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# Śrī Tattva-sandarbha

## TEXT 1

*kṛṣṇa-varṇam tviṣākṛṣṇam*

*sāṅgopāṅgāstra-pārṣadam*

*yajñaiḥ saṅkīrtana-prāyair*

*yajanti hi su-medhasaḥ*

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

### Purport by Gopiparanadhana prabhu

Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī begins the maṅgalācaraṇa of his Bhāgavata-sandarbha with this text from Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.5.32). The word maṅgala-ācaraṇa 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 maṅgalācaraṇa. 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 śiṣṭācāra-pariprāpta...maṅgalam ācarati [Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, Sūksma-ṭīkā on Govinda-bhāṣya 1.1.1]). Though it is undeniable that many inferior writers have followed the tradition with mediocre results, in the hands of a great author the maṅgalācaraṇa can concisely summarize his whole message and immediately establish an elevated level of discourse.

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

*se maṅgalācaraṇa haya tri-vidha prakāra  
vastu-nirdeśa, āśīrvāda, namaskāra*

“The maṅgalācaraṇa 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 Tattva-sandarbhā, and in the following seven verses, which continue the maṅgalācaraṇa, 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-sandarbhā. 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 svayaṁ 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 maṅgalācaraṇa 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 maṅgalācaraṇa 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 Purāṇic 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 brahmacārī celibate student, is known by the names Haṁsa, Vaikuṅṭha, 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, Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna, and Aniruddha, and teaches worship of the Supreme through the combined methods of the Vedas and tantras. Though Karabhājana does not explicitly identify this yuga-avatāra, one can easily recognize Him to be Kṛṣṇa, the son of Vasudeva. Then, reaching the point of our maṅgalācaraṇa verse, Karabhājana introduces it by stating,

*iti dvāpara urvīṣa/ stuvanti jagad-īśvaram  
nānā-tantra-vidhānena/ kalāv api tathā śṛṇu*

“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 Viṣṇu does not appear as a yugāvatāra in Kali-yuga. Indeed, one of Viṣṇu’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 Purāṇic evidence supporting this view: Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī, in his own commentary on Śrī Tattva-sandarbhā (known as Sarva-saṁvādinī), cites the following verses from the Viṣṇu-dharmottara Purāṇa:

*pratyakṣa-rūpa-dhṛg devo/ [DDB1]drśyate na kalau hariḥ  
kṛtādiṣv eva tenaiva/ tri-yugaḥ paripaṭhyate*

*kaler ante ca samprāpte/ kalkinaṁ brahma-vādinam  
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 Kṛta [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 Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam:

*ittham nṛ-tiryag-ṛṣi-deva-jhaṣāvatārair  
lokān vibhāvayasi haṁsi jagat-pratīpān  
dharmaṁ mahā-puruṣa pāsi yugānuvṛttaś  
channaś 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 hamṣi ghātayasi kalau tu tan na karōṣi yatas tadā tvam channo 'bhavaḥ, atas triṣv eva yugeṣv āvirbhāvāt sa evam-bhūtas tvam tri-yuga iti prasiddhaḥ. “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-varṇam tviṣākṛṣṇam, Śrīdhara Svāmī reads tviṣākṛṣṇam as the euphonic combination of tviṣā kṛṣṇam (“having a blackish complexion”) instead of tviṣā akṛṣṇam (“having a nonblackish complexion”), which is grammatically allowable because of the inherent ambiguity of the combination. Based on this reading of tviṣākṛṣṇam, Śrīdhara Svāmī identifies the avatāra being described as Śrī Kṛṣṇa, making Him the yugāvatāra for both Dvāpara and Kali.

But Śrīdhara Svāmī wrote his commentary a few hundred years before the advent of Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the worshipable Lord of Jīva Gosvāmī and all other Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas. They consider Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who initiated the devotional method of saṅkīrtana, congregational chanting of the names of God, to be the actual yuga-avatāra for Kali. Lord Caitanya fits the description channaḥ 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 Śrīdhara 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-saṁvādinī 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 Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas’ realization that Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu are one and that Lord Caitanya is the deliverer of Kali-yuga easily reconciles with Śrīdhara 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-

mañjuṣā,

*ārādhyo bhagavān vrajeśa-tanayas tad-dhāma vṛndāvanam  
ramyā kācid upāsanaṁ vraja-vadhū-vargeṇa yā kalpitā  
śāstram bhāgavatam pramāṇam amalam premā pum-artho mahān  
ittham gaura-mahāprabhor matam atas tatrādaro naḥ paraḥ*

“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 tviṣākṛṣṇam, Karabhājana Yogendra addresses two beautiful prayers to the Mahāpuruṣa. The followers of Lord Caitanya understand that these prayers are offered to Him, the Mahāprabhu, while Śrīdhara Svāmī interprets them more generically, removing them from the context of the description of the yugāvatāras.

*tyaktvā su-dustyaja-surepsita-rājya-lakṣmīm  
dharmiṣṭha ārya-vacasā yad agād araṇyam  
māyā-mṛgam dayitayepsitam anvadhāvad  
vande mahā-puruṣa te caraṇāravindam*

“O Mahāpuruṣa, 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-vacasā) to lose all happiness in family life, Lord Caitanya entered the renounced order (āraṇyam) and left His wife Viṣṇupriyā, even though she is directly His eternal consort, the goddess of fortune (rājya-lakṣmīm).

Śrīdhara Svāmī reads the same lines differently: Ordered by His father (ārya-vacasā) into exile in the forest (āraṇyam), Lord Rāmacandra gave up His royal opulence (rājya-lakṣmīm). For Śrīdhara Svāmī, māyā-mṛgam means “the golden deer that was the sorcerer Marīci in disguise,” and dayitayā ipsitam means “desired by His beloved Sītā”; that is, Lord Rāma chased after the false deer because His wife wanted to have it. The Gauḍīya ācārya Viśvanātha Cakravartī repeats Śrīdhara Svāmī’s explanation in his commentary but then adds another: Māyā-mṛgam means “the living entities who are entangled in material life, seeking out the

illusion of wife, children, wealth, and so on” (māyām kalatra-putra-vittādi-rūpām mṛgayati anveṣyatīti māyā-mṛgaḥ saṁsārāviṣṭo janah). Dayitayā means “out of compassion,” and īpsitam 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-saṁvādinī Śrī Jīva explains the phrase kṛṣṇa-varṇam tviṣākṛṣṇam as follows: Lord Caitanya is Kṛṣṇa Himself, yet His complexion (tviṣā) is akṛṣṇam, not dark blue but golden. Kṛṣṇa-varṇam means “containing the syllables kṛṣ-ṇa,” as in the name Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, the brahmacārī name given to Lord Caitanya by His spiritual master Keśava Bhāratī. 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 Viṣṇu should be identifiable by His special bodily features and ornaments (aṅgas and upāṅgas), His personal weapons (astras), and His associates (pārśadas). According to Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa in his commentary on the Tattva-sandarbhā, Caitanya Mahāprabhu appears with all of these identifying features (sāṅgopāṅgāstra-pārśadam): His main limbs (aṅgas) are Lord Nityānanda and Lord Advaitācārya; His ornaments (upāṅgas) are principal followers like Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura; even though in this appearance Lord Viṣṇu 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 (pārśadas), such as Gadādhara Paṇḍita 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 varṇās trayo hy asya/ gṛṇato ’nu-yugaṁ tanūḥ  
śuklo raktas tathā pīta/ idānīm kṛṣṇatām gataḥ*

“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” (Bhāg. 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 Dvāpara-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 (pīta): He is Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the Golden Avatāra. Fully aware of this and of the fact that no attempt at spiritual advancement can be successful 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 Vidyābhūṣaṇa remarks that Lord Kṛṣṇa became non-kṛṣṇa, or golden, when His own dark-blue complexion was covered by the effulgence (tviṣā) of His beloved consort, Śrīmatī 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  
bhāṣāṭikāṅ karomy aham śrī-vaiṣṇavānām tuṣṭaye*

“After paying my obeisances to the best among Lord Kṛṣṇa’s devotees, Śrīla Prabhupāda, 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 *maṅgalācaraṇa*. 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 Ṣaṭ-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 *maṅgalācaraṇa*, following in the footsteps of the previous *ācāryas* and setting an ideal example for his readers.

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

*Namas-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-nirdeśātmaka*: summarizing the subject matter of the book.

Often the *maṅgalācaraṇa* will also describe four essential elements of the book, called *anubandha-catustaya*:

*adhikāri ca sambandho viṣayaś ca prayojanam  
avaśyam eva vaktavyam śāstrādau tu catustayam*

“At its beginning a book must describe these four items: the qualifications of the person who may read the book (*adhikāri*), 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



(*prajojana*).” In modern books these four items are usually covered in the introduction.

It is significant that Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī begins his *maṅgalācarāṇa* 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 *Ṣaṭ-sandarbhā* 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 Ṛṣi in response to a question Mahārāja Nimi posed concerning the Lord’s color, name, and mode of worship in the various *yugas*. In this verse Karabhājana Ṛṣi 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-varṇa*. *Varṇam* also means “class” or “category.” So *kṛṣṇa-varṇam* may also indicate one who is in the same class as Kṛṣṇa. Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu is *kṛṣṇa-varṇa* in this sense because He is nondifferent from Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. *Varṇa* also means “letter” or “word,” and thus *kṛṣṇa-varṇam* also indicates one whose name has the word Kṛṣṇa in it—in this case Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya.

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

In *Sarva-saṁvādinī*, a supplementary commentary to *Śrī Ṣaṭ-sandarbhā* by Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī himself, he explains that Lord Caitanya is referred to as *kṛṣṇa-varṇa* 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-varṇa* also means one who is blackish like Kṛṣṇa, but in the case of Lord Caitanya *kṛṣṇa-varṇa* must refer to His inner complexion. This Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī explains in the next Text.

