one experiences here is nothing but a temporary cessation or diminution of misery. It is like the pleasure felt by a man who is repeatedly dunked in water and then brought to the surface just before drowning. Upon gulping down the life-giving air he feels great relief and joy, but such happiness is really only the temporary absence of continual misery. Lord Kṛṣṇa therefore advises us not to strive for the so-called happiness of this material world: sama-dukhha-sukham dhīram so ’mrtatvāya kalpate. “[DDB127]One who remains equipoised in both misery and happiness is qualified for liberation” (Bg. 2.15). Only such a person can taste real happiness; others experience only the illusion of happiness.

In conclusion, therefore, the Lord has designed a two-part program for both chastening and rehabilitating the jivas: On the one hand[DDB128] Māyā kicks them, and on the other[DDB129] the Lord instructs them through various incarnations, the Vedic scriptures, and His pure devotees. Thus Māyā’s actions and the Lord’s perfectly complement one another.

Although Māyā is the Lord’s material energy, she also exists in her own personal form. All the energies of the Lord have their personal features. (Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī will discuss this point in more detail in Śrī Bhagavat-sandarbha.) That Māyā has a personal form is evident from a dialogue between Lord Indra and Māyādevī narrated in the third chapter of the Kena Upaniṣad: Once there was a war between
the demigods and the demons. After a long struggle, the demigods prevailed by the Supreme Lord’s mercy, but they mistakenly ascribed their victory to their own valor and became proud. To humble them, the Lord appeared before them in the guise of a yakṣa. Unable to identify the yakṣa, they appointed Agni, the fire-god, to find out who He was. When Agni asked the yakṣa to identify Himself, He placed a straw in front of Agni and said, “Burn it.” With all his power Agni could not burn the straw. Then Vāyu, the air-god, was sent to identify the yakṣa, but he could not blow the straw away. Next Lord Indra approached the yakṣa, but the mysterious personality disappeared. Finally Māyādevi appeared to Indra in the form of Umā and told him that the yakṣa was in fact the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Many similar accounts in the Vedas and Purāṇas show that Māyā and other energies of the Lord have their own personal forms. Thus the description of how Vyāsa saw Māyā standing behind the Lord out of embarrassment is not figurative.

One more question might be asked: If Māyā, the predominating deity of the material energy, can manage all her own affairs, what need is there for the Paramātmā to control this world? Lord Kṛṣna answers in the Bhagavad-gitā (14.4):

\[
\text{sitva-yoniṣu kaunteya murtayāh sambhavanti yāḥ}
\]
\[
tāsāṁ brahma mahād yonir aham bīja-pradāh pitā
\]

“It should be understood that all species of life, O son of Kunti, are made possible by birth in this material nature, and that I am the seed-giving father.” Just as a woman cannot conceive a child without the help of a potent man, Māyā cannot manage the material world without the help of the Paramātmā. Māyā has her innate potencies for serving the Supreme Lord, but still she needs His help in carrying out her duties. For this reason Vyāsa saw that she was dependent on the Lord, a fact Kṛṣna confirms in the Bhagavad-gitā (9.10) when He says that this material nature, which is one of His energies, is ultimately working under His direction.

The next Text further explains Śrī Vyāsa’s trance.

TEXT 34

\[
tatra jīvasya tādṛśa-cid-rūpate 'pi parameśvarato vailakṣanyam tad-apāśrayām iti yayaḥ sammohita iti ca darsayati.
\]

Like the Lord, the jīva is purely spiritual, yet still he is different from the Lord. This truth is indicated by the words tad-apāśrayam ("Māyā is outside Him yet supported by Him," [in Bhāgavatam. 1.7.4]) and yayā sammohito ("deluded by Māyā," [in Bhāgavatam. 1.7.5]).

COMMENTARY
The Jīva Is Conscious and Distinct from the Lord

In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.7.4 the words used to describe Māyā’s relationship with the Lord are tad-apāsrayam. This phrase indicates that in His trance Śrīla Vyāsadeva saw that the Supreme Personality of Godhead supports Māyā and that she has no influence over Him. The prefix apa means “separate” and “inferior.” Māyā is separate from the Lord in the sense that she is not one of His internal energies. That she is ashamed to appear in front of the Lord indicates she is inferior to both Him and His internal potencies. For this reason she cannot influence Him, though she is dependent on Him. Therefore, as mentioned earlier, she has been compared to a maidservant who works outside a king.[DDB130]s inner apartments.

While unable to influence the Lord or His internal potencies, Māyā can influence the jīva, as the words yayā sammohitah indicate. Being part and parcel of God, the jīva is conscious by nature, yet he is not all-powerful like God, for his potencies are limited. Thus the Lord controls Māyā, and she controls the limited jīvas when they are not united with Him in bhakti-yoga. Just as sparks separated from a fire lose their brilliance but not their existence, so when the living beings are separated from the Lord they forget their nature and are absorbed in illusion. The Supreme Lord, however, is never affected by illusion. Thus the[DDB131] jīvas are different from the Lord, though they are qualitatively equal with Him in some respects.

Commenting on Bhāgavatam 1.7.4, Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣana points out that besides seeing the Personality of Godhead, Māyā, and the jīva, Śrīla Vyāsa also saw the time energy, as indicated by such verbs as apaśyat (“He saw”), sammohitah (“he is bewildered”), and manute (“he considers”). How is this? Because all these verbs indicate action, which in turn implies the influence of time. As the Bhālavayeśa-sruti states, atha ha vāva nityāni puruṣah prakṛtiḥ atmā kālah: “The Lord, material nature, the living entity, and time are certainly all eternal.” Time’s eternity is also mentioned by Parāśara Muni in the Viṣṇu Purāṇa (1.2.26):

\[
\text{anādir bhagavān kālo nān̄to 'syā dvija vidyate}
\]
\[
\text{avyucchinnāstatas tv ēte sarga-sthity-anta-samyamāh}
\]

“O twice-born Maitreya, supremely powerful time has no beginning or end. Thus the cycle of creation, maintenance, and annihilation continues perpetually.” And in the Bhagavad-gītā (13.20) Lord Krṣṇa says:

\[
\text{prakṛtim puruṣam caiva viddhya anādir ubhāv api}
\]
\[
\text{vikārāṁś ca gunāṁś caiva viddhī prakṛti-sambhavān}
\]

“Material nature and the living entities should be understood to be beginningless. Their transformations and the modes of matter are products of material nature.” In commenting on this verse in his Sārārtha-varṣini, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī [DDB132] Thākura says, māyā-jīvayor api mac-chaktivena anāditvā tayoh samāleśo 'py anādir iti bhāvah: “[Lord Krṣṇa says:] ‘Since both Māyā and the jīva are My energies, both exist since time immemorial. Therefore the jīva has
been in contact with Māyā since time immemorial.” It follows from this that the jīva’s karma has been acting since time immemorial as well.

Śrīla Vyāsadeva acknowledges that this is the nature of karma in Sūtra 2.1.35 of the Vedānta: na karmāvibhāgād iti cen nānādītvā. “One might object that the law of karma cannot explain the inequality in the universe because to begin with everyone must be equal. But this objection is not valid, since the cycle of creation has no beginning. Inasmuch as creation has no beginning, karma also has no beginning.”

Apart from karma, the other four entities Śrīla Vyāsa saw—the Personality of Godhead, the jīva, material nature, and time—are eternal, without beginning or end. Of these four, the Supreme Lord and the jīva are conscious spirit, but the Lord is infinite and the jīva is atomic in size. Time is not conscious, but it is free from the control of the material modes. It is the cause of the threefold division of past, present, and future. The material energy is inert and is composed of three modes—goodness, passion,[DDB133] and ignorance. Matter thus undergoes transformations in time and is the medium through which we perceive the three divisions of time. Although karma has been controlling every conditioned soul since time immemorial, karma can be brought to a close for jīvas who perfect the practice of devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. All this Śrīla Vyāsadeva also saw. To enlighten the conditioned jīvas about these all-important topics, He compiled the Sātvata-saṁhitā, Śrimad-Bhāgavatam.

In the next eight Texts, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī shows that Śrī Vyāsa’s experience refutes the popular monistic philosophy of Śrī Śankarācārya.

**TEXT 35**

yarhy eva yad ekam cid-rūpaṁ brahma māyāśrayatā-balitām vidyā-mayam tarhy eva
tan māyā-viṣayatāpannam avidyā-paribhūtam cety ayuktam iti jīvesvara-vibhāgo
'vagatah. tataś ca svarūpa-sāmarthya-vailakṣanyena tad dvitayam mitho vilakṣana-
svarūpam evety āgatam.

If it is indeed true that the one undivided Brahman, whose very nature is pure spirit, is the foundation of material illusion and also embodies the liberating force of knowledge, then it is illogical to say that Brahman falls under Māyā’s influence and is overcome by ignorance. Thus we can understand that the jīva and the Supreme Lord are separate entities. Since both their identities and their capabilities are different, the jīva and the Lord are essentially distinct.

**COMMENTARY**
The Jīva Is Not the Supreme Brahman
Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has carefully analyzed Śrīla Vyāsadeva’s trance, and now, on the basis of that analysis, he presents arguments against the Māyāvāda theory of the absolute oneness of the Supreme Soul and the jīva souls. The ideas of the Māyāvādīs are completely antagonistic to devotional service and are therefore one of the greatest obstacles on the path of real spiritual progress. Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī compared impersonalism to a tigress who devours one’s spiritual life. He said, kathāḥ mukti-vyāghryā na śrnu kila sarvātma-gilaniḥ: “My dear mind, never listen to talk about liberation, which is like a tigress who swallows everything, including the self” (Manah-sīksā 4).

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu also gave a stern warning about [DDB134]Māyāvāda philosophy to those who aspire to understand the Personality of Godhead in truth. He said, māyāvādī-bhāṣya śunile haya sarva-nāśa: “Hearing Māyāvāda philosophy completely destroys one’s spiritual life” (Cc. Madhya 6.153). Ultimately, He said, because the Māyāvādīs describe Absolute Reality as featureless they are the greatest offenders against Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord.

Śrī Madhvacārya presented forceful refutations of the Māyāvāda theory in a similar vein. One of his most impressive efforts in this line was his Māyāvāj[DDB135]da-khandanam. In this and other works he exposed the way Māyāvādīs misuse grammatical analysis and employ faulty logic, which they resort to in their vain attempt to prove the absolute nondifference between Brahman and the jīva.

In the same mood, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī will refute the Māyāvāda theory in the next few Texts and conclude by exhorting his readers to further investigate the Māyāvādīs’ “unintelligible concoctions.” In other words, Jīva Gosvāmī expects the followers of Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu to consider it their duty to defeat the impersonalists’ word jugglery in as many ways as possible. When the Māyāvādīs are so thoroughly exposed that not one of the pillars supporting their errant doctrine is left standing, then only fools will fall prey to their misleading ideas.

The impersonalists headed by Śrī Śankarācārya base their tenets on the Vedānta-sūtra and the eleven principal Upaniṣads, and they also try to support their arguments with statements from the Bhagavad-gitā. Jīva Gosvāmī contends, however, that their interpretations contradict what Śrīla Vyāsadeva experienced in trance, which is narrated in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, the essence of the Upaniṣads, the Vedānta-sūtra, and the Purāṇas.

Māyāvādīs claim that ultimate reality is nondual, pure consciousness, without form or attributes. They try to define ultimate reality only in negative terms, and so they repeat the aphorism neti neti, “Not this, not that.” To support their arguments they cite such Vedic declarations as sarvaṁ khalv idam brahma (“Indeed, all this is Brahman”; Chāndogya Up. 3.14.1), ekam evādvitīyam (“Brahman is one without a second”[DDB136]; Chāndogya Up. 6.2.1), vijñānam ānandam brahma (“Brahman is consciousness and bliss”; Brhad-āraṇyaka Up. 3.9.28), and neha nānāśi kiṁcana (“Ultimately no variety exists in this world”; Brhad-āraṇyaka Up. 4.4.19).
But then to explain the obvious variety in this world, the Māyāvādis are forced to introduce the idea of some beginningless entity called Māyā, or illusion. The Māyāvādis say that this Māyā cannot be defined as either existing or not existing. They further say that Māyā has two aspects—vidyā (knowledge) and avidyā (ignorance). Somehow or other some part of Brahman comes in contact with Māyā, and the result is illusion for that portion of Brahman. Brahman contacts both vidyā and avidyā. When the totality of Brahman contacts vidyā, then the personal Godhead, known as the [DDB137] īśvara, comes into being. And when small parts of Brahman contact avidyā, they become the jīvas.

According to the Māyāvāda doctrine, the difference between the [DDB138] īśvara and the [DDB139] jīva is not intrinsic or eternal; it is due only to upādhis, or the apparent limitations superimposed on Brahman by Māyā’s vidyā and avidyā potencies. When a jīva acquires spiritual knowledge and thus removes these upādhis from himself, he realizes himself to be the unlimited, nonvariegated Brahman. This attainment is supposed to be the perfection of spiritual life. In support of this concept, the Śankarites quote the Vedic statement rta jñānān na muktiḥ: “There is no liberation without knowledge.”

A favorite analogy the Māyāvādis use to explain how unlimited Brahman becomes limited as the jīvas is that of the sky and clay pots. Just as the vast sky seems to become limited in a pot and is then known as “the sky in the pot,” so the unlimited Brahman seems to become limited by the jīvas’ subtle and gross material bodies. When a pot is broken there is no longer a distinction between the sky in the pot and the all-pervading sky, and similarly when a jīva’s false identity is dissolved the jīva no longer appears different from Brahman. Actually, the Māyāvādis explain, the apparent distinction between the sky in the pot and the all-pervading sky did not really exist even when the pot was intact, and in the same way the difference between the individual self and the total Supreme is always illusory. The Advaita monists even see confirmation of all this in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, as in the final instructions to Parākṣit Mahārāja imparted by Śukadeva, the leader of all transcendentalists:

\[ \text{ghate bhinne yathākāśa ākāśah syād yathā purā evam dehe mṛte jīvo brahma sampadyate punaḥ} \]

“When a pot is broken, the portion of sky within the pot remains as the element sky, just as before. In the same way, when the gross and subtle bodies die, the living entity within again becomes the Supreme” (Bhāg. 12.5.5). Later in the same set of instructions, Śukadeva also says,

\[ \text{aham brahma param dhāma brahmāham paramam param evam samikṣann ātmānām ātmany ādhāya niṣkale} \]

“I am the Absolute Truth, the supreme abode, and that Absolute Truth, the supreme destination, is I. Meditating like this, merge yourself into that nameless universal self” (Bhāg. 12.5.11).
These statements of course need proper explanation, but when the Māyāvādīs explain them they do so without regard to the actual context. In fact, only by taking them out of context can one translate them as shown above. In the fifty-second Text of the Tattva-sandarbha, Śrila Jīva Gosvāmī will briefly discuss why such verses seem to have an impersonal slant, and in Śrī Paramātma-sandarbha, Texts[DDB140] 72–84, he will provide a more detailed discussion.

Śrila Jīva Gosvāmī here begins countering the Māyāvāda philosophy by establishing the essential distinction between the[DDB141] jīva and the [DDB142] īśvara. His first point, [DDB143]which we have learned from the account of Vyāsadeva’s trance, is that Māyā controls only the jīva and not the Supreme Lord. Indeed, Māyā is dependent upon the Lord and completely controlled by Him. The same Brahman cannot be the controller as well as the controlled, because ignorance and knowledge cannot exist simultaneously in the one undivided reality, just as light and darkness cannot occupy the same point in space.

The jīva’s[DDB144] abilities and qualities are different from those of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This difference, moreover, is not a product of illusion. By constitution the jīva is atomic in size, and thus he is vulnerable to Māyā’s influence when he disassociates himself from the Supreme Lord. But by surrendering to the Lord he can free himself from the shackles of Māyā. Śrila Vyāsa saw all this in His trance.

In the next Text, Śrila Jīva Gosvāmī states that the difference between the jīva and the Lord is real and not just empirical.

TEXT 36

na copāḍhi-tāratamya-maya-pariccheda-pratibimbatvādi-vyavasthayā tayor vibhāgah syāt.

Also, the Māyāvādīs cannot explain this difference between the jīva and the Lord simply as a division or reflection of Brahman into a hierarchy of upādhis.

COMMENTARY
The jīva Is Not Merely an Upādhi

The Māyāvāda philosophers hold that there is one reality—the formless, indivisible, non[DDB145]variegated, impersonal Brahman—and they have various theories for explaining the apparent existence of the[DDB146] jīva and [DDB147]the īśvara. The two theories mentioned in this section are the most prevalent, and both have been expressed in several modified forms. According to the pariccheda-vāda, the one indivisible Brahman appears divided into many
embodied jīvas because of various upādhis, just as the one great sky (mahākāśa) appears divided by being contained in various pots (ghatākāśa).

This theory proposes that no real difference exists between the sky inside a pot and the sky outside. The distinction is assumed only for practical purposes. Once the pot is broken and the apparent distinction removed, the sky inside the pot and the great sky are understood to be one. Similarly, the proponents of pariccheda-vāda say, there is no difference between the embodied jīva and Brahman. The jīva’s limiting adjunct, his subtle body, is actually a false covering superimposed on the jīva after he comes into contact with Māyā’s avidyā potency, and it is this false covering alone that makes him appear to be separate from Brahman. Thus when Brahman is limited by subtle bodies it becomes the jīvas. But when it is limited byvidyā it is called [DDB148]the īśvara. This doctrine of separation was formulated by Vācaspati Miśra, the ninth-century author of the Bhāmatī commentary on Śaṅkara’s Vedanta-sūtra-bhāṣya.

According to pratibimba-vāda, when the formless, undivided Brahman is reflected in the various subtle bodies made of avidyā, it appears to be many, just as the one sun reflected in various receptacles of water appears to be many. In this analogy, the sun remains uninfluenced by the agitation of the water in which it is reflected, even while the reflection is influenced. Similarly, Brahman is never influenced by the changes that its reflections, the jīvas, undergo. Indeed, the happiness and distress the jīvas experience are only illusions resulting from their conditioned, or reflected, state. When the jīva frees himself from illusion and achieves liberation, he reverts to his original Brahman consciousness. This is one Māyāvāda version of how the jīvas come into being.

According to the proponents of pratibimba-vāda, the same Brahman that becomes the jīvas when reflected in Māyā’s avidyā potency becomes the [DDB149]īśvara, the creator Godhead, when reflected in her vidyā potency. By virtue of this contact with Māyā, Brahman assumes a personal but temporary form that, unlike the jīva, is immune to Māyā’s influence. Nonetheless, Brahman’s manifestation in the personal feature of the [DDB150]īśvara is the work of Māyā and is inferior to the all-pervading Brahman. The pratibimba-vādīs say that all the incarnations of God described in the Vedic literature are manifestations of the [DDB151]īśvara—the results of Brahman’s combining with Māyā’s vidyā potency. Like the jīvas, such personal manifestations of God have subtle and gross bodies, but unlike the jīvas They neither accept [DDB152]Their bodies because of past karma nor are bound by the reactions of Their activities. Thus [DDB153]the jīva and [DDB154]the īśvara are distinct.

The Māyāvādīs try to support their ideas by citing scripture. For example, from the Sūka-rahasya Upanisad (2.12) they quote the statement kāryopādhir ayam jīvah kāranopādhir īśvarah: “The jīva is a reflection [of Brahman] in the antah-karāṇa, or heart, and the īśvara is a reflection in Māyā.”

Also: yathā hy ayam ījyot ātmā vivasvān āpo bhūtvā bahudhaiko ’nugacchan upādhinā kriyate bheda-rūpo devah kṣetresv evam ajo ’yam ātmā[DDDB155]. “Just as
the one effulgent sun appears to be many when reflected in many pots of water, so the one unborn ātmā, Brahman, appears to be many beings when reflected in many bodies.”8 (This text is quoted by Baladeva Vidyābhūsana in his Tattva-sandarbha commentary.)

Some Advaita monists also cite Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam in support of their pratibimba-vāda and pariccheda-vāda:

\[
\text{na hi satyasya nānātvaṁ avidvān yadi manyate} \\
\text{nānātvaṁ chidrayor yadvaj jyotisor vātayor iva}
\]

“This is certain: there is no variety in the Absolute Truth. If an ignorant person thinks there is, his understanding is just like thinking there is a difference between the sky above and the sky in a pot, or between the sun and its reflection in water, or between the air outside the body and the air inside”9 (Bhāg. 12.4.30).

Śrila Jiva Gosvāmi, following in Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s footsteps, contends that Śrī Vyāsadeva’s experience in trance contradicts both of these Mayāvāda doctrines—namely, pratibimba-vāda and pariccheda-vāda. This contradiction is evident from the analysis Jiva Gosvāmi has already presented, but in the upcoming Texts he will demonstrate it further by pointing out the specific defects in these doctrines.

TEXT 37

tatra yady upādher anāvidyakatvena vāstavatvam tarhy avisayasya tasya pariccheda-
visayatvāsamabhavah. nirdharmakasya vyāpakasya niravayavasya ca
pratibimbavāyogo 'pi upādhi-sambandhābhbhavād bimba-pratibimba-bhedābhavād
dṛśyatvābhavāc ca. upādhi-parichinnākāśa-stha-jyotir-ansāsyai va pratibimbo dṛśyate
na tu ākāśasya dṛśyatvābhavād eva.

If we assume that these upādhīs are empirically real and not illusory, still, because Brahman is not affected by anything, it cannot be delimited by them. Moreover, Brahman can cast no reflection because it is devoid of attributes, all-pervading, and indivisible. Since Brahman has no attributes, it can have no relation with upādhis; since it is all-pervading, it cannot be divided into a reflected object and its reflection; and since it is indivisible and uniform, it cannot be seen. In these respects Brahman resembles the sky:[DDB156] Because the sky is invisible, reflections are cast not by the sky itself but by limited luminous parts of the sky, namely the heavenly bodies.

COMMENTARY
Flaws in Pratibimba-vāda and Pariccheda-vāda

In Advaita monism, existence (sattā) is understood on three different levels—
pratibhasika (merely apparent reality), vyavaharika (ordinary, empirical reality), and paramarthika (absolute reality). Pratibhasika existence is perceived in such states as dreams and illusions but ceases when normal consciousness returns. One may, for example, mistake a rope for a snake in semidarkness, but this perception ceases as soon as light is shed on the rope. Therefore, the snake perceived in the rope was a merely apparent reality, or pratibhasika-sattā. It cannot be considered an empirical reality because it is private and temporary.

According to the Mayavādis, empirical reality, vyavaharika-sattā, refers to our perception of the material world in ordinary waking consciousness. Ultimate reality, paramarthika-sattā, is present in all objects of the material world, pervading them as the blissful source of all manifest varieties. In his Drg-drśya-viveka (20) Śripāda Śankarācārya writes:

asti bhāti priyam rūpam nāma cety anśa-pañcakam  
ādyatrayam brahma-rūpam jagad-rūpam tato dvayam

“Objects in the material world have five characteristics—existence, perceivability, attractiveness, form, and name. Of these, the first three belong to Brahman and the others to the world.” The last two items, form and name, are products of Māyā and thus constitute only the empirical reality; they do not exist on the absolute level. They are manifest only as long as one has not realized Brahman. The other three are Brahman itself as perceived in empirical reality.

The Mayavādis claim that the paramarthika-sattā, or absolute reality, is impersonal Brahman, which, unlike the other two realities, cannot be negated by experience and scriptural authority. Just as dreams cease when one wakes, the material world will cease to exist when one becomes Brahman realized. There is no higher reality than absolute Brahman, no higher existence that can negate the real existence of Brahman in the past, present, or future. On the level of Brahman existence, there is no distinction between knowledge, the knower, and the object of knowledge. All three fuse into one absolute reality. The two lower realities, pratibhasika and vyavaharika, are not perceived on this level of consciousness.

Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmi refutes both the pariccheda-vāda (the theory of division) and the pratibimba-vāda (the theory of reflection) by considering the Śankarites’ explanation of the upādhis covering Brahman as features of the two lower realities: These upādhis can never be real aspects of the absolute reality, since that would introduce duality on the nondual plane. In the case of pariccheda-vāda, the upādhis can be either empirical reality (anāvidyaka) or apparent reality (āvidyaka). Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmi shows the fault in both of these alternatives.

If the upādhis are empirically real, Brahman still cannot be limited by them because pure Brahman is unconditioned by anything else, empirical or otherwise. In the Bhagavad-gitā (13.13) Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa confirms this:

jñeyam yat tat pravakṣyāmi yaj jñātvāmṛtam aṣnute  
anādi mat-param brahma na sat tan nāsad ucyate
“I shall now explain the knowable, knowing which you will taste the eternal. Brahman, the supreme spirit, beginningless and subordinate to Me, lies beyond the cause and effect of this material world.” Thus no upādhis can limit Brahman.

But in the opinion of Śankarācārya, this Gitā verse says, “I shall tell you that which has to be known, knowing which one attains immortality; it is the beginningless, supreme Brahman, which is said to be neither being nor nonbeing.” In commenting on this verse Śankara writes:

[DDB157]

idam tu jñeyam atidriyatvena sādaikā-pramāṇa-gamyatvān na ghatādi-vad ubhaya-buddhy-anugata-pratyaya-viśayam ity ato na san na asad ity ucyate. yat tv uktam viruddham ucyate jñeyam tan na sat tan na asad ucyate iti. na viruddham.

“anyad eva tad viditād atho aviditād adhi” iti śrute.

[DDB158]

[DDB159]“But this knowable Brahman, being beyond the reach of the senses, can be understood only by means of hearing revealed knowledge from scripture. Therefore, unlike the clay pot, etc., it can never be said to exist or not exist, and thus it can never be called sat or asat.

“Objection: But what you said about Brahman, the object of knowledge—that it is neither existent nor nonexistent—is contradictory.

“Answer: No, it is not, because the śruti states: ‘That [Brahman] is different from the known and from the unknown, for it is beyond both’ [Kena Up. 1.3 [NEW160]].”[DDB161]

So according to the Māyāvādis’ own version, Brahman is beyond sense perception, beyond empirical existence and nonexistence. Such being the case, if the upādhis of Brahman are empirically real they can never limit the undivided and indivisible Brahman and produce the jīvas. Therefore the Vedas say, agrhyo na grhyate: “The untouchable [Brahman] cannot be perceived” (Brhad-āranyaka Up. 9.26). Brahman being neither pierceable nor divisible, it cannot be broken or delimited into jīvas the way one might break a large stone into pebbles.

If we hypothetically grant that the upādhis can divide Brahman into jīvas, then in that case neither the jīvas nor Brahman itself should be called eternal. But the Bhagavad-gitā, which the Māyāvādis accept as authoritative, describes both the jīva and Brahman as eternal. In Chapter Thirteen, text 20, Lord Kṛṣṇa says that the jīva is anādi, beginningless. The same is stated in texts 20–24 of the Second Chapter.

Śrila Baladeva Vidyābhūṣana states that even if the above point is overlooked, other inconsistencies abound in the Māyāvāda conception: The jīvas and the [DDB162]jīvāra move from one place to another, but Brahman is all-pervading. Somehow portions of Brahman become limited by upādhis to manifest as the jīvas. When a given jīva moves from one place to another, either Brahman also moves along with him[DDB163] or it does not. But Brahman’s moving from place to place is impossible, because when something
moves it leaves one location and then occupies another, where it was absent before. It is absurd to propose this situation for Brahman, since Brahman is always present everywhere.

On the other hand, if Brahman does not move with the jīvas, we must assume that when a jīva is moving from place to place his [DDB164] upādhi constantly delimits new portions of Brahman, simultaneously releasing the previously delimited portions. This reduces Brahman, the absolute reality, to a toy in the hands of its upādhis, a proposal that is also absurd.

If it is instead proposed that all of Brahman is grasped by its upādhis, the problem of movement can be solved, but then there remains no Brahman free from upādhis, meaning that there is no chance for the jīvas' liberation or for useful discussion of philosophy; all of existence would consist of the deluded Brahman, and there would be no liberated domain to aspire for.

If it is countered that Brahman is not the basis for its upādhis and thus they can move independently of Brahman, this means that even at the liberated level these independent upādhis will continue to exist.

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī thus [DDB165] concludes that the interpretation of pariccheda-vāda in terms of Brahman’s upādhis being empirically real is invalid.

He then goes on to refute pratibimba-vāda, the theory of reflection. Brahman, Śrīla Jīva states, can cast no reflection in its upādhis, or subtle bodies of material existence, because Brahman is devoid of all attributes. Only an object possessing attributes like form and color can cast [DDB166] a reflection. If an object is invisible, how can it be reflected in anything?

If it is countered that the sky, although invisible, casts a reflection in water, Jīva Gosvāmī replies that it is in fact the stars and planets in the sky that cast reflections in water, not the sky itself. If the sky could cast a reflection, then the wind would also be able to cast one, because air is a grosser material element than sky. According to modern science, the bluish background seen behind the visible bodies in the firmament is an optical illusion created by the refracted sunlight passing through the atmosphere. No concrete, underlying object is there to cast a reflection, only the invisible firmament. Hence the analogy comparing Brahman to the sky being reflected in water is inappropriate here.

Furthermore, we have already shown that, according to the Māyāvādīs, Brahman is beyond empirical existence and nonexistence and thus also beyond sensory perception. [DDB167] Thus it is foolish for the Māyāvādīs to propose that Brahman reflects as the jīvas. But Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī is willing to grant the opposition a respite and hypothetically accept their premise that Brahman can reflect in upādhīs [DDB168]; in this case all-pervading Brahman must also exist in the upādhīs, in which it supposedly reflects. But if the reflected object, Brahman, is already present in the reflecting medium, the upādhīs, how will it
reflect there? As a mirror cannot reflect in itself, so Brahman cannot reflect in itself. Even if somehow it manages to reflect in itself, how will it be possible to distinguish the reflected Brahman from the original Brahman already present in the upādhis? The two will be coincident, allowing no basis for distinguishing one from the other. How can the reflected Brahman be singled out to be termed jīva and made to suffer? What was His offense? Why is it that the reflected Brahman becomes affected by upādhis and not the original Brahman, although the reflection is no different from the original?

The Māyāvādīs have also told us that Brahman has no internal parts: niskalāṁ niṣkriyāṁ sāntam. “Brahman contains no limbs or parts. It is inactive and peaceful” (Svetāsvatara Up. 6.79). But a formless, indivisible object cannot have a relation with any upādhi, real or imaginary, and thus it cannot reflect in any medium.

In response to this contention, the Advaita monists cite the analogy of a clear crystal that appears red when placed in front of a red flower. Just as the red color, which is formless and partless, casts its reflection on the crystal, so it is possible for Brahman to be reflected in its upādhis. But this is a faulty argument. The red color in this analogy belongs to the flower, which projects its image through the crystal, although in the crystal we perceive only the flower's color. The color exists simply as the flower's attribute and cannot sustain itself independently. A flower, moreover, has shape, parts, and attributes. In sum, neither the color nor the flower compares adequately to Brahman. Therefore, like the analogy of the reflected sky, this analogy has also been applied incongruously by the Māyāvādīs.

The śruti says, asaṅga hy ayaṁ puruṣah: “Brahman is free from any relation or association” (Brhad-āranyaka Up. 4.3.15). Therefore Brahman cannot engage in any relationship with a reflecting medium. The Māyāvādīs interpret the word asaṅga here as meaning “devoid of real relations.” This implies that Brahman can have nonreal relations or associations, created by Māyā, but we have already shown that a formless Brahman has no ability to manifest a reflection in an empirically real medium or have any other relation with such a medium, and this impossibility is even more definite with respect to unreal relations with unreal mediums. The Prasnopanisad (4.10) confirms this when it states, tad acchāyam aṣaṁritam alohitam: “That Brahman casts no shadow, has no body, and is colorless.” We can thus conclude that upādhis—whether real or unreal—can never impose themselves on pure Brahman. They affect only the deluded jīvas.

In the next Text Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmi presents more arguments against the Māyāvāda doctrine, hypothetically considering Brahman's upādhis as real.

