

# **Srimad Bhagavatam, the Natural Commentary on Vedanta Sutra**

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#### **References:**

- 1) Haridas Pandit (Sastri): "Vedanta-darsana"  
Collection of verses from SB pertaining to Vedanta-sutra.
- 2) Further research by Suhotra Swami choosing another (better) verses utilizing  
Srila Prabhupada's translations and purports with the help of Folio program.
- 3) Bhaktivinod Thakur: "Bhagavata-arca-marici-mala"  
Compendium of SB verses

Vedanta-sutra is collections of codes (sutra, very concise statement) expressing philosophical ideas drawn from the Vedas, esp. from the Upanisads. Mostly all of this is of concern to jnana-yogis, not to bhakti-yogis.

Vedanta-sutra is a sort of philosophical gunfight between Srila Vyasadeva and the known six systems of Vedic philosophy, impersonal Vedanta, four schools of Buddhism and jainism. Srila Vyasadeva puts continually their arguments and defeats them.

As long as material world is manifest, these systems of philosophy eternally recurr. Buddha, for example, will appear after 2500 years. Even in the Rig Veda is presented some philosophical discussion and there are about ten philosophies mentioned and one of them quite resembles Buddhism.

Aim of Vedanta-sutra is to establish `vedanta', conclusion of the Vedas, presented in the Upanisads (philosophical portion of the Vedas) as the ultimate explanation the Absolute Truth. The other philosophies are also drawn from the Vedas, but they are incomplete, imperfect.

The Srimad Bhagavatam, 'artho yam brahma-sutranam', is Srila Vyasadeva's own natural commentary on Vedanta-sutra. To read it is quite difficult, because of its voluminous nature and sometimes deep philosophy. These references to Vedanta-sutra proven to be very helpful in bringing to the sharp focus the background philosophical issues which are profoundly relevant to our understanding of SB.

## Refutations of atheistic Sankhya philosophy

There are two Sankhya philosophies. One is Bhagavata Sankhya taught by Devahuti-putra Kapiladeva in the SB 3.Canto and is not different from KC philosophy. The word 'sankhya' in Sanskrit means 'to count'; it is the explanation of the material world in terms of elements, numbers of elements and how they function together. The Bhagavat Sankhya philosophy presents the ultimate tattva (all these elements are called tattvas), isvara-tattva, Sri Krsna.

There is another Sankhya philosophy, Nirisvara Sankhya, taught by impostor Kapila. It seems that this atheistic philosophy came about in response to the challenge of Buddhism to the entire Vedic civilization. Buddhists rejected the Vedas and began to set up in India a kind of alternative culture. It was very powerful within the first thousand years after Buddha. The prevailing atmosphere at that time was so atheistic that a serious philosophical discussion was in position, just like today, if someone starts to talk about God, he is just laughed off the stage... Therefore some of the Sankhya philosophers started to preach a type of Sankhya which just did not account for Supreme Being. It is still current in India today.

Srila Prabhupada draws a very stark parallel between that atheistic Sankhya philosophy and philosophy of modern materialistic science. There is a clear common ground — both hold that the creation is the spontaneous effect of material nature which alone creates.

In atheistic Sankhya philosophy there are two ultimate tattvas, ultimate realities. One is the prakriti, in its most primeval form called pradhana, primeval material nature. The other one is purusa, the individual soul. So Sankhya philosophy recognizes the existence of spirit and in today's atheistic, materialistic science some scientists hold that consciousness should be counted as real element. But they are in the minority. Generally the scientists are just gross materialists. But that does not amount very much to the difference, because the atheistic Sankhya philosophers don't ascribe any function to the spirit. Spirit just exists and is conscious, but has no power to act. It is the prakriti that spontaneously does everything. It is very similar to modern materialistic science.

According to SB, pradhana, or the primeval material nature, is unknowable. This is very significant. Sutra refuting this atheistic Sankhya position:  
jnayatva avacanat ca "There is no statement in the Vedas, that the pradhana is object of knowledge."

In other words, there is no support for the idea, that pradhana can be understood by living entity, human being.

This undercuts the whole position of the atheistic Sankhya philosophy because their whole premise is that when one knows material nature, its original form as it is, all the secret workings, when one has penetrated the inner secrets of material nature, then one will be liberated. That is the secret of liberation.

Today's material scientists say the same thing, of course, their conception of liberation is little bit different... Sci-fi visions of liberation. Liberation means liberation from distress.