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

*āsan varṇās trayo hy asya grhṇato ’nu-yugaṁ tanūḥ  
śuklo raktas tathā pīta idānīm 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 *akṛṣṇam*, “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 *brahmacārīs* walking on the road: “The *brahmacārīs* are coming.” Yet another consideration is that Gargācārya 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-gītā* (7.25) Lord Kṛṣṇa says, *nāham prakāśaḥ sarvasya yoga-māyā-samāvṛtaḥ*: “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. Prahlāda Mahārāja also refers to Lord Caitanya when he says in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (7.9.38), *channaḥ 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 *Nāradiya Purāna* (5.47) also foretells the Lord’s appearance as a devotee:

*aham eva kalau vipra nityam pracchanna-vigrahaḥ  
bhagavad-bhakta-rūpeṇa lokān rakṣāmi sarvadā*

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

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

*Sāṅgopāṅgāstra-pārsadam* means “with His limbs, ornaments, weapons, and associates.” According to Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, Lord Caitanya’s limbs are Lord Nityānanda Prabhu and Advaita Ācārya, His ornaments are Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, 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 Purī.

Sāṅgopāṅgāstra-pārsadam may also refer to Lord Caitanya's form as Śrī Kṛṣṇa, 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 Kṛṣṇa 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 saṅkīrtana-prāyair yajanti hi su-medhasaḥ 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 saṅkīrtana movement.

Su-medhasaḥ 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 saṅkīrtana movement. Saṅkīrtana is very dear to Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. He Himself was always absorbed in performing saṅkīrtana, 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):

*kaler doṣa-nidhe rājann asti hy eko mahān guṇaḥ  
kīrtanād eva kṛṣṇasya mukta-saṅgaḥ paraṁ vrajet*

*kṛte yad dhyāyato viṣṇuṁ tretāyāṁ yajato makhaiḥ  
dvāpare paricaryāyāṁ kalau tad dhari-kīrtanāt*

"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 Kṛṣṇa one can become free from material bondage and be promoted to the transcendental kingdom. Whatever result was obtained in Satya-yuga by meditating on Viṣṇu, 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 Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*."

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī's worshipable Deity is Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Therefore Jīva 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 maṅgalācaraṇa*.

## TEXT 2

*antaḥ kṛṣṇaṁ bahir gauram*

*darśitāṅgādi-vaibhavam*

*kalau saṅkīrtanādyaiḥ smah*

*kṛṣṇa-caitanya āsritāḥ*

**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 antaḥ kṛṣṇam, “internally Kṛṣṇa Himself,” [DDB6] and tviṣākṛṣṇam 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 (darśitāṅgādi-vaibhavam), 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 ekaṁ śaraṇam vraja  
ahaṁ tvām sarva-pāpēbhyo/ mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ*

“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 Vaiṣṇava, 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:

*titikṣavaḥ kārūṇikāḥ/ suhṛdaḥ sarva-dehinām  
ajāta-śatravaḥ śāntāḥ/ sādavaḥ sādhu-bhūṣaṇāḥ*

*mayy ananyena bhāvena/ bhaktim kurvanti ye dṛḍhām*

*mat-kṛte tyakta-karmāṇas/ tyakta-svajana-bāndhavāḥ*

*mad-āśrayāḥ kathā mṛṣṭāḥ/ śṛṅvanti kathayanti ca  
tapanti vividhās tāpā/ naitān mad-gata-cetasāḥ*

“The symptoms of a sādhu 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 sādhu 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 sādhus do not suffer from material miseries, for they are always filled with thoughts of My pastimes and activities.”

The special dispensation of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu—sāṅkīrtana, 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, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī; there are several dangerous offenses that a careless practitioner 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 Mahāprabhu has made it auspicious:

*kaler doṣa-nidher rājan/ asti hy eko mahān guṇaḥ  
kīrtanād eva kṛṣṇasya/ mukta-saṅgaḥ paraṁ vrajet*

“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 yad dhyāyato viṣṇum/ tretāyām yajato makhaiḥ  
dvāpare paricaryāyām/ kalau tad dhari-kīrtanāt*

“Whatever result was obtained in Satya-yuga by meditating on Viṣṇu, 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 glories of Kṛṣṇa” (Bhāg. 12.3.51–52).

Therefore the most discriminating and fortunate people are eager to participate in Lord Caitanya’s sāṅkīrtana movement. Even residents of higher planets and of the spiritual world, who otherwise do not come near the earth during Kali-yuga, are

attracted:

*kṛtādiṣu prajā rājan/ kalāv icchanti sambhavam  
kalau khalu bhaviṣyanti/ nārāyaṇa-parāyaṇāḥ*

“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 pāṣadas 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 Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī 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 *antaḥ kṛṣṇam bahir 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*.

*Darśitāṅgādi-vaibhavam* 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 Jīva Gosvāmī includes the readers of *Śrī Śaṭ-sandarbha*. He invites them to join him in taking shelter of Lord Caitanya by participating in the *saṅkīrtana* movement, the universal process for pleasing the Supreme Lord and attaining deliverance. By using the plural Śrī Jīva also implies that Lord Caitanya’s teachings are not limited to a particular sect or nationality.

So far Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has described his worshipable Deity. Next he performs *āśīr-vādātma-maṅgalācaraṇa*, invoking auspiciousness by declaring the glories of his spiritual masters.

### TEXT 3

*jayatām mathurā-bhūmau*

*śrīla-rūpa-sanātanau*

*yau vilekhayatas tattvaṁ*

*jñāpakau pustikām 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 Gopiparandhana prabhu**

As Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa discusses in his *Tattva-sandarbha* commentary, this verse fulfills the second and third purposes of a *maṅgalācaraṇa*, namely offering blessings and paying respects. Jīva 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 Jīva 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 Jīva, in turn, considered himself a surrendered disciple of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. In this verse, then, the

author is honoring his spiritual master and grand-spiritual-master, and by praising them he automatically offers respects to all their predecessors and to Supreme Lord.

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-maṇḍala. In that most sacred of districts they lived sometimes in Vṛndāvana and sometimes at other sites such as Govardhana and Rādhā-kuṇḍa. 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-Govindajī temple, and Śrīla Jīva the Rādhā-Dāmodara temple.

Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa 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 Vidyābhūṣaṇa points out that the Viśva-koṣa dictionary assigns a few definitions to this word tattva: tattvaṁ vādya-prabhede syāt svarūpe paramātmani. “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

#### Invocaton III

Here Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī explains his reason for composing the *Ṣaṭ-sandarbhā*. He is doing so at the behest of his spiritual masters, Rūpa and Sanātana Gosvāmīs, who are also his uncles. Jīva 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 Jīva 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 Jīva Gosvāmī prays that through the *Ṣaṭ-sandarbhā* 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 Jīva Gosvāmī is in the process of writing the *Ṣaṭ-sandarbhā*, his mention here of *pustikām imam* (“this book”) may seem a defect. Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa 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 vyalikhad grantham*

*likhitād vṛddha-vaiṣṇavaiḥ*

**Gopiparanadhana:** A friend of theirs, a Bhaṭṭa scholar from a family of South

Indian brāhmaṇas, composed the original edition of this book after studying the writings of venerable Vaiṣṇavas.

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 Vaiṣṇavas.

### 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 Vaiṣṇava 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 brāhmaṇas 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 Gosvāmī's life in a purport to Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Ādi 10.105): “Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī 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 Gauḍīya-sampradāya. In the year 1433 śakābda (A.D. 1511), when Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu was touring South India, He stayed for four months during the period of Cāturmāsya 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 Gosvāmī was later initiated by his uncle, the great sannyāsī Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī. Both the father and the mother of Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī were extremely fortunate, for they dedicated their entire lives to the service of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. They allowed Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī to go to Vṛndāvana, and they gave up their lives thinking of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. When Lord Caitanya was later informed that Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī 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 Gosvāmī as their younger brother and take care of him. Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī, out of his great affection for Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, 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 Gauḍīya-sampradāya.”

## Purport by BBT Translators

### The Source of Śrī Ṣaṭ-sandarbhā

Śrīla Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī was the son of Veṅkaṭa Bhaṭṭa, the head priest of the temple of Lord Raṅganātha at Śrī Raṅgam, where the Śrī-vaiṣṇava sect had[DDB8] its headquarters. It was in Veṅkaṭa's home that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu stayed for the four months of the rainy season during His tour of South India. There He and Veṅkaṭa 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 Gauḍīya-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-ramaṇa. 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 Rāmānujācārya, Śrī Madhvācārya, and Śrīdhara Svāmī. Śrīla Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī culled the essence from the works of these previous *ācāryas* 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

*tasyādyaṃ granthanālekhaṃ*

*krānta-vyutkrānta-khaṇḍitam*

*paryālocyātha paryāyam*

*kṛtvā likhati jīvakhaḥ*

**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 Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī were in correct sequence, and some were not. Some parts were incomplete or lost. Now, after careful study, Jīva is rewriting this book in the proper sequence.

### Purport by Gopiparandhana prabhu

Since no copies of Śrīla Gopāla Bhaṭṭa's original notes are known to exist, we cannot say just what in the Sandarbhas Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī 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 Jīva Gosvāmī's own. Here Jīva humbly credits Śrīla Gopāla Bhaṭṭa for doing the important part of the work, just as Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī credited him for Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa.

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 Vedāntists, adherence to the opinions of previous ācāryas is not merely a matter of intellectual integrity but is an essential spiritual principle. Vaiṣṇava Vedāntists do not try to discover reality on their own strength, individual or collective, but depend on revealed knowledge recorded in standard scriptures (śāstra) and received through ancient lines of disciplic succession (guru-paramparā).

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

[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" (Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 6.23).

### Purport by BBT Translators

Homage to Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī

The following question may arise: If Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī had already composed a work on this subject, why should Rūpa and Sanātana have engaged Jīva Gosvāmī

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 *ācāryas*.

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 *ka* is used in this context in a diminutive sense, to indicate that a humble soul is writing.

As *jīvānugas*, 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-prayojanān kāyati varṇayatīti 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, *jīvayati jīvān kṛṣṇa-prema-pradāneneti jīvo, jīva eva jīvaka iti svārthe ka*: “One who infuses life into living beings by giving them love of Kṛṣṇa 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

*yaḥ śrī-kṛṣṇa-padāmbhoja-*

*bhajanaikābhilāṣa-vān*

*tenaiva dṛśyatām etad*

*anyasmai śapatho 'rpitaḥ*

**Gopiparanadhana:** Only those who have no desire other than to worship the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa 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 Kṛṣṇa. 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-sandarbhā. 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 Dvaipāyana Vyāsa, they will create unfortunate karmic reactions for themselves, or at least they will certainly fail to understand the Bhāgavatam's transcendental message.