TEXT 38

tathā vāstava-paricchedādau sati sāmānādhihkaranya-ṣaṁśa-mātena na tat-tyāgaś ca bhavet. tat-paddhatha-prabhavaś tatra kāranam iti ced asmākam eva matam
Moreover, if there were empirically real upādhis delimiting Brahman (pariccheda) or acting as the medium of its reflection (pratibimba), a person could not escape from them simply by knowing he is one with the Supreme in essence. And if the Advaita monists propose that freedom from upādhis is due to the influence of the supreme entity, who is called tat, then they agree with us!

**COMMENTARY**

Refutations of Pratibimba-vāda and Pariccheda-vāda

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī here exposes further complications that arise from accepting Brahman’s upādhis as empirically real. The Advaita monists believe that a jīva can become free from bondage to his upādhis by becoming educated through the śrutis. This is the idea of the following śruti statements:

*Tat tvam asī: “Thou art that” (Chāndogya Up. 6.8.7).
*Tat tvam asy-ādi-vākyebhyah jñānam mokṣasya sādhanaṃ: “The means to liberation is knowledge arising from [DDB170]such dictums as ‘Thou art that’” (Brhatnārādiya Pur. 35.68).
*Brahma veda brahmaiva bhavati: “He who knows that Brahman becomes Brahman” (Mundaka Up. 3.2.9).
*Tatātī sokam ātma-vit: “The knower of the Self transcends grief” (Chāndogya Up. 7.1.3).

Thus, with the apparent support of Vedic scripture, the Māyāvāda school claims that liberation is achieved through knowledge. Indeed, the śruti says, *tam eva viditvā ati mṛtyum eti/ nānyah panthā vidyate ’yanāya: “Only by knowing that [Brahman] can one transcend death; there is no other way to cross over” (Śvetāśvatara Up. 3.8., 5.15). And in the Bhagavad-gitā (4.37) Lord Kṛṣṇa says:

\[
yathāidāmsi samiddho ‘gnir bhasma-sāt kurute ‘rjuna
jñānāgniḥ sarva-armāṇi bhasma-sāt kurute tathā
\]

“As a blazing fire turns firewood to ashes, O Arjuna, so does the fire of knowledge burn to ashes all reactions to material activities.” [DDB171] Continuing the idea in the next two verses (Bg. 38 and 39) the Lord says, *na hi jñānena sādṛṣṭam pavitram iha vidyate: “Nothing is as purifying as knowledge”*; and *jñānam labdhvā parām śāntim acireṇādhitacamhāti: “Having attained this knowledge, one quickly attains the supreme peace.”

In effect, the Māyāvādīs think the jīva is like a rich man’s infant son who has gotten lost in a busy public place and is then found by a poor man. As a result of this misfortune, compounded by the son’s ignorance of his true identity, the baby grows up in a humble setting as the child of the poor man. Later the child may be recognized by one of his father’s servants. As soon as the boy comes to
realize he is the son of a wealthy man, all his poverty evaporates. He does not have to toil hard to get rid of this poverty. In fact, he was never really poor, just ignorant, and thus simply coming to a proper understanding of his real identity was sufficient to reverse the situation.

Another example: A person forgets that he put his watch in his pocket and searches for hours, but without any luck. Finally, a friend comes along and sees the watch strap sticking out of his pocket and tells him, “Your watch is in your pocket.” At once the person has the watch and his anxiety is gone. Knowledge alone was sufficient to relieve his distress.

Similarly, the Māyāvādīs say, the jīva is nothing but deluded Brahman. As soon as he realizes this by properly hearing the Vedic instructions, he becomes liberated. He then understands that Brahman is not distant from him, for in fact he himself is Brahman. His only obstacle was ignorance, which hearing the Vedas has now removed. Of course, for the process to be effective one’s heart must be pure, and to achieve this purity Śrīpāda Śaṅkarācārya recommends the sādhanā-catuṣṭaya, or “fourfold practice,” consisting of discrimination, dispassion, “the six achievements,”[DDB173] and eagerness for liberation.

According to Śaṅkara, one of the four mahā-vākyas, or essential statements of all Vedic instructions, is tat tvam asī:[DDB174] “You are that [Brahman].” This statement underlines the oneness of the jīva with Brahman. But, we have to ask, since Brahman is all-pervading and all-knowing while the jīva is atomic and limited in knowledge, how can they be the same? To this the Māyāvādīs reply that tat tvam asī should not be understood in its primary, literal sense but only in a secondary sense. One can recognize the actual oneness between the jīva and Brahman when one puts aside their opposing qualities—omnipresence and omniscience versus atomic size and limited knowledge—and recognizes only their mutual quality of consciousness. This process is called bhāga-tyāga-lakṣanā, or applying a metaphorical meaning to a phrase by avoiding part of a word’s literal meaning or some of its qualifications[DDB175]. Thus one can realize the true oneness between Brahman and the[DDB176] jīva only when one puts aside the upādhi that de[DDB177]limits Brahman into becoming a jīva. To help in this realization the guru instructs the disciple, “You are that.” Since the śrutī statements cannot be meaningless, Śaṅkara contends, this is the only way to understand the mahā-vākyas.

Śrila Jiva Gosvāmi answers this whole argument by pointing out that even when a jīva is absorbed in hearing the Vedic sound conveying the knowledge that he is one with Brahman, the upādhi covering the jīva, which is empirically real, will not magically dissolve. A man bound by chains will not become free just by meditating that his fetters are cut. A rabbit will not turn into an elephant just by meditating, “I am an elephant, I am an elephant.” Such achievements would be possible only if the upādhis were merely apparent. An intoxicated office clerk may think he is the President of the United States, but when he becomes sober he understands he is still just an office clerk. If the upādhis covering Brahman are real, the task of removing them is not so easy. Mere knowledge is not sufficient to liberate the jīva from Māyā.
If knowledge alone were actually sufficient for liberation, why do the scriptures recommend various austerities, penances, and rituals for self-purification? The Māyāvādīs can only say that these are preliminary steps for purifying the heart, for qualifying one to understand the meaning of the śrutis’ mahā-vākyas.

But according to the sāstras, knowledge (vidyā) and ignorance (avidyā) are both products of Māyā. So even if a jīva, by studying Vedic texts, gets rid of his avidyā with the help of vidyā, he will still be bound by vidyā. How will he do away with this other upādhi, vidyā? Until he is free from all upādhis he cannot realize Brahman, which is beyond both vidyā and avidyā. Lord Kṛṣṇa discusses this point with Uddhava in the Eleventh Canto of the Bhāgavatam (11.11.3):

vidyāvidye mama tanū viddhya uddhava śarīrinām
mokṣa-bandha-karī ādye māyayā me vinirmite

“O Uddhava, both knowledge and ignorance, being products of Māyā, are expansions of My potency. Both knowledge and ignorance are beginningless, and they perpetually award living beings [DDB178]liberation and bondage, respectively.” Here the Lord explicitly states that vidyā is also a product of Māyā. When He says that vidyā gives liberation, He does not mean that vidyā alone can grant it, because no one can become free from Māyā without surrendering to the Supreme Lord. He emphatically declares this to Arjuna in the Bhagavad-gitā (7.14):

daivī hy eṣā guṇa-mayī mama māyā duratyayā
māṁ eva ye prapadyante māyāṁ etāṁ taranti te

“This divine energy of Mine—Māyā, consisting of the three modes of material nature—is difficult to overcome. Only those who have surrendered unto Me can easily cross beyond it.”

The term vidyā means “knowledge” and also “devotion.” In Upaniṣadic statements such as tam eva vidvitvā ati mṛtyum eti, the word vidvitvā (“after knowing”) really means “by being devoted to Him, fully knowing His essence”; it does not mean having knowledge without devotion. Lord Kṛṣṇa confirms this in the Bhagavad-gitā (4.9):

janma karma ca me divyam evam yo vetti tattvatah
tyaktvā deham punar janma naiti māṁ eti so ‘rjuna

“One who knows in truth the transcendental nature of My appearance and activities does not, upon leaving the body, take his birth again in this material world, but attains My eternal abode, O Arjuna.” Here the same root, vid (“to know”), is being used, and in this context it means “knowing with devotion.”

Material knowledge is a feature of Māyā, whereas transcendental knowledge about the Lord is manifested by the illuminating power of bhakti, an aspect of the
Supreme Lord’s internal potency. Spiritual knowledge is inseparable from bhakti. The process of hearing—or in other words receiving knowledge—is in fact listed first among the nine processes of devotional service. A passage from the Brhad-\-aranyaka Upanisad (4.4.21) bears out our conclusion that vidyā indicates knowledge with devotion: vijñāya prajñāṁ kurvita. “After knowing, one should practice wisdom.” Here the word used for wisdom—prajñā—conveys the same meaning as vidyā, and so the sentence indicates, “After knowing Him, one should practice devotion.” Also, in the Bhagavad-\-gītā (9.2) the Lord says, rāja-vidyā, “This is the king of knowledge.” From the context it is evident that here vidyā means “devotional service.” Thus it is devotional service and not mere knowledge that cuts the bonds of Māyā, as stated in Bhagavad-\-gītā 7.14 and confirmed later, in Bhagavad-\-gītā 11.53–54:

\[
\text{nāham vedair na tapasā na dānena na cejayā}
\]
\[
\text{śakya evam-vidho draśṭum drśṭavān asi māṁ yathā}
\]
\[
\text{bhaktyā tv ananyayā śakya aham evam-vidho 'rjuna}
\]
\[
\text{jñātum draśṭum ca tattvena praveśṭum ca parantapa}
\]

“[Lord Kṛṣṇa said to Arjuna:] ‘The form you are seeing with your transcendental eyes cannot be understood simply by studying the Vedas, nor by undergoing serious penances, nor by charity, nor by worship. It is not by these means that one can see Me as I am. My dear Arjuna, only by undivided devotional service can I be understood as I am, standing before you, and can thus be seen directly. Only in this way can you enter into the mysteries of My understanding.”

If the Māyāvādīs respond by suggesting that it is possible for the jīva to remove all upādhis and become Brahman by the mercy of the all-powerful and benign Brahman, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī is glad to accept this idea, since it amounts to surrendering to the Vaiṣṇava view. The Advaita monists insist that Brahman is devoid of all attributes and potencies, but if that same Brahman is now required to bless the jīva, then it has to have some potency, namely mercy. By allowing featureless Brahman to have any potency at all, the Māyāvādīs conform to the Vaiṣṇava definition of Para-brahman as Bhagavān, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In that case, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī says, asmākam eva mata-sammatam: [DDB179] “Their view then agrees with ours.” In the Bhagavat-sandarbha Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī will prove that even for Brahman realization one must take shelter of the Supreme Lord.

Next, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī exposes the fallacies of the second alternative, that Brahman’s upādhis are unreal.

**TEXT 39**

\[
\text{upādher āvidyakatve tu tatra tat-paricchinatvāder apy aghatamānatvād}
\]
Conversely, if the upādhis are only apparently real, then Brahman's delimitation (paricchedavāda) and reflection (pratibandhavāda) are also apparently real, since these processes would not in fact occur. Because in this case the Māyāvādis' doctrine would be based on the analogy of an unreal dream state, such analogies as that of the pot and the sky, which involve real upādhis, cannot serve to establish it. No proper analogy can be drawn between something that exists and something that does not exist[DDB180]. Therefore the Māyāvādis’ theories of division and reflection are nothing but the play of illusion, unprovable by their faulty application of analogies.

COMMENTARY
Further Refutations of Pratibandha-vāda and Pariccheda-vāda

In previous Texts, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmi has shown that if Brahman’s upādhis are empirically real one cannot satisfactorily explain the existence of either the jīvas or the iśvara. Now he will consider the Śaṅkarites’ second option, that Brahman’s upādhis are only apparent. In this Text the upādhis are called āvidyaka, or “illusory,” a specific reference to prātibhāsīka reality as defined in Māyāvāda theory. In this context the Śaṅkarites do not intend “illusory” to mean altogether nonexistent, for nonexistence can never give rise to either the jīva or the iśvara. Rather, they say, Brahman’s upādhis are “illusory” in the sense that they exist on neither the empirical nor the absolute level. They are an intangible, apparent reality, akin to dreams, misperceptions, and hallucinations.

The objects one sees in dreams, misperceptions, or hallucinations are intangible. In a dream one may eat a big feast, for example, but upon waking up one will still feel hungry; the feast appears real only while dreaming. Similarly intangible are misperceived or imagined objects, such as a “snake” that is in fact a rope; fear of the snake will persist only as long as the misperception or hallucination continues. This kind of illusory reality (prātibhāsīka-sattā) is inferior to the empirical world and to absolute reality. Nonetheless, the Māyāvādis posit that such apparent upādhis can cause Brahman to take on the characteristics of jīvas and the iśvara.

The first step in refuting this erroneous theory is to point out that an effect is always dependent on its cause and that specific effects arise from specific causes. For example, one cannot make water taste sweet by adding salt. It follows, therefore, that if the upādhis imposed on Brahman are only apparent realities they cannot produce empirical reality. A daydream may be a pleasant reverie, but no one gains any real benefit by imagining he has been crowned emperor of the world. Instead, as he wakes away the time the daydreamer may lose an opportunity for gaining some practical benefit in the real world. However much he dreams, his apparent reality will never become empirically real.
In the context of discussing real upādhis, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has already refuted the two analogies the Māyāvādīs use to explain pariccheda-vāda and pratibimba-vāda—the analogy of the sun reflecting in many waterpots and that of the sky becoming delimited by a pot. These analogies are also inappropriate here. The Māyāvādīs may justifiably presume the sky to be empirically real and thus delimitable by such an upādhi as a pot. But Brahman is neither empirical not divisible, and therefore it is impossible for empirical upādhis to delimit it. If any delimitation of Brahman can be reconciled with Brahman’s transcendental nature, such delimitation can occur only on the level of mere appearance, not in empirical reality. Such a prātbhāsīka delimitation, unreal in the empirical sense, will not help explain how the jīvas and the īśvara come into being on the empirical plane. This leaves no consistent explanation of how indivisible, formless Brahman can be divided into the jīvas and the īśvara by either empirical or merely apparent upādhis.

A good analogy must be as similar as possible to what it illustrates. The greater the similarity, the stronger the analogy. But the analogy of the sky and the pot is not similar enough to the situation the Māyāvādīs try to apply it to: while the sky and Brahman are similar, the sky’s upādhi, the pot, is empirical, while Brahman’s upādhis must be merely apparent.

The impersonalists compare this world to a dream [DDB181] to show its illusory nature[DDB182]—to show that it does not really exist. But it is unjustifiable to equate the dream world (apparent reality) with the external world (empirical reality) in order to reach this conclusion. If a person commits murder in a dream he is not punished for it, but in the phenomenal world he risks punishment for such an act. So it is improper to say that the world is just a dream. Sin and piety, which pollute or purify the heart of an actor, are not applicable to acts done in dreams; they give their bitter and sweet fruits only in the phenomenal world. The analogy of a dream, therefore, is not adequate for explaining the appearance of the material world from Brahman. The Vedic scriptures present the dream analogy only to illustrate the temporary nature of this world, with a view toward inspiring a sense of detachment from materialism in those desiring to walk the path of transcendence.

The Māyāvādīs’ only other alternative is to assign Brahman to empirical (vyāvahārika) reality by placing it in the same class as the sky, to which the Vedas compare it. But that leaves us with no absolute reality, in which case the whole idea becomes absurd because, logically, absolute reality must exist, and the Vedas and numerous saintly persons confirm this.

Thus all these arguments fail to establish the doctrines of pariccheda and pratibimba, which are thus left as nothing more than mental exercises for impersonal speculators. They provide no sound explanation of how pure Brahman, by adulteration with upādhis, manifests as many, namely as the [DDB183]jīvara and the jīvas.

Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī offers still more refutations of impersonalism in the next Text.
TEXT 40

iti brahmāvidyayoh paryavasāne sati yad eva brahma cin-mātratvenāvidyā- yogasyātyantābhāvāspadatadvā chuddham tad eva tad-yogād asūdhāyā jīvah punas tad eva jīvāvidyā-kalpita-māyāśrayatvād iśvaras tad eva ca tān-māyā-visayatvāj jīva iti virodhas tad-avastha eva syāt. tatra ca śuddhāyām city avidyā tad-avidyā- kalpitopāдуhau tasyām iśvarākhyāyānā vidyeti tathā vidyā-vatte 'pi māyikatvam ity asamañjasā ca kalpanā syād ity-ādy anusandheyam.

In this way, by basing their ideas on Brahmā and avidyā alone, the Māyāvādis contradict themselves when they say that the one undivided Brahmā, pure by virtue of being unadulterated consciousness and thus altogether free from contact with avidyā, is nonetheless polluted by contacting avidyā and thus becomes the jīva. Then again, say the Māyāvādis, that same Brahmā becomes the personal Godhead when He serves as the basis of Māyā, the illusion concocted from the jīva’s avidyā. And under the influence of Māyā, Brahmā supposedly once more becomes the jīva. Here we have avidyā within the pure spiritual being (Brahmā), vidyā within the upādhi called God, who is concocted by that avidyā, and an illusory status of that same Godhead, who is the proprietor of vidyā. We should carefully study how these and other similarly manufactured ideas are simply incoherent.

COMMENTARY
Inconsistencies in Advaita Monism

In the previous Texts Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has refuted the two main theories of Advaita monism, pariccheda-vāda and pratibimba-vāda. He showed that neither of these consistently explains the empirical world and the presence of the jīvas and God within it. Now Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī points out in more detail the fallacies in these theories. He argues that even if we accept either the pariccheda-vāda or the pratibimba-vāda as a description of how Brahmā becomes divided into the many jīvas, still the contradiction between Brahmā’s perfection and the superimposition of avidyā will remain unresolved.

How can Brahmā, which is indivisible,[DDB184] pure consciousness, have portions that fall under the rule of Māyā and think themselves jīvas? Knowledge and delusion cannot share the same location, just as light and darkness cannot both be present in exactly the same place. Being indivisible, Brahmā cannot become fragmented to manifest the jīvas. Moreover, the absolute existence cannot include Māyā (avidyā), but only Brahmā alone. For Māyā to be involved with Brahmā, either Brahmā would have to degrade itself to Māyā’s empirical level so it could be adulterated by upādhi, or else Māyā would have to elevate herself to the absolute plane of Brahmā so that she could influence it. The first of these alternatives is impossible because Brahmā is without attributes and cannot change. The second alternative
amounts to dualism, because then Mâyâ and Brahman would have equal status on the plane of absolute reality. This, of course, contradicts the first principles of Advaita monism.

Under the pressure of these arguments, the impersonalists may try to placate us with the claim that the vital issue at hand is not precisely how the jīva came under the influence of Mâyâ but simply that he is now suffering in illusion. The house of material existence is now on fire; we do not have time to search out Mâyâ's origin but should try to escape the fire quickly before it devours us, before we lose the opportunity of human life.

Even if we grant this point, the Mâyâvâdīs still must convince us that the end they want us to seek, impersonal liberation, is in our best interest. This they cannot do. Our house may be on fire, but it does not follow that we should panic and jump out the first available window to our certain death.

As Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī indicates here, the Mâyâvâdīs say that after Brahman comes under the influence of avidyā He is called the [DDB185]jīva. Then this jīva creates Mâyā by his imagination. A portion of Brahman next gives shelter to Mâyā and becomes known as the [DDB186]īśvara, or the Supreme Lord. From that point on Mâyā follows the [DDB187]īśvara's dictates and controls the jīva, who is Brahman covered by Mâyā. So the [DDB188]īśvara is the basis of Mâyâ, and the jīva is her viśaya, or object of action.

This is self-contradictory. This explanation is plagued with the logical fault called anyonyāśraya-dosa, or “the defect of mutual dependence”: Mâyâ's existence supposedly originates from the jīva, and the jīva's existence also originates from Mâyā. This means that without Mâyā there is no jīva and without the [DDB189]jīva there is no Mâyā. In addition, a part of Brahman supposedly becomes the [DDB190]īśvara by contacting Mâyā, but then Mâyā becomes subordinate to this īśvara. In this view even God cannot come into existence without the involvement of the finite living beings, who are themselves dependent manifestations of Mâyā. So ultimately the [DDB191]īśvara is dependent on Mâyā for His existence.

Another absurdity in the pariccheda-vāda and pratibimba-vāda presentations is the claim that Mâyā has two features—vidyā and avidyā. The upādhi delimiting Brahman as the [DDB192]īśvara is supposedly Mâyā’svidyā portion, which is predominantly in the mode of goodness, while the upādhis limiting Brahman as the jīvas constitute her avidyā portion. In this way, the [DDB193]īśvara is the basis of the jīvas’ illusion despite His being the embodiment of perfect knowledge, but the Mâyâvâdīs cannot explain how such a division of Mâyā into vidyā and avidyā comes into existence. Certainly Brahman, being devoid of qualities, cannot create this division.

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī advises us to study other inconsistencies like these in Mâyâvâda philosophy. For example, we should consider the following questions: If originally only featureless Brahman and nothing else exists, where does avidyā come from? Or, if avidyā can bind Brahman, isn’t it more powerful than Brahman? The
Māyāvādīs compare Brahman to a spider that weaves its own web and somehow gets bound by it, but this analogy presents Brahman as possessing attributes and potencies, revealing a tacit acceptance of the Vaisnava dualistic understanding.

We should also consider the following conundrums: (1) Since Brahman is unlimited and devoid of parts, it cannot possibly cast a reflection. (2) Brahman is described as pure awareness, but in order to function, awareness needs an object apart from itself. There is no meaning to knowledge without a known object. And when there is an object, there is the multiplicity of knower, knowledge, and known. (3) The very fact of Brahman’s existence proves that it is potent, because anything that exists necessarily has some kind of energy or attribute. Thus there is duality between Brahman and its potencies or attributes.

From Sāṅkhya philosophy we understand that the primeval pradhāna generates the mahat-tattva, which then gives rise to false ego. Now, suppose we grant that, as the Māyāvādīs say, a jīva can dissolve his false ego by cultivating spiritual knowledge. But even if one does this, the other two basic elements of material nature—mahat-tattva and pradhāna—will remain undissolved. How will the egoless jīva transcend the mahat-tattva and pradhāna to realize Brahman? Egolessness is not equivalent to liberation, since at the time of universal annihilation, when the conditioned jīvas merge into the body of Mahā-Viṣṇu, they are devoid of false ego but still bound by their karma.

An analysis of the word “Brahman” reveals still further problems for the Māyāvādīs. Every word has an inherent relationship with its meaning. According to Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī in his Hari-nāmāmṛta-vyākārana (2.1), a word that refers to something denotes either an object, a quality, a class, or an activity. Certainly the word “Brahman” represents neither a class nor an activity. If Brahman were a quality, there would have to be another object possessing that quality, since no quality can exist without belonging to some object. If, as the last alternative, Brahman is an object, then it must possess qualities because an eternal object cannot exist without qualities. In either case, Brahman enters into a duality.

Māyāvādīs explain this material world on the basis of Māyā, which is neither sat (real) nor asat (unreal). They say that Māyā is thus inexplicable (anirvacaniya). But in the Bhagavad-gītā (2.16) Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa recognizes only two categories, sat and asat:

\[
\text{nāsato vidyate bhāvo nābhāvo vidyate sataḥ} \\
\text{ubhayor api drṣṭo ’ntas tv anayos tattva-darsibhiḥ}
\]

“Those who are seers of the truth have concluded that the unreal (asat) has no existence and that the real (sat) has no nonexistence.” There is no mention here or in any other bona fide scripture of an inexplicable third mode. Thus there is no foundation for the Māyāvādīs’ concept that Māyā and the material world generated from her belong to some inexplicable third category.

To prove their contention that the material world is inexplicable (anirvacaniya or
mithyā), neither real nor unreal, the Śaṅkarites cite the well-known example of the rope and the snake. If snakes were completely nonexistent (asat), they say, no one would ever mistake a rope for one in semidarkness, because a nonexistent thing can never be perceived. So the “snake” is not nonexistent, but still it cannot be considered real (sat) either, because in sufficient light no snake will be seen. Thus there must be a third category, separate from both sat and asat. This third category is anirvacaniya, inexplicable, and to it the Śaṅkarites assign Māyā.

The truth, however, is that one need not resort to the Māyāvāda philosophy to explain the rope mistaken for a snake. The snake and the rope are both real. A person who mistakes a rope for a snake must have previously experienced a real snake, and the conditions must be insufficient for correct perception. His experience of snakes, therefore, will cause his mind to superimpose the impression of a snake on the rope in semidarkness. By contrast, someone who has no experience of snakes will never mistake a rope for one. An infant, for example, will never mistake a rope for a snake. Thus there is no inexplicable third category in material existence, as the Māyāvādīs claim.

Since Māyāvādīs accept only Brahman as the ultimate reality, they say that even scriptures that teach such statements as tat tvam asī (“You are that”) are true only empirically. Although such declarations have the power to uplift those who hear them, they are not absolutely true. In this way the Śaṅkarites expose yet another inconsistency in their system. If the scriptures are only empirically real, how can they elevate anyone beyond Māyā? By this logic even the enlightened writings of such liberated souls as Yājñavalkya and Śaṅkara are unable to liberate their readers, for, not being absolute, they must be full of relative imperfections.

In truth the jīva is not [DDB194] merely an adulterated version of Brahman, as the Māyāvādīs say. As the Supreme Lord states in the Bhagavad-gītā (15.7), mamaivāmśo jīva-loke jīva-bhūtah sanātanah: “The jīva is My eternal fragment.” Thus the jīva can never lose his identity by merging back into the Brahman it supposedly really is. When wheat berries and rice grains are mixed, they do not merge into one another and lose their separate identities. We can easily distinguish the wheat from the rice. If, however, we mix papaya seeds with some similar-looking black peppercorns, we may have difficulty distinguishing between them. Still, this does not mean they have lost their distinct identities.

Likewise, when water and ink [DDB195] are mixed, each substance retains its separate identity. Only because it is difficult for us to distinguish between them do the two liquids appear to have merged. The water molecules and the ink molecules have not merged to become all ink, all water, or something else. [DDB196] One indication that the substances do not merge is that when a glass of ink is poured into a pail of water, the total volume of liquid increases by one glass, and the same happens when a glass of water is poured into a pail of ink. In neither case do the substances merge.

Similarly, the jīvas cannot merge into Brahman and lose their identity. Of course, if a jīva wants to feel that he has merged with Brahman and performs the appropriate
spiritual practices, the all-merciful Supreme Lord will help that jīva imagine he has attained literal oneness with Him. In reality, God and the jīvas are always distinct, and both the Lord and His pure devotees are always aware of this distinction.

Having established that the Māyāvādis’ philosophy is opposed to the truths revealed in Vyāsadeva’s meditative experience, and having highlighted some of the prominent defects in their logic, Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmi next argues that the monistic conclusion also contradicts the experience of Śukadeva Gosvāmi, the principal speaker of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.

TEXT 41

kim ca yady atrabheda-vāda eva tātparyam abhavisyat tarhy ekam eva brahmājñānena bhinnam jñānena tu tasya bheda-mayam duhkham viliyata ity apasyad ity evāvakṣyat. tathā śrī-bhagaval-lilādīnām vāstavatvābhāve sati śrī-śuka-hṛdaya-virodhaḥ ca jāyate.

Furthermore, if the jīvas’ absolute oneness with Brahman were the actual purport of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Śūta Gosvāmi would have said that Śrīla Vyāsadeva saw in His trance how the one Brahman becomes divided because of ignorance, and how knowledge dispels the suffering caused by this duality. And if the Supreme Lord’s pastimes and qualities were unreal, what Śrī Śukadeva experienced in his heart would be invalidated.

COMMENTARY
Śrīla Vyāsadeva’s Experience Does Not Support Advaita Monism

Having presented his logical refutations of Advaita monism, Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmi now proceeds to disprove it by reference to sabda-pramāṇa, scriptural evidence. This is the Vedic system. Logic by itself cannot give us an understanding of the Absolute Truth, the Personality of Godhead. In transcendental matters such as this, the final authority is always scripture. Scriptural evidence is so decisive that even if a certain claim defies logic but is supported by sabda-pramāṇa, it should be accepted as conclusively true. Any standard of truth lower than this would be inconsistent with Vedāntic epistemology, which is based on the axiom that the Vedas emanate from the Absolute and are thus infallible.

Earlier, in the pramāṇa portion of Śrī Tatvā-sandarbha, Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmi showed that Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the supreme authority among all types of pramāṇas. Now he puts Advaita monism to Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam’s test. The essential message of the Bhāgavatam is found in the verses narrating what Śrīla Vyāsa saw in trance—the Supreme Personality of Godhead along with His internal potencies, His marginal potency (the jīvas), and His external potency (Māyā). Vyāsa did not see a nondifferentiated Brahman being overpowered by Māyā and turning into many jīvas. Rather, He saw that the jīvas are distinct from the Supreme Lord and are captivated by Māyā because they think themselves independent of the Lord.
Vyāsadeva thus saw that the cause of the jīvas’ suffering is their sense of false independence. At the same time, He saw that the solution to the jīvas’ predicament is rendering devotional service to the Supreme Person (bhakti-yogam adhoksaje), not imagining a state of oneness with Him.

In Śūta Gosvāmi’s prayers to Śukadeva Gosvāmi, his spiritual master, Śūta confirms that merging with impersonal Brahmān is an inferior goal. While speaking Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam to the sages at Naimisāranya, Śūta Gosvāmi specifically mentions that originally Śukadeva was absorbed in the bliss of Brahmān. Later his heart was captivated when he heard a few Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam verses describing the pastimes and attributes of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Śukadeva was so entranced that he thoroughly studied the description of the Lord’s pastimes in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, and later he excelled in narrating the Bhāgavatam.

Therefore it is said that the Bhāgavatam, which is the ripened fruit of the tree of Vedic literature, became even more relishable when it emanated from the mouth of Śukadeva. Śūka means “parrot,” and Śukadeva’s name alludes to the well-known fact that fruits become sweeter after being pecked by parrots. When the fruit of the Bhāgavatam was touched by Śukadeva Gosvāmi’s lips and then tasted by Parikṣit Mahārāja, it became sweeter than ever.

Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmi’s attraction to the Bhāgavatam indicates that the pastimes and attributes of the Supreme Personality of Godhead are both real and completely transcendental; otherwise a liberated soul like Śukadeva, who was beyond all mundane desires, would have never taken an interest in them. Śukadeva Gosvāmi, the most eminent of all Brahmān-realized transcendentalists, demonstrated by his own behavior the falsity of the idea of absolute oneness between the Lord and the jīvas.

Thus we can conclude that the keys to the Advaita doctrine of monism—namely, pariccheda-vāda and pratibimba-vāda—are supported neither by logic nor by the scriptures, especially not by the supreme scriptural pramāṇa, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. The Māyāvādīs derive their opinions only from word jugglery and the distortion of scriptural truths, with the result that the innocent who hear their explanations become confused.

Next Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmi explains the purpose of the monistic statements found in the Vedic scriptures.

TEXT 42

tasmāt pariccheda-pratibimbatvādī-pratipādaka-sāstrāṇy api kathāṇcit tad-sādṛṣyena gaunyaiva vṛttya pravarteran. ambu-vad-agrahānāt tu na tathātvam, vrddhi-hrāsa-

bhāktatvam antar-bhāvād ubhaya-sāmanjasyād evam iti pūrvottara-pakṣa-maya-
nyāyābhyām.

Therefore scriptural passages that appear to favor such doctrines as paricchedavāda and pratibimba-vāda must be understood in a secondary sense—that is, as expressing some sort of similarity between the Supreme’s relation to the manifest world and the ordinary processes of division and reflection. The Vedānta-sūtra confirms this idea:

“The water in a pond covers the land underneath and thus delimits it from the rest of the earth, but Brahman cannot be delimited in this way to become a jīva” (Vs. 3.2.19).

“No, the reference to delimitation is appropriate not in its primary sense but in its secondary sense, that of the water delimiting larger and smaller areas of land. This interpretation fulfills the purpose of the scriptural passages, and thus it is appropriate to compare Brahman to land” (Vs. 3.2.20).

The first of these sūtras gives an opponent’s objection, and the second replies to that objection.