**SB 3.26.10:** the basic definition of pradhana and prakriti.

"...The unmanifested eternal combination of the three modes is the cause of the manifest state and is called pradhana. It is called prakriti when in manifest stage of existence."

**SB 12.4.20-21:** the pradhana is unknowable.

"...sunya vat..."

"...The situation is just like of a complete sleep or a voidness. Indeed, it is indescribable...since pradhana is the original substance, it is the actual basis of material creation."

It means that the research of atheistic Sankhya philosophers (and modern scientists) will never be completed, it is totally futile.

Pradhana appears to be nothing, but it is so complex that none can understand it. Mathematicians need pages of calculation to describe this seeming void. This is very significant understanding; people who argue that everything appeared from nothing just reached the limit of the power of their knowledge. They can't go beyond.

### ***Argument of the atheistic Sankhya philosophy:***

The Vedic scriptures indicate that the pradhana is aja, unborn, or beginningless. Therefore it exists as separate, parallel tattva to purusa.

In other words, the atheistic Sankhya philosophy is ultimately dualistic; there are two Absolute Truths.

**SB 10.87.31:** 'Neither material nature nor the soul who tries to enjoy her are ever born (ajayor). Yet living bodies coming to being when these two combine just as bubbles form where water meets the air. And just as rivers merge into the ocean, or the nectar from many different flowers blend into honey, so all these conditioned living beings eventually merge back into You, the Supreme, with their various names and qualities.'

The example of nectar from many different flowers which blend together into honey is very significant. It is used to illustrate what happens at the time of the cosmic dissolution, the maha-pralaya, when the universes enter into the body of Maha-Visnu. So there is pradhana, the material energy, and there are the purusas, the souls. So they merge together as nectar from different flowers merge together into honey. That merging doesn't mean that they disappear; they have simply been condensed, combined, amalgamated together. And with the next cosmic manifestation this amalgamation will come out again and everything will become distinct as it was before.

This sheds very important light on this point of "aja", that prakriti and purusa are beginningless. So they are beginningless, or unborn, but they are subordinate. This is the point.

From the purport: 'Prakriti thus serves as the upadana-karana, or ingredient cause of creation. In the ultimate issue, however, since she is also an expansion of the Supreme Lord, it is the Lord alone Who is the ingredient cause as well as the efficient cause.'

[Upadana-karana = material cause or ingredient cause; the substance, matter.  
Mita-karana = efficient cause or operative cause; one who puts ingredients together.

Antaryami (Sanskrit: inner ruler or guide, Supersoul) = formal cause; the form of object.  
CC: Supersoul gives form to the universe from within.

Artha-visesa = final cause; the purpose.]

According to Vedanta philosophy, SB, Krsna is all four these causes. But in each stage of causation He is displaying the particular lila. So in this upadana-karana, this lila of material cause, He is expanded as the pradhana, prakriti. This is His form that He uses to give the ingredients to everything. The pradhana is Krsna's energy, but yet it is nondifferent from Him; it is beginningless and yet it is subordinate to Him. It is not independent from the Lord. This is mistake of atheistic Sankhya philosophers.

**SB 2.10.45 :** Krsna is always aloof; His energies are working and in this way these four causations are taking place. He is always enjoying but still the Vedic scriptures say that Lord is the ultimate cause of everything (verse:) "to counteract the idea that material nature is independent."

From the purport: "...the material nature therefore produces the moving and standing manifestations of the material world after being contacted by the Supreme Father, and not independently."

Lord glances at material nature and thus everything begins. The pradhana then becomes energized by the time energy, kala-siseksa (time is that very glance of Maha-Visnu that energizes the pradhana and sets it to motion).

**SB 3.26.4-5:** Material creation is lila of the Lord; it is simply His mercy that He glances at the material nature. He is never entangled in the material creation.

Another point from the purport: "Energy emanated from the Lord manifests in two ways: as an emanation from the Supreme Lord and as a covering of the Lords' face. BG: example of the cloud; to the sun the cloud is creation of it's energy, but to the ordinary common men in a conditioned state it is covering to the eyes because of the cloud the sun can not be seen."

For those who are under the control of material nature this material nature is covering, it is bewildering. So, again, it is another reason why is this study of material nature to find the truth futile; it is one of the very profound functions of the material nature to cover the Absolute Truth. We can't get around the cloud, it is stretching from horizon to horizon. From Krsna's point of view the cloud is very insignificant thing.

The material creation is lila for the Lord. For those who want to imitate rather than serve the Lord, they become captivated by the material nature. It is not that every living entity who comes into this creation is so captivated. Because it is the lila the pure devotees participate with Lord like, for instance, Narada Muni by preaching.