Śrī Jīva'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-śāstras 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 Maṇigrīva 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:

*trṇād api su-nīcena/ taror iva sahiṣṇuṇā  
amāninā māna-dena/ kīrtanīyaḥ 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.” (Śiṣkāṣṭaka 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 Ṭhākura, that publishing the great works of standard Vaiṣṇava ācāryas is the most effective 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

sañkīrtana 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 sañkīrtana and view the devotees' street chanting as foolish. As Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura told Śrīla Prabhupāda, a kīrtana party playing karatālas and mṛdaṅga drums on a street corner may be heard for one or two blocks, but the printing press is “the big mṛdaṅga”; it can be heard all over the world.

Therefore Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted his disciples to make publishing and distributing Kṛṣṇa 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), Kṛṣṇa told Arjuna:

*idaṁ te nātapaskāya/ nābhaktāya kadācana  
na ca śuśrūṣave vācyam/ na ca mām abhyasūyati*

“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 Kṛṣṇa Himself, Śrīla 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 Śrīla Prabhupāda commented that the Vaiṣṇava ācāryas, 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 Kṛṣṇa. . . . 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 Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī and the authorities he cites. Let the book speak for itself. Carefully study Śrīla Jīva’s arguments and you will find that they are very reasonable, consistent, and illuminating.

## **Purport by BBT Translators**

### Qualifications of the Reader

Here Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī defines the *adhikārī*, the person qualified to read *Śrī Śaṭ-sandarbhā*. Śrī Jīva is writing only for those whose sole desire is to serve Lord Kṛṣṇa. 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 *Ṣaṭ-sandarbhā* “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 *Ṣaṭ-sandarbhā* 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 Ṣaṭ-sandarbhā*.

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (18.67), Lord Kṛṣṇa imposes[DDB11] a similar restriction on Arjuna:

*idaṁ te nātapaskāya nābhaktāya kadācana  
na cāśuśrūsave vācyam na ca mām yo ’bhyasūyati*

“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 Ṣaṭ-sandarbhā* for gaining profit, adoration, and distinction.

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

## TEXT 7

*atha natvā mantra-gurūn  
gurūn bhāgavatārtha-dān  
śrī-bhāgavata-sandarbhān  
sandarbhān 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-sandarbhā*.

**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 saṅkalpa or solemn intent to carry out some sacred work. A brāhmaṇa who has uttered the saṅkalpa 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 saṅkalpa-mantras and accepts a daṇḍa (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 prakāśaś ca/ sāraktiḥ śreṣṭhatā tathā  
nānārtha-vatvaṁ vedyatvaṁ/ sandarbhaḥ kathyate budhaiḥ*

“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* (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*). To explain the term *sandarbha*, in his commentary on this Text Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa quotes a well-known verse of unknown origin:

*gūḍhārthasya prakāśaś ca sāraktiḥ śreṣṭhatā tathā  
nānārtha-vatvaṁ vedyatvaṁ sandarbhaḥ kathyate budhaiḥ*

“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 *Ṣaṭ-sandarbha* because it contains six books, the *Tattva-*, *Bhagavat-*, *Paramātma-*, *Kṛṣṇa-*, *Bhakti-*, and *Prīti-sandarbha*. Each *sandarbha* is an analysis of the subject stated in its title, and each is based on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī also wrote a verse-by-verse commentary on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* called the *Krama-sandarbha*, and this is sometimes referred to

as the seventh *sandarbha*.

Both Vaiṣṇavas 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 *ācāryas* coming in succession after Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī in praising him as the greatest Vaiṣṇava philosopher of all time. Śrīla Prabhupāda called *Śrī Ṣaṭ-sandarbha* “the last word on the teachings of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu.” Thus it is clear that Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī is perfectly justified in giving the title *sandarbha* to his work.

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

## TEXT 8

*yasya brahmeti samjñām kvacid api nigame yāti cin-mātra-sattāpy  
amśo yasyāṁśakaiḥ svair vibhavati vaśayann eva māyām pumāmś ca  
ekam yasyaiva rūpaṁ vilasati parama-vyomni nārāyaṇākhyam  
sa śrī-kṛṣṇo vidhattām svayam iha bhāgavān prema tat-pāda-bhājām*

**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 Brahman 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, Vaikuṅṭha. 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 Jīva Gosvāmī concludes his maṅgalācaraṇa. 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 *satyaṁ jñānam anantaṁ brahma* (“The Absolute Truth is real existence and consciousness, unlimited”; Taittirīya Up. 2.1) and *astīty evopaladhavyaḥ* (“It can only be known to the extent of saying ‘It exists’”; Kāṭha 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 Upaniṣadic 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 Taittirīya 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 saḥ, rasam hy ayaṁ labdhvānandī bhavati* (“He is the reservoir of pleasure; one who realizes Him as *rasa* also becomes ecstatic,” Taittirīya Up. 2.7).

God as the creator of this world is called the Puruṣa or Pumaṇ. He is an expanded form of Kṛṣṇa named Kāraṇodakaśāyī 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, Garbhodakaśāyī 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 Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu in each universe appear the Personality of Godhead's various pastime incarnations—Lord Matsya, Lord Varāha, and many others. The activities of Kāraṇodakaśāyī Viṣṇu and His expansions constitutes the meaning of the phrase *amśakaiḥ svair vibhavati vaśayann eva māyām*: “[He] regulates the material nature (Māyā) and exerts His control through further personal expansions.”

Lord Nārāyaṇa is the expansion of Kṛṣṇa who in the infinite realm of Vaikuṅṭha rules with inconceivable splendor (*vilasati*). He is technically called a *vilāsa* expansion of the original Godhead because, although He is in essence fully God, He displays not quite all of Kṛṣṇa's attributes. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī hints at this *vilāsa* status by using the verb *vilasati* here. Vaikuṅṭha 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 Vaikuṅṭha—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 Kṛṣṇa, 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*:

*ete cāmśa-kalāḥ pumsaḥ kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam*

“All the above-mentioned incarnations are either plenary portions or portions of the plenary portions of the Lord, but Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa 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 Kṛṣṇa consciousness, which is best cultivated through the easy process of hearing and chanting Kṛṣṇa's glories. Because the practice of Kṛṣṇa 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 Ṣaṭ-sandarbha

Although one without a second, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa 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 *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (2.1.1): *satyaṁ jñānam anantaṁ 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 Kāraṇodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, who lies in the Causal Ocean and is the Supersoul of the entire material creation. The Lord has only one Kāraṇodakaśāyī Viṣṇu expansion, also called Mahā-Viṣṇu. He activates the material energy with His glance. The second Puruṣa is Garbhodakaśāyī 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 Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu’s lotus navel. The third Puruṣa is Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, who expands as the Supersoul in all life forms, and indeed in every atom.[DDB12]

These three Puruṣāvatāras are also called Saṅkarṣaṇa, 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 Gosvāmī in his *Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta* 1.25):

*viṣṇos tu trīṇi rūpāṇi puruṣākhyāny atho viduḥ  
ekam tu mahataḥ sraṣṭṛ dvitīyaṁ tv aṇḍa-saṁsthitam  
ṛtīyaṁ sarva-bhūta-sthaṁ tāni jñātvā vimucyate*

“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 Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, who is situated within each universe, and the third is Kṣīrodakaśāyī, 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 Vaikuṅṭhas. 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 anyākāraṁ yat tasya bhāti vilāsataḥ  
prāyeṇātma-samaṁ śaktyā sa vilāso 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 *svayaṁ bhagavān*, the original Personality of Godhead. This *svayaṁ-rūpa* is described in the *Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta* (1.12):

*ananyāpekṣi yad rūpaṁ svayaṁ-rūpaḥ sa ucyate.* “That form of the Supreme Lord which is not a dependent expansion of some other form is called *svayaṁ-rūpa*, a ‘self-sufficient form.’” The Lord’s *svayaṁ-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 Jīva Gosvāmī will explain all this in greater detail. Here he briefly describes the essence of *Śrīmad-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 *vācya-vācaka-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 kṛṣṇaḥ* indicates that *svayaṁ bhagavān*, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is the subject (*viśaya*) of the *Ṣaṭ-sandarbha*. By this phrase Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī establishes the *vācya-vācaka-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 Jīva Gosvāmī 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

*athaivaṁ sūcitānāṁ śrī-kṛṣṇa-tad-vācya-vācakatā-lakṣaṇa-sambandha-tad-bhajana-lakṣaṇa-vidheya-saparyāyābhidheya-tat-prema-lakṣaṇa-prayojanākhyānāṁ arthānāṁ nirṇayāya tāvat pramāṇaṁ nirṇīyate. tatra puruṣasya bhramādi-doṣa-catustaya-duṣṭatvāt sutarām alaukikācintya-svabhāva-vastu-sparśāyogyatvāc ca tat-pratyakṣādīny api sa-doṣāni.*

### 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: Śrī Kṛṣṇa as the subject (*viṣaya*), 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 *maṅgalācaraṇa*, 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 *viṣaya*, *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 [DDB13]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-sandarbhā*, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī points out that the preceding verse has already stated the *anubandha-catuṣṭaya*. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the subject of the *Bhāgavatam* and of the *Sandarbhās*. The *Bhāgavatam* is fully competent to describe Kṛṣṇa—His personality and expanded energies—and the *Sandarbhās* 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 Jīva’s words in the preceding verse, *sa kṛṣṇaḥ* 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-bhājām* (“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 Jīva Gosvāmī’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-sandarbhās* will explain the methods of devotional thought and activity on the basis of statements from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. and the *Prīti-sandarbha* will discuss pure love of God according to the *Bhāgavatam*.