COMMENTARY
The Meaning of Monistic Statements

The Māyāvādīs accept the Vedas as the supreme authority and cite them profusely in support of their opinions. Indeed, many of the Vedic references they quote may seem to support their theories, but here Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī explains how to correctly interpret the apparently monistic statements in the Vedas.

In Sanskrit, words have two kinds of meanings—primary, called mukhyā-vṛtti, and secondary, called gauni-vṛtti. Vedic philosophers say that by the will of the Supreme Lord each word has some particular potency, which creates a specific relationship between the word and its meaning. For example, the word “cow” has a potency by which it refers to a particular entity having four legs, a tail, two eyes, a dewlap, an udder, and other features. Sometimes, however, in a particular context a word’s primary meaning fails to convey a relevant sense. In such cases we should conclude that the expression is figurative and accept some appropriate secondary meaning. Whenever the primary meaning of a scriptural statement is inappropriate there must be a secondary meaning intended, because scriptural statements, being apauroṣeyya and thus free of defects, cannot be meaningless. In the Bhagavad-gītā Lord Kṛṣṇa addresses Arjuna as puruṣa-vyāghra, “tiger among men.” In its primary sense the word “tiger” refers to a ferocious animal with claws and fangs. Arjuna was certainly not such an animal, but since Lord Kṛṣṇa’s words cannot be meaningless, the need arises for a figurative interpretation of puruṣa-vyāghra. Here the phrase is a metaphor, in which the Lord is calling Arjuna a tiger only to indicate his courage and prowess as a warrior. The word “tiger” in this phrase applies to these two characteristics that the tiger and Arjuna have in common, not to the primary sense of a tiger’s shape, habits, and so forth.

In the same way, Vedic texts that appear to support monistic ideas should not be abandoned as ambiguous babblings just because their primary meaning contradicts the conclusion of Śrīla Vyāsa’s trance. Rather, we should interpret these statements
in a way consistent with the underlying purport of the Vedas. Accepting them literally will lead to confusion, and rejecting them outright may lead to contempt for the apauruseya-śabda. In the opinion of Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, one must search for secondary meanings that agree with Śrīla Vyāsa’s experience.

To support this judgment, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī refers us to Sūtras 3.2.19 and 20 of the Vedānta. The Vedānta-sūtra is divided into four chapters (adhyāyas), each having four sections (pādās). These are further divided into adhikaranas. Each adhikarana includes a topical statement from the Upaniṣads followed by a doubt concerning that statement, then an opponent’s position (pūrva-pakṣa), then the right conclusion (siddhānta), and finally sangati, a demonstration of how the adhikarana relates to other adhikaranas. Some sūtras are simply antitheses that represent the opinions of various sages and philosophers. These are always followed by siddhānta-sūtras.

Sūtra 3.2.18 establishes that the purpose behind mentioning the jīva as a reflection of the Paramātmā is not to show that the Paramātmā becomes the jīva by reflection but to show that the Paramātmā is different from the jīva in the same way that any real object is different from its reflection. If an object and its reflection were absolutely nondifferent, they could not be distinguished from each other. Thus the metaphor of the sun and its reflection in water is presented to establish not the oneness of the Paramātmā and the jīvātmā but just the opposite. Sūtra 3.2.18 states, ata eva copātā śūryakāḍi-vat: “Therefore, the analogy of the sun and its reflection shows the difference between the Supersoul and the soul.”

A doubt is then raised: “This very analogy proves that the Paramātmā reflects in avidyā and appears to become the jīva. What’s wrong with this interpretation?”

The next sūtra (3.2.19) answers this doubt. It proves that the jīva is not a reflection of Brahman by pointing out that an upādhi cannot delimit Brahman in the same way that water can delimit land. While commenting on this sūtra in his Govinda-bhāṣya, Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣana explains that since Brahman is all-pervading, no object can possibly be distant from Him. Therefore, while the sun can cast a reflection in water because it is some distance from the water, Brahman can cast no reflection in anything because it is all-pervading. Therefore the jīva cannot be a reflection of Brahman.

Although the claim of this sūtra is valid, it does not agree with those scriptural statements that seem to indicate the jīva is a reflection of Brahman. It is in this sense that Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī calls this sūtra a pūrva-pakṣa. But if Brahman does not reflect as the jīva in the same way that the sun reflects on water, what do the śrutī statements to that effect actually mean? They must have some reasonable purpose. Vyāsadeva responds with the siddhānta, or conclusion, in Sūtra 3.2.20 [DDB197]. Although the comparison of the sun and its reflection to[DD198] Brahman and the jīva is not valid when interpreted literally, it is valid when we consider the secondary characteristics of the analogy: The sun is great like Brahman, and its reflection is small like the jīva. Why do we give this secondary interpretation? To uphold the scripture’s conclusions, which constitute the
overarching, consistent message of the Vedas and their corollary literature. Other valid interpretations of this analogy are as follows: (1) The jīvas' pains and pleasures do not affect Brahman, just as disturbances in a reflection of the sun do not affect the sun itself. (2) As a reflection of the sun is dependent on the sun, so the jīvas are dependent on Brahman. (3) The jīvas are localized like the sun’s reflections, while Brahman extends everywhere, [DDB199] as the sun does through its heat and light.

If we were to similarly analyze the remaining Brahma-sūtras, as well as the Vedas and Purāṇas, we would discover that all the scriptural statements indicating nondifference between God and the living entity, when understood in such a secondary sense, prove to be based not on absolute oneness but on some common attributes between the analogy and its subject, and thus they are faithful to the conclusion of the Vedas. The Vedic texts never propose complete oneness between Brahman and the jīva. Such a proposal would make the whole body of Vedic scripture self-contradictory; it would reduce the Vedas to babble, a waste of time for anyone wanting to study them for spiritual enlightenment. One may here raise the objection, “Instead of rejecting the primary sense of the monistic statements found in sāstra, why not accept them and instead reinterpret those statements that teach dualism?” The answer is that the understanding derived from such an approach would contradict Śrī Vyāsa’s experience, which is the nucleus of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, the topmost pramāṇa.

Next, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī explains the nondifference between the Supreme Lord and the jīva from the Vaiṣṇava point of view.

TEXT 43


Therefore the scriptural statements instructing us about the nondifference between the jīvas and Brahman should be reconciled so as to agree with the conclusions Vyāsa came to in His trance. This is accomplished by first removing the apparent contradiction in the jīvas’ being both different and nondifferent from Brahman: From these statements teaching nondifference we should understand that the jīvas are one with Brahman in the sense that both they and Brahman are pure spiritual entities, while by Brahman’s inconceivable, natural potency, which makes even the impossible possible, the jīvas are also innately distinct from Brahman by virtue of their being His parts, like the infinitesimal rays of the sun’s light.

COMMENTARY
Monistic Statements Need Interpretation
Here Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī gives his definitive opinion about the relation between the jivas and the Supreme Lord. Both the Lord and the jivas are naturally conscious beings, and it is primarily this common trait that the Vedic literature refers to when it speaks about their oneness. The purpose of these statements is to help us understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is beyond our experience. We know we are conscious, and so to give us some idea of His nature the Vedas employ various analogies and metaphors to illustrate that the Lord is conscious like us. In the course of these descriptions, we jivas are sometimes described as nondifferent from Him.

Thus we should never misunderstand the Vedic statements about oneness to mean that the Lord and the jiva are one in all respects. When we read “He was a tiger in battle” we do not think that a man actually turned into a tiger. Rather, we accept a secondary meaning and understand that in battle the man was as ferocious as a tiger. We must accept similar secondary meanings for the statements in the Vedic literature about the jiva’s and Brahman’s oneness, our criterion always remaining whether our interpretation is consistent with the principles derived from Śrīla Vyāsadeva’s trance.

Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī is a follower of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam’s acintya-bhedābheda philosophy, which he alludes to in the last sentence of this Text. Acintya-bhedābheda means “inconceivable, simultaneous oneness and difference” between the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the living entity, or in other words between the energetic source and its energy. The energy cannot exist without the energetic and is thus in one sense identical to it. At the same time, the energy can be said to be different from the energetic source because the energy’s activities are perceived to be separate from the energetic. Logically, such a relation is ultimately inconceivable.

The jivas are like atomic rays of light in relation to the sunlike Lord. As the Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad (6.8) states, parāsya śaktir vividhaiva śrūyate: “The Supreme Lord has manifold energies.” Just as the rays of sunlight are neither completely different from nor exactly the same as the sun, so the jivas are simultaneously one with and different from the Lord. The Vedas’ descriptions of nondifference refer to the qualitative oneness of the Lord and the jivas, and the Vedas’ descriptions of difference refer to their quantitative difference.

The Brhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad (2.1.20) provides an analogy to help us understand: yathāgneh visphulinga vyuccaranti evam eva asmād ātmānāh sarve prānāh sarve lokāḥ sarve devāh sarvānī bhūtānī vyuccaranti. “Just as sparks emanate from a fire, so all these vital airs, planets, demigods, and living beings come from the Personality of Godhead.” Sparks are obviously different from the fire that manifests them, but because they possess in minute quantity such fiery qualities as heat and light, they can be said to be “one with” the fire as well. In the same way, the jivas can be said to be simultaneously different from and one with the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Any apparent inconsistency in this relationship is resolved by the inconceivable creative energy of the Supreme Lord, which can make the impossible
possible.

One should not confuse this inconceivable nature of the Lord with the inexplicable (anirvacanīya) nature that the Māyāvādis ascribe to Māyā. They say that Māyā is neither sat (“real”) nor asat (“unreal”) and is hence indescribable. Vaiṣṇavas, however, do not say that the Lord and His energies are indescribable, for the scriptures describe both. Instead Vaiṣṇavas say that because the Lord’s nature and qualities are inconceivable to our limited mind and intellect, the Lord can be understood only through śabda-pramāṇa. Some of the Lord’s inconceivable features are mentioned in the Īṣopanisad (5):

\[
\text{tad ejati tan naijati tad dāre tad v anti ke}
\]
\[
\text{tad antarasya sarvasya tad u sarvasyasya bāhyataḥ}
\]

“The Supreme Lord walks and does not walk. He is far away but He is very near as well. He is within everything, and yet He is outside of everything.”

Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣana gives us another analogy that may help us understand acintya-bhedābheda-tattva: A fair-skinned brāhmaṇa boy and a dark-skinned brāhmaṇa boy are the same in terms of caste but are different as individuals. Similarly, the Supreme Lord and the jīva are one in that they both possess consciousness, but they are different in that the Lord is the all-pervading, all-knowing, independent controller of Māyā, whereas the jīva is localized and may be the ignorant, dependent slave of Māyā.

Sometimes the Vedas equate the jīva with Brahman because he is subservient to Brahman. The principle behind this idea is not unfamiliar. An ambassador, for example, is in one sense equal to the chief of state he represents, and because of this equivalence any respect or disrespect shown the ambassador redounds upon his master. The reason why people accept a rough equivalence between the two is that the ambassador has some of the master’s power, but no one would ever foolishly consider them identical in all respects. The Māyāvādis err by choosing to see just one side of the situation and emphasizing only the nondifference between the jīva and Brahman.

One should not deal with the Vedas according to the logic of “ardha-kukkuṭi,”10 accepting only statements favorable to one’s viewpoint and rejecting opposing ones. The Vedas contain statements declaring both the difference and the nondifference between Brahman and the jīva. These seemingly contradictory views can most naturally be reconciled by the application of the acintya-bhedābheda philosophy. This doctrine of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s is the greatest gift of philosophy to the world. His teachings do not contradict any Vedic scripture or authentic point of view; rather, they resolve the apparent contradictions in the Vedic literature in accordance with the Vedas’ final conclusions. His teachings are the natural and direct explanation of the Vedic literature.

In summary, what follows are the ideas underlying the Vedic statements that speak of the oneness of Brahman and the jīvas, employing the analogies of reflection and
delimitation:
1. The jīva, like Brahmā, is by nature purely conscious.
2. The jīva, like Brahmā, is distinct from matter.
3. The jīva is one of Brahmā’s energies.
4. The jīva is eternally dependent on Brahmā.
5. The jīva can never be absolutely one with Brahmā.
6. The jīva is constitutionally the eternal servitor of Brahmā.
7. The analogies of reflection and delimitation help us understand the purely spiritual nature of Brahmā.

In the Paramāṭma-sandarbha Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī will further describe the living entity and his relationship with the Supreme Lord. In the next Text he summarizes the facts concerning abhidheya, the process for realizing this subject.

TEXT 44

tad evam māyāśrayatva-māyā-mohitatvābhyām sthite dvayaor bheda daivi hy esā ity-ādi-nyāyena tad-bhajanasyaiva bhidheyatvam āyātam.

Since the Supreme Lord and the jīva thus have distinct identities, the Lord being the foundation of Māyā and the jīva being deluded by her, we can conclude that devotional service to the Lord is the only recommended method for self-realization. This conclusion follows logically from such scriptural statements as the following one in the Bhagavad-gītā [7.14]: “This divine energy of Mine, consisting of the three modes of material nature, is difficult to overcome. Only those who have surrendered unto Me can easily cross beyond it.” [gpd200]

COMMENTARY
Devotional Service Is the Abhidheya

Śrīla Viśādeva saw that the Supreme Lord is the foundation of Māyā: māyām ca tad-apāśrayām (Bhāg. 1.7.4). He also saw that only the living entity is deluded by Māyā: yayaḥ sammohito jīvah (Bhāg. 1.7.5). Thus the Supreme Lord and the jīva are naturally distinct, for the Lord never comes under Māyā’s spell. The Lord can never turn into a jīva, and no jīva can ever make himself God. Śrīla Viśādeva also saw that the means for the jīva’s release from bondage is devotional service to the Supreme Lord: bhakti-yogam adhokṣaje (Bhāg. 1.7.6).

In this Text the word eva in the phrase tad bhajanasya eva means “only” and indicates that no process other than bhakti-yoga can cut the bonds of Māyā. No other method, not even jñāna-yoga or aṣṭāṅga-yoga, is potent enough to permanently relieve the jīvas’ miseries. As Lord Kṛṣṇa declares in the Bhagavad-gītā (7.14): daivi hy esā guna-mayī mama māyā duratyayā/ mām eva ye prapadyante māyām etām taranti te. Māyā, the divine energy of the Lord, cannot possibly be overcome by anyone except the person who surrenders unto Him. Other paths
may at best elevate a person to the mode of goodness by purifying his heart of the lower modes, but they cannot elevate him to full transcendence without the merciful help of bhakti.

Nārada Muni confirms this in his teachings to Yudhisthira Mahārāja (Bhāg. 7.15.28–29):

\[ \textit{ṣad-varga-samyamaikāntāḥ sarvā niyama-codanāḥ} \\
\textit{tad-antā yadi no yogān āvahyēh śramāvahāḥ} \\
\textit{yathā vārtādayo hy arthā yogasyārtham na bibhrati} \\
\textit{anarthāya bhaveyuh sma ārtham istam tathāsataḥ} \]

“Ritualistic ceremonies, regulative principles, austerities, and the practice of yoga are all meant to control the senses and mind, but even after one is able to control the senses and mind, if he does not come to the point of meditation upon the Supreme Lord, all such activities are simply labor in frustration. As professional activities or business profits cannot help one in spiritual advancement but are a source of material entanglement, the Vedic ritualistic ceremonies cannot help anyone who is not a devotee of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.”

In this Text the word bhedā (“difference”) is also significant. By using it Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī emphasizes that unless the jīva clearly understands he is both different from and subordinate to the Supreme Lord, he will not become interested in pursuing devotional service. This conviction is essential for advancement in spiritual life. The natural tendency of a conditioned soul is to think himself the controller, the lord of all the surveys, and this delusion makes him loathe the very idea of surrendering to the Lord. Indeed, this tendency to control remains a great peril even for those actively engaged in bhakti-yoga, since the jīvas’ desires to control are very deep-rooted and can sprout forth at any time, choking off the tender creeper of devotion. Unless a candidate for unalloyed bhakti vigilantly guards against residual desires to be the master of all, these desires will likely manifest themselves and slow his progress toward pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

In the next Text Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī concludes this part of his discussion with a reference to the prayojana, or final goal, of bhakti-yoga.

**TEXT 45**

\[ \textit{ataḥ śrī-bhagavata eva sarva-hitopadeśtvāt sarva-duhkha-haratvād raśminām sūrya-vat sarvesāṁ parama-svarūpātvāt sarvādhikā-guna-sālitvāt parama-prema-yogatvam ātme ca sthāpitam.} \]

From the above discussion we can see that the Personality of Godhead is the most deserving recipient of perfect love because He instructs all people about their
ultimate welfare, He removes all sorrows, He is everyone’s Supreme Self (like the sun in relation to its rays), and He is perfectly endowed with all wonderful qualities. Thus is established the final goal of all endeavor (prayojana).

**COMMENTARY**

**Love of God Is the Goal of Life**

The *Vedas* provide education in religious practice (*dharma*), economic development (*artha*), regulated sense enjoyment (*kāma*), and ultimately liberation from the cycle of birth and death (*mokṣa*). These four are known as the *purusārthas*, or goals of human life. On the basis of logic or scriptural authority, every school of Indian philosophy tries to direct the jīvas toward liberation, which puts an end to all miseries.

Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s teachings, however, lead beyond liberation. When Sanātana Gosvāmi approached Śrī Caitanya to inquire about spiritual life, his first question was “What is my duty after liberation?” This question was revolutionary. Before this, almost no one would inquire about a fifth *purusārtha*; liberation was considered the ultimate goal. But Lord Caitanya explained to Sanātana that *prema*, love of God, is the fifth and ultimate goal of life (*pañcama-purusārtha*): *premā pum-artho mahān*. Lord Caitanya established this *purusārtha* with reference to the *Vedas*, and in the course of doing so He relied especially on “the spotless *Purāṇa*,” *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, promoting it as the ultimate scriptural authority. Along with the final goal of pure love of God, Śrī Caitanya also established that Lord Kṛṣṇa is the most complete manifestation of God and therefore the most perfect object of loving devotional service.

Prior to Lord Caitanya, Vaiṣṇavas generally rendered reverential devotional service to the Supreme Lord in His opulent feature. Only a few rare souls knew the true conclusion of the Vedic teachings. Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, however, revealed to all His followers the fifth goal—love of God—and ordered them to propagate it everywhere. If a person makes *prema* his ultimate goal in life, he will not detest the material world (as impersonalists do), because he will appreciate it as the creation of his beloved Lord. Following the example of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, a devotee should see everything in this world in relation to the Supreme Lord and use whatever he can in His devotional service. One who adopts this correct outlook will quickly be endowed with all good qualities. The evil traits of lust, greed, envy, and so on will depart from him. Treating every living being as part and parcel of the Lord, he will become everyone’s well-wishing friend and not think of harming or exploiting anyone, even in his dreams.

With the followers of Lord Caitanya able to cultivate such an attitude, it is clear that His teachings are the most sublime, practical, and versatile of all spiritual philosophies. Although these teachings emphasize giving up this world and going to the spiritual world, following them also improves the quality of life here. Lord Caitanya’s teachings are thus suitable for all people to study and practice, regardless of caste, creed, or nationality.
By contrast, when a spiritual practitioner makes liberation his final objective, he will almost never develop a loving relationship with the Supreme Lord. Rather, he will attempt to use the Supreme Lord to achieve his goal. It is not uncommon to find liberationists who at first worship the Deity forms of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and then discard these forms at a supposedly higher stage of development, when they imagine they have advanced to the level of Brahman realization. Such deluded souls think that because they have achieved oneness with the Supreme they no longer need the Deity forms.

For the Māyāvādīs, then, the Lord is nothing more than a means to liberation, and thus their impersonalistic philosophy is the ultimate form of selfishness and blasphemy. Based on detachment and introversion, their doctrine cannot bring warmth and sympathy, compassion and serenity, into human society. It only depersonalizes human life.

A pure devotee advancing on the path of loving devotional service is not inclined to demand anything of his Lord, not even liberation. He desires only to please his worshipable Lord eternally. To that end he cheerfully tolerates any tribulation. Such unconditional love is in fact the prayojana, or goal of life, promoted by Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. Although in the previous Text Śrīla Gospāmī said that a jīva should worship the Lord to get free from the clutches of Māyā, here he goes further: he rejects liberation as the prayojana and hints at a new goal—love of Godhead, prema-bhakti. Śrī Jīva will present his full discussion on prema-bhakti later, in Śrī Priti-sandarbha.

In this Text Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī gives four reasons why the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the most suitable object of love. The first reason is that the Supreme Lord is always thinking of every jīva’s welfare. Therefore He frequently teaches the conditioned souls various ways to better themselves. He comes Himself to give direct instruction, as He did when He taught Arjuna on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra and, as Veda-vyāsa, compiled the Vedic literature. To preach His message He also sends His devotees to this material world as good-will ambassadors. Even on the material level the Supreme Lord takes care of all living beings by impartially supplying them with such essentials as light, air, water, and food. Even atheists and agnostics are provided for.

The second reason why the Supreme Lord is the most worthy object of love is that He relieves the miseries of the conditioned souls by helping to liberate them from illusion. To take advantage of this help, however, the jīvas must surrender to Him:

\[
\text{sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaranaṁ vraja}
\]
\[
aham tvāṁ sarva-pāpebhyo mokṣayisyāmi mā śucah
\]

“[Lord Kṛṣṇa said to Arjuna:] ‘Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender unto Me. I shall deliver you from all sinful reactions. Do not fear’” (Bg. 18.66).

The third reason why Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the most lovable object is that He is the ultimate svarūpa, or Self, of all beings, just as the sun globe is the ultimate basis of the sun’s
rays. The sun’s rays always depend on the sun, and they are glorious only in relation to the sun. In the same way, the jīvas perpetually depend on the Personality of Godhead and become glorious only when they reawaken their true relationship with Him through bhakti-yoga. Even material objects find peace only when they are united with their source: rivers all naturally seek the ocean and become finally calm when they reach that goal; similarly, an earthy object separated from the earth, such as an apple thrown into the air, will be spontaneously attracted to return to the earth. We also see that human beings naturally want to revere those they consider superior. Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is the ultimate superior being, and therefore He is the ideal person in whom all jīvas may repose their reverence and love.

The last reason why Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the best object of love is that He possesses all wonderful, matchless qualities to their fullest extent. Of all the Supreme Lord’s own direct manifestations, His original two-handed form as a cowherd boy is the most beautiful and attractive. Thus Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī writes in his Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.2.59):

siddhāntatas tv abhede 'pi kṛṣṇa-śrīśa-svarūpayoh
rasenotkṛṣyate kṛṣṇa-rūpam esa rasa-sthitih

“Although in principle there is no difference between the personalities of Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Nārāyaṇa, the husband of the goddess of fortune, still Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s form is the unparalleled reservoir of rasas. This, indeed, is the law of rasas.”

Śrīla Vyāsa saw this same Kṛṣṇa in trance, along with all His personal attributes and potencies. He saw that love of Kṛṣṇa is the ultimate goal of life: kṛṣṇe paramapūruse bhaktih (Bhāg. 1.7.7). Thus we can conclude by both logic and scriptural analysis that Lord Kṛṣṇa is the supreme object of love. He is the actual prayojana, the ultimate goal of life.

Next Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī explains the importance of sādhana-bhakti, devotional service in practice.

TEXT 46

TEXT 46.1

tatrābhidheyaṁ ca tādṛṣṭatvena drṣṭavāṁ api yatats tat-pravṛtty-artham śrī-
bhāgavatākhyāṁ imāṁ sātvata-samhitāṁ pravartitavāṁ ity āha anartheti. bhakti-yogō
'tra sravana-kīrtanādi-lakṣanāṁ sādhana-bhakti-yogō na tu prema-lakṣanāṁ.
anuṣṭhānam āhy upadesāpekṣaṁ prema tu tat-prasādāpekṣaṁ iti.

In trance Śrīla Vyāsadeva also perceived the process of self-realization (abhidheya),
as described above [in Text 44]. Then, to propagate it He composed for the saintly Vaiṣṇavas this scripture called Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. Śrī Śūta Gosvāmī describes all this in the verse beginning anartha- [ Bhāg. 1.7.6]. In this verse the word bhakti-yoga refers to sādhana-bhakti, regulated devotional service, which is characterized by hearing, chanting, and so on, and not to prema-bhakti, devotional service in pure love of God. This is the correct interpretation because sādhana-bhakti depends on instruction, while love of God depends only on the Lord’s grace.

TEXT 46.2

\[ \text{tathāpi tasya tat-prasāda-hetos tat-prema-phala-garbhatvāt sāksād evānarthopāsaṃatvam, na tv anya-sāpekṣatvena yat karmabhīr yat tapasā jñāna-vairāgyayatās ca yat ity-ādau sarvām mad-bhakti-yogena mad-bhakto labhate 'njasā svargāpavargam ity-ādeh. jñānades tu bhakti-sāpekṣatvam eva śreyah-sṛtim bhaktim ity-ādeh. atha vā anarthasya samsāra-vyasanasya tāvat sāksād avyavadhānenopāsaṇam sammohādi-dvayasya tu premākhya-sviya-phala-dvārenety arthah. atah pūrva-vad evaḥṝḥidheyam ārtṣitam.} \]

Even so, sādhana-bhakti, being the means for gaining the Lord’s grace, ultimately matures into love of Godhead. Thus it is said that sādhana-bhakti directly removes the jīva’s miseries (anarthopāsaṃam sāksād), without depending on anything else. As the Lord states in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam [11.20.32–33], “Everything that can be achieved by frutitive activities, penance, knowledge, detachment, mystic yoga, charity, religious duties, and all other means of perfecting life is easily achieved by My devotee through loving service unto Me. If somehow or other My devotee desires promotion to heaven, liberation, or residence in My abode, he easily achieves such benedictions.” By contrast, such methods as cultivating knowledge depend on devotional service for success, as shown in such statements as the following [ Bhāg. 10.14.4]: “My dear Lord, devotional service unto You is the best path for self-realization. If someone gives up that path and engages in the cultivation of speculative knowledge, he will simply undergo a troublesome process and will not achieve his desired result. As a person who beats an empty husk of wheat cannot get grain, one who simply speculates cannot achieve self-realization. His only gain is trouble.”

Or else the meaning of anarthopāsaṃam sāksād is that sādhana-bhakti, without relying on any intermediate process, directly counteracts the material miseries but that only pure love of God, the mature fruit of sādhana-bhakti, can counteract the two fundamental faults of bewildermen and misidentification. Thus the abhidheya is expressed here [ Bhāg. 1.7.6] as it was before [Texts 29 and 32].

COMMENTARY
The Definition of Abhidheya

In Text 44 Śrīla Vyāsa’s trance that Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam’s abhidheya-tattva is devotional service to the Supreme Lord. Vyāsadeva also saw in His trance that the miseries of the jīvas can be vanquished by bhakti-yoga alone, and that this practice of bhakti-yoga will further lead to pure love of Godhead, which brings one direct realization of the Lord. To broadcast this
knowledge He compiled the beautiful Bhāgavatam and taught it to His son, Sukadeva Gosvāmī.

The word bhakti-yoga is used twice in the Bhāgavatam verses describing Śrīla Vyāsadeva’s trance. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī says that the first occurrence of this word (Bhāg. 1.7.4) refers to spontaneous devotional service in full realization of prema, because only on that level of pure love can one have direct personal realization of the Supreme Lord. The second occurrence (Bhāg. 1.7.6) refers to devotional service in practice, sādhanabhakti. Unlike sādhanabhakti, prema-bhakti does not depend on instruction because at that stage a devotee offers devotional service to the Lord spontaneously.

Sādhanabhakti must be learned from scripture and from saintly persons; it is motivated for the most part by scriptural injunctions. As the devotee performs the regulated practice of bhakti, his heart is gradually purified and he becomes fit for spontaneous devotional service in love of God. Only in this sense can it be said that sādhanabhakti matures into prema-bhakti. But in fact prema, the internal potency of the Lord, manifests in the aspiring devotee’s heart by the grace of the Lord and His pure devotee.

In the Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī states that devotional service which is executed by the senses and which matures into bhāva-bhakti is called sādhanabhakti. When bhāva-bhakti intensifies it is called prema-bhakti. The only difference between the two is the degree of intensity: bhāva-bhakti is the immature state of prema-bhakti. Bhāva-bhakti is like the dawn, prema-bhakti like high noon. Thus Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī defines prema-bhakti as follows:

samyan-masnita-svānto mamatvātīṣāyāṅkitaḥ
bhāvah sa eva sāndrātmā budhaiḥ prema nigadyate

“When bhāva becomes very dense and the devotee’s heart melts completely out of intense love for the Lord and great attachment to Him, that state of bhāva is called prema by learned scholars” (Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.4.1).

Because devotion belongs to the internal potency (svarūpa-śakti) of the Supreme Lord, it is as potent as He is and can certainly fulfill all a devotee's desires. A pure devotee has no desire except to render the Lord service, but if somehow he does have some other desire, to fulfill it he need not take to any process other than bhakti. This is the supreme independence of pure devotional service.

On the other hand, other progressive processes, such as jñāna-yoga or āstāṅga-yoga, depend on the grace of bhakti for success. Without the merciful glance of devotion, none of these processes can ever give their practitioners their own intended fruits, what to speak of love of God. Just as the body and the senses are worthless without the soul, so these paths are worthless without devotion. In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, therefore, after Sukadeva Gosvāmī lists various demigods one may worship to fulfill material desires, he concludes:
akāmāh sarva-kāmo vā mokṣa-kāma udāra-dhīh
śivreṇa bhakti-yogena yajeta puruṣam param

“A person who has broader intelligence, whether he is full of material desires, without any material desires, or desiring only liberation, must by all means worship the supreme whole, the Personality of Godhead” (Bhāg. 2.3.10). This statement reveals that bhakti-yoga is the key to fulfilling all desires, whether spiritual or mundane. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī confirms this in his Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.2.251): kintu jñāna-virakty-ādi-sādhyam bhaktyaiva sidhyati. “Indeed, only with the aid of bhakti can one attain the fruits available through the cultivation of knowledge, detachment, and so on.” The knowledge and detachment mentioned here are not those related with the Lord and His devotional service. Indeed, the Bhāgavatam verse quoted in this Text (10.14.4) makes it explicit that knowledge of impersonal Brahman is certainly among those items not related to the Lord and His devotional service.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.7.6 states, anarthopāsamanm sāksād bhakti-yogam: “Bhakti-yoga directly mitigates the miseries of the conditioned soul.” Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī gives two explanations of the word sāksād (“direct”) in this context. He says that bhakti in the first sense is sādhana-bhakti, which, unaided by any other process, directly removes all such worldly miseries as mental and physical disturbances caused by the dualities of heat and cold. However, to dispel the underlying delusion of bodily attachment we need bhakti in the second sense—namely, prema-bhakti, love of God, the fruit of sādhana-bhakti,

In the next Text Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī discusses the prayojana-tattva as Vyāsadeva realized it.

TEXT 47

TEXT 47.1

atha pūrva-vad eva prayojanaṁ ca spaṣṭayitum pūrvoktasya pūrṇa-puruṣasya ca śrī-
kṛṣṇa-svarūpataṁ vyajjavitum grantha-phala-nirdeśa-dvārā tatra tad-
anubhavāntaṁ pratipādayann aha yasyām iti. bhaktih premā śravaṇā-rūpayā
sādhana-bhaktyā sādhyatvāt. utpadyate āvirbhavati. tasyānusāngikam gunam aha
śoketi atraiśāṁ samśkāro ’pi nāṣyatīti bhāvah, pritrī na yāvan mayi vāsudeve na
mucyate deha-yogena tāvat. iti śrī-ṛṣabhadeva-vākyāt.

Next, to clarify the final goal (prayojana), as described above [in Bhāg. 1.7.4–6], and to affirm that the pūrṇa-puruṣa mentioned above [in Bhāg. 1.7.4] is in fact Lord Kṛṣṇa, Śūta Gosvāmī speaks the verse beginning yasyām [Bhāg. 1.7.7]. While describing the effect of hearing Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam in this verse, he reveals another of Śrīla Vyāsadeva’s realizations. In this verse the word bhakti refers to
pure love of Godhead, because that is the goal achieved through executing the devotional practice of hearing. The word *utpadyate* (“is generated”) here means “becomes manifest.” And the manifestation of pure love of Godhead is *soka-mohabhayapaha*—that is, it destroys all lamentation, illusion, and fear, the implication being that even their subtle remnants are destroyed. This is confirmed by the words of Śrī Rṣabhadeva:

“Therefore, until one has love for Lord Vāsudeva, who is none other than Myself, he is certainly not delivered from having to accept a material body again and again” [Bhāg. 5.5.6].