Another nice point: "It is a fact that there are two classes of men; those who are obedient to the laws of the Supreme and those who are atheists, or agnostics. They do not accept the existence of the Lord and want to create their own laws." This is very significant because we are speaking about Sankhya philosophy. Sankhya philosophy is a clear example of this phenomena - conditioned souls who are rebellious and want to create their own laws. That is what all these nontheistic, or non-Bhagavata philosophies are. They are just invented laws by persons who want to be in maya. Therefore we call them Mayavadis.

Pradhana is sustained by the brahmajyoti. In the Vedanta-sutra this is called "jyotir upa-krama" (it exists within light, in the jyoti within the Brahman effulgence of the Lord.)

**SB 4.9.16:** The research to the origin of the material nature ultimately ends up in the impersonal brahmajyoti.

*Argument of atheistic Sankhya philosophers why material nature spontaneously gives rise to the creation:* They say when the material nature comes into proximity with the souls then there is a kind of mutual interaction or attraction, as between a piece of metal and a magnet. You bring them together, they are attracted and they combine. They say that this spontaneous combination is the manifestation, or creation.

**SB 5.18.39:** Magnetic attraction causes Lord's glance.

**SB 7.5.14:** When one is cleansed from all designation one will be naturally attracted to Krsna.

If we are spirit then why should we be attracted to the matter? The Sankhya philosophers have no answer for that. But here the answer is given: we are attracted to matter because we are not attracted to Krsna. We are meant to be attracted to Krsna. The Lord is the ultimate principle of attraction.

Vedic literature describes the Supreme Lord as sat, the real, the truth, and this material world is described as asat, the unreal. The atheistic Sankhya philosophers argue against this. Their philosophy is dualistic and thus they can not agree with the statement that this material world is asat, unreal. They take it be a tattva, a truth. Their argument is that the Vaisnava Vedantists contradict themselves because they also sometimes say that this world is real, that the origin of everything is the Supreme Truth, the sat, and they also say that this material world is asat. They distinguish between the two - sat is God, asat is material world. How this all put together? If they say that the sat is the origin and the asat is the emanation then how is it that the sat and asat can be together in the beginning? How is it that the unreal emanates from the real?

### ***What does a devotee mean when he says that the material world is real?***

**SB 10.2.26:** "...the Lord is the active principle, the real truth in all the ingredients of creation, ... the beginning of all truth."

From the purport: Example of a lump of clay and a clay pot. The pradhana is comparable to the lump of clay and from this lump of clay one can make a clay pot. In ingredient the clay lump and the clay pot are the same but there is a difference in name and form and the clay pot can be easily destroyed.

Krsna is sat, eternally real, and in His lila of creation He manifests as the pradhana, the upadana-karana, material cause. This is also sat, that is His energy, real. From this pradhana come at the time of manifestation the names and the forms of this material existence which are asat. This is what is meant. The substance, vastu, of existence is real but in this material world it assumes temporary forms. They are asat, unreal, ultimately meaningless. To be in maya means to become attached to the unreal

names and forms that appear in this material world. Substance is not maya, but the attachment to the temporary forms, that is maya.

*Argument of atheistic Sankhya philosophers that Vaisnava philosophy is pantheistic:* If the example of clay lump and clay pot is given and it is said that the substance is God therefore it is said that God is everything. God is everywhere. This is also not correct. Next verse refutes it.

**SB 3.21.19:** "O Personality of Godhead, desiring to create these universes, You create them, maintain them and again wind them up by Your own energies which are under the control of Your second energy called yogamaya just as a spider creates a cobweb by its own energy and again winds it up."

This is very instructive analogy to help us understand the relationship between the Lord Himself and His expanded energies in form of pradhana and prakriti.

From the purport: "The spider is individual living entity, by its energy it creates a cobweb and plays on it and whenever it likes it, winds up the cobweb thus ending the play. When the cobweb is manufactured by the saliva of the spider, the spider does not become impersonal. Similarly, the creation and manifestation of the material or the spiritual energy does not render the creator impersonal."

Prabhupada explains that when devotee observes this material creation he sees Krsna. What it means can be easily understood by the same example. When we see cobweb we don't think that it is the work of the mouse or man... Immediately we think of a spider. In this way when devotee sees the material existence he sees or thinks of Krsna. Everything reminds him of Krsna because he knows well the origin of everything, Krsna. It is quite logical when one sees a spider web to think of a spider. To associate this creation with anything else than Krsna is *asat*.