But, as Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī 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 *pramā-karaṇa*, “an instrumental cause of true knowledge” (*Nyāya-bhāṣā* 5). “True knowledge” (*pramā*) 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 *ācāryas* with some modifications, but it is not the only version; each school of thought in India has its own conception of *pramā* 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-samvādinī* Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī mentions ten different *pramāṇas* accepted by various philosophic schools. Śrī Jīva 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 distrusting 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 *pramāṇa* 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-pramāṇa*, 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,

*ṛṇam kṛtvā ghṛtaṁ pibet jīved yāvat sukhaṁ jīvet  
bhasmī-bhūtasya dehasya kiṁ punar-āgamo 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-aṅgī jārato vīkṣya garbhīṅim  
pratyakṣa-mātra-viśvāso ghana-śvāsam kim ujjhasi*

“My dear follower of Cārvaka, 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 *pramāṇas*. 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 *pramāṇa*, 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-pramāṇa* is *āpta-vākya*, “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-vākya* in day-to-day life, even those who proudly declare they have no faith in any authority.

According to the *Sarva-saṁvādinī*, these are the other *pramāṇas* proposed by various schools:

(4) *Ārṣa*, the authority of sages. Knowledge gleaned through this *pramāṇa* is based on statements by gods and ṛṣis. *Ārṣa* is just a kind of *śabda-pramāṇa*.

(5) *Upamāna*, analogy. Using this *pramāṇa*, 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 *pramāṇa* 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 *pramāṇa* is a form of simple mathematical deduction.

(9) *Aitihya*, tradition. We employ this *pramāṇa* 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) *Ceṣṭā*, gesture. When we make something known by literally pointing at it, we are employing *ceṣṭā*. This is a tacit variation of *śabda* together with *pratyakṣa*.

*Śrī Bhāgavata-sandarbhā* is concerned with the highest kind of knowledge obtainable, personal realization of the Absolute Truth. Śrī Jīva 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 *karaṇāpātava*, 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 Jīva Gosvāmī outlines his subject and purpose. Now, with the phrase *tad-bhajana-lakṣaṇa-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-sandarbhā* therefore deals with Vaiṣṇava epistemology. Jīva Gosvāmī 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 *pramā*, and a means of acquiring it is called *pramāṇa*. Sometimes the word *pramāṇa* is used to mean “proof,” “evidence,” or “authority.”

Jīva Gosvāmī 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 (*vipralipsā*), and has imperfect senses (*karaṇāpātava*).

*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 *karaṇāpātava*, 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. *Ārṣa*: 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 ṛṣir yasya mataṁ 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 Vaiṣṇavas, 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. *Upamāna*: 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. *Arthāpatti*: 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. *Ceṣṭā*: 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-śaṣṭhānīndriyāṇi*).

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-grāhyam atīndriyam veti*). This experience of pure Vaiṣṇavas is called *vaiduṣa-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. *Śabda*: revealed knowledge. *Śabda* literally means sound, but as a *pramāṇa* it refers to meaningful, articulate sound spoken or written by an *āpta-puruṣa*, a trustworthy person who is an authority on the matter in question. In its ultimate sense the term *śabda* 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 *śabda* differs from the language used in mundane transactions, which is called *pauruṣeya-śabda* and is not always reliable. For Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, *śabda-pramāṇa* is restricted to the revealed knowledge of the *Vedas*. It is called *apauruṣeya-śabda*, 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*. *Apauruṣeya-śabda* is therefore the perfect *pramāṇa* because it is free from the four defects.

At present, people who fail to accept the authority of *apauruṣeya-śabda-pramāṇa* 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 *apauruṣeya-śabda-pramāṇa* as a means of knowing about it, but unfortunately they also accept one or more *pauruṣeya* sources of *śabda-pramāṇa* as *apauruṣeya*. 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 *pauruṣeya*, they remain skeptical about the existence of transcendental reality. Ultimately, no amount of raw sensory experience or *pauruṣeya-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, *apauruṣeya-śabda-pramāṇa* 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 *apauruṣeya-śabda-pramāṇa* to learn about it. For them, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī elaborately explains in the next Texts what constitutes genuine *apauruṣeya-śabda-pramāṇa*.

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-śabda-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-śabda-pramāṇa śabda-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 nārāyaṇaḥ sākṣāt; Bhāg. 6.1.40*), who is free from all defects.

In his *Sarva-samvādinī*, while discussing the principle of *śabda-pramāṇa*, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī writes: *tathāpi bhrama-pramāda-vipralipsā-karaṇāpāṭava-doṣa-rahita-vacanātmakaḥ śabda eva mūlaṁ pramāṇam. anyeṣāṁ prāyaḥ puruṣa-bhramādi-doṣa-mayatayānyathā-pratīti-darśanena pramāṇaṁ vā tad-ābhāso veti puruṣair nirṇetum aśakya tvāt tasya tad-abhāvāt*. 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), *anumāna* (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 *anumāna* can serve as assistants to *śabda*, but whenever *pratyakṣa* and *anumāna* contradict *śabda*, we should give preference to *śabda-pramāṇa*.

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

*pratyakṣaṁ cānumānaṁ ca śāstraṁ ca vividhāgamam  
trayaṁ su-viditam kāryaṁ dharma-śuddhim 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*).

*pratyakṣeṇānumānena nigamenātma-samvidā  
ādy-anta-vad asaj jñātvā niḥsaṅgo 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 *apauruṣeya-śabda*.

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

Next Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī 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

*tatas tāni na pramāṇānīty anādi-siddha-sarva-puruṣa-paramparāsu sarva-laukikālaukika-jñāna-nidānatvād aprākṛta-vacana-lakṣaṇo veda evāsmākaṁ sarvātīta-sarvāśraya-sarvācintyāścarya-svabhāvaṁ vastu vividiṣatām pramāṇam.*

### 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 *apauruṣeya*, 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 *brāhmaṇas* 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 vāṇīyaṁ veda-samjñitā*  
*mayādau brahmaṇe proktā dharmo 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*.

*tena proktā sva-putrāya manave pūrva-jāya sā*  
*tato bhṛgv-ādayo ’grhṇan sapta brahma-maharṣayaḥ*

“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.

*tebhyaḥ pitṛbhyas tat-putrā deva-dānava-guhyakāḥ*  
*manuṣyāḥ siddha-gandharvāḥ sa-vidyādhara-cāraṇāḥ*

*kindevāḥ kinnarā nāgā rakṣaḥ-kimpuruṣādayaḥ*

“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, Vidyādhara, Cāraṇas, Kindevas, Kinnaras, Nāgas, Kimpuruṣas, and so on.

*bahvyas teṣāṃ prakṛtayo rajah-sattva-tamo-bhuvah*

*yābhir bhūtāni bhidyante bhūtānām patayas tathā  
yathā-prakṛti sarveṣāṃ citrā vācaḥ sravanti 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-vaicitryād bhidyante matayo nṛṇām  
pāramparyeṇa keṣāñcit pāṣaṇḍa-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 disciplic succession. There are other teachers who directly support atheistic viewpoints.”

Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa comments that when it is not *apauruṣeya*, *śabda-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), *nāsāv ṛṣir yasya mataṃ na bhinnam* (“No one is considered a sage who does not have his own opinion”).

In his *Sarva-saṃvādinī* Śrīla Jīva 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 never be certain that an instance of one of the other *pramāṇas* is not faulty, a perverted reflection of the true instrument (*pramāṇa-ābhāsa*). *Apauruṣeya-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 never 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 *apauruṣeya-śabda-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. *Śabda* 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." *Śabda* 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. *Śabda* 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" (*bahupratyakṣa-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 *śabda*. An argument's general premise can be faulty in various ways, as when reasoning involves *viśama-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. *Śabda-pramāṇa* 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 be 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.

*Śabda-pramāṇa* acts independently of *anumāna* in authoritative statements like "You are the tenth person." *Anumāna* can assist *śabda* 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.

*Śabda* 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. *Anumāna* cannot contradict what *śabda* has established, as in a pharmaceutical dictum like "This herb eliminates excesses of all three *dhātus*." *Śabda* 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-saṁvādinī* Śrīla Jīva 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 *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (6.8): *yo brahmāṇam vidadhāti pūrvam yo vai vedāṁś ca prahiṇoti tasmai*. “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 hṛdā 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-saṁhitā* (1.21) states:

*sarveṣāṃ tu sa nāmāni karmāṇi ca pṛthak pṛthak  
veda-śabdebhya evādau pṛthak-saṁsthās ca nirmame*

“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 h[DDB27]is philosophy because it was not based on *śabda-pramāṇa*.

All orthodox schools of philosophy in India, whether monistic or dualistic, consider the *Vedas apauruṣeya*, 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 Jīva 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 Jīva Gosvāmī has already shown (in Text 9) how unreliable are the alternatives to the Vedic authority. If, as he has established, only *apauruṣeya-śabda* can give access to transcendental reality, how could the *Vedas* then have been written or compiled by human beings? If Jīva 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 *apauruṣeya* 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 Śaṅkarācārya, Madhvācārya, Rāmānujācārya, Kumārila Bhaṭṭa, and Rūpa Gosvāmī all accepted the *Vedas* as *apauruṣeya* 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 pointed 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 Vaiṣṇava *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 [DDB34] the *Vedas*? [DDB35] 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 Śrīla 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 Jīva Gosvāmī 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 *svāśraya*, 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 *apauruṣeya-śabda-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[[DDB43](#)]—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:

*nāham prakāśaḥ sarvasya yoga-māyā-samāvṛtaḥ  
mūḍho ’yaṁ 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.”

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 (*pāriśeṣya-nyāya*), as well as on the authority of the great *ācāryas* and saints coming in the bona fide disciplic successions, 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 Jīva Gosvāmī shows that inference cannot be an independent means for understanding the Absolute Truth.

## TEXT 11

*tac cānumataṁ 'tarkāpratiṣṭhānāt' ity-ādau 'acintyāḥ khalu ye bhāvā na tāms tarkeṇa  
yojayet' ity-ādau 'śāstra-yonitvāt' ity-ādau 'śrutes tu śabda-mūlatvāt' ity-ādau  
pitṛ-deva-manuṣyāṇām  
vedaś cakṣus taveśvara  
śreyas tv anupalabdhe 'rthe  
sādhya-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 *śabda-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 Dvaipāyana Vyāsa. 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 Pāṇḍu; 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 *śabda-pramāṇa*, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī here cites Dvaipāyana Vyāsa’s own opinions from these two works, plus a statement from another preeminent Vaiṣṇava, Uddhava. *Tarkāpratiṣṭhānāt* 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.

