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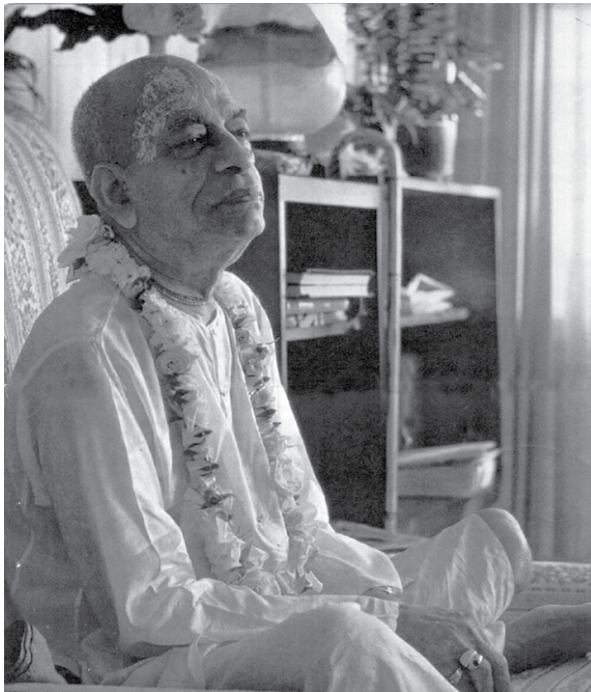
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Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada



*His Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada*

PREFACE TO SRI VEDANTA-SUTRA PART II

***His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta
Swami Prabhupada***

In approximately 1968, while staying in Montreal, Srila Prabhupada wrote a preface to a planned commentary on Vedānta-sūtra. After writing the preface, Srila Prabhupada started some other translating work and nothing more was done. To our knowledge it has never been printed. For Part I, see Bindu issue 225.

All the prominent *ācāryas* of the different *vaiṣṇava-sampradāyas* have compiled commentaries on *Vedānta-sūtra*, but they do not follow the principles of the *śāṅkarite* school. The impersonalist monists stress more on non-duality declaring themselves God and saying that there is no separate existence of God.

The monistic school does not recognize the *Vedānta* commentaries presented by the *vaiṣṇava ācāryas*, known as the *śuddhādvaita*, *viśiṣṭādvaita* and *dvaitādvaita* commentaries, as well as the inconceivably-one-and-different philosophy of Lord Chaitanya known as the *acintya-bhedābheda* commentary. According to them, the monistic commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra* is the final word, Lord Krishna has a material body, and the followers of the philosophy of Krishna Consciousness are not transcendentalists.

Everyone is pursuing some sort of knowledge. There are universities, institutions, and many educational establishments pursuing knowledge. But *Vedānta* means the last word in the pursuit of knowledge. This last word in the pursuit of knowledge is explained in the *Bhagavad-gītā* by Lord Krishna. The purpose of Vedic knowledge is to understand Krishna. The exact words in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (15.15) are:

*sarvasya cāhaṁ hṛdi sanniviṣṭo
mattaḥ smṛtir jñānam apohamaṁ ca
vedaś ca sarvair aham eva vedyo
vedānta-kṛd veda-vid eva cāham*

The Lord is situated in everyone's heart. He gives intelligence and delusion. He is the original source of knowledge. He is the goal of knowledge. He is the compiler of *Vedānta-sūtra*, and he knows what is *Vedānta*.

These words are a very significant explanation of *Vedānta-sūtra* by Krishna himself. In another place he has also referred to the *Vedānta-sūtra* by saying, "By the course of *Brahma-sūtra* one can actually understand the philosophy of *Bhagavad-gītā*." [Bg. 13.5] *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Vedānta-sūtra* are very intimately interrelated. To understand *Vedānta-sūtra* rightly is to understand *Bhagavad-gītā* rightly.

The word "sūtra" means "summarized code". In the *Skanda* and *Vāyu Purānas*, "sūtra" is explained as "the presentation of a thesis in few words, but with great volumes of meaning, and which, when understood, is very beautiful".