*Argument of atheistic Sankhya philosophers:* How can the Lord remain *sat* when at the time of dissolution He absorbs this *asat* into Himself? This defective creation enters into the Lord therefore He must become defective.

**SB 4.7.26:** "My dear Lord, You are transcendental to all speculative positions. You are completely spiritual, devoid of all fear and You are always in control of material energy. Even though You appear in the material energy You are situated transcendently. You are always free from material contamination because You are completely self-sufficient."

Baladeva Vidyabhusana gives an example in this regard, explaining that the Lord is the basis of the manifestation, maintenance and dissolution of this material creation but He is always distinct from it at the same time. The analogy of the canvass and the painting - the picture can be eradicated, overpainted by white or scraped off the canvass but no matter what happens to the painting the canvass remains always as the basis. The canvass is always distinct as the support.

**SB 10.87.29:** "...sunya tulam..."

The Lord, being the basis of creation, maintenance and destruction, is neutral. He is the remote cause. In that sense "He is like the void." He can not be discerned, He can not be understood by a person who is caught in a cycle of time, creation, maintenance and destruction of the universe.

**BG 2.69:** What is night for the conditioned is the day for the transcendentalists because they can see beyond the covering of the material nature.

What the materialist take to be *asat*, unreal, primordial void, unmanifested, unknown beginning, the transcendentalist understand perfectly. He is the *sat*, He is the eternal real. It can be seen from the next verse.

**SB 8.3.34:** The nonmanifestation of material creation is actually the state when it becomes invisible to us. But the Lord can see everything in both states, visible and invisible. In both states the Lord is always witness.

In the 11.Canto, in the teachings of Hamsavatara to Lord Brahma and four Kumaras, Hamsavatara tells them that the liberated soul in the state *turiya*, above material nature, also becomes *saksi*, the witness, in the same way as the Lord. He can also see, at the time of nonmanifestation when everything seems to be nonexistent to materialist, its existence with the Lord. He can see the Lord and Lord's energies.

In the 3.Canto are verses which explain how all the energies of material existence are arrayed around the Lord in spiritual world. The same energies which manifest in this material world, they are personalities and in *Vaikuntha* with the Lord worshipping Him eternally. In other words, the substance is *sat*, eternally real.

**SB 3.10.13:** The Lord is always the same. The activities of time factor are eternal and can not be stated as false, only temporary.

**SB 6.3.12:** The Lord is the basis and the controller of everything like the thread is basis of the quilt.

The thread exists even before the weaving of the quilt, it exists during the existence of the quilt and when the quilt is unravelled the thread remains.

The substance itself is eternal.

**SB 12.4.27:** That which mundane people call *asat* (voidness, nonmanifestation) is actually the separate reality (which they can not perceive).

The *maya* is reflection in darkness (of our ignorance). The material energy is the deluding potency, so she fills out the darkness or she casts a reflection to that darkness

which we take to be the reality. In this way everyone is deluded. The material energy is a real energy but she has function to bewilder us when we forget Krsna. When one perceives Krsna behind material energy then he is no longer in ignorance, the darkness is not there. It is just like a projector — you need a dark room to create an image. If you turn on all the lights, if that background of ignorance is not there, than what is the effect of turning on the projector? You are not bewildered by that; it may be a very interesting, exciting movie, but if all the lights are on, it is just a very dim image and you are very aware that you are in the room with so many objects and people. You can't become absorbed in that, it doesn't have the effect. The illusion is identification. The movie is just a projected image of light and sound but when we look at it we start to enjoy it vicariously. That is the illusion WE create.

From Krsna's position is everything spiritual, but from point of view of conditioned souls there is matter — temporary, miserable, ignorant substance.

But ultimately, from spiritual point of view above the three modes of material nature, the matter does not exist.

One sutra in Vedanta-sutra says that when one comes upto Brahman platform, then one will see within Brahman the gramya-bhuta (gramya = village, bhuta = elements), Vrndavan village within which one will see things appearing to be constructed out of bhutas, elements (their true, spiritual forms). To see this is a cold shower for the impersonalists which prefer to go back to the material world...

*Argument of Nyaya and Vaisesika:* If the material nature is an emanation of the Supreme Lord and the jiva is also an emanation from Him, the philosophy confuses the difference between the Lord and the jiva. What is the difference between them?

They are also, as the Sankhya philosophers, against the position of the one Absolute Truth. Sankhya philosophers says there are two absolute truths, purusa and prakriti, the Nyayas explain reality in sixteen categories and the Vaisesikas say there is nine real substances and seven real categories. According to them each one of these categories is component of the total but in itself exists as its own reality.