*Tarkāpratiṣṭhānāt* 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,

*naiṣā tarkeṇa matir āpaneyā  
proktānyenaiva su-jñānāya preṣṭha*

“My dear boy Naciketā, this understanding cannot be attained by *tarka*. To be realizeable as spiritual truth it has to be spoken by someone with special authority” (*Kaṭha 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. *Śāstra-yonitvāt* 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 mantavyaḥ* (“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.” *Śāstra*, Vedic scripture, is where He is revealed. This idea accords with the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad*’s prototypical inquiry *taṁ tv aupaniṣadam puruṣaṁ pṛcchāmi* (“I want to ask about the Supreme Person, who is known from the *Upaniṣads*”; *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Up.* 3.9.26).

*Śrutes tu śabda-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 *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (2.6): *so ’kāmayata bahu syāṁ 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 śabda-mūlatvāt*: “Because revealed scripture, unlike sense perception, is based on *śabda-pramāṇa*.” *Śabda-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, Dvārakā. As the best student of Bṛhaspati, 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 *gopīs*, who were grieving in Vṛndāvana because of His absence. To meet and talk with the *gopīs* 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-gīta* 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 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 Vyāsadeva 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 Bhartṛhari’s *Vākya-padīya* (1.34) to this effect:

*yatnenāpādito 'py arthaḥ kuśalair anumāṭṛbhiḥ  
abhiyukta-tarair anyair anyathavopapādyate*

“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 Jīva 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, *śabda-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 *Bṛhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad* (2.4.5) thus states, *ātmā vā are draṣṭavyaḥ śrotavyo mantavyo nididhyāsitavyo maitreyi*: “The Self, my dear Maitreyī, should be realized, and so it should be heard about, reflected on, and deeply meditated on.” Here the word *mantavyaḥ* 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-saṁvādinī*, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī quotes the *Kūrma Purāṇa*:

*pūrvāparāvirodhena ko 'nv artho 'bhimato bhavet  
ity-ādyam ūhanam tarkaḥ śuṣka-tarkaḥ tu varjayet*

“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: *vādaḥ pravadatām aham*. “[DDB49]Among logicians I am the conclusive truth.” Thus Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī is right in accepting *anumāna* as one of the principal means of gaining valid knowledge.

Jīva Gosvāmī 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 Jīva Gosvāmī begins his demonstration that the *Purāṇas* are even more important for us than the *Vedas*.

## TEXT 12

### TEXT 12.1:

*tatra ca veda-śabdasya samprati duṣpāratvād duradhigamārthatvāc ca tad-artha-nirṇāyakānām munīnām api paraspara-virodhād veda-rūpo vedārtha-nirṇāyakaś cetihāsa-purāṇātmakeḥ śabda eva vicāraṇīyaḥ. tatra ca yo vā veda-śabdo nātma-viditaḥ so ’pi tad-dṛṣṭyānumeya eveti samprati tasyaiva pramoṭpādakatvaṁ 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-pramāṇa* 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 mahābhārate mānavīye ca 'itihāsa-purāṇābhyām vedam samupabṛmhayet' iti 'pūraṇāt purāṇam' iti cānyatra. na cāvedena vedasya bṛmhaṇam sambhavati na hy aparipūrṇasya kanaka-valayasya trapuṇā pūraṇam yujyate.*

#### Translation

Gopiparandhana: Thus both the *Mahābhārata* [Ādi-parva 1.267] and the *Manu-saṁhitā* 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’ (*pūraṇa*).” 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-saṁhitā* 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 (*pūraṇa*).” 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-śabdaḥ purāṇam itihāsam copādatte tarhi purāṇam anyad anveṣaṇīyam. yadi tu na na tarhitihāsa-purāṇayor abhedo vedena. ucyate viśiṣṭaikārtha-pratipādaka-pada-kadambasyāpauruṣeyatvād abhede 'pi svara-kramabheda bheda-nirdeśo '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 what 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:

*ṛg-ādibhiḥ samam anayor apauruṣeyatvenābhedo mādhyandina-śrutāv eva vyajyate 'evam vā are 'sya mahato bhūtasya niḥśvasitam etad yad ṛg-vedo yajur-vedaḥ sāma-vedo 'tharvāṅgirasa itihāsaḥ purāṇam' ity-ādinā.*

#### Translation

**Gopiparanadhana:** This nondifference of the *Vedas* and the *Itihāsa-Purāṇa*—on the grounds of the *Itihāsa-Purāṇa* being as *apauruṣeya* as the *Ṛg Veda* and other *Vedas*—is implied in the passage of the *Mādhyandina-śruti* beginning “Thus indeed the breath of this Supreme Being constitutes the *Ṛg 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 *Ṛg* and other *Vedas* in terms of the *apauruṣeya* nature all these works share: “My dear Maitreyī, the *Ṛg*, *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 tāms tathaiva bhajāmy aham*: “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 *ṛṣis* 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 *Āraṇyakas*, and the philosophical *Upaniṣads*. To ordinary perception, the language and contents of the *Samhitās*, especially of the *Ṛg Veda Samhitā*, seem the most archaic. The *Brāhmaṇas*, *Āraṇyakas*, 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 *Ṛg 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—*Śrauta-sūtras* for major sacrifices and *Gṛhya-sūtras* for rituals performed at home. Manu and others compiled lawbooks, the *Dharma-śāstras*. But especially important for the spiritual education of the general public are the *Itihāsas* (epics such as the *Rāmāyana* 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 *Itihāsas* and the *Purāṇas* describe the ancient history of the universe, the *Itihāsas* 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 Sāyana's from the tenth century A.D., are too recent to provide reliable insight into the original intentions of the texts. The orthodox philosophical *darśanas* each claim Vedic connection, but all of them except Jaimini's Mīmāṃsā and Dvaipāyana's Vedānta merely pay lip service to *apauruṣeya-śabda-pramāṇa* while in practice ignoring it. Mīmāṃsā minimizes the authority of the *Upaniṣads* and their approach to the Absolute Truth. Gautama's Nyāya and Kaṇāda'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 *darśanas* disagree among one another on major points of epistemology and ontology. The existing commentaries on the ancient *sūtras* 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 *Itihāsas* and *Purāṇas* assume special value. *Itihāsa-purāṇābhyām vedam samupabṛmḥayet*: "One should complete the *Vedas* with the *Itihāsas* 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 *Itihāsas* 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 *Itihāsas* 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 *Itihāsa* narrations, such as the portion of the *Ṛg Veda Samhitā* describing a conversation between the demigods and Lord Brahmā (*saṁyudhṁ prajāpatiṁ devā abruvan . . . yo brāhmaṇāyāvagureṭ taṁ śatena yāyatet*) and the portion of the *Nṛsimha-tāpanī Upaniṣad* (7) describing [DDB53]xxx (*avacanaiva procāva. . .*) Other passages describe the creation of the universe in Purāṇic fashion, as in the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad's* descriptions *yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante* ("From that Supreme everything in existence was generated"; *Taittirīya Up.* 3.1) and *etasmād ātmana ākāśaḥ bhūtaḥ* ("From that Supreme Soul, the sky came into being"; *Taittirīya Up.* 2.1). The opponents argue that if the recently composed, popular *smṛtis* were the real *Itihāsas* and *Purāṇas* one could not correctly equate them with the perfect, eternal *Vedas*.

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī replies by confirming that all the Vedic literature, from the *Ṛg 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 Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī cites in this text, the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* is also referred to as the *Mādhyandina-śruti* because the recension cited most often belongs to the *Mādhyandina* branch of the *Vājasaneyī White Yajur Veda*. Since the *Atharva Veda* appeared in the meditations of two sages, Atharvā and Aṅgirā, it is sometimes called the *Atharvāṅgīrasa Veda*.

## Purport by BBT Translators

### Difficulties in Studying the *Vedas*

In the previous Texts Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has established that the *Vedas*—*Ṛg*, *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, Śrīla Vyāsadeva divided it into four: *vyadadhād yajña-santatyai vedam ekaṁ 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-vimśati-bhedena ṛg-vedam kṛtavān purā  
śākhānām tu śatenaiva yajur-vedam athākarot*

*sāma-vedam sahasreṇa śākhānām prabibheda saḥ  
atharvāṅgam atho vedam bibheda navakena tu*

[DDB54]“Formerly the *Ṛg 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*, *Āraṇyaka*, and *Upaniṣad*. So all together the *Vedas* consist of 1,130 *Samhitās*, 1,130 *Brāhmaṇas*, 1,130 *Āraṇyakas*, 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 *Āraṇyakas*, 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, *vaidika* (“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 *śikṣā*, 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*; *jyotiṣa*, 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. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī 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 Jīva Gosvāmī 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 Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī 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, Sūta Gosvāmī, 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 *Itihāsas* and *Purāṇas* are one with the *Vedas*, this does not mean they are literally identical with them. Otherwise the words *Itihāsa* 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—*udātta* (high), *svarita* (intermediate), and *anudātta* (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 *Vṛtrāsura*.

Another significant difference between the four *Vedas* and the *Itihāsas* 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-pāṭha*, *krama-pāṭha*, *ghana-pāṭha*, and *jaṭā-pāṭha*, for keeping the word order intact. But while no rewording or rearrangement of words is allowed in the *Vedas*, the *Itihāsas* 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 *Itihāsas* intact, we find slight differences from edition to edition.