The *Śārīraka-bhāṣya* of Shankaracharya is also known as *Vedānta-siddhānta*. The non-dualism philosophy expounded by Shankaracharya can be summarized as follows:

There is only the Absolute Truth, the living entity is Brahman, and the cosmic manifestation is false. The example of reality and falsity is given by them in the comparison of mistaking a rope for a serpent. In the darkness, in illusion, a rope may be accepted as a serpent. When one comes to his senses he understands that the rope is not a serpent. Then the "serpent" is understood as false. Similarly, according to Shankar's philosophy, this cosmic manifestation is actually false. *Māyā* means "what is not." *Mā* means "not" and *yā* means "this". In other words, the phenomenal representation of the material world has no reality. Behind these phenomena, the noumenon is reality.

According to Shankar's philosophy, the Absolute Truth is impersonal. As such, it has no diversity. In the material world there are different kinds of diversity. The dog species is not like the human being species. This distinction, dog species or human species, is present in the material world. But spiritually there is no such differentiation. Even in personal considerations there are diversities. In a personal form, one has legs, hands and a head. But this differentiation,

according to the *māyāvāda* philosophy of Shankaracharya, is also false. Shankaracharya does not recognize that Brahman can be qualified. Take, for example, the premise: "God is merciful." This is a qualification of God, the Absolute Truth. But Shankar's impersonal philosophy does not accept that qualities such as mercifulness, beauty, or opulence exist in the Absolute Truth. According to Shankar and his followers, if the Absolute Truth is qualified then it becomes limited by that qualification. Their conclusion is that since Brahman, the Absolute Truth, is unlimited, there cannot be any limitation by qualification.

The incarnation of the Absolute Truth, Godhead, is accepted by them as a manifestation of material designation. In other words, according to Shankar's philosophy, when God, the Absolute Truth, incarnates, he assumes a material body. Only in that designated form does the Absolute Truth become the creator, sustainer, and annihilator of the cosmic manifestation. In his commentary on *Bhagavad-gītā*, Shankaracharya has



Nāma-tattva

EVERY MOMENT *Kātyāyana Samhitā*

*nāma-saṅkīrtanāj jātaṁ puṇyaṁ nopacayanti ye
nāma-vyādhi-samāyuktāḥ śata-janmasu te narāḥ
sā hānis taṁ mahac chidraṁ sa mohah sa ca vibhramah
yan-muhūrtāṁ kṣamaṁ vāpi vāsudevaṁ na kīrtayet*

Those who do not take advantage of the congregational chanting of the Lord's holy names will suffer from various diseases in hundreds of births. Any time that is not spent chanting the holy names of the Lord is a waste, harmful, and causes illusion. In other words, if one does not utilize every moment chanting the holy names of the Lord, his life is spent in vain. ❀

— Quoted in *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*, 11.507-8. Translated by Bhumipati Das. Ras Biharilal & Sons. Vrindavan. 2006



accepted that Narayan is beyond this cosmic manifestation. Shankar has described that everything that is manifested in the material world is produced from the unmanifested *mahat-tattva*, but Narayan is transcendental to the *mahat-tattva*. In other words, he has accepted that the *mahat-tattva* is also created by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Narayan. There are so many contradictions in his philosophy. That is a different subject matter. We do not wish to enter into the contradictions of his philosophy, but as far as possible we are presenting the summary of *māyāvāda* philosophy, non-dualism.

According to Shankaracharya, the highest spiritual conception, the absolute truth, is without any contamination of material existence and therefore he has no connection with the creation, sustenance, or annihilation of the material world. He is always devoid of all qualities, without any diversity, without any material condition, and without any material reaction for his activities. As such, the cosmic manifestation is also false. Shankar says that, similarly, the conception of the Personality of Godhead, who accepts his designation from this false material manifestation, is also false. The Absolute Truth is only conceived as eternal, full of knowledge and full of bliss. The appearance as Narayan, or as an incarnation, is only temporary, not eternal. For some purpose he appears like that, but the ultimate end is impersonal.

According to Shankar's philosophy, the differentiation between God and the living entities is an illusion. The living entities are not the subordinate energy of the Supreme. Being covered by the conception of *māyā*, the living entities only appear to be different from the Absolute Truth. This differentiation between the living entities and the Supreme is manifested in the material world in ordinary dealings. Spiritually there is no such difference. The activities of the living entities in the spirit of enjoyment in the material world, such as their qualities of being infinitesimal and innumerable, are only designations of the false *māyā*. An example in this connection given by the *māyāvādī* philosophers is that when reflecting light from a red flower, crystal glass appears

to be red, although the glass itself has nothing to do with the redness. It is completely different from the color. Similarly, when contaminated by *māyā*, the living entity acts as an enjoyer, and becomes infinitesimal and individual. But this is simply like an artificial color reflection. In actuality the living entity is pure Brahman. This theory of reflection is called *pratibimba-vāda*. According to this philosophy, ultimately there is no difference between the Absolute Truth, the living entities, and material nature.