They are seemingly theistic philosophies - isvara is there, but he is just another category. There is a God but He has nothing intrinsically to do with the other categories. They object that He is the source.

**SB 6.16.9:** the similarity and difference between the Lord and the living entity with regard to the creation. "...The living being is so sublime that is equal in quality to the Supreme Lord. Nonetheless, because he is extremely small he is prone to be illusioned by the external energy..."

The specific word is "suksma", very fine, or not seen by material eyes, very small.

From the purport: This verse describes the philosophy of acintya-bhedabheda tattva. The Supreme Lord is greatest of all whereas the living entity is "suksma", extremely small. The lord is udasina, neutral. He acts but He is not personally affected.

Opposition it understands in a way that the Lord just -becomes- the world and the living entities. He is also entangled in material manifestation, He has no separate identity.

But this is not a fact: The Lord is the source of jiva and pradhana but He is not affected by creation that results from their combination. He is neutral like a judge (Paramatma) before two opposing parties, jiva and pradhana.

## **Refutations of Buddhism**

Buddhism is an extremely influential philosophy in the East and in the West because it is very mental. When people get on the mental plane and start to speculate it seems inevitable that they end up with Buddhistic ideas; even if they have never read a book on Buddhism. They just follow the natural (mental) course of Buddhist thinking.

### ***Basic points of Buddhist philosophy***

There are four basic themes, or principles in Buddhist philosophy. In Buddhism they are called "The Four Noble Truths" spoken by Buddha Himself.

#### **1. Duhkha (suffering)**

Existential statement about existence itself  $\acute{L}$  it is full of suffering.

#### **2. Samudaya**

Suffering has a cause. If suffering has a cause therefore suffering can be removed, destroyed.

#### **3. Nirodha (annihilation of suffering)**

#### **4. Marga (path to annihilation of suffering)**

There is a path out of suffering, taught by the Buddha. Buddhists speak about eightfold noble path, etc. It is going more and more complex but in essence this marga boils down to ahimsa (nonviolence) and sunyata (extinction of the self). In this world one should practice ahimsa and that will lead to sunyata. The Buddhist philosophy simply deals with material existence and its negation.

## ***Four schools of Buddhism described in Vedanta***

- 1. Vayvasika (direct realism)**
- 2. Sautrantika (representationalism)**
- 3. Yogacara (subjective idealism)**
- 4. Madhyamika (voidism)**

Someone may want to know what about Zen or some other popular form of Buddhism. These are four original schools of Buddhist philosophy and from them later on came others (like Zen came out of Madhyamika.)

People naturally speculate through these phases. In the western philosophy we find the same points of view under different names and different guises because these are simply stopping points of the mind on its endless journey to nowhere... They are related as will be explained.

### **1. Direct realism (Vayvasika)**

It simply accepts the world as it is, at face value as you see it. Buddhism is completely materialistic; there is no transcendental reality behind this world. What you perceive with your senses is all in all.

But there is problem: Why are we suffering? In attempt to explain it the Sautrantika philosophy came up.

### **2. Representationalism (Sautrantika)**

The word comes from the idea that we don't perceive the world directly but its representation in our mind only. We cannot be sure that the world really is how we think it to be; our mind is therefore receiving impression and creating image of the world. We know only that representation.

There is an internal reality, or an internal aspect. That is the mind, the subtle aspect of matter, and it is out of harmony with the external reality because it gets attached. The world is passing by, with all its changes, and if our mind becomes attached to the external forms of things and we don't want them to change, they change anyway; therefore we suffer. Then comes the next step, subjective idealism.

### 3. Subjective idealism (Yogacara)

It tries to answer the philosophical problem that arises: If both externally and internally there is matter, why should the internal matter become attached to the external matter?

The only thing which really exists is our own consciousness and everything we are perceiving is the creation of that consciousness. In another words, we are dreaming. In the West the extreme version of the same philosophy is called solipsism (in latin solis = sole, alone): I alone exist and everything else is my imagination. The problem is that one takes this imagination as real and tries to enjoy it with his mind. That is the cause of suffering.

### 4. Voidism (Madhyamika)

It is position of total frustration with all philosophical points of view. Why? Because the weakness of Yogacara is very obvious: If everything is my dream then why should I dream something so rotten? Why not something nice?

Therefore it rejects all philosophy and says that everything is just void. From it comes Zen Buddhism with its mental exercises like what is the sound of one hand clapping, etc. It follows no logic anymore because logic is frustrating.