**TEXT 47.2**


In this verse [Bhāg. 1.7.7] the word *parama-pūruse* (“for the Supreme Person”) refers to the same *pūrna-purusa* (“complete person”) mentioned earlier [Bhāg. 1.7.4]. What is His form? To this Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī replies, “Krṣṇa.” In other words, for those whose hearts are enriched with thousands of scriptural statements such as *krṣnas tu bhagavān svayam* (“Krṣṇa is the original Personality of Godhead”; [Bhāg. 1.3.23]), and for those who are attracted to His glories and fame by hearing through a bona fide disciplic succession, as soon as they hear His name their minds are filled with His presence. And as soon as such persons chant the first syllable of His name while uttering His *mantra*, the Lord’s attention is also drawn to the chanter. That is the form denoted by the word Krṣṇa in this verse [Bhāg. 1.7.7]. This is confirmed by the author of Nāma-kaumudī: “The conventional meanings of the name Krṣṇa are ‘one who is black like a tamāla tree,’ ‘He who was breast-fed by Śrī Yaśodā,’ and ‘the Supreme Brahma.’”

**COMMENTARY**

Devotional Service Completely Frees One from Material Miseries

In Text 45 Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī summarized Śrīla Vyāsadeva’s realizations concerning *prayojana-tattva*. Śūta Gosvāmī reaffirms these realizations in *Bhāgavatam* 1.7.7, where he states that just by listening to the *Bhāgavatam* one will attain love of Godhead. Bhākti here must refer to love of Godhead and not *sādhana-bhakti*, devotional service in practice, since hearing *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is itself the *sādhana*. In this verse the verb *utpadyate* (“is generated”) means not that love of God is created anew but that it becomes manifest in the heart. Because love of God is His internal potency, it is never created.

As a concomitant effect of love of God, the devotee is freed from all lamentation,
illusion, and fear. Indeed, even their dormant seeds are destroyed, so powerful is love of Kṛṣṇa. The root cause of a jīva’s misery is his forgetfulness of the Lord, but when he attains love of God He never forgets the Lord.

One who attains love for Kṛṣṇa loses interest in all kinds of other pleasures, including even the bliss of impersonal realization. All his doubts are vanquished and all his desires completely satisfied. Nothing can disturb him or deviate his mind from devotional service. In this regard Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī writes (Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.2. 58):

\[
tatrāpy ekāntinām śresthā govinda-hṛta-mānasāh
yeśāṁ śṛṣṭa-prasādo'pi mano hartum na śaknuyāt
\]

“Among the various kinds of unalloyed devotees of the Lord, the best are those whose hearts have been captivated by Lord Govinda. Indeed, such devotees have no attraction or desire even for the favor of Lord Nārāyaṇa, the husband of the supreme goddess of fortune.”

A side benefit of such pure love for Kṛṣṇa, as Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī mentions in text 47.1, is that even the seeds of lamentation, illusion, and fear are destroyed. These seeds are rooted deeply in the soil of bodily attachment. B[DDB201]y quoting Lord Rsaḥadeva here,[DDB202] Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī emphasizes that there is no way to eradicate this bodily attachment other than by becoming attached to Kṛṣṇa. And one can easily attain this prayojana of attachment to Kṛṣṇa by hearing Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. Vyāsadeva saw all this in His trance.

Kṛṣṇa, referred to in Bhāgavatam 1.7.7 as parama-pū[DD203]rusa, the Supreme Person, is identical with the pūrṇa-puruṣa whom Vyāsa saw along with His potencies. In Text 30 Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has already explained that this pūrṇa-puruṣa is the original Personality of Godhead. Now he identifies that Supreme Person as Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī next explains who that Kṛṣṇa is. History records various Kṛṣṇas. For example, Arjuna was also called Kṛṣṇa, as shown in Bhāgavatam 1.8.43, where Śrimati Kuntidevi addresses Lord Kṛṣṇa as Kṛṣṇa-sakha, “the friend of Kṛṣṇa [Arjuna].” And Vyāsadeva was also sometimes called Kṛṣṇa. Nonetheless, as soon as Vaiśnavas coming in the authorized lines of disciplic succession hear the word “Kṛṣṇa,” the form that immediately comes to mind is Lord Kṛṣṇa’s, not Arjuna’s or Vyāsa’s or that of any other ancient or modern person of the same name. According to Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣana, this is the spontaneous experience of eminent personalities like Śāta Gosvāmī, Saunaka Rṣi, and Jayadeva Gosvāmī. Thus the normal, conventional meaning of the name Kṛṣṇa is the two-handed Lord Kṛṣṇa who appeared as a cowherd in Vraja.

As we have described above, words may have various secondary meanings in addition to their primary ones. The primary meaning of a word is the image that comes to [DDB204]mind upon first hearing or reading it, before any related thought or analysis can modify its meaning. Thus the primary meaning of the
name “Krṣṇa” is Lord Śrī Krṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Śrī Lakṣmiṇidhara Pāṇḍita, while commenting on the meanings of various names of the Lord in his Nāma-kaumudi, defines “Krṣṇa” as “He who is black like the tamāla tree.” In Vaiṣṇava literature Krṣṇa’s bodily hue is often likened to the color of the tamāla tree, which is commonly found in the Vṛndāvana area. Just defining Krṣṇa’s complexion, however, leaves open the possibility that the Krṣṇa referred to is the son of Devaki in Mathurā and Dvārakā. Therefore Lakṣmiṇidhara further specifies the meaning as “the one who was suckled by Śrīmati Yaśodā.” This fixes the primary meaning of “Krṣṇa” as the young cowherd son of Yaśodā in Vṛndāvana, since the older Krṣṇa of Mathurā does not drink Mother Yaśodā’s breast milk. If doubts still linger about this Krṣṇa’s being the Supreme Lord—since there could always be someone else named Krṣṇa from Vṛndāvana who has a blackish complexion and a mother named Yaśodā—Lakṣmiṇidhara further limits the meaning of “Krṣṇa” to “the Supreme Brahman,” the Personality of Godhead.

In Sanskrit, words have a derived meaning (yaugika), which may sometimes differ from their conventional usage (rūḍhi). The rūḍhi, or conventional meaning, is always the primary meaning. In cases where the primary, conventional meaning differs from the derived meaning, the primary meaning always takes precedence: yogād rūḍhir baliyasī. In the case of the name “Krṣṇa,” the derived meaning is also the Supreme Person, as the Mahābhārata (Udyoga-parva 70.5) explains:

krṣir bhū-vacakam sabdo naś ca nirvṛtti-vaccakah
viṣṇus tad-bhāva-yogāc ca krṣno bhavati sāsvatāh

“The syllable ‘krṣ’ denotes existence, and the syllable ‘naś’ denotes bliss. The eternal Lord Krṣṇa is also always Viṣṇu in both these senses.”

The Amara-kośa Sanskrit dictionary (1.18) states, viṣṇur nārāyanah krṣno vaikuṇṭha viṣṭara-śravāḥ: “The names Viṣṇu, Nārāyana, Krṣṇa, and Vaikuṇṭha are synonymous.” One may say that these are names of Viṣṇu, but after listing thirty-nine such names, the Amara-kośa states, vasudevo ’syai janakah: “His father is Vasudeva.” By way of further confirmation that Krṣṇa is supreme, the author then immediately lists the names of Lord Balarāma, Krṣṇa’s brother.

Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣana quotes the following verse in his commentary on Śrī Viṣṇu-sahasra-nāma (20), while defining the name “Krṣṇa”:

krṣir bhū-vacakah sabdo naś ca nirvṛtti-samjñakah
tayoraikyam param brahma krṣṇa ity abhidhiyate

“The syllable ‘krṣ’ means ‘existence,’ and the syllable ‘naś’ means ‘bliss.’ The combination of these two is ‘Krṣṇa,’ the name of the Supreme Personality of Godhead” (Gopāla-tāpani Up., Pūrva 1.1). In this way both the conventional and the derived meanings of the name “Krṣṇa” are the same—the two-handed cowherd boy who is the son of Mother Yaśodā and also the Supreme Godhead. Since Vyāsadeva saw this particular Krṣṇa in His trance, the ultimate goal of life must be to attain love of Krṣṇa.
The next point Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī makes is that when the word Kṛṣṇa is uttered in a mantra, as in the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra, this sound attracts the attention of Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself the very moment the first syllable is vibrated. This is so because the name “Kṛṣṇa” is identical with the person Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. For verification we can examine the experience of many realized souls who attained perfection by chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra.

In the next Text Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī explains that the bliss derived from love of Godhead is far superior to that derived from impersonal realization.

**TEXT 48**

atha tasyaiva prayojanasya brahmānandānubhavād api paramatvam anubhūtavān. yatasyād tādānanda-vaiśiṣṭya-lambhanāya tām adhyāpayām aṣety āha sa samhitām iti. kṛtvānukrāmya ceti prathamatah svayam sāṅkepāna kṛtvā paścāt tu sīr-nārādopadesād anukramena vīvṛtyety arthah. ata eva śrīmad-bhāgavatam bāhūtāntarām kṛtam yad atra śrūyate yac cāṇyatraśādaśa-purānāntarām bāhūtām iti tad dvaṇyam api samāhitam syāt. brahmānandānubhava-nimagnatvāt nivṛtti-niratam sarvato nivṛttau niratam tatrāvyabhcārīnām api ty arthah.

Śrīla Vyāsadeva experienced that this final goal [the bliss of pure love of God] is superior to even brahmānanda, the happiness derived from realizing the impersonal aspect of the Supreme. This we know because Vyāsadeva taught Sukadeva Gosvāmī Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam so he could taste the special bliss derived from love of Godhead, even though Sukadeva was already absorbed in brahmānanda. Śuta Gosvāmī states this in the verse beginning sa-samhitām [Bhāg. 1.7.8]. In this verse the phrase kṛtvānukrāmya (“after compiling and revising”) indicates that Vyāsadeva first wrote Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam in an abbreviated form and that later on, after being instructed by Śrī Nārāda Muni, He expanded and rearranged it. Thus two apparently contradictory statements are reconciled—one found here [in the Bhāgavatam] saying that the Bhāgavatam was composed after the Mahābhārata, and the other found elsewhere [in the Skanda Purāṇa, Prabhāsākhanda 2.94], saying that the Mahābhārata was compiled after the eighteen Purāṇas. The word nivṛtti-niratā (“attached to renunciation”) implies that because of his absorption in the bliss of Brahman, Śrī Sukadeva was living a life of complete renunciation, from which he never deviated.

**COMMENTARY**

Love of God Is Superior to the Bliss of Brahman

One of Śrīla Vyāsadeva’s most profound realizations described in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam was that bhaktya-ānanda, the bliss derived from rendering loving devotional service to Kṛṣṇa, is superior to brahmānanda, the bliss derived from merging into the impersonal Brahman. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī confirms this
superiority in his Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.1.38):

brahmāṇando bhaved esa cet parārdha-guni-kṛtah
naiti bhakti-sukhāmbhodheḥ paramāṇu-tulām api

“Even if the happiness of Brahman realization is multiplied trillions of times, it would not equal even a single drop of the ocean of the bliss derived from devotional service.” Indeed, the bliss of pure devotional service always minimizes the happiness of Brahman realization.

A father naturally wants to give His son the best thing he has. Thus Śrīla Vyāsadeva taught Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam to Sukadeva Gosvāmī. But being Vyāsadeva’s son was not [DDB205]the only qualification Sukadeva possessed. Perfectly fixed in renunciation, he had no material desires (nīrvṛtti-niratam). In other words, he had no ulterior motive that would have led him to misconstrue the meaning of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam for material gain, either gross or subtle. It is for this reason that Śrīla Vyāsadeva regarded Sukadeva as the most qualified of His disciples to hear the Bhāgavatam, and by choosing him for this great honor Vyāsadeva set the standard for all future students and speakers of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.

In this Text Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī also resolves a controversy concerning the order in which the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and the Mahābhārata were composed. In the passage beginning with the following two verses, the Bhāgavatam itself says it was composed after the Mahābhārata:

stri-śūdra-dvija-bandhūnām trayi na śruti-gocarā
karma-sreyaśi mūdhānām śreya evam bhaved iha
iti bhāratam ākhyānāṁ kṛpayā mūninā kṛtam

evam pravrātyaśa sadā bhūtanām śreyāśi dvijāḥ
sarvātmakenāpi yadā nātusyaḥ dhṛdayam tataḥ

“Out of compassion, the great sage thought it wise to do something that would enable even those who were ignorant of how to act for their own welfare to achieve the ultimate goal of life. Thus He compiled the great historical narration called the Mahābhārata for women, laborers, and friends of the twice-born because they do not have access to the Vedas. O twice-born brāhmaṇas, still His mind was not satisfied, although He engaged himself in working for the total welfare of all people” (Bhāg. 1.4.25–26).

When Vyāsa was thus feeling dissatisfied, Nārada Muni came and requested Him to compose Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. Elsewhere, however, it is stated that the Mahābhārata was spoken after all eighteen Purāṇas. Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣana, in his commentary on this Text of the Tattva-sandarbha, cites the Matsya Purāṇa (53.70):

aṣṭādaśa-purāṇani kṛtvā satyavati-sutah
“After compiling the eighteen Purānas, Vyāsadeva, the son of Satyavati, composed the great history called the Mahābhārata, which serves as a commentary on the Vedas.”

To resolve this apparent contradiction in the chronology, Śrila Jiva Gosvāmi explains that Śrīla Vyāsadeva originally composed the Bhāgavatam in an abbreviated form. Later He compiled the great history called Mahābhārata out of compassion for those who cannot study the Vedas. But even after completing this great epic, Vyāsa still felt a void in His heart. Thereafter Nārada Muni instructed Him to produce a new, expanded edition of Śrimad-Bhāgavatam, the one currently available.

Moreover, from Śrimad-Bhāgavatam 1.3.43, quoted below, we can understand that this later edition was composed after Lord Kṛṣṇa’s disappearance from the earth. Earlier Vyāsa had composed the Mahābhārata for the welfare of people in the grip of Kali. Parikṣit Mahārāja’s chastisement of Kali occurred after the dialogue between Nārada Muni and Śrīla Vyāsadeva, since it was the spread of Kali’s influence that had saddened Vyāsa. Prior to Kali’s appearance Vyāsadeva had no reason to feel dissatisfied, since Lord Kṛṣṇa was still present along with all religious principles. The Bhāgavatam (1.3.43) confirms that this later edition of Śrimad-Bhāgavatam manifested before the brāhmaṇa boy Śrīṅgi had cursed Mahārāja Parikṣit, an event that occurred after the disappearance of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa:

krṣne sva-dhāmopagate dharma-jñānādibhīḥ saha kalau naṣṭa-drśāṁ eṣa purānārko ‘dhunoditaḥ

“This Bhāgavata Purāṇa is as brilliant as the sun, and it has arisen just after the departure of Lord Kṛṣṇa to His own abode, accompanied by religion, knowledge, etc. Persons who have lost their vision due to the dense darkness of ignorance in the Age of Kali shall get light from this Purāṇa.” In this connection we can also refer to the statements of Sūta Gosvāmi in the First Canto, Chapter Four.

We can summarize the chronology of the Vedic literature in Kali-yuga as follows: First Śrīla Vyāsadeva edited the one Veda, the original Yajur Veda, into four Vedas. He then abridged the one billion verses of the Purāṇas into eighteen Purāṇas consisting of a total of four hundred thousand verses. These included Śrimad-Bhāgavatam in its original, abbreviated form. Then Vyāsa composed His epic work, Mahābhārata, after which He distilled the essence of the Vedas, Purāṇas, and Mahābhārata into the Vedānta-sūtra. Finally He composed His most significant work of all, [DDB207] the full Śrimad-Bhāgavatam, which is Vyāsadeva’s own commentary on the Vedānta-sūtra.

Some traditional scholars believe there were two versions of the Mahābhārata. They say it was first compiled soon after the Vedas in one hundred sections, and later Veda-vyāsa reduced it to a hundred thousand verses in eighteen sections after
compiling the eighteen Purāṇas. The Mahābhārata's Ādi-parva (10.5) states that Śrīla Vyāsa compiled a samhitā with six million verses, of which He gave one hundred thousand to human beings. This Mahābhārata was first recited by the sage Vaiśampāyana to King Janmejaya, Parīksit's son. Another reference traditional scholars give to support their contention that there were two versions of the Mahābhārata is the Brhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad verse cited in Text 12 (B.a. Up. 2.4.10) This verse lists the scriptures that the Supreme Lord breathed out, including the Itihāsas, which are listed before the Purāṇas.

Next Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī shows that Śrīla Vyāsadeva's realization in trance constitutes the epimote of all philosophies, as confirmed by Sūta Gosvāmī.

TEXT 49

TEXT 49.1

tam etam śrī-veda-vyāsaya samādhi-jātānuhbhavān śrī-saunaka-praśnottaratvena viśādayan sarvātmārāmānuḥbhavena sa-hetukam samvādayati ātmārāmās ceti. nirgranthā vidhi-nisedhātītā nirgatāhankāra-granthayo vā. ahaṅkitum phalābhisandhi- raḥitām. atra sarvākeṣpa-parihārārtham āhya itthām-bhūta ātmārāmānām apy ākārsāna-svabhāvo guno yasya sa iti.

In reply to a question posed by Śrī Saunaka [Bhāg. 1.7.9], Sūta Gosvāmī speaks the verse beginning ātmārāmaś ca [Bhāg. 1.7.10], further explaining what Śrīla Vyāsadeva experienced in trance and showing logically how it is consistent with the experience of all sages who take pleasure in the self. In this verse the word nirgranthāḥ (“free from bondage”) means either “beyond the rules and regulations described in the scriptures” or “free from the knot of false ego.” The word ahaṅkitum (“causeless”) means “not desiring any results.” And to put an end to all doubts, Śrī Sūta says, “Indeed, the nature of Lord Hari is such that even ātmārāmas feel attracted to Him.”

TEXT 49.2

chrāvayitvā tena tam ākṣipta-matim kṛtvā tad eva pūrṇam tam adhyāpayām 
āseti bhāgavata-mahimātiśayah proktaḥ.

In the next verse (beginning harer guṇā; [Bhāg. 1.7.11]), Śūta reiterates this idea 
by relating Ṣukadeva Gosvāmī’s experience. First, when Ṣukadeva Gosvāmī heard 
Śrīla Vṛṣṇadeva recite a few selected Bhāgavatam verses describing Lord Hari’s 
attributes, Ṣukadeva’s attention was drawn away from the bliss of impersonal 
Brahman and his heart was captivated. Later Ṣukadeva studied the complete 
Bhāgavatam, despite its vast size. And thereafter Lord Viṣṇu’s devotees became 
very dear to him, his affection for them growing as he daily discussed the Lord’s 
pastimes with them. Or else the word viṣṇu-jana-priya means that he became dear 
to them.

The purport is as follows: The Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa 12 relates how Śrī Ṣukadeva, 
even while in the womb of his mother, realized that Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa could 
completely dispel Māyā’s influence by virtue of His independence. Subsequently, 
on Ṣukadeva’s request, Vṛṣṇadeva brought the Lord to His hermitage, and when 
Ṣukadeva saw Lord Kṛṣṇa before him even as he lay within the womb, he became 
free from Māyā’s influence. Considering his life successful, Ṣukadeva at once 
departed alone. Thereafter Śrīla Vṛṣṇadeva, knowing that He could control 
Ṣukadeva only with Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, somehow made him hear some selected 
Bhāgavatam verses describing Lord Kṛṣṇa’s superexcellent characteristics. In this 
way He captivated Ṣukadeva’s heart, and later He taught him the entire narrative. 
Thus is declared the supreme glory of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.

TEXT 49.3

tad evam darśitam vaktuh śrī-ṣukasya śrī-veda-vyāśasya ca samāna-hṛdayam. tasmād 
vañcetr hṛdayānurūpam eva sarvatra tātparyaṁ paryālocaniyam nānyathā. yad yat 
tad-anvāthā paryālocaṇām tatra tatra kuṣṭha-gāmitaivyeti niṣṭankitam. śrī-sūtah.

From the above we can see that the speaker (Ṣukadeva Gosvāmī) and Śrīla 
Vṛṣṇadeva had the same realizations. And therefore we should always study the 
message of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam in the light of Ṣukadeva’s realizations, not 
otherwise. By implication, we should consider any other interpretation merely 
speculative and thus deviant from the correct understanding.

The verse under discussion [Bhāg. 1.7.11] was spoken by Śrī Śūta Gosvāmī.

COMMENTARY
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam Attracts Even Ātmārāmas

To explain the essence of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, in Text 29 Jīva Gosvāmī first 
analyzed the Bhāgavatam’s description of Ṣukadeva’s heart. Then he analyzed Śrīla 
Vṛṣṇadeva’s experience in trance, on the basis of which Vyāsa wrote Śrīmad-
Bhāgavatam. Jīva Gosvāmī concludes the discussion of the present Text by 
confirming the outcome of these analyses with the words of Śrī Śūta Gosvāmī in 
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.7.10, the famous “ātmārāma verse.” What follows is a list of 
the major points to be derived from his analysis:

1. The Personality of Godhead is endowed with multifarious potencies in three
categories—internal, external, and marginal.
2. The chief and original form of the Lord[DDB209] is Śrī Kṛṣṇa, but Kṛṣṇa also manifests countless other expansions.
3. Neither the Supreme Lord’s Supersoul manifestations nor the impersonal Brahman are independent of Him.
4. The finite living entities are different from the Supreme Lord in their personal identity; they can never be one with Him in an absolute sense.
5. Māyā is the external energy of the Lord, deluding those living entities who turn their backs on Him.
6. Māyā is a devotee of the Lord and is always subservient to Him.
7. Māyā cannot influence the Lord and His internal potencies.
8. The jīvas can become free from the bondage of Māyā only by surrendering to the Lord and engaging in His devotional service.
9. Hearing the Ṣrīmad-Bhāgavatam is devotional service to the Lord and can thus end the jīva’s miseries.
10. The bliss one derives by engaging in devotional service to the Lord is so superior to the happiness derived from the realization of impersonal Brahman that even self-satisfied sages (ātmārāmās) become attracted to the Lord’s attributes and pastimes.
11. The purpose of human life is to attain love of God, the mature fruit of devotional service in practice (sādhana-bhakti).
12. Devotional service is supremely independent, like the Personality of Godhead; it does not need the support of any other method of self-realization.

When Sūta Gosvāmī finished describing Śrīla Vyāsadeva’s trance, Śaunaka Rṣi asked him, “If Śukadeva Gosvāmī was completely renounced, having no interest in anything by virtue of being absorbed in the bliss of the self, what caused him to study this lengthy Bhāgavata Purāṇa?”

Sūta Gosvāmī replied with these two verses (Bhāg. 1.7.10–11): “All different varieties of ātmārāmas (those who take pleasure in the ātmā, or spirit self), especially those established on the path of self-realization, though freed from all kinds of material bondage, desire to render unalloyed devotional service unto the Personality of Godhead. This means that the Lord possesses transcendental qualities and therefore can attract everyone, including liberated souls. The heart of the transcendently powerful Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī was captivated when he heard a description of Lord Hari’s attributes and pastimes, and therefore he undertook the study of this great narration, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. This made him very dear to the devotees of Lord Viṣṇu.”

By this answer Sūta Gosvāmī confirms all the realizations of Śrīla Vyāsadeva and Śukadeva Gosvāmī. First Śūta states a general principle[DDB210]—that many self-satisfied persons, although liberated from material bondage, are still eager to engage in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Then he mentions Śukadeva Gosvāmī as a specific instance of this principle’s application. Thus Śūta Gosvāmī establishes that Śukadeva Gosvāmī was not the only liberated person who became attracted to the Personality of Godhead’s service. On the contrary, Śukadeva’s experience is corroborated by that of many other ātmārāmās, demonstrating
that the only reason why one would reject the bliss of Brahman realization and take up devotional service must be the wonderful, all-attractive attributes of Lord Hari.

By this explanation Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī shows conclusively that Śukadeva Gosvāmī, Śrīla Vyāsadeva, and Śūta Gosvāmī shared the same realizations. Therefore these realizations should form the basis of any genuine study and interpretation of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. Interpretations based on something else must be considered deviant from the scripture’s intended meaning.

In Text 27 Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī disclosed that Śrīdharā Svāmī inserted some impersonalistic ideas into his commentary on Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. Śrīdharā Svāmī did this as a preaching strategy to attract the Māyāvādīs to the Bhāgavata philosophy. Jīva Gosvāmī said there that in such instances he would give his own explanations.

A recent scholar has criticized Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī for this policy, labeling him an opportunist who accepted only those statements that supported his opinion and belittled others by declaring that they were made with ulterior motives and did not actually express Śrīdharā Svāmī’s opinions. This scholar suggests that Jīva Gosvāmī is not a true follower of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who highly revered Śrīdharā Svāmī’s Bhāvārtha-dipikā.

But in this Text Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī further clarifies his policy: He accepts any explanation that complements the realization of Śrīla Vyāsadeva, Śukadeva Gosvāmī, and Śūta Gosvāmī—namely that pure devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa is the ultimate goal of life. That this policy reflects the real desire of Lord Caitanya will be recognized by everyone who knows that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was the leading opponent of impersonalism in His time. In debate He defeated two of the leading Māyāvādīs of His time, Prakāśānandā Sarasvatī and Vāsudeva Sārvabhauma, and He frequently condemned the Māyāvāda interpretation of the Vedānta-sūtra. In light of His teachings and example, for Him to embrace a Māyāvāda[a commentary on Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is unlikely and not at all credible.

Vaiṣṇavas coming in discipic succession do not have the slightest confusion on this point. Lord Caitanya revered Śrīdharā Svāmī’s commentary for two reasons: first, because Śrīdharā was in fact a great Vaiṣṇava, and second, because his commentary kept the natural sense of the Bhāgavatam and with its conclusions supported the Vaiṣṇava siddhānta. Therefore it should be obvious to anyone who reads his commentary that whatever impersonal explanations Śrīdharā Svāmī gave did not express his true heart. For example, while commenting on the first verse of the Bhāgavatam he states, śrīmad-bhagavad-guṇa-anuvartana-pradhānam bhāgavata-sāstram: “Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam was written chiefly to provide descriptions of the Supreme Lord’s qualities.” In the next verse, while commenting on the word vāstavam, he writes, vāstava-sābdena vastuno ‘mśo jīvah, vastunah sāktir māyā ca, vastunah kāryam jagat, tat sarvam vast eva: “The word vāstava indicates that the jīva is part of the Absolute, that Māyā is the energy of the Absolute, and that the
material world is the creation of the Absolute. All this is real.” This and many similar statements throughout Śrīdhara Svāmī’s Bhāgavatam commentary make foolish any doubt about his status as a pure Vaiṣṇava. And it is equally foolish to criticize Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī for not using the impersonalistic portions of Śrīdhara’s commentary here in his Śat-sandarbha.

One can fathom the true essence of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam only from the viewpoint of Śrī Vyāsa and Śukadeva Gosvāmī. Because Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī held this opinion, he is a true scholar of the Bhāgavatam and a true follower of Śrī Caitanya, who desired to see the Bhāgavatam established as the final word in philosophy throughout the world. Jiva Gosvāmī was neither a blind follower of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu nor a blind scholar foolishly trying to understand the supreme scripture without accepting the standard authorities in disciplic succession.

Jiva Gosvāmī was the leading disciple of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, two principal followers of Śrī Caitanyaadeva. The Lord personally instructed them in the science of devotional service and ordered them to write books setting forth His precepts. This they did in a most wonderful way, explaining the intricacies of bhakti-yoga so that no follower in their line would have to speculate or misinterpret the teachings of Lord Caitanya. Rūpa and Sanātana personally trained Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. They were so pleased with him that they made him the editor of many of their books. We have no reason, therefore, to doubt that Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī loyally followed in the footsteps of Śrīla Rūpa and Sanātana Gosvāmīs and therefore of Lord Caitanya. The ultimate proof of this is that one can find no contradictions between the writings of Rūpa and Sanātana and those of Jiva Gosvāmī. Indeed, earlier in Śrī Tattva-sandarbha Jiva Gosvāmī declared that he was writing this work under their order. Moreover, he succeeded Śrīla Rūpa and Sanātana Gosvāmīs as leader of the Gaudiya Vaiṣṇavas in Vṛndāvana, Bengal, and Orissa. This universal recognition of his leadership was explicit acknowledgment of his stature as a dedicated follower of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

We learn from Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.2.2) that Śukadeva Gosvāmī left his father’s house immediately after his birth. According to the Brahma-vaiśvātī Purāṇa, when Śukadeva was still in his mother’s womb he could understand the peril of living in the material world, the risk of being captivated by Māyā. He also knew that Kṛṣṇa can counter Māyā’s charms, and therefore he [DDB212]had his father, Vyāsadeva, bring Lord Kṛṣṇa from Dvārakā. [DDB213]Only when the Lord Himself promised to protect Śukadeva from Māyā did he agree to take birth, and even then he immediately left home to enter the forest. Out of natural affection for His son, Śrīla Vyāsadeva followed him, calling him to come back. But Śukadeva was completely unattached to material life and paid his father no heed. Vyāsadeva was deeply disappointed, since He wanted to teach Śukadeva Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. To entice him to return home, Vyāsa had some of His disciples recite verses from the Bhāgavatam whenever they went to the forest to collect firewood. Once when they were singing these verses, Śukadeva Gosvāmī heard them. At once his heart was captivated, and he followed the students back to Śrī Vyāsa. Then
Śukadeva, who had already put aside his attachment to the impersonal Brahman, learned the complete Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam from Śrīla Viśādeva.

At present there is no scriptural reference indicating which verses Śrī Śukadeva heard that captivated him, but some Vaiṣṇava scholars state that they included the following three:

*yam manyase mātuleyam priyam mitram suhṛt-tamam
akaroh sacivam dūtam sauhrdād atha sārathim*

“O King, that personality whom, out of ignorance only, you thought to be your maternal cousin, your very dear friend, well-wisher, counselor, messenger, benefactor, etc., is that very Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa” (Bhāg. 1.9.20).

*aho baki yam stana-kāla-kūtām
jighāṁsayāpāyaya adpy asādhvī
lebhē gatiṁ dhātry-ucitāṁ tato 'nyāṁ
kam vā dayālum saranam vrājema*

“Alas, how shall I take shelter of one more merciful than He [Kṛṣṇa], who granted the position of mother to the she-demon Pūtanā although she was unfaithful and she prepared deadly poison to be sucked from her breast?” (Bhāg. 3.2.23)

*barhāpidāṁ naṭa-vara-vapuh karnayoḥ karnikārāṁ
bibhrad vāsah kanaka-kapiśam vaijayantīṁ ca mālāṁ
randhrān venor adhara-sudhayāpārāyan gopa-vṛndair
vṛndāranyāṁ sva-pada-ramaṇāṁ prāviṣad ġita-kṛitiṁ*

“Wearing a peacock-feather ornament upon His head, blue *karnikāra* flowers on His ears, a yellow garment as brilliant as gold, and a Vaijayanti garland, Lord Kṛṣṇa exhibited His transcendental form as the greatest of dancers as He entered the forest of Vṛndāvana, beautifying it with the marks of His footprints. He filled the holes of His flute with the nectar of His lips, and the cowherd boys sang His glories” (Bhāg. 10.21.5).

These verses describe Lord Kṛṣṇa’s love for His devotees, His mercy even toward His enemies, and His incomparable charm and beauty.

The history of Śukadeva Gosvāmī described in the Mahābhārata differs from that narrated above. Baladeva Vidyābhūṣana explains that the two accounts describe events from different days of Lord Brahmā.