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

*strī-śūdra-dvija-bandhūnām trayī na śruti-gocarā  
karma-śreyasi mūḍhānām śreya eva bhaved iha  
iti bhāratam ākhyānam kṛpayā muninā kṛtam*

“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 Jīva 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*, *Itihāsas*, and *Vedas* as follows:

*vede rāmāyaṇe caiva purāṇe bhārate tathā  
ādāv ante ca madhye ca hariḥ sarvatra gīyate*



“In the *Vedas*, *Rāmāyaṇa*, *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 Gosvāmī 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 cacāro gram amarāṇām pitāmahaḥ*

*āvīrbhūtās tato vedāḥ sa-śaḍ-aṅga-pada-kramāḥ*

*tataḥ purāṇam akhilaṁ sarva-śāstra-mayaṁ dhruvam  
nitya-śabda-mayaṁ puṇyaṁ śata-koṭi-pravistaram  
nirgataṁ brahmaṇo vaktrāt tasya bhedaṁ nibodhata  
brāhmaṇam purāṇam prathamam ity-ādi.*

### Translation

**Gopiparanadhana:** Therefore the *Prabhāsa-khaṇḍa* 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-khaṇḍa* 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-koṭi-saṅkhyā brahma-loke prasiddheti tathoktaṁ tṛtīya-skandhe ca 'ṛg-yajuḥ-sāmātharvākhyān vedān pūrvādibhir mukhaiḥ' ity-ādi-prakarane:*

*itihāsa-purānāni pañcamam vedam īśvaraḥ  
sarvebhya eva vaktrebhyaḥ sasṛje sarva-darśanaḥ*

*ity api cātra sākṣād eva veda-śabdaḥ prayuktaḥ purāṇetihāsayoḥ.*

### 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 Purāna*, the Third Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* has a passage that starts "Beginning from the front face of Brahmā, gradually the four *Vedas*—*Ṛg*, *Yajur*, *Sāma*, 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-yajuḥ-sāmātharvākhyān vedān pūrvādibhir mukhair:* "Beginning from the front face of Brahmā, gradually the four *Vedas*—*Ṛg*, *Yajur*, *Sāma*, 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 vedaḥ':*

*itihāsaḥ purāṇam ca pañcamo veda ucyate  
vedān adhyāpayām āsa mahābhārata-pañcamān*

*ity-ādau. anyathā vedān ity-ādāv api pañcamatvaṁ nāvakaḥpyeta samāna-jātīya-niveśitatvāt saṅkhyāyāḥ.*

### Translation

**Gopiparanadhana:** Elsewhere we find similar statements to the effect that "the *Purāna* 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 *Itihāsas* and *Purāṇas* are called the fifth *Veda*” [*Bhāg.* 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 *Itihāsas* 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 vedaṁ yan mahābhārataṁ smṛtam*’

*iti. tathā ca sāma-kauthumīya-sākhāyām chāndogyopaniṣadi ca:*

‘*ṛg-vedaṁ bhagavo ’dhyemi yajur-vedaṁ sāma-vedam ātharvaṇam caturtham itihāsam purāṇam pañcamam vedānām vedaṁ*’

*ity-ādi.*

#### Translation

**Gopiparanadhana:** Moreover, the *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa* states, “The *Veda* written by Kṛṣṇa [*Dvaipāyana Vyāsa*] is the fifth *Veda* and is known as the *Mahābhārata*.” And the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* of the *Kauthumīya* branch of the *Sāma Veda* states, “Sir, I have studied the *Ṛg Veda*, the *Yajur Veda*, the *Sāma Veda*, the fourth or *Atharva Veda*, and the *Itihāsa-Purāṇa*, which is the fifth *Veda*.” And so on.

BBT: Also, the *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa* states, “The fifth *Veda*, written by Śrī Kṛṣṇa-dvaipāyana Vyāsa, is called the *Mahābhārata*.” Another reference is found in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* of the *Kauthumīya* school of the *Sāma Veda*: “Venerable sir, I have studied the *Ṛg*, *Yajur*, *Sāma*, and *Atharva Vedas*, and also the *Itihāsas* and *Purāṇas*, which are the fifth *Veda*” [*Kauthumīya Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 7.1.2].

#### TEXT 13.5

*ata eva ’asya mahato bhūtasya’ ity-ādāv itihāsa-purāṇayoś caturṇām evāntar-bhūtatva-kalpanayā prasiddha-pratyākhyānam nirastam. tad uktam ’brāhmaṇam purāṇam prathamam’ ity-ādi.*

#### Translation

**Gopiparanadhana:** Thus is disproved the objection that denies the authenticity of the *Itihāsas* and *Purāṇas* as we know them by presuming that the *Itihāsa* and *Purāṇa* mentioned in the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka 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 Purāṇa*. . . .”

**BBT:** Thus is refuted the frequently raised objection that the *Itihāsas* and *Purāṇas*, said in the *Bṛhad-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 Purāṇa* is the first . . .”( *Skanda Purāṇa*).  
[DDB58]

### Purport by Gopiparanadhana prabhu

These quotations from an assortment of sources, both *smṛti* and *śruti*, further justify the *Itihāsas*’ and *Purāṇas*’ 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 *Itihāsas*’ and *Purāṇas*’ status as the fifth *Veda*, but Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī is also drawing from the *Purāṇas* themselves for additional insight. How four-headed Brahmā manifests the *Purāṇas* along with the *Vedas* during his work of periodic re-creation is described in the verses from the *Skanda Purāṇa* quoted in Text 13.1. Lord Brahmā is the grandfather of the immortal (or more properly very long-lived) demigods, who descend from Marīci 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 Purāṇa*, from his mouths Brahmā first manifested the *Vedas* and their integral supplements—the six *Vedāṅgas*, the *pada-pāṭhas*, and the *krama-pāṭhas*. The six corollary texts known as the *Vedāṅgas* present scientific information needed to properly recite the *Vedas*, understand them, and use them in rituals. The *Śikṣā-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; *Jyotiṣa* 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 *Purāṇas* at once. The *Skanda Purāṇa* 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 (*puṇyam*). The *Purāṇas* are said to contain altogether one billion verses (*śata-koṭi-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 *Bhaviṣya 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 *apauruṣeya* status of the *Itihāsa-Purāṇa*. The *Bhaviṣya 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 *śruti* cannot be the ones edited by Veda-vyāsa and open to the purview even of uneducated *śūdras*. Hearing the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad*'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 to 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 *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 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 *Upaniṣads*. 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 *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, some followers of the Mīmāṃsaka 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 *śruti* statements sometimes considered Purāṇic are *yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante* (“from whom these beings take birth”; *Taittirīya Up.* 3.1) and *sa brahmaṇā sṛjati rudreṇa vilāpayati harir ādir anādiḥ* (“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*.

Mīmāṃsakas further argue that over an immense period many of these original Purāṇic portions of the *Vedas* were lost and those that remained became difficult to understand. Therefore, the Mīmāṃsakas 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 *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka 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 Mīmāṃsakas’ argument.

Śrīla Jīva 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 *apauruṣeya*, Vedic nature of the *Itihāsas* and *Purāṇas* in the Vedic *Samhitās*, *Brāhmaṇas*, *Āraṇyakas*, *Upaniṣads*, *Kalpa-sūtras*, *Dharma-sūtras*, and *Gṛhya-sūtras*, as well as in the *Purāṇas*, *Itihāsas*, and other *smṛti* texts. Here are a few of these statements:

*ṛcaḥ sāmāni chandāmsi purāṇam yajuṣā saha  
ucchiṣṭāj jajñire sarve divi devā 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 bṛhatīm diśam anu vyacalat tam itihāsaś ca purāṇam ca gāthās ca itihāsasya ca sa  
vai purāṇasya ca gāthānām ca nārāsaṃsīnām ca priyam dhāma bhavati ya evam veda.*

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

*evam ime sarve vedā nirmītāḥ sa-kalpāḥ sa-rahasyāḥ sa-brāhmaṇāḥ sopaniṣatkāḥ  
setihāsāḥ sāvākyātāḥ sa-purāṇāḥ.*

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

*nāma vā ṛg-vedo yajur-vedaḥ sāma-veda ātharvaṇaś caturtha itihāsa-purāṇaḥ  
pañcamo vedānām vedaḥ.*

“Indeed Ṛg, Yajur, Sāma, and Atharva are the names of the four Vedas. The Itihāsas and Purāṇas are the fifth Veda” (Chāndogya Up. 7.1.4).

*mimāṃsate ca yo vedān ṣaḍbhir aṅgaiḥ sa-vistaraiḥ  
itihāsa-purāṇāni sa bhaved veda-pāra-gaḥ*

“One who thoroughly studies the Vedas along with their six limbs and the Itihāsas and Purāṇas becomes a true knower of the Vedas” (Vyāsa-smṛti 4.45).

In the next Text Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī explains why the Itihāsas and Purāṇas are counted as the fifth Veda.

## TEXT 14

### TEXT 14.1:

*pañcamatve kāraṇam ca vāyu-purāṇe sūta-vākyam*

*itihāsa-purāṇānām vaktāram samyag eva hi  
mām caiva pratijagrāha bhagavān īśvaraḥ prabhuh*

*eka āsīd yajur-vedas taṁ caturdhā vyakalpayat  
cāturhotram abhūt tasmims tena yajñam akalpayat*

*ādhvaryavam yajurbhis tu ṛgbhir hotram tathaiva ca  
audgātram sāmabhiś caiva brahmatvam cāpy atharvabhiḥ*

*ākhyānaiś cāpy upākhyānair gāthābhir dvija-sattamāḥ  
purāṇa-saṁhitāś cakre purāṇārtha-viśāradaḥ*

*yac chiṣtam tu yajur-veda iti śāstrārtha-nirṇayaḥ*

iti.