**SB 10.87.19:** There is a spiritual essence to everything. Krsna's "undifferentiated unchanging Self is permanent reality among all these impermanent life forms."

Buddhism views this world as being essentially impermanent. Any idea of permanence is rejected. Bhagavatam says, that "those with spotless intelligence who are altogether free from material attachment realize Krsna's Self as permanent reality."

From the purport: "The Lord remains eternally unchanged (eka-rasa); He eternally maintains His personal form of immeasurable unalloyed spiritual pleasure (rasa)."

So there is a reality beyond the impermanent forms of this world and the nature of this reality is spiritual bliss. There is one (eka) Reality and it is full of rasa, full of bliss.

In Buddhism the exact opposite premise is made: there is one reality but it is material and dukkha, full of suffering.

If we are one, according to Buddhism, the self is just matter, we are not actually living conscious beings, our individuality is just an illusion; why should we suffer?

Example of lump or bag of chemicals is given. If we have bag of chemicals and it falls to the ground with the big crash, why should it suffer?

According to SB, it takes two to suffer - suffering arises out of duality, when there is a different desire (than serving the Lord, being one with His desire). It is explained in the next, very famous verse.

**SB 11.2.37:** "bhayam dvitiyabhinivesatah syat"

Very concise yet extremely profound explanation of the origin of suffering. When the living entity is attracted by the material energy which is separate from Krsna, is overpowered by fear because he is separated from the Supreme by the material energy. His conception of life is reversed. What does it mean? Real life means eternity, knowledge, bliss; the Buddhists say that real life means everything is temporary, full of ignorance, full of suffering. Their conception of life is reversed because they have become separated, dvitiya; they are absorbed in something other than the Lord.

**SB 11.11.5-8:** The explanation of duality, happiness and distress: they are here because of the presence of both the perfect Supreme Lord and the imperfect living entity within the body. Example of two birds on the tree; one of them doesn't understand himself or the Lord, he is covered by ignorance and is thus called eternally conditioned.

### **Argument for the existence of the Supreme Lord:**

Every intelligent person who knows that he is suffering, he understands his suffering in terms of his imperfection: 'I am imperfect in so many ways, incomplete, there is some great lack in my life, therefore I am suffering.' Because of this when we think about how to become free of suffering we are obliged to think about perfection, we are obliged to consider state of perfection which is certainly transcendental to our present position.

So long as the atma thinks that he is alone and that he is the Lord, enjoyer, controller of material nature, he suffers. In that suffering condition he is forced to think about his imperfections. People are working so hard in this world to make up for their imperfections. So from where this conception, this intuition of perfection arise? This is because within this body there is the perfect being, the Paramatma. The individual soul shares the qualities of the Paramatma; that's why he is drawn by instinct to strive for perfection – his qualities are the same. But there is difference – he is suksma, very small. Because of it he can be separated due to maya's influence and in this way he falls down into suffering.

According to Buddhist philosophy this sense of self has to be destroyed. Destroy the self and then only will suffering end, when everything is extinguished.

### **Argument of Buddhists:**

Buddha explained the cause of suffering very precisely without touching the doctrine of duality. He explained it as a wheel of causation. This wheel has twelve spokes which represent twelve phases of causation beginning with avidya, ignorance, and ends with jara-marana, old age and death. Eleventh is jati, birth.

This is a wheel of change and the Buddhists explain the phenomenal changing of this world by the philosophy of spontaneous everchanging equilibrium. They give example of waves in the ocean: one is coming up, other is going down, just randomly coming up and down. In this way everything is changing but everything is staying the same - as ocean. Their another example: The stream is just flowing by, carrying different things. It is always there and yet at the same time on the surface there is so much random change going on.

**SB 8.5.28:** The material body is compared to "the wheel which revolves around the hub, or central support, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Who is the Supersoul and the ultimate truth..."

The difference between these two examples of wheel is the existence of the hub, the Supersoul, in the example of SB which is not present in the Buddhist wheel of change. Yet they say that there are twelve phases of change, always repeating. The wheel has to turn and therefore requires the central point. But Buddhists don't allow it. If there is no hub (the reality), why should these twelve phases repeat one after another? Therefore this example of wheel of change doesn't make any sense.