Having ascertained the *prameya* of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam—that is, what one should learn from it—Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī next says something about the format of Śrī Sat-sandarbha.
atha kramena vistaratas tathaiva tātparyam nirnetum sambandhābhidheya-
prayojanesu sadbhīh sandarbhair nirnesyamānesu prathamam yasya vācya-vācakatā-
sambandham śastram tadd eva dharmah projjhita-kaitava ity-ādi-padye
sāmānyākāratas tāvad āha vedyam vāstavam atra vastu iti. ṭīkā ca atra śrīmati
sundare bhāgavate vāstavam paramārtha-bhūtam vastu vedyam na tu vaiśeṣikādi-vad
dravya-guṇādi-rūpam ity eṣā. śrī-veda-vyāsah.

Hereafter, to delineate systematically and thoroughly the message of Śrīmad-
Bhāgavatam, we shall explain in these six Sandarbhas the principles of sambandha,
abhidheya, and prayojana, one after the other. This first book, the [DDB214]
Tattva-sandarbha, discusses the connection between the subject being
described and the text describing it. This connection is mentioned in general
terms in Bhāgavatam 1.1.2 with the words vedyam vāstavam atra vastu: “Here
the [DDB215]real reality is to be known.” Commenting on this part of
the verse, Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī writes, “Here in this beautiful Bhāgavatam
the ultimate reality in its highest manifestation is to be known, not reality in terms
merely of substance, qualities, and so on, as taught by the Vaiśeṣikas and
others.”
This verse [Bhāg. 1.1.2] is spoken by Śrī Veda-vyāsa.

COMMENTARY
The Subject of the Śat-sandarbha

Here Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmi informs us that in the six Sandarbhas he will explain in
great detail the same sambandha-, abhidheya-, and prayojana-tattva that Śrī
Vyāsadeva and Śukadeva Gosvāmi realized. He briefly mentioned them in Texts 8
and 9, and now he will elaborate on them on the basis of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. The
Tattva-, Bhāgavat-, Paramātma-, and Kṛṣṇa-sandarbha treat the sambanda-tattva,
[DDB216]the Bhakti-sandarbha discusses the abhidheya-tattva, and the Pṛti-
sandarbha explains the prayojana-tattva.

The Tattva-sandarbha introduces the subject matter of the six Sandarbhas by
establishing the authority of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and saying something about its
origin and content. As mentioned earlier, the relationship of a subject with its
description is technically called the vācya-vācakatā sambandha. The subject of
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is revealed in its very second verse: vedyam vāstavam atra
vastu. “The absolute reality is made understandable herein.” As we have already
discussed, reality manifests on various levels, but Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam enlightens
us about the ultimate reality, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who encompasses and reconciles all other
realities.

In contrast to Śrīla Vyāsadeva’s presentation in the Bhāgavatam, the philosophies
formulated by other ancient sages, such as Gautama and Kanāda, incompletely
describe reality. Gautama, in his system of Nyāya philosophy, says that by
understanding the empirical means and objects of knowledge one can free oneself
from material miseries. And Kanāda, in his system of Vaiśeṣika philosophy, which was briefly alluded to at the end of this Text, recognizes seven categories of existence: dravya (substances), guṇa (qualities), karma (motions), sāmānya (general categories), vīṣeṣa (particularities), samavāya (inherence), and abhāva (nonexistence). With these seven categories the Vaiśeṣikas try to explain all of reality. But although the scientific study embodied in philosophies like Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika may lead to realization of reality on some level, this is far different from realization of the absolute reality, which Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam makes available. Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī explains the nature of this reality in the next Text.

TEXT 51

atha kiṁ-svarūpaṁ tad vastu-tattvam ity atrāha:
vadanti tat tattva-vidas tattvam yaj jñānam advayam


“What is the nature of this [DDB21] absolute reality?”
Sūta Gosvāmī answers [Bhāg. 1.2.11]:
“The knowers of that absolute reality [DDB219] call it nondual consciousness.”
Here the word jñāna refers to that entity whose nature is exclusively pure consciousness. This pure spirit is called nondual for the following reasons: (1) there is nothing else, either similar or dissimilar, that is self-existent; (2) it takes support only from its own potencies; and (3) these potencies can have no existence without it as their absolute foundation.
The term tattva here implies the idea of the supreme goal of human life. Thus we understand that this tattva, or absolute reality [DDB220], is the embodiment of the highest bliss and is therefore also eternal.
The verse under discussion was spoken by Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī.

COMMENTARY
Absolute Reality Is Nondual Consciousness

In the last Text Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī stated that the absolute reality [DDB221] is to be known from Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. This naturally raises the question, “What is the essential nature of this absolute reality [DDB222]?” In reply Jiva Gosvāmī quotes Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam’s statement that the absolute reality [DDB223] is nondual (advayam), or in other words one without a second. There cannot be more than one absolute reality [DDB224], because if a second one were to be found the first one would immediately cease to be absolute. That the absolute reality [DDB225] is nondual, however, does not mean that
nothing else exists. Rather, the word “nondual” indicates two further things (in addition to the meaning stated above): first, the absolute reality[DDB226] is self-existent, meaning that it is grounded in itself and depends on no external support; second, nothing else can exist independent of this nondual reality’s support.

In Vedic philosophy, an object is considered nondual if it is free of three kinds of differences—those between[DDB227] objects of the same class, those between [DDB228] objects of different classes, and those between an object and its parts. A difference between objects of the same class is called sajātiya-bheda. Even though two chairs may look the same, function the same, and belong to the [DDB229]same class, called “chair,” they still differ as individual chairs. A change in one will not directly affect the other. A difference between objects of different classes is called vijātiya-bheda. For example, in its appearance and function a chair is different from a table. Finally, a difference between an object and its parts is called sva-gata-bheda. For example, if all the parts of a chair are scattered, the chair will no longer exist. In this way the chair is not self-existent.

These three kinds of differences give rise to the duality we observe throughout material nature. They do not exist, however, on the absolute plane; thus Śūta Gosvāmī calls the pure consciousness (absolute reality[DDB230]) jñānam advayam, nondual consciousness.

Even when the Supreme Personality of Godhead expands into forms such as Rāmacandra and Balarāma, these svāṁśa (selvesame) expansions remain nondifferent from the Lord’s original self. Still, while He is not dependent on Them, They are dependent on Him. Since the Lord and His svāṁśa expansions belong to the same class, no difference of the sajātiya-bheda type is found in Him.

Material nature, being inert, belongs to a class of existence different from that of the transcendental Personality of Godhead. This might lead one to conclude that there is vijātiya-bheda between Him and material nature. Nevertheless, since material nature’s existence is not independent or separate from Him, there is ultimately no difference of vijātiya-bheda between Him and His material expansions.

Finally, the Lord’s body and its limbs are each fully conscious and potent and therefore nondifferent from Him Himself. For this reason it is said that in Lord Kṛṣṇa there exists no difference of the svagata-bheda type.

The finite living entities belong to the marginal potency of the Supreme Lord. Thus one may view them in two ways, both as belonging to the same class as the Lord because they are conscious like Him, and as belonging to a different class because their size and potency is very small. From both viewpoints the jīvas are fully dependent on the Supreme Lord, so that there exist none of the three types of differences between them and the Lord. Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī concludes, therefore, that although the Lord’s energies render Him service in various ways, they have no existence separate from Him (tāṁ vinā tasām asiddhatvāt).
Just as a spider weaves a web with a special substance it produces and then makes the web its home, so Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the personified nondual absolute reality[DDB231], employs His own energies to manifest the spiritual realm, where He resides. These energies are part of His internal nature and have no independent existence.

In the verse under discussion (Bhāg. 1.2.11), the word jñānam means “consciousness.” Its significance here is that the nondual reality is consciousness and also conscious, just as the sun is light and also luminous. Because the word jñānam refers to the absolute reality[DDB232], this nondual consciousness must have perpetual existence (sat) as a characteristic. And because the word tattvam indicates the supreme objective of life, it follows that this nondual reality must also be characterized by bliss (ānanda), since all living beings seek pleasure, whether they know it or not. Indeed, direct perception, logical analysis, and scriptural authority all confirm that the pursuit of happiness is the ultimate motivation in all activities. This is the basic purpose underlying creative and destructive processes and all personal relationships. As the Brhad-āraṇyaka Upanisad (2.4.5) states, na vā are patyuh kāmāya patiḥ priyo bhayatvā ātmanas tu kāmāya patiḥ priyo bhavatī: “My dear, the husband is [DDB233]loved not for his own sake[DDB234] but for the sake of the self.”

Here the word “self” refers to either the jīva or the Supreme Lord. In our conditioned state, the self we perceive is [DDB235] the jīva. We become attached to someone or something because we derive happiness from loving that person or thing. This feeling of happiness comes from our sense of possession—the notion that the object of love is “ours”—not from the person or the object itself. The truth of this principle is shown by the common experience that our happiness naturally decreases when our sense of possession diminishes.

By contrast, in the liberated state we realize that our ultimate Self is the Supreme Lord. When we act solely on the basis of this understanding we become the Lord’s pure devotees, and then we render service only for His pleasure and desire nothing in return. Even if the all-attractive Lord treats us roughly we are still happy, for we have abandoned all fears and cares in our loving relationship with Him. Lord Caitanya demonstrated this standard in His Śīkṣāṭaka, where He prayed:

āśliṣya vā pāda-ratāṁ pinaṣṭu mām
adāṁśanāṁ marma-hatāṁ karotu vā
yathā tathā vā vidadhātu lampato
mat-prāṇa-nāthas tu sa eva nāparah

“I know no one but Kṛṣṇa as my Lord, and He shall remain so even if He handles me roughly in His embrace or makes me broken-hearted by not being present before me. He is completely free to do anything and everything, for He is always my worshipful Lord, unconditionally.”

In conditioned life we do not know that Kṛṣṇa is the supreme object of love and the source of all bliss. Rather, we mistake ourselves for the source of bliss. To
enlighten us about Himself, Kṛṣṇa instructs us in the Bhagavad-gītā (10.8—9):

ahāṁ sarvasya prabhavo māttah sarvam pravartate
iti matvā bhajante mam buddhā bhāva-samanvitaḥ

mac-cittā mad-gata-prānā bodhayantah parasparam
kathayaṇta ca mām nityam tasyanti ca ramanti ca

“I am the source of all spiritual and material worlds. Everything emanates from Me. The wise who perfectly know this engage in My devotional service and worship Me with all their hearts. The thoughts of My pure devotees dwell in Me, their lives are fully devoted to My service, and they derive great satisfaction and bliss from always enlightening one another and conversing about Me.”

Thus there is an inherent relationship between jñāna (knowledge), sat (eternal existence), and ananda (bliss). This relationship is clearly indicated in such śrutī statements as vijnānam anāndaṁ brahma: “Brahman is pure consciousness and bliss” (Bṛhad-āraṇya Upaniṣad 3.9.34). Thus the nature of the nondual consciousness described in this verse has been designated sac-cid-ānanda, “permanent existence, knowledge, and bliss.”

In this Text Jīva Gosvāmī presented his thesis, that jñāna is eternal. In the next Text he will explain the pūrva-pakṣa, that jñāna is momentary.

TEXT 52

TEXT 52.1

nanu nila-piṭādy-ākāraṁ kṣanikam eva jñānaṁ drṣṭam tat punar advayaṁ nityam jñānaṁ katham lakṣyate yan-niṣṭham idam sāstram ity atrāḥa

sarva-vedānta-sāram yad brahmātmaikyatva-laksanam

vastv advitiyaṁ tan-niṣṭham kaivalyaika-prayojanam

iti. satyam jñānam anantam brahma iti yasya svarūpam uktam yenaśrutam śrutam bhavati iti, yad-vijnānaṁ sarva-vijnānam pratijñātām, sad eva saumyedam agra āsid ity-ādinā nikhilā-jagad-ekā-kāranatā, tad aikṣata bahu syāṁ ity anena satya-sankalpatā ca yasya pratipādītā tena brahmaṁ svarūpa-śaktibhāyām sarva-brhattachānām sārdham, anena jivenāmyaneti tadyoktāv idantā-nirdēsena tato bhinnatve 'py ātmātā-nirdēsenā tad-ātmāṁśa-viśeṣatvena labhdhasya bādarāyaṇa-saṁādhi-drṣṭa-yukter aty-abhinatāt-rahitasya jīvātmano yad ekaṁkāh tvaṁ asi ity-ādau jñātā tad-amsa-bhūta-cid-ānapatvenā saṁākārātā, tad eva laksanāṁ prathamato jñāne sādhaskātām yasya, tathā-bhūtam yāt sarva-vedānta-sāraṁ advitiyaṁ vastu, tan-niṣṭham tad-eka-viśayatām idām śṛ-bhāgavatam iti prāktana-padya-stheneṇaḥ.
One may question, But events of consciousness are seen to exist only briefly, taking the shape, say, of a blue object one moment and a yellow object the next. How then can consciousness be called the nondual and eternal theme of this scripture [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam]?
Sūta Gosvāmi replies:
“This Bhāgavatam is the essence of all Vedānta philosophy because its subject matter is the Absolute Truth, which, while nondifferent from the spirit soul, is the ultimate reality, one without a second. The goal of this literature is exclusive devotional service unto that Supreme Truth” [Bhāg. 12.13.12].
The śruti has defined the nature of this Absolute Truth (Brahman): “The Supreme Brahman is infinite truth and knowledge” [Taittiriya Up. 2.1.1]. That Brahman is the sole cause of the entire creation is shown by such śruti statements as “By hearing about which [Brahman] everything is heard” [Chāndogya Up. 6.1.3], “By knowing which [Brahman] everything is known,” and “My boy, in the beginning there was only sat, the eternal reality” [Chāndogya. Up. 6.2.1]. That the Supreme Brahman achieves everything simply by His desire is shown by the statement “He glanced and desired, [DDB237]Let Me become many”’ [Chāndogya.Up. 6.2.3]. In the statement “Along with this individual living entity I shall manifest name and form” [Chāndogya Up. 6.3.2], the living entity (jīva) is mentioned in connection with and as belonging to the Supreme, which is called Brahman because it is greater than all else in essence and potencies; here the pronoun idam (“this”) differentiates the jīva from Brahman, but the word atmanā (“self”) indicates that the jīva is part and parcel of Brahman. According to what was revealed in Śrīla Vyāsadeva’s trance, the living entity is one with the Supreme Brahman in the sense of not being completely different from Him. Such śruti statements as tat tvam asi (“You are that”; [Chāndogya Up. 6.8.7]) reveal that the oneness of the Supreme Brahman with the jīva consists of their both being purely spiritual by virtue of the jīva’s status as a particle of the Supreme Brahman.
Understanding this idea helps one acquire preliminary knowledge of the Supreme Brahman.
The entity thus designated as the Supreme Brahman, who is the essence of all the Upaniṣadṣ and is one without a second, is the focus of interest, the exclusive subject matter, of this Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. Here we understand “this Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam” to be implied by the syntactic connection with that same phrase in one of the preceding verses [12.13.10][NEW238].

TEXT 52.2


The following analogy helps clarify the above idea. Suppose a person has been kept in a dark room from birth and has never seen the sun. When he wants to know what the sun is, someone points to a ray of sunlight passing through a window grating and says, “That is the sun. Try to understand that the sun is a great orb of
light, of the same substance as this ray, which is a portion of it.” In the Paramātma-sandarbhā we will establish that the jīva is similarly a fractional portion of the Supreme Brahman, manifested by one of His inconceivable potencies.

TEXT 52.3


Thus when the Upaniṣads say that the Supreme Brahman has parts, they mean that one of His characteristics is to be endowed with the part-and-parcel living beings and other energies. Conversely, when the śrutis speak of Him as having no parts, they are focusing on His exclusive essence.

In the fourth line of Bhāgavatam 12.13.12, namely kaivalyaika-prayojanam, the word kaivalya (“oneness”) simply means “purity.” Later, in the Priti-sandarbhā, we will demonstrate that this purity is none other than pure devotional service. The verse under discussion [Bhāg. 12.13.12] was spoken by Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī.

COMMENTARY
The Meaning of Monistic Statements [DDB242]in the Scripture

In the last Text Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī established that the Absolute Truth is eternal, nondual consciousness. One sect of Buddhists, the Kṣaṇika-vijñāna-vādis, raise an objection to this conclusion. Their doctrine states [DDB243]the following:

There is only one reality, consciousness, which is changing at every moment, and [DDB244]there is no difference between knowledge and the object of knowledge. Just as in our dreams the things we see do not exist outside our consciousness, so also in our waking life distinctions between knowledge and the object of knowledge are not real. When we see a blue object our consciousness is blue. If we next see a yellow object, the blue consciousness is destroyed and our consciousness changes to yellow. How, then, can consciousness be called eternal?

[DDB245]This is the objection the Vijñāna-vādis raise[DDB246] against Jiva Gosvāmī’s conclusion that the Absolute Truth, [DDB247]the nondual consciousness, is eternal. [DDB248][DDB249]****New[DDB249]They reason that an eternal object cannot be the cause of anything since in general a cause transforms into its effect. For example, since milk transforms into yogurt, it cannot be eternal. Similarly, the nondual consciousness, being the cause of everything, must undergo transformation and therefore cannot be eternal. Further, they say, everything is changing at every moment, although we may not notice the moment-by-moment change, just as we do not notice the moment-by-moment growth of plants or our bodies.
To the Vijnana-vadhis’ argument Sri Jiva Gosvami replies not with a logical refutation but by quoting Srimad-Bhagavatam, the supreme pramana. The Bhagavatam verse given here (12.13.12) explains that the nondual reality is characterized by oneness of the Supreme with the individual selves. Thus the oneness of reality is not the Buddhists’ oneness of momentary consciousness and its objects. This reality is advaya-jnana, the essence of all the Upanisads and the subject matter of Srimad-Bhagavatam;[DDB250] it is not momentary but eternal, conscious, and blissful by nature; it is the cause of everything in this universe; and it can achieve everything simply by its will. All this implies that the advaya-jnana is endowed with multifarious potencies. It is called Brahman because it is the greatest and because it can make others great: brhattvad brinhanatvacho yad brahma paramam vidu (Viṣṇu Pur. 3.3.21). The various śruti statements cited in this Text describe all these characteristics of Brahman. So the theory of consciousness [DDB251] put forward by the Ksanika-vijnana-vadhis does not agree with either śruti or Srimad-Bhagavatam.

The Vijnana-vadhis’ theory of reality is based on their assumption that there is no absolute, pure consciousness. The Vijnana-vadhis do not know that the absolute reality is a person possessing acintya-sakti, inconceivable potencies, through which He causes everything while remaining unaffected. As the Isopanisad declares in its opening verse,

om purnam adah purnam idam purnat purnam udacyate
purnasya purnam adaya purnam evavasyate

“The Personality of Godhead is perfect and complete, and because He is completely perfect, all emanations from Him, such as this phenomenal world, are perfectly equipped as complete wholes. Whatever is produced of the Complete Whole is also complete in itself. Because He is the Complete Whole, even though so many complete units emanate from Him, He remains the complete balance.”

The Vijnana-vadhis’ view is based on a material conception of changing consciousness. Their understanding does not apply to the absolute realm. While in our ordinary experience material energy is in a constant state of flux, the Lord and His internal energies are not under the same system of natural laws that govern material nature. The example of the spider cited in the previous Text also applies here: from within itself the spider produces a special substance and then weaves its web with it, and later it draws the substance back within itself, all without undergoing any transformation. To understand the Absolute Truth, we must first shed all our misconceptions based on material conditioning and simply hear from authentic spiritual authorities in disciplic succession. The Vedic literature therefore recommends that even if a person is highly qualified by good birth, good education, and so forth, he still should present himself as ignorant and foolish at the feet of a bona fide spiritual master, inquire from him submissively, and render service to him. This is the correct process for cleansing one’s heart and mind of material contamination, and a sincere candidate for spiritual life who follows this process can gradually gain full realization of the Absolute Truth. The Vijnana-vadhis, being followers of Lord Buddha, reject the [DDB252] Vedic literature, and
consequently they end up with the hopelessly muddled explanation of transcendental reality outlined above. They say consciousness is momentary. If this were true, then consciousness could not be the cause of anything, because according to the Nyāya school of logic a cause has to exist for at least two moments. It must exist as the cause for the first moment and then transform or produce the result in the next moment. And if our consciousness were existing for only one moment at a time, we could not remember our past experiences, since there would be no continuity from one moment’s consciousness to another moment’s consciousness. A person who has experienced something can recall it later on, but if consciousness were momentary there would be nothing to recall in the next moment’s consciousness. This is certainly contrary to everyone’s experience.

Nor can the Viṣṇu-vādīs’ idea of the external world withstand the test of logic. They say that the external world is a manifestation of momentary consciousness. Here a question may be asked: Are things perceived as external one with momentary consciousness or different from it? If the Viṣṇu-vādīs claim that the external objects are separately real, then they are agreeing with our Vaisnava opinion and are contradicting their own statement that the apparently external objects are only a manifestation of internal consciousness. On the other hand, if they say that the external objects are one with internal consciousness, in practice there would be no way to distinguish between the momentary, internal consciousness and the objects it perceives. Also, there would be no standard to separate, say, blue consciousness from yellow consciousness, and thus our perceptions would be rife with confusion.

As is known from both reason and direct experience, consciousness always has a subject (one who is conscious) and an object (what one is conscious of). If momentary consciousness alone were real, where would its subject and object be? To this the viṣṇu-vādīs offer no satisfactory answer. If neither external objects nor such internal objects as happiness and distress are different from the perceiver, then who is doing the perceiving? Everyone’s common experience is that the perceiver, the perceived, and the perception are distinct.

In this Text Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī again clarifies that the oneness of the jīva and Brahman spoken of in śruti should not be understood as absolute oneness. After all, śruti contains such statements as anena jīvenātmanānupraviśya nāma-rūpe vyākaravāni: “Along with this jīva I shall enter as Paramātmā and create name and form” (Chāndogya Up. 6.3.2). Here the pronoun anena (“this”), referring to the jīva, implies that the jīva is different from “I,” the speaker (God). Nonetheless, elsewhere the jīva is described as part and parcel of Brahman, a conclusion confirmed by Śrīla Vyāsa’s trance. The reconciliation of this apparent contradiction is that, as we have discussed before, the jīva and Brahman are one in the sense of their sharing the common characteristic of consciousness but are different in their individual identities and potencies. When someone says that Texans and New Yorkers are one, we understand him to mean they are from the same country, the United States, not that they have no separate identities.
The jīvas are parts of Brahman, the whole. This is the oneness of Brahman with its parts, its energies, which is the fundamental teaching of the Upaniṣads and also of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. The idea is that in general the part is dependent on the whole and helps it function. When separated from the whole, the part becomes useless, just as a finger lopped off a hand becomes useless. In the same way, the relation between the jīvas and the Supreme Lord, who is known as Brahman in the Upaniṣads, is that of the servants and the served. The jīvas have no independent existence. All their problems begin when they start considering themselves independent of the Supreme Lord.

Correctly understanding the oneness between Brahman and the jīvas is a fundamental step in understanding the nature of Brahman. Every jīva directly experiences his own consciousness, and the Upaniṣads, on the basis of the oneness of Brahman and the jīvas, instruct the jīvas to extrapolate from that experience some idea of the nature of Brahman. To illustrate this process, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī gives the analogy of a man born and bred in a cavelike room who has never seen the sun. To educate this man about the sun, someone may point to a ray of sunlight shining into his dark room through a tiny opening and tell him, “This single ray of light is from the sun, an enormous sphere that emanates countless similar rays.” From this information the man can get some idea of what the sun is like. The Upaniṣads use this same method to instruct the jīvas about Brahman’s status as pure consciousness. Indeed, the jīvas are like atomic rays emanating from the sunlike Brahman. The sun’s rays are not completely different from the sun, for they originate from the sun, nor are they absolutely one with the sun, since they can be seen apart from the sun and they lack the complete potency of the sun. Similarly, the jīvas are neither completely one with Brahman nor completely different from Brahman. In his Sarva-saṁvādī, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī calls this relationship between the jīva and Brahman acintya-bhedābheda, “inconceivable, simultaneous oneness and difference.” Owing to this relationship, Brahman is described as advaya-jñāna, or nondual consciousness, which is the subject of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.

Thus the word Brahman—as the Upaniṣads and also Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam use it—should not be misunderstood to mean impersonal Brahman without qualities. The Māyāvādīs insist on this wrong understanding, but according to logic such an impersonal Brahman cannot exist, because if it did it would possess the attribute of existence, which implies potency, which in turn implies duality—Brahman plus attributes. But Māyāvādīs abhor duality in the absolute realm. Therefore in no Vedic scripture does the word Brahman mean impersonal Brahman in the sense that the Māyāvādīs intend.

The true conception of Brahman is stated by Śūta Gosvāmī in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.2.11): brahmaḥ paramātmataḥ bhagavān iti sādyate. “This nondual consciousness is called Brahman, Paramātmā, and Bhagavān” Here Śūta Gosvāmī does not say that the Absolute Truth is also called jīva. He includes only the above-mentioned three designations—three names of the same nondual consciousness, which Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam identifies as Krṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The Absolute Truth appears differently to the practitioners of various spiritual
processes, but the Absolute Truth itself does not change. This is the significance of the word *sabdyate* (“it is designated”) here. The Brahman described in the Vedic scriptures is Bhagavân, the Supreme Person, Krsna.

In the *sruti* we find two types of statements concerning the relationship between the *jīvas* and Brahman: those statements designating the *jīva* as part of Brahman and those indicating his oneness with Brahman. The real distinction between these kinds of statements is only one of emphasis on either difference (*bheda*) or nondifference (*abheda*). Statements in the Vedic scripture such as *nityo nityānāṁ cetanaś cetanānāṁ* (“That one eternal conscious being is the support for the many eternal conscious beings”; *Katha Up.* 2.2.13) belong to the *bheda* class. Statements such as *sarvam khalv idam brahma* (“Indeed, all this is Brahman”) belong to the *abheda* class.

The word *kaivalya* in *Bhāgavatam* 12.13.12 properly means “pure devotion.” Although impersonalists commonly use this term to mean final emancipation, or merging into Brahman, Brahman is not ultimately impersonal, as the Māyāvādīs claim. Their usage of *kaivalya* is therefore absurd. *Kaivalya* means liberation, but the real mark of liberation is pure devotional service, not merging into Brahman. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī will explain this more fully in the *Pṛti-sandarbha*.

To summarize, each statement in the Vedic scriptures describing the oneness of Brahman and the *jīvas* serves one or more of the following purposes:
1. To distinguish both Brahman and the *jīvas* from inert matter by pointing to consciousness as their common quality.
2. To show that the *jīvas* are fractional parts of the Supersoul.
3. To teach that the *jīvas* are dependent on the Supersoul.
4. To indicate that by becoming an unalloyed devotee of the Lord a *jīva* can become powerful like the Supreme Lord.
5. To show that living in the material world is not the natural, healthy condition of the *jīva*.
6. To show that the *jīva*, whether in conditioned life or in liberation, is dependent on the Lord.
7. To establish that Brahman is the only self-existent reality.

One should not think that any statement in the Vedic scriptures about the oneness of Brahman and the *jīvas* asserts their absolute oneness.

To know the Supersoul, one must first understand the nature of the individual self, the *jīva*. Thus in the next Text Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī begins explaining the characteristics of the self.

TEXT 53

[DDB253]TEXT 53.1

tatra yadi tvam-pādārthasya jīvātmanto jñānatvam prakṛtāy ātmanātvaṁ ca prathamāt viṣāra-
The jīva is designated tvam (“you”) in the statement tat tvam asi (“You are that.”). If one first understands that this “you” is conscious and eternal, then one can easily understand how the Supreme Brahman (tat) has a similar nature. To make just this point, in accordance with the reasoning of Vedānta-sūtra 1.3.20—“One contemplates the jīva in order to know the other, the Supreme”—sage Pippalāyana describes the jīva as having the same nature as tat when he says to King Nimi [Bhāgavatam 11.3.38]:

“The soul was never born and will never die, nor does it grow or decay. It is actually the knower of the youth, middle age, and death of the material body. It can thus be understood to be pure consciousness, existing everywhere at all times and never being destroyed. Just as the life air within the body, although one, becomes as many in contact with the various material senses, so the soul appears to assume various material designations in contact with its material bodies.”

[DDB254]TEXT 53.2


Here ātmā means “the pure self,” and na jajāna means “he was never born.” Since he has no birth, the self is also free from the next transformation, sustained existence. Naidhate means “he does not increase”; since he does not increase, he does not undergo transformation. The word hi means “because,” the idea of logical reason. Vyabhicārinām means “of all impermanent things,” namely the living entity's various bodies in childhood, adolescence, and so on, or else the living entity's bodies in the various species of life—demigods, humans, and others. The self is the savana-vit, the witness of each of these stages of life. Certainly this witness is not subject to the varying conditions of what he merely observes. In answer to the question “Who is this unchanging self?” Pippalāyana says, “He is pure consciousness, nothing but awareness.” How does it exist? “It is eternally present everywhere throughout the body.”

[DDB255]TEXT 53.3

nanu nila-jñānam naṣṭam pita-jñānam jātam iti prātīter na jñānasyānapāvyātvam. tatrāha indriya-balene. sad eva jñānam ekam indriya-balena vividham kalpitam.
nilādy-ākārā vṛttaya eva jāyante naśyanti ca na jñānam iti bhāvah. ayaṃ āgamāpāyi-
tad-avadhi-bhedena prathamas tarkah. draṣṭr-drṣṭya-bhedena dvitiyo ‘pi tarko jñeyah.
vyaḥcārīsv avasthitasyāvyahbicāre draṣṭāntah prāno yatthe.

“But how can we consider consciousness ever-present, since we experience that
after our consciousness of something blue disappears our consciousness of
something yellow appears?” Pippalāyana answers, indriya-balena (“by the power of
the senses”), indicating that although consciousness is always present and is one,
the power of the senses causes it to appear variegated. In other words, it is not
consciousness itself that appears and disappears; rather, what appear and disappear
are the various mental states in the form of perceptions of something blue and so
on.
Thus the first argument [presented to help identify the absolute reality[DBB256]]
is based on the difference between the things that appear and disappear and
that which is not subject to such changes. The second argument is based on the
difference between the observer and the objects he observes. The example of
the life air shows how something unchanging can exist in the midst of
ephemeral objects.

COMMENTARY
Characteristics of the Soul

As mentioned above, the Vedic statements that describe nondifference between the
jīva and Brahman do so in reference to the common attributes of both. One
popular example of such a statement is tat tvam asi, “You are that.” Here the word
tat and tvam signify Brahman the jīva, respectively, who both possess the attribute
of consciousness. The idea behind this statement is that one who clearly
understands the jīva’s spiritual nature can easily grasp the nature of Brahman. The
same idea lies behind the analogy Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī gave in the previous Text, in
which a man in a cave learns about the sun by being instructed about a sun-ray.

This technique has also been used in the Vedaṇā-sūtra (1.3.20): anyārthaḥ ca
parāmarṣah. “One reflects [on the jīva] for the sake of understanding the other
[Paramātmā].” Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣana comments: “This sūtra refers to the
dahara-vidyā portion of the Chāndogya Upaniṣad (8.1), which describes meditation
on the Supersoul in the small space (dahara) within the heart. The body of the
worshiper is considered the city of Brahman, in which lies the Supersoul, the
worshipable Lord within the dahara. The worshiper is supposed to meditate on the
eightfold qualities belonging to the Supersoul. These eight qualities are listed in
the Chāndogya Upaniṣad (8.7.1): [DBB257]The Supersoul is free from sin, old
age, death, sorrow, hunger, and thirst. He has unfailing desires and unfailing
determination.’ But further along (Chāndogya Up. 8.12.13), mention is made of
a blissful one who rises out of the body, attains to the light, and becomes
situated in his own natural state. He is called the purusottama.” This
purusottama, according to Baladeva Vidyābhūṣana, is the jīva who has attained
perfection by acquiring transcendental knowledge of the Lord.