This non-differentiation between the Absolute Truth, the living entities, and the cosmic manifestation is illustrated by the *māyāvādī* philosopher through the example of the sky and the pot. The sky in the pot and the entire sky are the same. But the sky within the pot appears to be limited on account of being designated by the pot cover. When the pot is broken, or the illusion of *māyā* is dissipated, then there is no distinction that this pot is different from that pot, or this sky is different from that sky. According to Shankaracharya, this cosmic manifestation is also *māyā*. When these material elements disappear, then only existential Brahman will remain. Therefore, Brahman is truth and this cosmic manifestation is false.

Shankaracharya does not accept the theory of transformation, as the *vaiṣṇava ācāryas* do. The theory of transformation is explained in this way. Milk can be transformed into yogurt under certain conditions, but yogurt cannot be transformed back into milk, nor can it be used as milk, in the same way, the living entities cannot become the Supreme Absolute Truth.

Actually, this kind of propaganda by Shankaracharya was done under supreme order to dissipate the dark Buddhist philosophy and to establish the Vedic philosophy, the absolute truth. According to Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Shankar's *māyāvāda* philosophy is another edition of Buddha's philosophy. Buddha's philosophy of voidness is almost equal to the impersonal philosophy of Shankar. Therefore, according to Shankar's philosophy, impersonal non-variegatedness is the ultimate stage of perfect knowledge. ❀

To be continued in the next issue.

KRISHNA LILA IS GAURA LILA IS KRISHNA LILA

*Srila Bhaktisiddhanta
Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada*

[Before Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu revealed himself in this world:] Sri Adwaita Prabhu said, “O devotees, please wait for some days. You will soon realize Krishna, within and without. By the strength of your devotional service, Sri Krishna, who enjoys with the *gopīs*, will manifest his form as Sri Gaurasundar among you. By serving him, you will achieve the perfection of serving Krishna.” This does not mean that Sri Adwaita Prabhu preached the philosophy of *gopī-chāḍī gaurāṅga-nāgarī*—becoming a lover of Gauranga who has left the *gopīs*. In the performance of *kīrtana*, which is the service of Sri Gaurasundar, the worship of Gaura is the worship of Krishna and the worship of Krishna is the worship of Gaura. Not understanding Sri Gaurasundar as Krishna and considering Sri Nityananda Svarup as merely a spiritual master, foolish ignorant people fall from the devotional service of the Lord. Moreover, if they consider that the pastimes of Gaura are not those of Krishna but only the pastimes of a devotee, then they meet a similar fate. The pastimes of Sri Krishna are Sri



Gaurasundar’s pastimes of giving conjugal enjoyment. They are not contaminated with the philosophy of the *prākṛta-sahajiyās* (mundane devotees). If a *sādhaka* considers that the pastimes of Sri Gaura are not those of Sri Krishna but are separate manifestations of variegated material enjoyment, he falls from his position and becomes a conditioned soul. Then, leaving the service of Lord Krishna, the illusory energy supplies him the evil propensity of imagining to enjoy Gaura. The pure devotees of Gaura do not associate with such so-called *gaura-bhaktas*, who are actually servants of *māyā* and followers of the *śākta* philosophy. In the consideration of pure devotees, mixed devotional service is prominently found in the thirteen pseudo-*Vaiṣṇava āpa-sampradāyas* like *bāula*, *sahajiyā*, and *gaura-nāgarī*. Giving up such unwanted association is an exhibition of nonduplicious devotion to Sri Gaurasundar. Until the propensity for serving Krishna is awakened in the heart of a living entity, his clear perception of Sri Gaurasundar remains covered by the spirit of material enjoyment. When this covering is removed, then, under the guidance of Sri Adwaita Prabhu, one soon attains the fortune of seeing Sri Gaurasundar. ❀
— Purport to *Caitanya-bhāgavata*, ādi 11.65

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