### **Destruction and liberation**

In Buddhism 'nirodha,' destruction, is the path of release. To destroy the self, maya. When the conception of selfness is removed and there is nothing left then that is liberation. They have processes of meditation, as Prabhupada explained, that they in the mind break everything down. Finally they have atoms and behind the atoms the void and they meditate on the void. Ultimately there is only nothingness. Their goal is total destruction. Their view is quite interesting. The individual person can destroy the universe; not for everyone else but for himself... Then he is free.

The Lord and His energies are eternal, sometimes manifest and sometimes unmanifest. But during the anihilation nothing is actually destroyed in essence, because the Lord is sat, eternal reality. But the Buddhists say that everything is actually ultimately asat. In fact it is only invisible.

**SB 2.10.16:** "The merging of the living entity along with its conditional living tendency with the mystic lying down of Maha-Visnu is called the winding up of this cosmic manifestation (nirodha). Liberation, mukti, is the permanent (!) situation of the form of

the living entity after he gives up the changeable gross and subtle material bodies.Đ  
Direct reply to the Buddhists, definition of destruction and liberation.

From the purport: "After the winding up of the cosmic manifestation most of the conditioned souls merge into the existence of Maha-Visnu, Personality of Godhead, lying in His mystic slumber, to be created again in the next creation..."

This is the defect of their philosophy; they aspire for the sunya, but they place themselves in the pradhana and they will be created again.

### **Prahlada Maharaja explains what is nirvana, the extinction of the material existence.**

**SB 7.7.37:** "The real problem of life is the repetition of birth and death which is like a wheel rolling repeatedly up and down. This wheel, however, completely stops when one is in touch with the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In other words, by the transcendental bliss realized from the constant engagement in the devotional service one is completely liberated from the material existence."

From the purport: "This cessation of all material happiness is called nivriti or nirvana."

### **Buddhist idea of causation (pratitya-samutpada, conditioned coproduction)**

A cause is always result, or an effect of previous cause. They give an example of a seed: The seed is a cause of a tree, but the seed is an effect of a tree before. When put in the ground it sprouts and the seed no longer exists. The sprout exists and when the tree grows up the sprout no longer exists. Things go on as a kind of endless stream without any logical, or real connection between them.

The wheel of causation without hub is to illustrate development of material existence in twelve phases. One replaces the other in sequence from one to twelve and then goes back to the original one again. In this way the wheel is turning without end. But because of this philosophy, this idea of pratitya-samutpada, this idea of wheel doesn't make sense because things are just happening spontaneously. Why should the development of material existence follow these twelve stages in this particular order and then repeat again? This idea really doesn't have any foundation.

**SB 11.22.30-32:** Definition of perception: There are three constituents arising from three modes of material nature: sense itself (creation of the mode of passion), its presiding deity (mode of goodness) and the objects of sight, the visible world (bhutas, elements; mode of ignorance). Behind it is the Supersoul Who energizes the modes of nature.

The subjective idealists are absorbed in themselves and therefore they think that the world is a product of their own imagination. It is just another way of thinking "I am God". Refutation of this idea gives next verse.

**SB 11.22.34:** "The speculative argument of philosophers 'This world is real, no, it is not real' is based upon incomplete knowledge of the Supreme Soul and it simply ends in understanding material dualities. Although such argument is useless, persons who have turned their attention away from Me, their true Self, are unable to give it up."

All over the world we find more or less what are these speculative philosophies boiled down to - someone says the world is real, someone other says it is unreal.

From the purport: "The material world is real, specifically because it emanates from the Supreme Reality, Lord Krsna. Without understanding of the reality of Lord Krsna one can never definitely ascertain the reality of His creation. One will always wonder if he is actually seeing something or merely thinking he is seeing. This kind of speculation can never be resolved without taking shelter of the Supreme Lord and is therefore useless."

How do we know that we are not dreaming now? Srila Baladeva Vidyabhusana gives some nice arguments. He says that there is clear difference between the wakeful state and the dreaming state. Our wakeful perception persists day after day, but dreams do not persist. Somebody can say that this experience of life that we are having is a dream but people do not awaken from wakefulness, they awaken from dreams only.

So these are two distinct states of material consciousness. Yet SB states that material consciousness as a whole is nothing but a dream. But this explanation of dream is very much different from the Buddhist idea.

**SB 4.29.2b:** "Everything happening within time which consists of past, present and future, is merely a dream. That is the secret understanding in all Vedic literature."

**SB 6.16.53-54:** "...all the condition of deep sleep, dreaming and wakefulness are but energies of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. One should always remember the original creator of these conditions, the Supreme lord, Who is unaffected by them."

When SB says that ultimately all states of material consciousness may be understood to be a dream, it is NOT OUR DREAM. This is the point.