### Translation

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

"The Personality of Godhead [Śrīla Vyāsadeva] then chose me as an authorized speaker of the *Itihāsas* 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 *ṛg-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 *Itihāsas* and *Purāṇas* are considered the fifth *Veda*:

"Śrīla Vyāsadeva, the almighty Supreme Lord, accepted me [Sūta Gosvāmī] as the qualified speaker of the *Itihāsas* 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-hotra*, 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 *ṛg-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 *Itihāsas* 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-yajñādhyayane ca viniyogo dṛśyate 'miśām `yad brāhmaṇānītihāsa-purāṇāni' iti. so 'pi nāvedatve sambhavati. ato yad āha bhagavān mātṣye:*

*kālenāgrahaṇam matvā purāṇasya dvijottamāḥ*

*vyāsa-rūpam aham kṛtvā samharāmi yuge yuge*

*iti pūrva-siddham eva purāṇam sukha-saṅgrahaṇāya saṅkalayāmīti tatrārthah.*



## Translation

**Gopiparanadhana:** We also see that the *Itihāsas* and *Purāṇas* are employed in the recitation of the *Brahma-yajña*, as is enjoined, "[The texts to be recited include] *Brāhmaṇas*, *Itihāsas* and *Purāṇas*" [*Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* 2.9]. This could not be the case if the *Itihāsas* and *Purāṇas* 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 *Purāṇas* 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 *Purāṇas* are also used in the formal study of the *Vedas* called *brahma-yajña*: *yad brāhmaṇānītihāsa-purāṇāni*. "The *Itihāsas* and *Purāṇas* are *Vedas*" [*Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* 2.9]. If the *Itihāsas* and *Purāṇas* 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 kṛtvā bhūr-loke 'smin prabhāsyate*

*adyāpy amartya-loke tu śata-koṭi-pravistaram  
tad-artho 'tra catur-lakṣaḥ saṅkṣepeṇa niveśitaḥ*

*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 chiṣṭam tu yajur-vedaḥ' ity uktatvāt tasyābhidheya-bhāgaś catur-lakṣas tv  
atra martya-loke saṅkṣepeṇa sāra-saṅgrahaṇa niveśito na tu racanāntareṇety arthaḥ.*

#### 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:** Sūta'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 Gopiparandhana prabhu**

Ugrāśravā Sūta, the son of Romaharṣaṇa, learned the *Purāṇas* from his father, whom Kṛṣṇa 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 Ugrāśravā 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 Purāṇic 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 Naimiṣāraṇya after Romaharṣaṇa's unfortunate death there.

Ugrāśravā 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.

*ṛg-atharva-yajuḥ-sāmnām/ rāśīr uddhṛtya vargaśaḥ  
catasraḥ saṁhitāś cakre/ mantrair maṇi-gaṇā 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. *Ṛg-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 *ṛg-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 *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad's* description of the breathing of Lord Viṣṇu creating the *Vedas* one after another, the *Ṛg Veda* being first [Text 12.4]. Śrīla Rādhā-mohana Vācaspati, in his commentary on *Śrī Tattva-sandarbhā*--written not long after Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa's commentary but without reference to Śrīla Baladeva's opinions--answers this objection. When the *Ṛg* 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, *ādhikeyena vyapadeśā 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 *Itihāsas* 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 Vidyābhūṣaṇa defines these: *Ākhyānas* are Purāṇic 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-samhitāś 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 Vidyābhūṣaṇa.

Rādhā-mohana Gosvāmī's opinion is different, that *purāṇa-samhitāḥ* refers to all the *Purāṇas* as a body. The followers of Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa 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 Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, and he does not contradict Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa on crucial matters. But there are some misled Vaiṣṇavas who belittle Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa 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. Kṛṣṇa-dvaipāyana Vyāsa advented near the end of Dvāpara-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:

*aṣṭāviṃśati kṛtvā vai/ vedā vyastā maharṣibhiḥ  
vaivasvate 'ntare hy asmin/ dvāpareṣu punaḥ punaḥ*

*veda-vyāsā vyatītā ye/ aṣṭāviṃśati sattama  
caturdhā yaiḥ kṛto vedo/ dvāpareṣu punaḥ punaḥ*

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

Text 14.2 mentions the sacrifice called *brahma-yajña*. This is one of the five "great sacrifices" (*pañca-mahā-yajñāḥ*) enjoined for every Vedic householder *brāhmaṇa* as daily atonement 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*, xxxxxxxxx. 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 *Gāyatrī mantra*. The details of *brahma-yajña* are specified in various *śrutis* such as the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* and *Taittirīya 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 *ṛtviks*, 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 *Ṛg 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, Vyāsadeva 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 Śrīdhara Svāmī defines the terms *ākhyāna*, *upākhyāna*, and *gāthā*:

*svayaṁ-dṛṣṭārtha-kathanam prāhur ākhyānakam budhāḥ śrutasyārthasya  
kathanam upākhyānam pracakṣate gāthās tu pitṛ-pṛthivy-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 chiṣtam tu yajur-vedaḥ* (“The remaining part was also called *Yajur Veda*”; *Vāyu Purāṇa* 60.16.22) signify that the *Itihāsas* and *Purāṇas* are *apauruṣeya*, 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-gītā* the words “Arjuna said” and “Kṛṣṇa 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 *Bṛhad-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 *ādhikeyena vyapadeśā 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 Ṛṣi 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 vāyavīya-saṁhitāyām*

*saṅkṣīpya caturo vedāṁś caturdhā vyabhajat prabhuḥ  
vyasta-vedatayā khyāto veda-vyāsa iti smṛtaḥ*

*purāṇam api saṅkṣiptam catur-lakṣa-pramāṇataḥ  
adyāpy amartya-loke tu śata-koṭi-pravistaram*

*iti. saṅkṣiptam ity atra teneti śeṣaḥ.*

### Translation

**Gopiparanadhana:** The same picture is drawn, describing the *Purāṇas* in conjunction with the *Vedas*, in the *Vāyavīya-saṁhitā* [1.1.37–38] of the *Śiva 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" (*saṅkṣiptam*) here implies "by him" to complete the idea.

**BBT:** Similarly, the *Vāyavīya-saṁhitā* 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 *saṅkṣiptam* (“condensed”) implies “condensed by Him.”

### TEXT 15.2

*skāndam āgneyam ity-ādi-samākhyās tu pravacana-nibandhanāḥ kāṭhakādi-vad  
ānupūrvī-nirmāṇa-nibandhanā vā. tasmāt kvacid anityatva-śravaṇam 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 *Kāṭhaka* 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 *Kāṭha Upaniṣad*, which was promulgated by the sage *Kāṭha*. 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

*tathāpi sūtādīnām adhikāraḥ sakala-nigama-vallī-sat-phala-śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāma-vat.  
yathoktam prabhāsa-khaṇḍe:*

*madhura-madhuram etan maṅgalaṁ maṅgalānām  
sakala-nigama-vallī-sat-phalaṁ cit-svarūpam*

*sakṛd api parigītam śraddhayā helayā vā  
bhṛgu-vara nara-mātram tārayet kṛṣṇa-nāma*

*iti.*

### Translation

**Gopiparanadhana:** That persons like *Sūta 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 Bhṛgu, any human being who just chants this name even once, whether with faith or neglectfully, will become liberated."

BBT: Yet Sūta 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-khaṇḍa* [of the *Skanda Purāṇa*]:

"O best of the Bhṛgu 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 coktaṁ viṣṇu-dharme:*

*ṛg-vedo 'tha yajur-vedaḥ sāma-vedo 'py atharvaṇaḥ  
adhītās tena yenoktaṁ harir ity akṣara-dvayam*

*iti. atha vedārtha-nirṇāyakatvaṁ ca vaiṣṇave:*

*bhārata-vyapadeśena hy āmnāyārthaḥ pradarśitaḥ  
vedāḥ pratiṣṭhitāḥ sarve purāṇe nātra saṁśayaḥ*

*ity-ādau.*

**Gopiparanadhana:** And as the *Viṣṇu-dharma* also states, "One is considered to have studied the *Ṛg Veda*, *Yajur Veda*, *Sāma Veda* and *Atharva Veda* who has uttered the two syllables Ha-ri." The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, furthermore, states that the *Itihāsas* 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 *Ṛg*, *Yajur*, *Sāma*, and *Atharva Vedas*."

And the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* affirms that the *Purāṇas* and *Itihāsas* 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-dīpakānām śāstrānām madhya-pātitābhyupagame 'py āvirbhāvaka-  
vaiśiṣṭyāt tayor eva vaiśiṣṭyam. yathā pādme:*

*dvaipāyanena yad buddhaṁ brahmādyais tan na budhyate  
sarva-buddhaṁ sa vai veda tad-buddhaṁ nānya-gocaram*

### Translation

**Gopiparanadhana:** Even though we understand that the *Itihāsas* 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 *Itihāsas* 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, *saṅkṣip* and *vyas*. 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-mīmāṃsā-sūtra*, Jaimini Ṛṣi teaches methods for interpolating sacrificial instructions that he assumes were once specified in no longer available passages of the *Brāhmaṇa śrutis*. 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 ṛṣis 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 *Kaṭha* or *Kāṭhaka*, 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 disciplic succession, the *Kāṭhakas*.

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. *Strī-śūdra-dviija-bandhūnām/ 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 Naimiṣāranya to speak them? Many of the most prominent sages in the universe had gathered at Naimiṣa 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 Ugraśravā Sūta, 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 disciplic 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 *smṛti*. 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 Vidyābhūṣaṇa, 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 *Itihāsas* 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-sāstras* and *Smṛti-sāstras* 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-saṁhitā* and the *Prabhāsa-khaṇḍa*. These are major sections of two large *Purāṇas*, the 24,000-verse *Śiva* and 81,000-verse *Skanda Purāṇas*.