This raises an obvious doubt: Why in the midst of this description of the dahara,
dealing with meditation on the Supersoul, is the jiva mentioned? To answer this
doubt, the above sūtra (Vs. 1.3.20) is quoted. The reference to the jiva in the
dahara-vidyā is not simply to convey knowledge about the jiva but to lead to
knowledge about the Supersoul, and by knowing the Supersoul the jiva attains his
real nature. In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.3.38, Pippalāyana Yogendra similarly
instructs King Nimi about the jiva to educate him about the nature of the Lord.

The purpose of the above-mentioned verse spoken by Pippalāyana is to distinguish
the self from the body. The body undergoes six types of changes. These are listed
in the Nirukta (1.1.2): jāyate ’sti vardhate viparinamate ’pakṣiyate naśyati ca. “The
body takes birth, exists for some time, grows, undergoes changes, dwindles, and
finally dies.” The soul, however, does not undergo any of these changes, as Lord
Krṣṇa confirms in Chapter Two of the Bhagavad-gītā.

The argument for the soul not undergoing these changes is that he is their
continuous observer. A man sitting in a moving airplane and unable to look out
the window cannot understand how fast it is going, but an observer on the ground
can easily understand. Similarly, we do not feel the earth rotating because we are
riding on it, but the astronauts can easily see this from their space vehicles.

The objection of the Kṣaṇika-vijñāna-vādās discussed in the previous Text—
namely, that consciousness is only momentary—is repeated here (in Text 53.3)
and answered differently. The momentary consciousness of which they speak
actually consists of changes in one's mental state. It is produced by the senses
interacting with the external world. Consciousness itself is constant. The Vedānta
explains that when a person looks at an object there arises a particular mental
state, called a vṛtti, which the soul perceives. The mental state itself is not the
perceiver. But the Buddhists, who are totally ignorant about the soul, mistake this
temporary, ever-changing vṛtti for the real consciousness.

This point is further clarified with the analogy of the life air. Air is one, but air
within the body has various names, such as prāna, apāna, and samāna, according to
the function it performs. Similarly, the soul is one, but on account of the senses,
the consciousness the soul manifests while in the body appears many-branched
and ever-changing. This phenomenon is similar to the way in which sweetened
milk gives rise to different mental states when perceived with different senses: to
the eyes it is white, to the tongue sweet, and so on.

So it is not the self but only the mental state affected by varieties of sense
perception that appears and disappears, or undergoes changes. The living entity is
a fractional part of the Supreme Lord, and since the Lord is conscious and eternal
the living entity must share these qualities, just as a tiny gold nugget shares the
qualities of the mother lode. And the purpose of explaining the conscious and
eternal quality of the soul with logic and personal experience is to help us develop
an understanding of the Supersoul.

Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī derives two arguments from the words of Pippalāyana (Bhāg.
11.3.38), both of which serve to distinguish the soul from the material body. The
first argument is based on the changes that occur in the material body. We see these changes as time progresses, but with some reflection we can understand that we ourselves have not changed but are the same person. Since the attributes of changeless and transformation cannot be attributed to the same object, the unchanging soul must be distinct from the changing body.

Śrī Jiva’s second argument is based on the distinction between the perceiver and the perceived. The body and mind cannot be the observer, because they are objects of perception. Thus the perceiver, the soul, must be different from them.

In the next Text Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmi presents further logic to help distinguish the self from the body.

**TEXT 54**

[DDB258]**TEXT 54.1**

\[drṣṭāntam vivṛtvam indriyādi-layena nirvākārūmpalabdhiṃ darśayati:\]

\[anṛṣu peśisu tarsu aviniścitesu\]

\[prāno hi jīvam upadhāvatī tatra tatra\]

\[sanne yad indriya-gane 'hami ca prasupte\]

\[kūṭa-stha aśayam rte tad-anusmṛtīṃ nah\]

\[anṛṣu anda-jeṣu. peśisu jarāyu-jeṣu. tarsu udhibḥi-jeṣu. aviniścitesu sveda-jeṣu.\]

\[upadhāvatī anuvartate.\]

Expanding further on this example, Pippalāya Śrī uses the analogy of the senses’ dissolution to demonstrate the soul’s changelessness:

“The spirit soul is born in many different species of life within the material world. Some species are born from eggs, others from embryos, others from the seeds of plants and trees, and others from perspiration. But in all species of life the prāna, or vital air, remains unchanging and follows the spirit soul from one body to another. Similarly, the spirit soul is eternally the same despite its material condition of life. We have practical experience of this. When we are absorbed in deep sleep without dreaming, the material senses become inactive, and even the mind and false ego are merged into a dormant condition. But although the senses, mind, and false ego are inactive, one remembers upon waking that he, the soul, was peacefully sleeping” [Bhāg. 11.3.39].

Here anṛṣu means “among those born from eggs,” peśisu means “among those born from wombs,” tarsu means “among those born from plants,” aviniścitesu means “among those born from perspiration or heat,” and upadhāvatī means “follows.”

[DDB259]**TEXT 54.2**

Having thus shown the changeless quality of the life air, sage Pippalāyana now compares the soul to it and in this way demonstrates that the soul is also changeless. How is this? The soul appears to be changing either when he is in contact with his senses during waking consciousness or when he is connected only with his ego while sleeping and dreaming, at which time his ego is filled with impressions from the waking state. But when the soul is in deep sleep, the senses and ego become temporarily submerged or dissolved, and only the changeless, essential soul remains. How does he remain? Āsayaṃ rte: without the “containing vessel,” the limitation of the subtle body. That is to say, he is free from the upādhis that impose changes upon him.

[DDB261]TEXT 54.3

nanv ahankāra-parantasya sarvasya laye śūnyam eva vasīṣyate kva tadā kūṭa-stha ātmā. ata āha tad-anumātrir nas tasyākhandātmanah susuṣṭi-sākṣinah smṛtir nah asmākam jāgṛ-draṣṭānām jāyate evāvantam kālam aham avāpam na kīcīd avediṣam iti. ato 'nanubhūtasya tasyāśmaranād āstya eva susuṣṭau tādṛg-ātmānubhavo viśaya-sambandhābhāvāca ca na spaṣṭa iti bhāvah.

But, one may object, when everything up to and including the ego is dissolved, only a void should remain. Why then is it said that even at this time the changeless soul is present? Pippalāyana answers, tad-anumātrir nah: “We remember it [DDB262].” When we, the perceivers of waking life, wake up from deep sleep, we each remember [DDB263]our self as the constantly existing soul who witnessed the condition of deep sleep. We say, “I slept happily for so long and was not aware of anything.” Since a person cannot remember what he has not experienced, the soul must perceive the experience of deep sleep, though this experience is indistinct because he is cut off from the objects of external sensation.

[DDB264]TEXT 54.4

ataḥ sva-prakāśa-mātra-vastunāḥ sūryādeḥ prakāśa-vaḍ upalabdhi-mātrasyāpy ātmana upalabdhi svāṣraye 'sty evety āyātam. tathā ca śrutih, yad vai tan na paśyati paśyān vai draṣṭavyān na paśyati na hi draṣṭur drṣṭer viparilopo vidyate iti. ayam sākṣi-sāksya-vibhāgena trītyas tarkah. duḥkhī-premāsapatvā-vibhāgena caturtho 'pi tarko 'vagantavyah.

We can therefore conclude that the soul, who is pure awareness, is also aware of himself[DDB265], just as an entity such as the sun, which is in substance pure light, also reveals itself by that light. We find the following confirmation in śruti: “It is true that he [the soul] is not seeing—or rather that although seeing,
he does not see externally visible objects. But it is not possible to remove the
seer’s sight altogether” (Brhad-āranyaka Up. 4.3.23).
This [idea that the soul is aware even during deep sleep] constitutes the third
argument [presented to help us identify the absolute reality[DDB266]]; it is based
on the distinction between the witness and the objects witnessed. We can also
understand the fourth argument, which is based on the distinction between the
unhappy sufferer and the focus of ecstatic love.

COMMENTARY
The Soul Is Distinct from the Body

In the previous Text Śrila Jīva Gosvāmi cited the analogy of the life air given in
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.3.38 to show the changeless nature of the soul. The
following verse (Bhāg. 11.3.39) develops this analogy further. There Sage
Pippalāyana explains that the life air continuously follows the soul into various
species,[DDB267] which fall into four categories based on their source of birth.
The life air enters the various bodies and seems to undergo transformations,
but in fact it remains unchanged. For example, the soul’s life air may occupy
the body of an ant in one life and that of an elephant in a different life, yet all
the while the life air remains unchanged. Similarly, the soul appears to undergo
changes in association with the many states and shapes of his successive bodies,
but in fact he remains unchanged.

The soul experiences three states of consciousness while in the body: the waking
state, the dreaming state, and the state of deep, dreamless sleep. During the waking
state a jīva is conscious of his gross body, gross senses, and mind, and his
consciousness seems divided and channeled by the mind and senses. In the
dreaming state the gross senses become inactive, or, to be more precise, the mind
loses contact with them, and thus the jīva is also not aware of the gross senses or
the gross body. Through dreams the jīva in this state perceives the various
impressions created in the subconscious mind during the waking state, and
because of the jīva’s attachment to these impressions, his consciousness seems to
undergo transformation. In the state of deep, dreamless sleep the soul loses contact
even with the mind, and thus he is not conscious of either his gross or subtle
body.

According to śruti, in the state of dreamless sleep the mind enters into the puritat
nerve in the heart: aha yadā susūpta bhavati yadā na kasyacana veda hitā nāma
nādyo dvā-saptatiḥ sahrsṛṇi hrdayāḥ puritatam abhipratisthante, tābhīḥ pratyavaspya
puritati śete. “When [the soul] is fast asleep, he does not know anything. At that
time the mind removes itself from the seventy-two thousand nerves (hitā)
spreading out from the heart and enters into the nerve called puritat, where it rests
[DDB268]” (Brhad-āranyaka Up. 2.1.19).

Feelings of happiness and distress are states of the mind and therefore part of the
“field” of the subtle body. This is described in the[DDB269] Bhagavad-gītā
(13.7): “Desire, hatred, happiness, distress, the aggregate [the physical body],
the life symptoms, and convictions—all these are considered, in summary, to be
the field of activities and its interactions.” As mentioned above, in deep sleep the soul loses contact with the mind and feels no material happiness or distress, no desires or hatred. He tastes only the bliss of the self. But this does not mean the soul becomes liberated in deep sleep. He is still bound by his subtle desires, which return him to the dreaming and waking states.

From the Buddhists comes an objection that the soul cannot exist in deep sleep. When there is no experience of the senses or the mind, why not assume that only the “void” remains during deep sleep? The answer is “Because we recollect the experience of deep sleep.” After waking from deep sleep a person may declare, “I have slept happily and wasn’t aware of anything.” Since someone cannot recollect something without having experiencing it, the person who perceived himself in deep sleep and the person who remembers this experience must be identical. Thus the happiness of deep sleep was experienced by the same person who recalls it upon awakening, but his recollection is hazy because during deep sleep his link with the mind and senses was broken.

The implication here is that although there is no false ego manifest during deep sleep, the soul's real ego remains, for this is his true and inseparable identity. So there is no possibility of voidness during deep sleep, as the Buddhists claim, nor is it possible that the soul becomes mere consciousness without individuality, as the Māyāvādīs claim.

This argument establishes that the soul's quality of cognition is an essential aspect of his[DDB270] nature. It is thus not true that the soul acquires cognition only when conditioned, nor that he remains solely as pure consciousness in the unconditioned state. As the sun illuminates both itself and other things as well, the soul can always know both himself and other things. The soul does not need help from the gross external senses to know himself[DDB271], just as one does not need a lamp to see the sun. This quality of cognition stays with the soul throughout all his states of existence, even when he inhabits lower species, just as a light bulb continues to emit light even when enveloped by a nearly opaque covering. The covering simply limits and distorts the light’s diffusion. Of course, it is the Supreme Lord who grants the soul his self-luminous nature, and so from the above we should not wrongly conclude that the jīva is a completely independent entity.

The passage from the Brhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad quoted in this Text states, “He [the soul] certainly does not see.” This statement refers to the soul in deep sleep. At that time the soul does not perceive anything because he is detached from the mind and senses; this does not mean, however, that his power of perception is lost. Thus the passage further says, “Although seeing, he does not see externally visible objects.”

In the previous Text Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī showed that the soul is distinct from the body. He substantiated this conclusion by citing the analogy of the life air. Here he has further shown that the soul is distinct both from the body and from the Supersoul. He presented four arguments. We have discussed the first two in our commentary on Text 53. The third argument is based on the difference between
the witness and the witnessed. During deep sleep, when the soul ceases to identify with the mind and senses, he witnesses his own self, and he can recollect this experience upon awakening. This phenomenon demonstrates the changeless nature of the soul by showing that it is distinct from the ever-changing body and senses.

The fourth argument is based on the fact that it is not the Supersoul but the jīva who suffers the material tribulations, although both dwell in the same body. The Supersoul is the witness of both the soul and the activities of the soul’s material body. As we have pointed out, in the state of dreamless sleep the soul becomes temporarily dissociated from [DDB272] both his subtle body and his gross body, but still the gross [DDB273] body does not die. This indicates that the breathing, heartbeat, blood circulation, and other vital functions continue by the grace of the Supersoul. Another inference we can draw is that the soul is dependent on the Supersoul, because if the soul were completely independent he would not choose to revert to a state beset with suffering. But in fact he cannot stop this reversion, being caught up in the states of material existence—waking consciousness, dreaming, and deep sleep. Therefore, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī concludes, the Supreme Lord is the fitting object of love, since he is totally free from material bondage.

In the next Text Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī summarizes these points.

**TEXT 55**

tad uktam:

anvaya-vyatirekākhyas tarkah syāc catur-ātmakaḥ
āgamāpāyi-tad-(bādha)avadhi[NEW275]-bhedena prathamo mataḥ

drastr-drśya-vibhāgena dvitiyo 'pi matas tathā
sāksi-sāksya-vibhāgena trtiyāḥ sammatah satām
duhkhi-premāsapaḍaṭvena caturthāḥ sukha-bodhakaḥ

iti. śrī-pippalāyano nimim.

[These arguments] can be summed up as follows:
Here we have four kinds of arguments in the modes of both exclusion and inclusion. The first argument is based on the difference between what takes birth and dies and what does not. The second is based on the difference between the seer and the seen. The third is based on the difference between the witness and the witnessed. The fourth argument, given to aid our understanding, is based on the difference between the miserable sufferer and the focus of pure love.
The verse under discussion [Bhāg. 11.3.39] is spoken by Śrī Pippalāyana to King Nimi.
COMMENTARY
Summary of Śrī Pippalayana’s Teachings

Here Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmi summarizes the conclusions of the last two Texts. According to Śrīla Baladeva Vidyāḥuṣana, in this Text the word tarka (literally “reasoning” or “logic”) means “inference,” which is one topic of epistemology. In the reasoning presented in this Text, Jiva Gosvāmi uses inference both positively and negatively. Positively, there is the general principle that when a soul and a body combine, changes occur that the soul perceives. Negatively, one never perceives changes in the soul or changelessness in the body. Thus by both positive and negative analysis we can infer that the body and the soul are distinct. We can apply a similar analysis to the other three arguments set forth in this Text.

Here we use logic to infer the difference between the body and the soul; understanding this difference is the first rung on the ladder of transcendental realization. We can also use logic to infer the difference between the soul and the Supersoul; understanding this difference is the necessary foundation of bhakti-yoga. Here we are not employing dry logic, which is based on a limited mortal’s mental wrangling, but rather transcendental logic, which is founded on the authority of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam’s statements and is designed to help raise one to a complete understanding of the Absolute Truth. The scriptures and saintly sages encourage sincere souls who seek to distinguish reality from illusion to use their intellect for this purpose.

Only the body takes birth, grows old, becomes diseased, and dies. The soul perceives all these changes, and when he identifies himself with his body he experiences them as miseries. Although distinct from his body, because of false ego the jīva becomes attached to his body and its by-products and thus experiences the body’s happiness and distress. The Supersoul witnesses the soul’s miseries in his material body but does not experience them as His own. Unperturbed by the actions and reactions of material bodies, He is always distinct from the jīva souls and is the suitable object of their love. We can infer the existence of the Supersoul from the fact that the soul does not create the elements needed for the maintenance of his body and that material nature, being inert, cannot create anything without the help of a sentient being. What’s more, the soul takes no part in maintaining the material body during deep sleep, when he is completely aloof from it.

In this way, knowing the characteristics of the jīva and his relationship to the body can help us understand something of the Supersoul, Brahman. And taking into account the common quality of consciousness shared by the jīva and Brahman, the latter can be identified as the nondual reality, the subject of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.

All these conclusions are based on an analysis of the individual jīva’s situation. Now Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmi begins a new analysis, one based on the total situation of the universe.
evam-bhūtānām jīvānām cin-mātram yat svarūpam tayaivākrtayā tad-anśitvena ca tad-abhinām yat tattvam tad atra vācyam iti vyaśti-nirdeśa-dvārā proktam. tad eva hy āśraya-samjñakam. mahā-purāṇa-lakṣāna-rūpānī sarṣaṅgābhīr arthāh samsaṭi-nirdeśa-dvārāpi lakṣyata ity atrāha dvābhyaṁ:
astra sargo visargaḥ ca sthānam poṣanam ātayah
manv-antaresānukathā nirodho muktir āśrayāh
daśamasya viṣuddhy-arthaṁ navānāṁ iha lakṣanam
varnayanti mahātmānāḥ śruti-nārthena cāṇjaśā
dBy describing these characteristics of the jīva souls, whose inner nature is pure consciousness, we have in effect described the Supreme Brahman, the subject of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, from the individual (vyaśti) viewpoint. This is so because the Supreme Brahman is nondifferent from the jīva souls, being the complete whole from whom they emanate in the form of His individual partial expansions. Indeed, He is called the āśraya, the fountainhead of all existence. The same nondual reality, Brahman, is also characterized in aggregate (samaṭi),[DDB277] cosmic terms in the list of a major Purāṇa’s ten topics, beginning with primary creation. This list is given in the following two verses:
“This Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam describes ten subjects: sarga (primary creation), visarga (secondary creation), sthāna (maintenance), poṣana (mercy), āti (desires), manv-antara (reigns of Manus), īśānukathā (pastimes of the Lord and His devotees), nirodha (annihilation), mukti (liberation), and āśraya (the substratum or ultimate shelter). To clarify the meaning of the tenth subject, the great souls describe the characteristics of the first nine subjects by prayers, and also by indirect and direct explanations” [Bhāg. 2.10.1–2].

manv-antarāṇī ceśānukathāḥ ca manv-antaresānukathāḥ. atra sargādayo dasārthā
lakṣyanta ity arthāh. tatra ca daśamasyāśrayasya viṣuddhy-arthaṁ tattva-jñānārtham
navānāṁ lakṣanam svarūpam varnayanti. nanv atra naivam pratyate. atra āśraya
śrutā kanthoktyaiva stutya-ādi-sthāneṣu anjasā sāksād varnayanti artheṇa tātparya-
vrtyā ca tad-tad-ākhyānesu.

Manvantaresānukathāḥ is a compound of manv-antara (“periods of Manus”) and īśānukathāḥ (“narrations of the Lord’s pastimes”).
This Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam discusses ten topics, beginning with creation, but the sages' real purpose in describing the characteristics of the first nine is to give us systematic, lucid knowledge of the tenth topic. One might object here that the
presentation of the other nine topics does not seem to explain the tenth topic; we reply that in the Bhāgavatam the sages explain the tenth topic both directly, by the explicit utterance of prayers and other statements, and also indirectly, through the implied purport of various historical accounts.

**COMMENTARY**

The Purpose of the Ten Topics of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam

Is to [DDB279] Describe the Supreme Lord

In previous Texts Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī defined the central focus of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam by examining the faith and spiritual experiences of Sūta Gosvāmī, Śukadeva Gosvāmī, and Śrīla Vyāsadeva. In the course of this exposition he explained the nature of the jīva. He then went on to analyze the second verse of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, which declares that the Absolute Reality is the Bhāgavatam's subject matter. To further define that reality he also referred to the Bhāgavatam verse beginning vadanti tat tattva-vidah (1.2.11), which names the three main aspects of the one nondual, supreme consciousness (advaya-jñāna). He proposed that to understand this nondual consciousness we should first understand the individual jīva, and therefore he discussed the jīva's position on the basis of two Bhāgavatam verses spoken by Pippalāyana Rṣī.

[DDB280] The basic ideas established so far concerning the jīva are that he is conscious, able to know himself and other things, distinct from the material energy, and free of the six types of bodily transformations. The analysis up to this point has thus been from the vyāṣṭī perspective, focusing on the situation of the individual jīvas.

Now Jiva Gosvāmī begins explaining the [DDB281] absolute reality from the viewpoint of the aggregate—the samāstī perspective—and he bases his explanation on the ten topics treated in the Bhāgavatam's twelve cantos. First he quotes two verses spoken by Śukadeva Gosvāmī (2.10.1–2), the second of which states that the reason why scripture describes such topics as creation, maintenance, annihilation, and liberation is to help us understand the ultimate topic, the Supreme Lord. Indeed, these other topics are but descriptions of the Supreme Lord’s manifold potencies. The Lord is the fountainhead of all these phenomena, and Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam explains them just to illustrate His special characteristics. In some places the Bhāgavatam introduces prayers to the Supreme Lord in the course of describing one or more of the other nine topics, and in these prayers the Supreme Person Himself is the object of [DDB282] glorification. In other places the Lord is described directly, as in the dialogue between Vidura and Maitreya and that between Kapila and Devahūti. In yet other places, the Bhāgavatam glorifies the Lord indirectly through historical episodes, such as the accounts of how the Lord saved Parīkṣit Mahārāja from Asvatthāma’s atomic weapon and of how Śukadeva Gosvāmī was captivated when he heard verses about Lord Kṛṣṇa’s attributes.

In this way Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī shows that the purpose of the nine preliminary subjects
discussed in the Bhāgavatam is to explain the tenth subject, the advaya-jñāna, which is also called the āśraya and is the fountainhead of everything.

Every person has two types of characteristics[DDB283], svārūpa (personal) and tata-sīha (marginal), and the Supreme Personality of Godhead is no exception. In our present conditioned state we have no experience of His personal features, and so if we hear these described without proper commentary we may misconstrue them [DDB284] on account of our strong material conditioning. But whether we adopt the aggregate or the individual viewpoint, we can more easily understand the Lord’s marginal characteristics manifested within the material nature, for they are within the scope of our personal experience.

Śrīla Vyāsadeva uses the same approach in the Vedānta-sūtra. After designating Brahman the subject of the book in the first sūtra—ātāto brahma-jijnāsā: “Now, therefore, inquire into Brahman”—he begins discussing the Lord’s marginal characteristics in the next sūtra—jannādy asya yataḥ: “From Him come the creation, maintenance, and destruction of the universe.”

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam similarly discusses ten topics, presenting the first nine to help us understand the tenth topic, the āśraya. (Later in the Sandarbhas this āśraya will be identified more fully as Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.) The first nine topics of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam deal with various potencies of the Lord, such as His creative potency, sarga-sakti. Understanding these topics helps us appreciate the Supreme Lord as the possessor of these potencies. Then we can come to properly apprehend His personal features and pastimes, which are narrated in the Bhāgavatam’s Tenth Canto. Without studying the nine preliminary topics of the Bhāgavatam, we run the risk of viewing His form and pastimes superficially, of concluding that Kṛṣṇa is an ordinary human being endowed with some extraordinary powers. But this is far from the truth. Lord Kṛṣṇa therefore says in the Bhagavad-gītā (9.11):

\[
\text{avajānanti mām mādhā mānuśīṁ tanum āśritam}
\]
\[
\text{param bhāvam ajānanto mama bhūta-maheśvaram}
\]

“Fools deride Me when I descend in the human form. They do not know My transcendental nature as the Supreme Lord of all that be.” By contrast, [DDB285] the Lord describes those who do understand [DDB286] His transcendental nature [DDB287] as follows:

\[
\text{janma karma ca me divyam evam yo vetti tattvataḥ}
\]
\[
\text{tyātvā deham punar janma naiti mām eti so 'ṛjuna}
\]

“One who knows in truth[DDB288] the transcendental nature of My appearance and activities does not, upon leaving the body, take his birth again in this material world, but attains My eternal abode, O Arjuna” (Bg. 4.9).

Therefore, wishing to lead us to the highest plane of transcendence through a proper understanding of the Bhāgavatam’s tenth subject, the sumnum bonum, Śukadeva Gosvāmi first explains the first nine subjects. Clearly, then, we should
study Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam in the order Śukadeva Gosvāmī presented it, from the first verse onward.

Unfortunately, unscrupulous persons do not study the Bhāgavatam verse by verse, Canto by Canto, but rather jump to the Tenth Canto. Yet they pose themselves as learned scholars of the Bhāgavatam. Another failing of these false Bhāgavatam scholars is their neglect of the mandatory requirement that one must hear the Bhāgavatam at the feet of a bona fide guru coming in Vaishnava disciplic succession. Because of this omission they cannot properly relish the ripened fruit of the Vedic tree of knowledge. To all such persons Lord Kṛṣṇa declares in the Bhagavad-gītā (7.25):

nāham prakāśah sarvasya yoga-māya-samāvrtah
mūḍho ‘yam nābhijānāti loko mām ajam avyayam

“I am never manifest to the foolish and unintelligent. For them I am covered by My Yogamāyā, and therefore they do not know that I am unborn and infallible.”

The most basic requirement for spiritual study, stipulated in all the Vedic scriptures, is that one must respectfully approach a bona fide spiritual master, humbly serve him, and submissively inquire from him. Then all the secrets of the Vedic teachings will be revealed. This injunction applies to every student, even those who are great intellectuals. The Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad (6.28) therefore states:

yasya deve parā bhaktir yathā deve tathā gurau
tasyaite kathitā hy arthāh prakāśante mahātmanah

“Only unto those great souls who have implicit faith in and devotion to both the Supreme Lord and the spiritual master are all the imports of Vedic knowledge revealed.” Nothing is revealed to the student without the grace of the spiritual master. Therefore to disregard the principle that one must approach a spiritual master to understand the Absolute Truth is to disrespect the Vedic teachings from the outset and ensure failure. Lord Kṛṣṇa confirms this in the Bhagavad-gītā (16.23):

yah śāstra-vidhim utsṛjya vartate kāma-kāratah
na sa siddhim avāpnoti na sukham na parām gatīm

“He who discards scriptural injunctions and acts according to his own whims attains neither perfection, nor happiness, nor the supreme destination.”

Therefore, to unravel the mystery of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam one should follow in the footsteps of the previous ācāryas and refrain from jumping to the esoteric pastimes described in the Tenth Canto.

In the next Text Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī begins explaining each of the ten topics by quoting their definitions from Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.
TEXT 57

TEXT 57.1

tam eva dasamam vispaṭayitum teśāṁ dasānāṁ vyuptādikāṁ sapta-slokīm āha:

bhūta-mātrendriya-dhiyām ṣaṁjana sarga udāhrtāh
brahmaṇo guṇa-vaiśamyād visargaḥ pauruṣaḥ smṛtaḥ

bhūtāṇi khādini mātrāṇi ca śabdādini indriyāṇi ca. dhī-sabdena mahād-ahānkārau.
guṇānām vaisamyāt parināmāt. brahmaṇāh prameśvarāt kartur bhūtādīnām ṣaṁjana
sargaḥ. puroṣo vairāja brahmaḥ tat-kṛtaḥ pauruṣaḥ, caraccara-sargo visarga ity arthāḥ.

To elucidate the tenth subject, Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī speaks seven verses defining
each of the ten subjects. [Four of the seven verses are as follows:]

“The primary creation of the five gross elements, the five subtle sense objects, the
five senses, the mahat-tattva, and the false ego, resulting from the disturbance in
the material modes’ equilibrium caused by the Supreme Lord, is known as sarga.
The secondary creation, effected by Lord Brahmā, is called visarga” [Bhāg. 2.10.3].
The bhūtas mentioned here are the five gross material elements, beginning with
ether. The mātras are the subtle elements—sound and so on. The indriyas are the
perceptive senses. The word dhī (“intelligence”) indicates the totality of
unmanifest matter, together with false ego. Brahman, the supreme controller,
generates these physical and nonphysical elements by causing the modes of
material nature to become unbalanced and produce transformations. This is called
sarga (“creation.”) The secondary creation, by Lord Brahma, is called visarga. Since
he is the vairāja-puruṣa, or “universal person,” his creation is also called pauruṣa.
Visarga is the sending forth of moving and nonmoving living beings.

TEXT 57.2

sthitir vaikuntha-vijayaḥ poṣanam tad-anugrahaḥ
manv-antarāṇi sad-dharma utayah karma-vāsanāḥ

avatāramucaritam hareś cāsyānuvartriṇām
pumśām iṣa-kathāḥ proktā nānākhyānopabṛmhitāḥ

vaikunthasya bhagavato vijayaḥ srṣṭānāṁ tat-tan-maryādā-pālanenotkarsaḥ sthitih
sthānām. tataḥ sthitasa sva-bhaktesu tasyānugrahaḥ poṣanām. manv-antarāṇi tat-tan-
manv-antarā-ssthānāṁ manv-ādināṁ tad-anugṛhitānāṁ satāṁ caritāṁ tān eva
dharmas tad-upāsanākhyāḥ sad-dharmaḥ. tatraiva sthitāv nānā-karma-vāsanā
ūtayāḥ. sthitāv eva harer avatāramucaritam asyānuvartriṇāṁ ca kathā iṣānukathāḥ
proktā ity arthāḥ.
“Śthiti is the victory of Lord Viṣṇu, and poṣana is the grace He bestows on His devotees. The word manv-antarāṇa indicates the principles of transcendental religion, while ātī refers to desires for material activities. Isānukathā indicates the various descriptions of the Lord’s pastimes in His incarnations, and also the descriptions of His faithful devotees’ activities” [Bhāg. 2.10.4–5].

Śthiti (“maintenance”) is vaikuntha-vijaya, the victory of Lord Vaikuntha, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In other words, śthiti indicates the supreme glory of the Lord shown by His maintaining all created beings in their respective situations under His laws. Poṣanam (“sustenance”) indicates how He maintains His devotees by bestowing His grace on them. Manv-antarāṇi (“periods of Manus”) indicates the histories of the Manus and other saintly kings who ruled during the Manus’ reigns, and also the histories of other saintly people who lived during those periods and received the Supreme Lord’s special favor. The deeds of these saints are themselves religious standards, establishing the sad-dharma (“transcendental religion”) of worshiping the Lord. With regard to universal maintenance, ātī (“impetuses for action”) are desires for various fruitful activities. Isānukathāḥ (“narrations about the Lord”) are historical accounts of the Lord’s pastimes in His various incarnations, as well as accounts of His faithful followers’ activities.

TEXT 57.3

nirodho ‘syānusayanam atmanāḥ saha saktibhīḥ
muktir hitvānyathā-rūpaṁ svarūpena vyavasthitīḥ

sthity-anantarām cātmano jīvasya saktibhīḥ svopadhibhīḥ sahāsyā harer anusayanam
hari-sayanânanugrata-vena sayanam nirodha ity arthah. tatra harer sayanam prapancaṁ
prati drṣṭi-nimilanaṁ jīvāṁ jārānam sajanam tatra laya iti jñeyam. tatraiva nirodhe
‘nyathā-rūpaṁ avidyādhiyastam ajñatvādikam hitvā svarūpena vyavasthitir muktih.

“The merging of the living entity, along with his conditioning, with the mystic lying down of [DDB292]Mahā-Viṣṇu is called the winding up of the cosmic manifestation [nirodha]. Liberation [muktī] is the permanent situation of the form of the living entity after he gives up the changeable gross and subtle material bodies” [Bhāg. 2.10.6].

When annihilation occurs after a period of universal maintenance, Lord Hari goes to sleep and the jīvas follow Him along with their energies, their upādhis. This is called nirodha (“winding up”). Lord Hari’s “going to sleep” consists of His closing His eyes to the material creation, and the jīvas’ “going to sleep” consists of their merging into Lord Hari. If a jīva in that merged state has freed himself from his false, acquired nature—the ignorance and other qualities superimposed on him by material illusion—he attains his original nature; this is called muktī (“liberation”).