The living entity and the material nature are two different energies and yet the soul is carried away by the waves of nature (three modes). The soul and the nature may be compared to oil and water. They do not mix; how is it possible then, for spirit to be carried away by matter? But the oil may rest on water, on its surface, and the waves of the ocean carry the oil to the shore. In these ways the modes condition our consciousness by the three states - wakefulness (jagrata), dreaming (svapna) and deep sleep (susupti) -

generated by these modes. (Note: Susupti means merging into acit-sakti. It is Brahman energy of the Lord, but total tamas, not like the rays of Brahman. The term `Brahman' includes the energies and one them is the acit-sakti, the energy of primordial material existence, the pradhana.)

**SB 11.13.27-28:** "Waking, sleeping and deep sleep are the three functions of the intelligence and are caused by modes of material nature. The living entity within the body is ascertain to posses characteristics different these three states and thus remains as a witness to them."

In his real existence the soul is the witness (saksitvena). Liberation means to come on the same platform as Krsna, turiya, the fourth stage above the three modes. Then one can actually see the material nature as it is, how it is working, because one is not under it anymore. When one is under one cannot see properly. This is to illustrate that all the Buddhist speculations on perception is all from the position of being under the modes of nature. All their conceptions are therefore material.

### **Voidism (Sunyavada)**

This is the position of ultimate frustration with material speculation, with philosophy as a whole.

Again conception of pratitya-samutpada is there: Whatever exists arose from that which no longer exists. (Before I was as a man I was a boy; the boy is the cause of my being a man. But the boy no longer exists. And before the boy there was a baby. That was the cause of the boy; that baby no longer exists.) As soon as a cause produces an effect that cause no longer exists. That effect will create a cause and it will no longer exist. Therefore existence doesn't arise from existence. And also existence does not arise from nonexistence. The example of a seed: A seed gives sprout to a tree, so the seed no longer exists, doesn't have existence. One cannot say that this tree arose from the seed, because the seed no longer exists. Nor can one say that the tree arose from nonexistence because if one takes a seed and fries it the seed won't give rise to a tree. And existence doesn't arise from itself because in Buddhism there is no acceptance of atman, selfness. The selfness is ruled out. One cannot say that the existence sustains itself; it cannot because there is no underlying reality of atman or anything. Nor the existence arise from anything else. Therefore the conclusion is that there is no creation. And if there is no creation then there is no destruction.

Therefore the only thing that can be concluded is that everything is just unreal, the only thing worth considering in all this unreality is void. Just making it all zero. There is no use to talk about anything because it is unreal, there is no use to try to trace out the beginning of anything. According to Western understanding in China they invented printing. The first book was a Buddhist book called the Pariprajnamrta (?) Sutra. This

book proclaimed this Sunyavada philosophy and the last verse of that book says: “After having explained that everything is unreal there is no need to ever print another book beyond this one...”

This voidistic, or nihilistic position is shared by frustrated people all over the world. They think that everything ultimately leads to nothing. The next verse refutes this position.

**SB 7.15.58:** "Although one may consider reflection of the sun in a mirror to be false, it has its factual existence. Accordingly, to prove by speculative knowledge that there is no reality would be extremely difficult."

The example of a reflection of a sun in mirror is given. The sun is reality and its reflection (yatha bhasa yatha tamah) is this material existence, work of maya. Maya creates a reflection of the Absolute Truth, Krsna, against the background of our ignorance of Krsna. The Buddhists are concerned with nirodha, destroying material existence. So if you see reflection of the sun in a mirror you can take a stone and you can throw it in a mirror, smash it and there will be no more reflection of the sun. But have you prove that the sun is not real by doing that?

To say, as Buddhists, 'it is true that everything is false' is self-contradiction, paradox. That destroys all ground upon which to stand to make pronouncements on reality or unreality of everything. They negate themselves also.

The Zen Buddhism is the kind of last chapter of voidism. They are not concerned with philosophy at all. They say “no comment” or they don't speak anymore or speak illogically, example of one hand clapping etc. Their process of attaining enlightenment (jap. satori) is nonrational. It is just sudden lightning experience. For them the truth cannot be expressed. Their explanation of karma is based on existence of desire; as long as there is desire, one has to take birth.

Baladeva Vidyabhusana makes a point against it: If everything is just happening, just one thing following another, then why do anything at all? Contradiction in Buddhist philosophy is that they strive for end. He asks, “Why then become a monk? Why meditate?” Apparently their philosophy is just 'let go', but they are not letting go...