COMMENTARY

The Definition of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam’s First Nine Topics

Understanding the Supreme Lord means knowing Him along with His potencies,
just as understanding the sun means knowing it along with its potency, sunshine. According to the Second Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, tenth chapter, the material world is a creation of the Lord and reflects His personality. This world perpetually goes through cycles of creation, maintenance, and annihilation. During annihilation all the material elements are unmanifest because they have merged into the original, dormant state of material nature, called prakṛti or pradhāna. In this phase the three modes of nature are in balance and thus inactive. At the end of the period of annihilation the Supreme Lord agitates the modes of nature by glancing upon them, and then the first[DDB293] stage of creation begins. This agitated state of the material modes is called the mahat-tattva, which, when further activated by the time factor, gives rise to material ego, ahankāra. From ahankāra come the five gross material elements (earth, water, fire, air, and ether), the five subtle elements (smell, taste, form, tactility, and sound), and the five perceptive senses (the senses of smell, taste, vision, touch, and hearing). This phase of creation is called sarga, or the primary creation. The subsequent creation is conducted by Lord Brahmā and is called visarga, or the secondary creation. Brahmā is also called Puruṣa or Vairāja.

Lord Viṣṇu oversees the maintenance of the rules and regulations governing universal affairs, and this maintenance is called sthiti or sthānam. The maintenance function shows Viṣṇu’s preeminence over Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva, who are in charge of the secondary creation and of destruction, respectively. To carry out the function of sthiti the Lord incarnates in every millennium, as He states in the Bhagavad-gītā (4.8):

\[
\text{paritrāṇāya sādhūnām vināsāya ca duṣkṛtām} \\
\text{dharma-samstāpanārthāya sambhavāmi yuge yuge}
\]

“To deliver the pious and to annihilate the miscreants, as well as to re-establish the principles of religion, I advent myself millennium after millennium.” And the grace the Lord showers on the pious is called poṣaṇa.

Each day of Lord Brahmā contains fourteen periods, each of which is ruled over by a Manu. The Manus are godly persons empowered to look after the welfare of all human beings. The activities of each Manu, along with the deeds saintly people perform during the Manus’ reigns, constitute many-antara. How these saintly persons behave and worship is called sad-dharma.

Impelled by their karma, living beings perform various material activities during the sthiti, or maintenance, of the creation, and these activities give rise to various desires for further material activities. These desires, in the form of impressions within the mind, are called ātī. The descriptions of the Lord’s pastimes with His associates during His incarnations in this material world are called īśānukathā.

The creation cycle begins when the Lord glances at material nature: sa īkṣata lokān nu srjety, sa imāl lokān asrjata. “He glanced and desired to create people. Indeed, He created them” (Aitareya Up. 1.1).
When it is time for annihilation, the Lord turns His eyes away from the creation, and this turning away is called His sleep, or cosmic rest. Next all the material elements become unmanifest in the reverse order in which they appeared, and the material nature then exists in equilibrium. At that time the jivas give up their gross bodies, but they remain conditioned by their subtle bodies, which are composed of their karmic impressions. This inactive state of the jivas is called sleep, corresponding to the Lord’s sleep, and this phase of existence is called nirdhā. When the time comes for the creation cycle, the jivas receive bodies according to part of the karma they accrued in the previous cycle.

During the maintenance period, if a living being takes to the devotional service of the Lord and attains perfection,[DDB294] he is freed from both his subtle and gross bodies and is situated in his original nature. This condition is called mukti, which is also a type of nirdhā. However, in contrast to the nirdhā that occurs at the time of universal annihilation, when the jiva attains mukti he is not compelled to take birth again in the material world. Rather, all his miseries come to an end and he enters the spiritual planets, where he eternally resides in his original, spiritual form. One can attain this state of eternal liberation only by practicing devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa, as Śrīla Vyāsadeva saw in His trance.

The Supreme Lord, the tenth topic discussed in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, is the foundation of the other nine topics. The events that occur under the headings of these topics all take place by His potency; indeed, the very reason why the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam describes these topics is to help us come to know the Supreme Personality of Godhead, for a person is known by His works and attributes.

In the next Text Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī defines the āśraya-tattva, the fountainhead of all existence, who is the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

**TEXT 58**

abhāsaḥ ca nirodhaḥ ca yato 'sty adhyavasyiyate
sa āśrayaḥ param brahma paramātmeti śabdyate

abhāsaḥ srṣṭir nirodho layaḥ ca yato bhavati adhyavasyaya upalabhya jīvānām
d jñānendriyasya prakāṣate ca sa brahmāt paramātmeta prasiddha āśrayah kathyate. iti-
śabdah prakārārthas tena bhagavān iti ca. asya vivṛttir agre vidheyā.

“The supreme one, who is celebrated as the Supreme Being or the Supreme Soul, is the supreme source of the cosmic manifestation, as well as its reservoir and winding up. Thus He is the Supreme Fountainhead, the Absolute Truth” (Bhāg. 2.10.7).

In this verse the ābhāsa (“appearance”) is material creation, and the nirodha (“cessation”) is its dissolution. The word yatāḥ refers to the one from whom the
creation emanates, by whom it is made perceivable to the ķivas’ senses (adhyavasyate), and in whom it is dissolved. That renowned fountainhead of existence—the āśraya—is known as Brahman (the Supreme Truth) and Paramātmā (the Supersoul). Here the word iti expresses the idea of a complete category, thus implying that Bhagavān, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is included as well. Later we shall explain the āśraya in detail.

COMMENTARY
Defining Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam’s Tenth Topic

The Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam’s description of the aforementioned ten topics culminates in the description of the āśraya-tattva. A book that treats too many subjects will bewilder the reader and make it difficult for him to ascertain its ultimate purpose. This is clearly not the case with the Bhāgavatam, however, for as stated here, the shelter of all the topics is the Supreme Lord. None of the other topics can be described without reference to the Lord, and indeed the whole reason why Śrīla Vyāsadeva included them was to throw light on the Lord’s energies and activities. In other words, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is really about only one topic—the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

The Lord creates the world, maintains it, and supplies the living beings with the senses and intelligence to perceive it. He blesses these suffering ķivas with the Vedic instructions so that the seriously inquisitive can understand Him, and also with the association of His devotees to guide them. Despite these blessings, most ķivas remain engaged in material activities, but some develop a desire to know the Lord. These can receive His grace and eventually attain mukti, liberation, which entails becoming situated in one’s own svarūpa, or original nature. This is possible only by the Lord’s mercy, which is available to one who understands in truth the āśraya-tattva described in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. Thus it is rightly said that the purpose of the other nine topics is to explain the tenth topic, the āśraya, who is the source of creation and annihilation. (The āśraya is called Brahman by followers of jñāna-yoga, and Paramātmā by followers of aṣṭānga-yoga.)

The word ca (“and”) in this verse (Bhāg. 2.10.7) indicates the topics of the Bhāgavatam not explicitly mentioned in the verse, such as poṣana. The word iti indicates Bhagavān, the term that the followers of bhakti-yoga use to designate the āśraya. Thus this verse echoes one quoted earlier, namely the verse beginning brahmeti paramātmeti bhagavān iti sabdyate (Bhāg. 1.2.11), which states that the nondual supreme consciousness is called Brahman, Paramātmā, and Bhagavān.

In the next Text Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmi gives further arguments to support the proposition that the Supreme Lord is the āśraya, or shelter of everything.

TEXT 59
TEXT 59.1

sthita ca tatrāśraya-svarūpam aparokṣānubhavena vyaśti-dvārāpi spaṣtam
darśayitum adhyātmādi-vibhāgam āha:

yo 'dhyātmiko 'yaṁ puruṣah so 'sāv evādhaivaivikaḥ
yas tatrobhaya-vicchedāḥ puruṣo hy ādhibhautikāh

ekam ekatarābhāve yadā nopalabhāmahe
tritayam tatra yo veda sa ātmā svāśrayāśrayah

Śukadeva Gosvāmi next discusses the divisions of adhyātmika, adhidaivika, and ādhibhautika. He does this to clarify the nature of the āśraya, which he describes by referring to the direct, common experience of the individual microcosm:

“This adhyātmika-purusa is the same as the adhidaivika-purusa, and he who creates the differentiation between these two is called the ādhibhautika-purusa. In the absence of any one of these we do not perceive the other two. He who knows these three is the Lord, who, being independent of everything else, is the support of His own self and is the true āśraya” [Bhāg. 2.10.8–9].

TEXT 59.2

yo 'yaṁ ādhyātmikāḥ puruṣaś caksur-ādī-karanābhīmāni draṣṭā jīvaḥ sa
evādhaivaivaś caksur-ādy-adhiṣṭhātā sūryādih. deha-sṛṣṭeh pūrvam karanānām
adhiṣṭhānābhāvena-kṣamātāyā karana-prakāśa-kartaṛtvābhīmāni-tat-sahāyayor
ubhayor api tayor vṛtti-bhedānudayena jīvatva-mātravīsesāt. tataḥ cobbhayah
karanābhīmāni-tad-adhiṣṭhātr-devata-rūpa dvi-rūpo vicchedo yasmāt sa ādhibhautikās
caksur-golakādy-upalakṣito dṛṣya dehaḥ puruṣaḥ iti puruṣasya jīvasyopādhiḥ. sa vā eṣa
puṣro 'nna-rasa-mayāḥ ity-ādī-śrutēḥ.

The jīva, the seer, who identifies himself as the owner of his eyes and other senses, is the adhyātmika person. He is indeed also the adhidaivika person, the sun and other deities presiding over the eyes and other senses. Before the physical body is created, the senses have nowhere to reside and so cannot act. Consequently at this point the adhyātmika and adhidaivika persons are indistinguishable, since there has yet to appear a distinction between the functions of the ordinary jīvas, who consider themselves independent actors and the illuminators of their senses, and the deities who help them.

And that person because of whom there arises the conception of duality between the presumed owner of the senses and their presiding deities is called ādhibhautika, the visible body consisting of the eyeball and other physical sense organs. This physical body is said to be a “person” because it is an upādhi superimposed upon the real person, the jīva. The śruti states, “This [ādhibhautika] person consists of food and vital fluids” [Taittiriya Up. 2.1.1].

COMMENTARY
The Lord Is the Ultimate Shelter
In the previous Text Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī showed that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the āśraya-tattva, the support of everything, even from the macrocosmic viewpoint. Now he further explains that the Lord is the support of each individual in his day-to-day sensory experiences.

The originally pure living being who misidentifies himself with the senses is called the ādhyātmika-puruṣa, the presiding deities of the senses are called the ādidaivika-puruṣa, and the visible physical body, along with the sense objects, is called the ādhībhautika-puruṣa.

The ādhībhautika-puruṣa creates the distinction between the ādhyātmika-puruṣa and the ādidaivika-puruṣa. Before the birth of one’s body, one cannot distinguish the latter two puruṣas because they are merged as if they are the same jīva. In this regard Śrīpāda Baladeva Vidyābhūṣāna writes, dehotpathe pūrvam api jīvena sārdham indriyāni tad-devatāś ca santy eva: “Even before the creation of the gross body, the senses and their presiding deities are present with the jīva.” At this stage there is no distinction between the deities and the jīvas, because no physical body exists yet. When the physical body comes into existence the senses come and sit in it, and their respective presiding deities take charge of them. At that time one can distinctly perceive the activities of the presiding deities. The eyes, ears, and other senses that we see in the physical body are not the real senses: rather, they are the seats for the actual senses, which are subtle. Lord Kṛṣṇa confirms this in the fifteenth chapter of the Bhagavad-gītā. After asserting that the living entity is His eternal fragmental part, the Lord states that the jīva attracts the mind and five senses, which are situated in material nature, meaning that the jīva accepts them as his own. Kṛṣṇa then says that when the soul quits his body he carries his five senses and his mind from their seats into his next body, just as the air carries aromas. Obviously, at the time of death the visible ears and eyes do not disappear. Rather, the subtle senses situated in them, along with the mind, are carried away by the soul.

Another reason why the physical body is called puruṣa, or “person,” is that the soul identifies himself with it. This illusion prompts a person to say “I am sick” when actually his body is sick. All bodily designations, such as “small man,” “tall man,” “American,” “Indian,” “boy,” and “girl,” are based on the jīva’s illusion that he is the material body. The Vedic statement Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī quotes in this Text confirms the usage of the term puruṣa for the body.

In the next Text Jīva Gosvāmī explains the second of the two Bhāgavatam verses he quoted in Text 59.1, namely 2.10.9.

TEXT 60

TEXT 60.1
ekam ekatārābhāva ity esāṁ anyonya-sāpekṣa-siddhatvena anāśrayatvatvam darśayati.
tathā hi drṣṭam vinā tat-pratīty-anumeyam karanam na sidhyati nāpi draśṭā na ca tad
vinā karana-pravṛtty-anumeyas tad-adhiśṭhātā sūryādīr na ca tam vinā karanam
pravartate na ca tad vinā drṣṭam ity ekatārasyābhāva ekam nopalabhāmahe. tatra
tadā tat tritayam alocanātmakena pratayayena yo veda sākṣitayā paśyati sa paramātmā
āśrayah. teśām api parasparam āśrayatvam aśṭīti tad-vyavacchedārtham viśeṣanam
svāśrayo 'nanyāśrayah, sa cāsāv anyeṣām āśrayas ceti. tatrāṃśāṃsinoḥ śuddha-jiva-
paramātmanor abhedāṃśa-svākārenaivāśraya uktaḥ.

The verse beginning ekam ekatārābhāve [Bhāg. 2.10.9] shows how the fact that all
of these [puruṣas] are mutually dependent in effect means that none of them is the
āśraya. The explanation is as follows: Without the presence of the visible object
there is no basis for the existence of either the sense organ (whose presence is
inferred from perception of the object) or the seer. And without the seer, the sun-
god and other presiding deities of perception also have no basis for existing.
Without the presiding deity of sight, the sense of sight cannot act, and without the
sense of sight there can be no perception. Thus in the absence of any one [of the
three puruṣas] we cannot find either of the others. Such being the case, the one
who knows all three of these, perceiving them visually as their witness—namely
the Supersoul—is indeed the actual āśraya, or shelter. In refutation of the idea that
the three puruṣas are shelters for one another, the Supersoul is specifically
characterized as svāśraya. His own shelter, meaning that He has no other shelter
and is consequently the shelter of all others. In this context the living entity is also
called āśraya, but only in the sense of emphasizing the partial nondifference
between the pure jiva and the Supersoul, who are related as part and whole,
respectively.

TEXT 60.2

ataḥ paro ’pi manute ’nartham iti,:

jāgrat-svapna-suṣuptam ca gunato buddhi-vṛttayah
tāsam vilaksanā jivāḥ sākṣitvena viiniścitāḥ

iti śuddho vicaṣte hy aviśuddha-kartuḥ ity-ādy-uktasya sākṣi-saṁjñināḥ śuddha-
śivasyāśrayatvam na śankāṇiyam. atha vā nāv adhyātmikādānām aśū āśrayatvam
asty eva. satyam, tathāpi parasparāśrayatvān na tatrāśrayatā-kaivalyam iti te tv
āśraya-sabdena mukhyatayā nocyanta ity āha ekam iti.

The pure jiva is designated as the witness in such statements as “Although
transcendental, he considers himself a material product” [Bhāg. 1.7.5]; “Waking
awareness, dream, and deep sleep are the functions of the mind, caused by the
modes of material nature. The individual soul has been ascertained to be distinct
from these functions, as their witness” [Bhāg. 11.13.27]; and “The pure one
witnesses the actions of the impure agent, the mind” [Bhāg. 5.11.12]. The pure
jiva being characterized thus, it cannot reasonably be proposed that this jiva,
known as the witness, is the āśraya.[DDB300]
Alternatively, one might propose that the aspects of ādhyātmika[DDB301] and so on are also āśrayas. We answer that this is true, but still, since they are dependent on one another, none of them is exclusively the āśraya; as the verse beginning ekam states, it is not in the direct, literal sense that they are referred to as āśrayas.

TEXT 60.3

tarhi sākṣina evāstām āśrayatvam. tatrāhā tritayam iti. sa ātmā sākṣi jivas tu yah svāśrayo 'nanyāśrayah paramātmā sa evāśrayo yasya tathā-bhūta ity anayor bhedah. vakṣyate ca hamsa-guhyā-stave:

sarvam punān veda guṇāṁś ca taj-ño
na veda sarva-jñam antamam ide

iti. tasmād ābhāsaś cety-ādinoktaḥ paramātmāvāśraya iti. śrī-śukaḥ.

“Then let the witness (the jīva) be the shelter.”[DDB303] In answer the words beginning tritayam are spoken: The witnessing self, the jīva, is called svāśraya (“his own shelter”), but in fact his āśraya is the Supersoul, who has no other āśraya; this is the difference between the two. Similarly, the Hamsa-guhyā prayers [Bhāg. 6.4.25] say, “A person who knows the modes of nature may know everything about them, but he does not know the all-knowing one. I worship that unlimited Lord.” Thus it is that the Supersoul, described in such statements as the one beginning ābhāsaś ca [Bhāg. 2.10.7], is alone the āśraya. The verse under discussion [Bhāg. 2.10.9] was spoken by Śrī Śuka.

COMMENTARY
The Jīva Is Not the Ultimate Shelter

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī shows here that except for the Lord none can be the āśraya, Śrimad-Bhāgavatam’s tenth topic. From a cursory look, the jīvas and presiding deities appear to be the āśrayas. The jīva, or conditioned soul, is the āśraya for his gross body, and the presiding deities are the āśraya for the senses. But none of them can be āśrayas independent of the others. For example, without a gross body the conditioned jīva would be unable to see a flower because the distinction between the presiding deity of the eyes and the jīva would not then be manifest. Conversely, when the body is manifest, then the senses come and sit in their respective seats and are presided over by their respective demigods. Still, if the demigods do not provide support, the senses cannot perceive. The presiding deity of the eye, for example, is the sun. Without the sun’s light the eye cannot perceive visible objects, even with the jīva’s support. For proper perception all three supports must be present: the jīva (the adhyātmika-puruṣa), the gross body (the adhibhautika-puruṣa), and the demigods (the adhī[DD]B304](a[vika-puruṣa]).

The one who witnesses all the activities of these three puruṣas is the Paramātmā, who is the āśraya for Himself as well as the jīva. He is the ultimate āśraya. Although the jīva witnesses his own various mental states, he is not their ultimate
basis. Sometimes the jīva is referred to as the āśraya in consideration of his being a minute fraction of the Lord and thus nondifferent from Him, but the jīva is never the āśraya in the primary sense.

The jīva is the marginal energy of the Supreme Lord, the energetic, and as such the jīva is always dependent on Him. Still, because the jīva is part and parcel of the Lord he has some of His characteristics in very minute degree, just as a drop of ocean water has some of the ocean's qualities. But only some: The ocean has waves, tides, and storms, none of which a single drop can accommodate. Also, unlike the drop of ocean water, the ocean shelters the whole oceanic world and is suitable for sailing or surfing. Similarly, the Supreme Lord is the shelter and source of happiness for all existence, a position no sane jīva can claim. Thus the jīva, although one with the Lord in some respects, should not be considered the object of worship independent of the Lord, the basis of all existence. The Lord is the Supreme substratum or shelter for Himself as well as others. This is the import of Śukadeva Gosvāmī’s statements explaining the various topics treated in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.

Jīva Gosvāmī will now quote Śrīla Sūta Gosvāmī as the latter draws the same conclusion from a slightly different angle while explaining the characteristics of a Mahā-purāṇa.

TEXT 61

TEXT 61.1

asya śrī-bhāgavatasya mahā-purānatva-vyanjaka-lakṣanam prakārāntarena ca vaddann
api tasyaivaśrayaratvam āha dvayena:

sargo 'syātha visargaś ca vṛtti raksāntarāṇi ca
vamsa vamśānucaritam samsthā hetur apāśrayah
dāśabhir lakṣanair yuktāṁ purānam tad-vido viduḥ
kecit pañca-vidham brahmaṁ mahād-alpa-vyavasthayā
antarāṇi manv-antarāṇi.

In the following two verses Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī describes in a different way the characteristics of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam that qualify it as a Mahā-purāṇa, and in so doing he affirms that the Supreme Lord alone is the āśraya:

“O brahmaṇa, authorities on the matter understand a Purāṇa to contain ten characteristic topics: sarga, the creation of this universe; visarga, the subsequent creation of worlds and beings; vṛtti, the maintenance of all living beings; raksā, the sustenance of all living beings; antarāṇi, the rule of various Manus; vamsa, the dynasties of great kings; vamśānucarita, the activities of such kings; samsthā,
annihilation; *hetu*, motivation; and *apāśrayā*, the supreme shelter. Other scholars state that the great *Purāṇas* deal with these ten topics while lesser *Purāṇas* may deal with five” [Bhāg. 12.7.9–10].

Here the word *antarāṇi* refers to periods of Manus.

TEXT 61.2

*pañca-vidham:*

*sarga ca pratisarga ca vanśo manv-antarāṇi ca*

*vamsānucaritam ceti purāṇam pañca-lakṣaṇam*

*iti kecid vadanti. sa ca mata-bheda mahād-alpa-vyavasthayā mahā-purāṇam alpa-

purāṇam iti bhinnadhikaranatvena. yady api viṣṇu-purāṇādāv api daśāpi tāni*

*lakṣyante tathāpi pañcānām eva prādhānyenoktatvād alpatvam.*

According to some, a *Purāṇa* has five characteristics:

“The five characteristics of a *Purāṇa* are *sarga*, creation; *pratisarga*, annihilation; *vamsā*, genealogy; *manv-antarāṇi*, the reign of Manus; and *vamsānucaritam*, the activities of dynasties of kings and successions of saints” [Matsya Pur. 53.65].

This difference of opinion is due to the different topics that characterize greater and lesser *Purāṇas*. Although *Purāṇas* such as the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* discuss all ten topics, these *Purāṇas* are still considered lesser because they discuss only five of the topics in depth.

TEXT 61.3

*atra daśānām arthānām skandhāsa yathā-kramam praveśo na vivaksitas teṣāṁ*

*dvādaśa-sankhyatvāt. dvitīya-skaṇḍhoktānām teṣāṁ tṛtiyādīṣu yathā-saṃkhyām na*

*saṃveśaḥ. nirodhaṅnām daśamādīśv astama-varjam anyesāṁ apy anyesu yathokta-

*lakṣaṇatayaḥ samāveśanāsakyatvād eva.*

In Śṛīmad-Bhāgavatam there is no intention of discussing the ten topics consecutively, one per canto; after all, the *Bhāgavatam* has twelve cantos. Nor should one think that because the ten topics are listed in the Second Canto they can be found one after another from Canto Three to Twelve, because the three topics of *nirodha*, *mukti*, and *aśraya* can all be found in the Tenth, Eleventh, and Twelfth Cantos. Nor will one find the remaining topics in order in the other cantos, with the exception of the Eighth Canto.

TEXT 61.4

*tad uktam śrī-svāminibhir eva:

*daśame kṛṣṇa-sat-kīrti-vitānāyopavarnyate*

*dharma-glāṇi-nimittas tu nirodho duṣṭa-bhū-bhujām*
prāktādi-caturdhā yo nirodah sa tu varnitaḥ iti. ato 'tra skandhe śrī-krṣna- 
ṛūpaśyāśrayasyaiva varnana-prādhānyam tair vivaksitam. uktam ca svayam eva. 
dāsame daśaṁam lakṣyaṁ āśritaśraya-vigrāham 

iti. evam anyatāpy unneyam.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī also indicates this [absence of a strict correspondence between 
the Bhāgavatam’s topics and cantos]:
“To spread Lord Krṣna’s glories, the Tenth Canto describes how unrighteous rulers 
suffered annihilation (nirodha) because they deviated from religious principles.” 
The four types of annihilations of the total material nature were already described 
earlier in the Bhāgavatam, so here Śrīdhara Svāmī’s intention is to show that the 
Tenth Canto primarily discusses the āśraya, the form of Śrī Krṣna. As Śrīdhara 
Svāmī himself states, “The subject of the Tenth Canto is the tenth topic, the 
Supreme Lord, who shelters His dependent devotees.” 
We can draw similar conclusions about the other cantos.

TEXT 61.5

atah prāyaśch sarve ’rthāḥ sarvesv eva skandheśu gaṇatvena vā mukhyatvena vā 
nirūpyanta ity eva teṣām abhīmatam. śrūtenārthena cānjasā ity atra tathaiva 
pratipannam sarvatra tat-tat-sambhavat. tataś ca prathama-dvitiyayor api mahā- 
purānatāyāṁ pravesah syāt. tasmāt krama na grhitaḥ.

Thus Śrīdhara Svāmī would agree with us that virtually every canto touches on all 
ten topics, either directly or indirectly. It is in the same light that we should 
understand the statement “these topics are described here either directly or 
indirectly” [Bhāg. 2.10.2], since we actually do find these topics discussed both 
directly and indirectly throughout the Bhāgavatam. And for the same reason we 
should recognize that the First and Second Cantos also belong to this Mahā- 
purāṇa. Therefore we do not accept the idea that these topics are discussed in a 
strict sequence.

COMMENTARY

Śrī Śūta Gosvāmī Lists the Ten Topics of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam

Previously Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī showed that Śūta Gosvāmī, Śukadeva Gosvāmī, and 
Śrīla Vyāsadeva [DDB310] are all in agreement concerning the essential message of 
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. Here Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī reiterates this conclusion by 
citing Śūta Gosvāmī’s statements regarding the characteristics of a Mahā-
purāṇa. Although the ten topics Śrī Śūta lists seem to differ from those listed by 
Śukadeva Gosvāmī, Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī shows that in essence they are the same. 
In the Bhāvārtha-dipikā, while commenting on verse 12.7.9 of Śrīmad- 
Bhāgavatam, Śrīdhara Svāmī offers the following reconciliation between 
Śukadeva’s list and Śūta’s list: “Sarga and visarga are found in both lists. 
Sthānam in the first list is called vṝtti in the second, pośana is called raksā, ūti is
called *hetu, manvantara* is called *antara,* and *iśānukathā* is called *vamsa* and *vamśānucaritam.* *Nirodha* and *muktī* are both called *samsthā* in the second list. (Muktī can also be counted as one of the four types of annihilations mentioned in Text 63). [DDB311]Below is a table comparing the two lists of ten topics:

### TOPICS IN THE BHĀGAVATAM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Listed by Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmi</th>
<th>Listed by Śrī Sūta Gosvāmi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Sarga (primary creation)</td>
<td>Sarga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Visarga (secondary creation)</td>
<td>Visarga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Sthānam (maintenance)</td>
<td>Vṛtti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Poṣana (sustenance)</td>
<td>Rakṣā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Ūti (material desires)</td>
<td>Hету</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Manv-antara (reigns of Manus)</td>
<td>Antara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Iśānukathā (acts. Lord + devotees)</td>
<td><em>Vamśa, Vamśānucarita</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Nirodha (annihilation)</td>
<td>Samsthā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Muktī (liberation)</td>
<td>Samsthā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Āśraya (the supreme shelter)</td>
<td>Apāśraya</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A Mahā-purāṇa deals extensively with these ten topics, while a lesser Purāṇa deals with only five—*sarga,* creation; *pratisarga,* dissolution; *vamsa,* the genealogies of kings or sages; *manv-antaras,* the reigns of Manus; and *vamśānucarita,* the histories of various sages, kings, and incarnations. In the course of discussing these five topics, a lesser Purāṇa will discuss all ten topics of a Mahā-purāṇa, but will treat only these five in depth. This difference in how extensively the ten topics are treated constitutes the principal distinction between a Mahā-purāṇa and a lesser Purāṇa. The following table illustrates in what context a lesser Purāṇa discusses the ten characteristics of a Mahā-purāṇa:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Sarga</th>
<th>Sarga, Visarga, Āśraya</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Pratisarga</td>
<td>Nirodha, Muktī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Vamsa</td>
<td>Iśānukathā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Manv-antara</td>
<td>Manv-antara, Sthānam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Vamśānucaritam</td>
<td>Iśānukathā, Poṣāna, Ūti, Āśraya</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam contains twelve cantos, but the [DDB312]first list of a Mahā-purāṇa’s topics is in the Second Canto. From this, plus the fact that the first two cantos seem in some ways introductory, some scholars conclude that the Bhāgavatam explains these ten topics successively in each canto from the Third Canto onwards. Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmi has no regard for this theory. Since a Mahā-purāṇa treats ten topics, if the first two cantos of the Bhāgavatam described none of these, then the Bhāgavatam proper would have only ten cantos. It is obvious enough, however, that the First and Second Cantos discuss at least *sarga, visarga,* and *rakṣā.*

Earlier Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmi listed the defining characteristics of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, and among these were its having eighteen thousand verses and twelve cantos and
its beginning with a reference to the Gāyatrī mantra. If the first two cantos are not really part of the Bhāgavatam, then what remains no longer meets the criteria for being the Bhāgavatam. Other scholars say that because Sukadeva speaks only from the Second Canto on, the First Canto is not part of the Bhāgavatam proper. But their opinion is countered by the same reply.

Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī additionally argues that the ten topics of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam are not described in strict sequence, one per canto. First of all, there are twelve cantos and only ten topics. If we try to resolve this dilemma by excluding two of the cantos, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam will be reduced to less than the stipulated eighteen thousand verses. Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī further says that although nirodha is the eighth topic, it is discussed profusely in the Tenth, Eleventh, and Twelfth Cantos.

This opinion is confirmed by Śrīdhara Svāmī, one of the earliest and most respected authorities on Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. According to the adherents of a successive description of the ten topics beginning from the Third Canto, the Tenth Canto should describe the eighth topic, nirodha, and the Twelfth Canto the tenth topic, āśraya. Undoubtedly the Tenth Canto discusses nirodha, but its principal topic is the āśraya, whom it establishes to be Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

In Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī’s opinion, which finds support in Śrīdhara Svāmī writings, all twelve cantos of the Bhāgavatam describe all ten topics, though some cantos place more emphasis on certain topics and less on others. In his Sarva-samvādīnī, Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī specifies which topics are covered extensively in each canto:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Cantos Primarily Discussed In</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Sarga</td>
<td>2, 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Visarga</td>
<td>2, 3, 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Vṛtī</td>
<td>3, 7, 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Rakṣā</td>
<td>throughout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Manvantara</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Vamśa</td>
<td>4, 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Vamsānucarita</td>
<td>4, 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Samsthā</td>
<td>11, 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Hētu</td>
<td>3, 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Apāśraya</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As mentioned before, the ultimate purpose of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is to explain the tenth subject, the āśraya, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. It is therefore illogical to expect that the Bhāgavatam will deal with the other nine subjects strictly successively, as if presenting mathematical theorems. Instead, the Bhāgavatam presents these other subjects primarily to establish and explain the glories of the Supreme Lord. We have no reason to insist on a consecutive order of the ten subjects or to deprecate the first two cantos. From the very start of the Tattva-sandarbha, Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī has proposed that Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam focuses entirely on Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the supreme
shelter of all existence. The Bhāgavatam describes Śrī Kṛṣṇa in its beginning, middle, and end, and not just in the last canto. Śrī Jīva will explain this matter in more detail in Śrī Kṛṣṇa-sandarbha.

In the next Text Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī presents Śūta Gosvāmī’s definitions of the first seven of the ten topics.

**TEXT 62**

**TEXT 62.1**

atha sargādināṁ lakṣanam āha:

avyākṛta-gūna-kṣobhāṁ mahātas tri-vṛto 'hamah
bhūta-mātrendriyārthānāṁ sambhavāḥ sarga ucyate

pradhāna-gūna-kṣobhāṁ mahāṁ tasmāt tri-guno 'hāṅkāras tasmād bhūta-mātṛanāṁ
bhūta-sūkṣmānāṁ indriyānāṁ ca sthūla-bhūtānāṁ ca tad-upalaksita-tad-devatānāṁ
cā sambhavāḥ sargaḥ. kāraṇa-sṛṣṭiḥ sarga ity arthaḥ.

Śūta Gosvāmī then describes the features of the ten topics, beginning with creation:

“From the agitation of the original modes within the unmanifest material nature, the mahat-tattva arises. From the mahat-tattva comes the element false ego, which divides into three aspects. This threefold ego further manifests as the subtle elements, as the senses, and as the gross sense objects. The generation of all of these is called creation (sarga)” [Bhāg. 12.7.11].

The mahat-tattva comes into being when the original, dormant material nature (pradhāna) is agitated, and from the mahat comes false ego in each of the three material modes. From this threefold ego come the subtle elements, the senses, and the physical elements. The appearance of the elements implies the appearance of their presiding deities as well. All together, the appearance of these constitutes sarga, the manifestation of the subtle causes of creation.

**TEXT 62.2**

puruṣānugrhitānāṁ eteśāṁ vāsanā-mayah
visargo 'yam samāhāro bijād bijam carācaram

puruṣah paramātmā. eteśāṁ mahad-ādināṁ jīvasya pūrva-karma-vāsanā-pradhāno
'yam samāhāraḥ kārya-bhūtaḥ carācara-prāṇi-rūpo bijād bijam iva pravāhāpanno
visarga ucyate. vyaṣṭi-sṛṣṭir visarga ity arthaḥ. anenotir apy uktā.

Śūta Gosvāmī continues:
“The secondary creation (visarga), which exists by the mercy of the Lord, is the manifest amalgamation of the desires of the living entities. Just as a seed produces additional seeds, activities that promote material desires in the performer produce moving and nonmoving life forms” [Bhāg. 12.7.12]. Here the word puruṣa (“person”) refers to the Supersoul, and etesām (“of these”) indicates the elements, beginning with the mahat. The primary reason the elements combine is the karma the jivas have accumulated from their previous lives. Thus the moving and nonmoving living beings take their births in a perpetual cycle, like the generation of one seed from another. This constant flow of generated products is called visarga, secondary creation. In other words, visarga is the creation of the individual organisms, and thus this discussion of visarga includes the topic of ūti (“impulses for activity”).

TEXT 62.3

\[ \text{vr̡ttir bhūtānī bhūtānām carānām acarānī ca} \]
\[ \text{kṛtā svena nrnām tatra kāmāc codanayāpī vā} \]

\[ \text{carānām bhūtānām sāmānyato 'carānī ca-kārāc carānī ca kānād vr̡ttih. tatra tu} \]
\[ \text{nrnām svena svabhāvena kāmāc codanayāpī vā yā niyātā vr̡ttir jīvikā kṛtā sā vr̡ttir} \]
\[ \text{ucyata ity arthaḥ.} \]

“Vṛttī means the process of sustenance, by which the moving beings live upon the nonmoving. For a human being, vṛttī specifically means acting for one’s livelihood in a manner suited to one’s personal nature. Such action may be carried out either in pursuit of selfish desire or in accordance with the Vedic injunctions” [Bhāg. 12.7.13]. Mobile living beings generally thrive on immobile ones, but the word ca (“and”) in this verse hints that, when the desire impels them, moving creatures will also subsist on other moving creatures. For human beings, however, the means of livelihood is prescribed according to their individual natures, on the basis of either selfish desire or scriptural injunction. All this is called vṛttī.

TEXT 62.4

\[ \text{rakṣācyutāvatāreḥa viśvasyānu yuge yuge} \]
\[ \text{tiryān-martyarṣi-devesu hanyante yais trayā-diviṣah} \]

\[ \text{yair avatāraḥ. aneneśa-kathā sthānam poṣanam ceti trayam uktaṃ.} \]

“In each age, the infallible Lord appears in this world among the animals, human beings, sages, and demigods. By His activities in these incarnations He protects the universe and kills the enemies of Vedic culture. This is called rakṣā” [Bhāg. 12.7.14]. Here the word yaih (“by them”) means by the incarnations. This definition of “protection” (rakṣā) also incorporates the three topics īśa-kathā (“narrations about the Supreme Lord”), sthāna (“maintenance”), and poṣaṇa (“nourishment”).
TEXT 62.5

манв-антаран мануга дхевану-пуртака суреварах
ржо а̄м̘ас̘ат̘арах ка хара̄г сад-видхам уцйате

манв-ады-адхарана кathanena сад-дхарма евак̘т̘а а́ви̘к̘с̘ать а́т̘а̄ а́р̘а̄г̘а. тата̄с ка пр̘к̘т̘ана-гра̄н̘ћ̘наи̘ка̄р̘т̘ам.

“In each reign of Manu (manv-antarana), six types of personalities appear as manifestations of Lord Hari: the ruling Manu, the chief demigods, the sons of Manu, Indra, the great sages, and the partial incarnations of the Supreme Personality of Godhead” [Bhāg. 12.7.15].

From the mention here of the activities of the Manus and the others, it is understood that the topic of sad-dharma (“progressive religious principles”) is also covered. In this way this list of ten topics is equivalent to the one given earlier in the Bhāgavatam.

TEXT 62.6

राजनम् ब्रह्म-प्रसूतानम् वामसस त्राई-कलिको ’नवयाह
वामशु [DDB317]āн̘ु̘क̘रा̄तम तेसाम् वर्त्तमान वामशा-दहराह ने ये

तेसा̄म् राजनम् ये ने वामशा-दहराह तेसाम् वर्त्तमान वामशु [DDB318]āनु̘क̘रा̄तम.

“Dynasties (vam̘śa) are lines of kings originating with Lord Brahmā and extending continuously through past, present, and future. The accounts of such dynasties, especially of their most prominent members, constitute the subject of dynastic history (vamsy[DDB319]ān̘ु̘क̘रा̄तम)” [Bhāg. 12.7.16].

The activities of the vam̘śa-dharāh (prominent members of those dynasties) constitutes vamsān̘ु̘क̘रा̄तम (“dynastic history”).

COMMENTARY
Śrī Śúta Gosvāmī Defines the Bhāgavatam’s Topics

At the end of the Second Canto Śukadeva Gosvāmī lists and defines the ten topics of Śrimad-Bhāgavatam, and in the Twelfth Canto Śūṭa Gosvāmī does the same. The first topic is sarga, primary creation. As we have already pointed out, during total dissolution everything in the material universe becomes unmanifest, a state called prakṛti or pradhāna. In this state the three modes of nature remain in a state of equilibrium. Not until the modes are agitated and put out of balance can creation begin again. This same principle applies to human beings: When a person is satisfied, peaceful, and equipoised he will not initiate some new activity; some stimulus must disturb his equilibrium and motivate him to act. One engages in sex, for example, when one’s mind and body are stimulated by lust or the desire to procreate.

The original disturbance in the pradhāna is caused by the glance of the Supreme Lord, with which He impregnates prakṛti, or material nature, with all the
conditioned jivas. Lord Krṣṇa confirms this in the Bhagavad-gītā (14.3): mama yonir mahad brahma tasmin garbham dadāmy aham. “The total material substance, called Brahman, is the source of birth, and it is that Brahman that I impregnate.” Here the word Brahman means prakṛti, not the Lord’s impersonal feature.

The impregnated or disturbed state of prakṛti is called the mahat-tattva. When further impelled by kāla, the Lord’s time potency, the mahat-tattva gives rise to the three kinds of ahankāra, or false ego. These include vaikārika ahankāra, false ego in the mode of goodness,[DDB321] taijasa ahankāra, false ego in the mode of passion,[DDB322] and tāmasa ahankāra, false ego in the mode of ignorance.

Vaikārika ahankāra gives rise to manas, the elemental substance of mind, and also to the presiding deities of material creation. Taijasa ahankāra gives rise to buddhi, the intelligence, and also to the senses, which are of two types, perceptive and working. When the kāla potency acts on the tāmasa ahankāra, sound comes into being, followed by ether and the ear. Under the impulse of time, ether then gives rise to tactility, and then air and the skin evolve. Similarly, air gives rise to form, after which fire and the eye evolve; fire gives rise to taste, and then water and the tongue evolve; and finally water gives rise to smell, after which earth and the nose evolve. The Lord Himself performs this primary phase of creation (sarga), which includes the creation of the abovementioned elements’ presiding deities. This is indicated here (in Bhāg. 12.7.11) by the word artha.

These are the stages of material creation in its primary phase (sarga):

**PRAKṛTI OR PRADHĀNA**
(Balanced state of Nature)
Glance of the Lord (with Kāla)
**MAHAT-TATTVA (Citta)**
(Pradhāna becomes disturbed)
**AHANKĀRA (False Ego)**
**VAIKĀRIKA TAIJASA TĀMASA**
(In Goodness) (In Passion)(In ignorance)

MIND AND INTELLIGENCE TAN-MĀTRAS PRESIDING DEITIES AND SENSES
(Sound, Touch, Form, Taste, Smell)and 5 material elements.

As mentioned previously, the Bhāgavatam distinguishes between the senses and the physical sense organs, the latter being the seats of the former. The above chart shows that false ego in the mode of passion gives rise to intelligence and the senses. These senses are not the sense organs but rather the subtle senses, which accompany the jīva from body to body. The physical sense organs, of course, are dissolved along with the rest of the gross body at death.

Each of the five tan-mātras, the subtle manifestations of the material elements, becomes mixed with the time energy of the Lord and gives rise to its corresponding gross element and the seat of the corresponding sense organ:

**TAN-MĀTRA MATERIAL ELEMENTS SEATS OF SENSES**
SOUND — SKY — EARS
TOUCH — AIR — SKIN
FORM — FIRE — EYE
TASTE — WATER — TONGUE
SMELL — EARTH — NOSE

The mahat-tattva, ahankāra, mind, and intelligence are considered internal senses. These four, plus the five working senses (legs, hands, anus, voice[DBB323], and genitals), the five perceptive senses (ears, eyes, nose, skin, and tongue), the five gross material objects (sky, air, fire, water, and earth), and the five subtle elements (sound, tactility, form, taste, and smell) total twenty-four elements, and the jīva and Paramātma can be counted as the twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth. Time (kāla) is not counted separately, being an energy of the Paramātma. Because pure elements cannot be employed in the process of creation, the five gross material elements listed above must be further combined by the process called pañci-karanam. In this process each of the elements is mixed with the other four according to a certain ratio. Then Lord Brahmā, using these mixed elements, proceeds with the secondary phase of creation, called visarga. He creates the bodies of the myriad living beings according to the stored-up karmic impressions of their previous lives. Visarga includes the manifestation of Brahmā’s mind-born sons—Atri, Vasistha, Daksa, Manu, and others. Some of these sons are Prājapatis, progenitors, whose offspring populate the universe. The phases of creation continue in cycles, one phase giving rise to the next, like one seed giving rise to another seed. The seeds in this creative process are the living entities’ fruitive activities.

After sarga and visarga come vr̄tti, sustenance. As stated in Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (1.13.47), one living being is generally sustained by eating others:

ahaśtāni sa-hastānām apadāni catus-padaṃ
dhāgūni tatra mahatām jīvo jīvasya jivanam

“Those who are devoid of hands are prey for those who have hands; those devoid of legs are prey for the four-legged. The weak are the subsistence of the strong, and the general rule holds that one living being is food for another.” Usually, immovable beings are food for those that move, but some moving beings, such as tigers, prey on other moving beings. Human beings are special because they can choose what kind of food they will eat. In this matter they can be guided either by their own desires or by Vedic scriptural injunction. Those who eat according to whim glide down to hellish species, while those who follow scripture progress toward liberation.

Since Lord Viṣṇu accepts the responsibility of maintaining Vedic culture in the universe, He incarnates in every millennium to protect His devotees and curb the demoniac. This is called rākṣa, protection. The Lord does not restrict His appearances only to the human species. As Prahlāda Mahārāja says in his prayers to Lord Nṛśimha, ittham nr-tiryag-rṣī-deva-jhāsāvatārāir lokān vibhāvayasi hamsi jagat pratīpān: “My Lord, You appear in various incarnations as a human being, an
animal, a great saint, a demigod, a fish, or a tortoise, thus maintaining the entire creation in different planetary systems and killing the demoniac principles” (Bhāg. 7.9.38).

The material creation is manifest for the duration of Lord Brahmā’s life, one hundred years according to his time scale. His one day lasts for one thousand cycles of the four yugas—Satya, Tretā, Dwāpara, and Kali. By human calculation, therefore, a day of Brahmā lasts 4,320,000,000 years. For managerial purposes he divides each of his days into fourteen periods called manv-antaras. The person who rules during each of these periods is called Manu, who is assisted by his sons, [DDB324] by demigods such as Candra and Varuṇa,[DDB325] by Lord Indra, [DDB326] by the seven great sages, called sapta-rsis, [DDB327] and by a special partial expansion of the Supreme Lord who incarnates for each particular manv-antara. The demigods and sages are all appointed for the period of one manv-antara, and the activities of these great personalities constitute sad-dharma, or progressive religious principles. At present ([DDB328] A.D. 1994[DDB329]) we are in the period of the seventh Manu, Vaivasvata Manu, more exactly in the 5,092nd year of Kali-yuga, in the twenty-eighth yuga cycle of the day of Brahmā called the Śvetavarāha-kalpa, during his fifty-first year. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam names the fourteen Manus, the corresponding incarnations special to their periods, and the names of Indra in these periods:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MANU</th>
<th>MANU’S FATHER</th>
<th>NAME OF AVATAR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INDRA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Svāyambhuva</td>
<td>Brahmarāja</td>
<td>Yajaṇa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Svārociṣa</td>
<td>Agni</td>
<td>Vibhu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Uttama</td>
<td>Priyavrata</td>
<td>Satyasena</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Tāmasya</td>
<td>Priyavrata</td>
<td>Hari</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Raivata</td>
<td>Priyavrata</td>
<td>Vaikuntha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Cāksasa</td>
<td>Cākṣu</td>
<td>Ajita</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Vaivasvata</td>
<td>Vivasvān</td>
<td>Vāmana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Sāvarni</td>
<td>Vivasvān</td>
<td>Sārvabhauma/Bali</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Dakṣa-sāvarni</td>
<td>Varuṇa</td>
<td>Rṣabha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Brahma-sāvarni</td>
<td>Upāsloka</td>
<td>Viṣvaksena</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Dharma-sāvarni</td>
<td>Upāsloka</td>
<td>Dharmasetu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Rudra-sāvarni</td>
<td>Upāsloka</td>
<td>Svadhāmā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Deva-sāvarni</td>
<td>Upāsloka</td>
<td>Yogeśvara</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Divaspati
14. Indra-sāvāni  Upaśloka  Brhadbhānu
Śuci

Two prominent dynasties of kings come from Lord Brahmā—the sun dynasty and the moon dynasty. The description of the deeds performed by the kings appearing in these dynasties is called vamśyānucaritam.

In the next Text Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī explains the definitions of the remainder of the Bhāgavatam’s ten topics and concludes Śrī Tattva-sandarbha by explaining their purpose.

TEXT 63

TEXT 63.1

naimittikah prākṛtiko nitya ātyantiko layah

samstheti kavibhiḥ proktas caturdhāsyasvabhāvataḥ

asya parameśvarasya. svabhāvataḥ saktitah. ātyantika ity anena muktrir apy atra praveśitā.

“There are four types of cosmic annihilations—occasional, elemental, continuous, and ultimate—all of which are effected by the inherent potency of the Supreme Lord. Learned scholars have designated this topic dissolution (samsthā)” (Bhāg. [12.7.17].

In this verse the word asya (“His”) refers to the Parameśvara, the Supreme Lord, while svabhāvataḥ (“due to nature”) means “by His energy.” The term ātyantikah (“ultimate”) implies that mukti (liberation) is included in this kind of dissolution.

TEXT 63.2

hetur jīvo 'syā sargāder avidyā-karma-kārakah
yam cānuśayinam prāhur avyākrtam utāpare

hetur nimittam. asya viśvasya. yato 'yam avidyayā karma-kārakah. yam eva hetum kecic caitanya-prādhānyenānusayinam prāhur aparā upādhi-prādhānyenāvyākrtam iti.

“Out of ignorance the living being performs material activities and thereby becomes in one sense the cause (hetu) of the creation, maintenance, and destruction of the universe. Some authorities call the living being the personality underlying the material creation, while others say he is the unmanifest self” [Bhāg. 12.7.18].
The *hetu* (“cause”) here is the *nimitta*, or efficient cause. *Asya* (“of this”) refers to this universe, the existence of which is due to the *jivas*, who act in ignorance. Some call that same cause the *anusayi* (“underlying personality”), highlighting the principle of consciousness, while others call him the *avyākṛta* (“unmanifest”), focusing attention on the *jivas’ upādhis*.

**TEXT 63.3**

vyatirekānvayau yasya jāgrat-svapna-sūṣuptisū
māyā-mayesu tad brahma jīva-vṛttisv apāsrayah

ṣrī-bādarāyana-samādhi-labdhārtā-virodhād atra ca jīva-śuddha-svārupam
evāśrayatvena na vyākhya-yate. kintu ayam evārtha jāgrat-ādīsv avasthāsu māyā-
mayesu māyā-sakti-kalpitēsu mahat-ādī-drāvyesa ca kevala-svārūpena vyatirekah
parama-sākṣitayanvayaḥ ca yasya tad brahma ca jīvānāṃ vṛttisv śuddha-svārupatayā
sopādhitayā ca vartanesu sāhitēs vāpāsrayah sarvam aty atikramya-āśraya ity arthāḥ.
apa ity etat khalu varjane varjanam cātikrame paryavasyatīti.

“The Supreme Absolute Truth is present throughout all the states of awareness—waking consciousness, sleep, and deep sleep—throughout all the phenomena manifested by the external energy, and within the functions of all living entities, and He also exists separate from all these. Thus situated in His own transcendence, He is the ultimate and unique shelter” [Bhāg. 12.7.19]. It cannot be said that the *jīva* is the āśraya, even in his pure state. That would go against what Śrīla Vyāsadeva experienced in trance. Rather, the correct understanding is as follows: The Supreme Brahman is alone in His original identity. He is always aloof from the states of consciousness known as waking awareness and so on, and also from the manifestations of matter, beginning with the *mahat-tattva*. All these are products of the external energy, that is to say, creations of His Māyā potency. While remaining aloof from all these manifestations, He simultaneously associates with them in His feature as the Supersoul, the supreme witness. Therefore He is the basis for the *jīva’s* activities in both his pure and his conditioned state[DDB331]. But in this context the word *apāśraya* indicates that even while He is the foundation for the *jīva’s* activities He still remains transcendent to everything; the prefix *apa* refers to “abandonment,” which here amounts to the idea of transcending.

**TEXT 63.4**

tad evam apāśrayābhiyakti-dvāra-bhūtam hetu-sābda-vyapadiṣṭasya jīvasya śuddha-
svārupa-jñānam āha dvābhyaṃ

padārthesu yathā dravyam tan-mātram rūpa-nāmasu
bija-pañcataṁtāsu hy avasthāsu yutāyutam

virameta yadā cittam hitvā vṛtti-trayam svayam
yogena vā tadātmānam vedehāyā nivartate
Such knowledge of the pure nature of the jīva, who is here designated the cause of material existence, leads to realization of the apāśraya, or transcendental fountainhead of existence, as Sūta Gosvāmī states in two verses:

“Although a material object may assume various forms and names, its essential ingredient is always present as the basis of its existence. Similarly, both conjointly and separately, the jīva is always present with the created material body throughout its phases of existence, beginning with conception and ending with death.

“Either on the strength of one’s own power of discrimination or because of one’s regulated spiritual practice, one’s mind may stop functioning on the material platform of waking consciousness, sleep, and deep sleep. Then the jīva understands the Supreme Soul and withdraws from material endeavor” [Bhāg. 12.7.20–21].

TEXT 63.5


We can consider the substances earth, water, and so on to be either associated with their products having names and forms—such as pots—or separate from them. After all, we can identify these substances even apart from their products. In the same way, although by the force of ignorance the originally pure spirit soul becomes involved with the nine stages of life from conception to death, he can nonetheless become indifferent by understanding that he is in fact distinct from all this by virtue of his being a pure self. Thus becoming aloof, he is then qualified to inquire about the dāśraya. That is the purport of the verse beginning virameta [Bhāg. 12.7.21].

The vr̥tti-trayam (“three functional states”) are the states of waking, dreaming, and deep sleep. Ātmānam (“Self”) here means the Supersoul. Svayam (“by oneself”) means by carefully studying the illusory nature of the world, as the sage Vāmadeva did. Yogenā (“by yoga”) indicates that one may conduct this study by means of the kind of meditation Śrīmati Devahūti and others practiced. Ihāyāh niṣvartate (“he becomes free from all actions”) means that he refrains from all activities other than the practice of God-realization.

This is our explanation of sambandha, the connection between Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and the subject it discusses.

TEXT 63.6

iti kali-yuga-pāvana-sva-bhajana-vibhajana-prayojanāvatāra-śrī-śrī-bhagavat-krṣna-
Thus ends the Tattva-sandarbha, the first book of the Bhāgavata-sandarbha, which was written according to the instructions of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, the revered leaders of the universal royal assembly of Vaiṣṇavas. They are unalloyed servants of the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the purifier of the jīvas in Kali-yuga, who descended to distribute the benediction of His own devotional service.

COMMENTARY

Conclusion

The dissolution of the material creation is called sanstha, of which Śūta Gosvāmī says there are four kinds—naimittika, prakṛtika, nitya, and ātyantika. The dissolution that comes at the end of Lord Brahmā’s day is called the naimittika, or occasional. The dissolution of the universe at the end of Lord Brahmā’s life is called prakṛtika, or complete. The inexorable moment-by-moment progression of everything in the material world toward annihilation is called the nitya, or continuous, dissolution. And when an individual jīva gets free from both his subtle and gross bodies and enters the spiritual sky, that is called the ātyantika, or ultimate, dissolution, namely liberation. Having attained this state, one does not have to take birth again in this material world. Thus Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī says that ātyantika-laya includes mukti, the ninth topic among the ten topics of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam Śukadeva Gosvāmī enumerated in [DDB335] a verse quoted in Text 56 (Bhāg. 2.10.1)

In his Sarva-samvādī Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī states that, in addition to the dissolutions mentioned above, there is also a partial dissolution at the end of each manv-antara. To substantiate this statement he cites the Viṣṇu-dharmottara Ārṇa, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, and the Bhārata-tātparya of Śrī Madhvācārya. Part of the reference from the Viṣṇu-dharmottara Ārṇa (1.75.1, 2) states:

vajra uvāca
manv-antare parikṣine yādṛṣṭi dvija jāyate
samavasthā mahā-bhāga tādṛśim vaktum arhasi

mārkandeya uvāca
manv-antare parikṣine deva manv-antareśvarāh
mahār-lokam athāsādyā tisthanti gata-kalmaśāh

“King Vajra asked, ‘[DDB336]O brāhmaṇa, what is the situation of the world when a manv-antara ends? Please explain this to me.’

“Mārkandeya replied, ‘[DDB337]At the end of a manv-antara, the demigods appointed for that particular manv-antara, being free from sins, attain to
Maharloka and reside there.

Märkandeya goes on to explain that the seven sages, Manu, and Indra go to Brahmaloka while the earth becomes submerged in a deluge. This description of the general annihilation at the end of each manv-antara is similar to the one given in the Twenty-fourth Chapter of the Bhāgavatam’s Eighth Canto. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī comments that the existence of a dissolution at the end of each manv-antara is further substantiated by the Hari-vamśa Purāṇa and commentaries on its chapters dealing with the subject of universal dissolution. Thus the dissolution at the end of a manv-antara can be categorized as naimittika, or occasional, because it occurs repeatedly with the changes of Manus.

The hetu, or efficient cause of creation, is the jīva. The Supreme Lord has nothing to gain by creating this material world. He has His own transcendental abode, where He engages in loving pastimes with His dear devotees. But for the welfare of those living beings who have turned their backs on Him, He has created this universe, where the jīvas are avidyā-karma-kāraṇa, acting out of ignorance and sustaining the universe. In that sense the jīvas are the efficient cause behind the creation, even though they neither design nor produce it. As Lord Kṛṣṇa states in the Bhagavad-gītā (7.5), jīva-bhūtām mahā-bāho yayedam dhāryate jagat: The living entities sustain the whole material world.

The Lord’s ultimate purpose in creating the material world is to enable the jīvas to attain liberation from the cycle of repeated birth and death. Śukadeva Gosvāmī states this explicitly in Srimad-Bhāgavatam (10.87.2):

\[ \text{buddhindriya-manah-prānān janānām} \text{ asrjat} \text{ prabhuh} \]
\[ \text{mātṛartham} \text{ ca bhavārtham} \text{ ca ātmane 'kalpanāya ca} \]

“The Supreme Lord manifested the material intelligence, senses, mind, and vital air of the living entities so that they could indulge their desires for sense gratification, take repeated births to engage in fruitive activities, become elevated in future lives, and ultimately attain liberation.”

From this we can see that the jīva is certainly not the āśraya of the universe. According to Śrīla Vyāsadeva’s realization in trance, that position belongs to the Supreme Lord. But if the Lord is the āśraya of this material world, wouldn’t He also necessarily be in contact with Māyā and her creation? Śrī Śūta Gosvāmī replies that the Supreme Lord is apāśraya, the transcendental shelter. In other words, He is the āśraya, but He is apart from Māyā. In the Bhagavad-gītā (7.4) the Lord describes His own material nature as bhīnā prakṛti, His separated energy. In His original form the Supreme Personality of Godhead is completely aloof from His creation, but as the Supersoul He witnesses and controls the activities of both the jīvas and Māyā. Thus by His inconceivable potency He both associates with the creation and remains aloof from it. This He also confirms in the Bhagavad-gītā (9.4):

\[ \text{māyā tatam idam sarvam jagad avyakta-mārtinā} \]
\[ \text{mat-sthāni sarva-bhūtāni na cāham teṣv avasthitah} \]
“By Me, in My unmanifested form, this entire universe is pervaded. All beings are in Me, but I am not in them.” Yet even though as the Supersoul the Lord pervades the universe and controls it, He is neither in physical contact with it nor influenced by it.

In Text 53 Śrīla G Gosvāmī showed that knowledge of the pure nature of the jīva is the first step in the science of God-realization. Here in Text 63 he substantiates this statement with two verses spoken by Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī (quoted in Text 63.4).

In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam [DDB338] 11.22.47 Lord Kṛṣṇa mentions the nine states of bodily existence the jīva experiences: conception, gestation, birth, infancy, childhood, youth, middle age, old age, and death. Although in his conditioned state the jīva seems to associate with these nine states, he never actually does. Just as clay is the essential constituent of a pot yet still exists independent of the pot, so the jīva animates his body but still exists independent of the body and its nine states.

When a person knows that[DDB339] whether [DDB340]he is awake, dreaming, or merged in deep sleep[DDB341] he is always distinct from his body during all the nine states, he is qualified to walk on the path of God-realization. That is the stage of athāto brahma-jiñānā: One who knows he is distinct from the body is qualified to inquire into the Absolute Truth (V.s. 1.1.1).

This Text gives two processes for self-realization. The word svayam (“by oneself”) implies the path of jñāna, in which one meditates on the self as different from everything else in the realm of Māyā. The Brhad-āranyaka Upanisad relates the history of a sage named Vāmadeva who followed this path, and the Eleventh Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam tells of another practitioner, Dattātreya.

The second process is implied by the word yogena, which means the path of bhakti. On this path one considers oneself different from the three states of existence—the waking state, the dreaming state, and deep sleep—and meditates on the Supersoul. This path is exemplified by Lord Kapiladeva’s mother, Śrīmatī Devahūti, whose story is told in the Third Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.

Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī concludes that the āśraya of everything is Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead; He alone is the subject (sambandhi-tattva) of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.

The following is a summary of Śrī Tattva-sandarbha: The first eight Texts, which are in verse form, make up the invocation, or mangalācarana. In these verses Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī prays to his teachers and his worshipable Deity; [DDB342] he also tells why he is writing the book and defines its subject and the qualifications one must have to read it.

In Texts 9 through 26 Jiva Gosvāmī discusses Gaudīya Vaiṣṇava epistemology. He
first points out that all human beings are subject to four defects that prevent them from acquiring perfect knowledge independently. Of the ten means of gaining knowledge,[DDB343] Śrīla Jiva accepts śabda, revealed scripture, as supreme, for it alone can give one perfect knowledge. Since the Vedas are śabda-brahman, knowledge revealed by the Supreme Lord, they are the highest authority. But because they are now unavailable in their complete form, because they are cryptic, and because they can no longer be learned from representatives of a proper disciplic succession of teachers, Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī recommends the Purāṇas, which, along with the Rāmāyana and Mahābhārata, constitute the fifth Veda. Next Śrīla Jiva shows that the Purāṇas have the same source, authority, and nature as the Vedas, and that, for us in this age, their simple language and universal accessibility render them an even better source of knowledge than the other four Vedas.

But the Purāṇas seem to contradict one another in various ways—for example, by glorifying different deities as [DDB344]worthy of the highest worship—and most of them lack a proper disciplic succession. By the process of elimination, therefore, in Text 18 Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī proposes Śrimad-Bhāgavatam as the most suitable Purāṇa for investigation. From Text 19 to 26 Śrīla Jiva reveals the supreme qualities of Śrimad-Bhāgavatam and shows how it is the most authoritative Vedic scripture, the ripened fruit of the desire tree of Vedic knowledge. He shows that the Bhāgavatam is based on the Gāyatri mantra, the essence of the Vedas, and that it is the natural commentary on the Vedaṇṭa-sūtra. In Texts 27 and 28 Śrīla Jiva describes the basic scheme of the Sandarbhas, what sources he plans to refer to, and his method of analysis.

From Texts 29 to 63 he establishes the following principles:
1. The subject matter of Śrimad-Bhāgavatam is Lord Kṛṣṇa.
2. Lord Kṛṣṇa is the original personality of Godhead.
3. He has multifarious potencies, which are divided into three main categories—internal, external, and marginal.
4. Māyā, His external energy, works under Him but cannot control Him.
5. The jīvas have been bound by Māyā since time immemorial.
6. The jīvas cannot transcend Māyā by their own power.
7. Surrender to the Lord is the jīvas’ only means of liberation.
8. The goal of life is to attain prema, love of Kṛṣṇa.

To establish these eight principles, Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī first examines the inner mood of Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī, the speaker of Śrimad-Bhāgavatam. In Text 29 he quotes and analyzes Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī’s prayers[DDB345] that describe Śukadeva’s realization and exalted position. Then, from Texts 30 to 49 he examines the [DDB346]Bhāgavatam’s description of what Śrīla Vyāsa realized in trance, [DDB347]this realization [DDB348]being the basis upon which [DDB349]Vyāsa composed Śrimad-Bhāgavatam. While describing Vyāsa’s trance, Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī uses logic and scriptural reference in Texts 34 to 43 to decisively smash the two primary doctrines of the Māyāvādīs, pariccheda-vāda and pratibimba-vāda.

From Texts 50 to 52 [DDB350]Śrī Jiva shows that Śrimad-Bhāgavatam’s subject
is the nondual [DDB351] supreme reality by analyzing the second verse of its first chapter. In Texts 53 to 55 he explains the nature of the ātma—namely, that the ātma, being a fractional part of Brahman, is conscious like Brahman but can never be equal to Brahman. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī explains that understanding this similarity between the ātma and Brahman is the initial step toward realizing the Absolute Truth.

From Text 56 on he examines the subject matter of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam from another angle. Here he analyzes the Bhāgavatam's ten topics, citing Śukadeva Gosvāmī's list in the Second Canto and Sūta Gosvāmī's in the Twelfth. He shows that there is no clash of either spirit or content between these two great Bhāgavatam authorities. In their descriptions of the first nine topics, both Śukadeva and Sūta convey an understanding of the multifarious potencies and activities of the tenth topic, the shelter of all, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Thus from various angles Jīva Gosvāmī [DDB352] establishes that Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the ultimate scriptural authority and that it teaches the following: Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, devotional service is the process for attaining the supreme goal of life, and this supreme goal is unalloyed love of Godhead.

In the next three Sandarbhas, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī will further elaborate on the sambandhi-tattva.

HARI OM TAT SAT

[DDB353]
Thus ends the Śrī Jīva Tosāntī [DDB354] Commentary on Śrī Tatva-sandarbha, the first book of Śrī Saṭ-sandarbha, by Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī Prabhupāda.