### Purport by BBT Translators

The *Itihāsas*, *Purāṇas*, and *Vedas* All Have the Same Origin

The word *saṅkṣiptam* 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 Upaniṣad* 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 Yājñavalkya is described as receiving the *Vājasaneyī-saṁhitā* 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-khaṇḍa*, Gautama advises Ambarīṣa 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) Sūta Gosvāmī says, *strī-śūdra-dvija-bandhūnām trayī na śruti-gocarā . . . iti bhāratam ākhyānam 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 Ṛṣi says to Sūta Gosvāmī, *manye tvām viśaye vācām snātam anyatra chāndasāt*: “We consider you expert in all subjects except the *Vedas*.” So if Sūta Gosvāmī 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

*Skānde:*

*vyāsa-citta-sthitākāśād avacchinnāni kānicit  
anye vyavaharanty etāny urī-kṛtya grhād iva*

*iti.*

*tathaiva dṛṣṭam śrī-viṣṇu-purāṇe parāśara-vākyam:*

*tato 'tra mat-suto vyāsa aṣṭāvimśatime 'ntare  
vedam ekaṁ catuṣ-pādaṁ caturdhā vyabhajat prabhuḥ*

*yathātra tena vai vyastā veda-vyāsena dhī-matā  
vedās tathā samastais tair vyāsair anyais tathā mayā*

*tad anenaiva vyāsānām śākhā-bhedān dvijottama  
catur-yugeṣu racitān samasteṣv avadhāraya*

*kṛṣṇa-dvaipāyanam vyāsam viddhi nārāyaṇam prabhum  
ko 'nyo hi bhuvi maitreya mahābhārata-kṛd bhavet*

*iti.*

### Translation

**Gopiparanadhana:** The *Skanda Purāṇa* says, "These others make use of small collections of ideas they have carved out from the infinite sky of Vyāsadeva'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 Parāśara Muni in *Śrī Viṣṇu Purāṇa* [3.4.2.–5]: "Then, during the period of the twenty-eighth Manu, the great master, my son Vyāsa, 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 Vyāsas in the past, including myself. O best of *brāhmaṇas*, you can understand that thus in each of the rotations of the cycle of four ages a different Vyāsa organizes the branches of the *Vedas*. But know that Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa is the Supreme Lord Nārāyaṇa Himself. Who else on this earth, Maitreya, could be the author of the *Mahābhārata*?"

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 *Viṣṇu 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

*skānda eva:*

*nārāyaṇād viniṣpannam jñānam kṛta-yuge sthitam  
kiñcit tad anyathā jātam tretāyām dvāpare ’khilam*

*gautamasya ṛṣeḥ śāpāj jñāne tv ajñānatām gate  
saṅkīrṇa-buddhayo devā brahma-rudra-puraḥsarāḥ*

*śaraṇyam śaraṇam jagmur nārāyaṇam anāmayam  
tair vijñāpita-kāryas tu bhagavān puruṣottamaḥ*

*avatīrṇo mahā-yogī satyavatyām parāśarāt  
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 Ṛṣi'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 Ṛṣi's curse, the demigods became perplexed. Led by Brahmā and Rudra, they approached Lord Nārāyaṇa, 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 Satyawatī and Parāśara, and re-established the forgotten *Vedas*.”

### TEXT 16.3

*veda-śabdenātra purāṇādi-dvayam api gr̥hyate. tad evam itihāsa-purāṇa-vicāra eva śreyān iti siddham. tatrāpi purāṇasyaiva garimā dṛśyate. uktaṁ hi nāradye:*

*vedārthād adhikaṁ manye purāṇārtham varānane  
vedāḥ pratiṣṭhitāḥ sarve purāṇe nātra saṁśayaḥ*

*purāṇam anyathā kṛtvā tiryag-yonim avāpnuyāt  
su-dānto 'pi su-śānto 'pi na gatim kvacid āpnuyāt*

*iti.*

**Gopiparanadhana:** The word *veda* in this context also implies the *Purāṇas* and *Itihāsas*.

Thus we have established that the best way to proceed is to examine the *Itihāsas* and *Purāṇas*. Even among these two, moreover, there is evidence that the *Purāṇas* are more important. As stated in the *Nārada Purāṇa*, "O lovely one, I consider the message of the *Purāṇas* more important than that of the *Vedas*. Without doubt all the *Vedas* are given a firm foundation in the *Purāṇas*. Anyone who disrespects the *Purāṇas* 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 *Purāṇas*. Thus it is established that studying the *Itihāsas* and *Purāṇas* is supremely beneficial. And of these two, the *Purāṇas* are more excellent. As stated in the *Nāradya Purāṇa*, "O lovely one, I consider the *Purāṇas* more important than the *Vedas* because the *Purāṇas* firmly establish all the Vedic meanings. There is no doubt of this. One who disrespects the *Purāṇas* 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-accomodating, so the mind of Veda-vyāsa encompasses everything there is to know. All Vedic ṛṣis 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 Ṛṣi, student of Maitreya Ṛṣi and narrator of the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, attests to this. Previously, in the twenty-sixth Dvāpara-yuga of this Vaivasvata-manvantara, Parāśara himself was Vyāsa, editor of the *Vedas*. As an incarnation of Nārāyaṇa, however, Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana 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 Ṛṣi's curse coincidentally helped accelerate this spontaneous process of degradation. Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa 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 *utsanna* 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 Pārvatī 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 Vyāsadeva.



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, *vyāsocchiṣṭam 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-dvaipāyana is the twenty-eighth. Of the twenty-eight Vyāsas who have appeared until now, Kṛṣṇa-dvaipāyana 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 *brāhmaṇas* 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, Vyāsadeva'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, fruitive 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 Kṛṣṇa 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 guruṁ prapadyeta jijñāsuḥ śreya uttamam*: “One who seriously wants to learn about the highest good in life must take shelter of a bona fide spiritual master.”

Next, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī explains the three divisions of the *Purāṇas*.

## TEXT 17

### TEXT 17.1

*skānde prabhāsa-khaṇḍe ca:*

*veda-van niṣcalaṁ manye purāṇārthaṁ dvijottamāḥ  
vedāḥ pratiṣṭhitāḥ sarve purāṇe nātra saṁśayaḥ*

*bibhety alpa-śrutād vedo mām ayam cālayiṣyati  
itihāsa-purāṇais tu niṣcalo 'yam kṛtaḥ purā*

*yan na dṛṣṭam hi vedeṣu tad dṛṣṭam smṛtiṣu dvijāḥ  
ubhayor yan na dṛṣṭam hi tat purāṇaiḥ pragīyate*

*yo veda caturo vedān sāṅgopaniṣado dvijāḥ  
purāṇaṁ naiva jānāti na ca sa syād vicakṣaṇaḥ*

*iti.*

**Gopiparanadhana:** And in the *Prabhāsa-khaṇḍa* 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 *brāhmaṇas*, is found in the *smṛtis*, and what cannot be located in either is clearly described in the *Purāṇas*. O *brāhmaṇas*, 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 *Prabhāsa-khaṇḍa* 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 *smṛti*, 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 *brāhmaṇas*, even if he has studied the four *Vedas* along with the *Vedāṅgas* and *Upaniṣads*."

### TEXT 17.2

*atha purāṇānām evaṁ prāmāṇye sthite 'pi teṣām api sāmastyenāpracarad-rūpatvān  
nānā-devatā-pratipādaka-prāyatvād arvācīnaiḥ kṣudra-buddhibhir artho duradhigama  
iti tad-avastha eva saṁśayaḥ.*

**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 uktam mātsye:*

*pañcāṅgam ca purāṇam syād ākhyānam itarat smṛtam*

*sāttvikeṣu ca kalpeṣu mähātmyam adhikaṁ hareḥ*

*rājaseṣu ca mähātmyam adhikaṁ brahmaṇo viduḥ  
tadvad agneś ca mähātmyam tāmaseṣu śivasya ca  
saṅkīrṇeṣu sarasvatyāḥ pitṛṇām 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 *ākhyāna*. 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]:

"A history is called a *Purāṇa* if it has the five defining characteristics; otherwise it is called an *ākhyāna*. 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

*atrāgnes tat-tad-agnau pratipādyasya tat-tad-yajñasyety arthaḥ. śivasya ceti ca-kārāc  
chivāyāś ca. saṅkīrṇeṣu sattva-rajas-tamo-mayeṣu kalpeṣu bahuṣu. sarasvatyā nānā-  
vāny-ātmaka-tad-upalakṣitāyā nānā-devatāyā ity arthaḥ. pitṛṇām `karmaṇā pitṛ-  
lokaḥ' iti śrutes tat-prāpaka-karmaṇām ity arthaḥ.*

**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. *Saṅkīrṇeṣu* ("in the mixed") means "in the various *Purāṇas* in the mixed modes of *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas* 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*, *karmaṇā pitṛ-lokaḥ*: "By fruitive activities one can attain the abode of the forefathers." Thus here the word *pitṛṇām* ("of the

forefathers”) refers to the fruitive 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 *Purāṇas*. 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 Purāṇic authority are the ritualists of the first millenium A.D. who followed the Jaimini-mīmāṃsā interpretation of Kumārila and Prabhākara and the much more recent proponents of the Ārya-samāja. 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 Brahmā," 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,

*vede rāmāyaṇe caiva/ purāṇe bhārata tathā*

*ādāv ante ca madhye ca/ hariḥ sarvatra gīyate*

"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].

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 *ācāryas* 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 Sūta Gosvāmī at Naimiṣāraṇya 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):

*vaiṣṇavaṁ nāradyaṁ ca/ tathā bhāgavataṁ śubham  
gāruḍaṁ ca tathā pādmaṁ/ vārāhaṁ śubha-darśane  
sāttvikāni purāṇāni/ vijñeyāni śubhāni vai*

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

*brahmāṇḍaṁ brahma-vaivartaṁ/ mārkaṇḍeyaṁ tathaiva ca  
bhaviṣyaṁ vāmanaṁ brāhmaṁ/ rājasāni nibodhata*

"Know that the *Brahmāṇḍa*, *Brahma-vaivarta*, *Mārkaṇḍeya*, *Bhaviṣya*, *Vāmana* and

Brahmā Purāṇas belong to the mode of passion.

*mātsyaṁ kaurmaṁ tathā laiṅgaṁ/ śaivaṁ skāndaṁ tathaiva ca  
āgneyaṁ ca ṣaḍ etāni/ tāmasāni nibodhata*

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

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

### 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:

*sargaś ca pratisargaś ca vaṁśo manvantarāṇi ca  
vaṁśyānucaritaṁ caiva purāṇaṁ pañca-lakṣaṇam*

"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-sandarbhā* 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 *Medinī Sanskrit dictionary* (1.21.2): *kalpa śāstre vidhau nyāye samvarte brāhmaṇe dine*. "*Kalpa* means 'scripture,' 'rule,' 'logic,' 'dissolution,' and 'day of Brahmā.'"

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):

*vaiṣṇavaṁ nārādīyaṁ ca tathā bhāgavataṁ śubham  
gāruḍaṁ ca tathā pādmaṁ vārāhaṁ śubha-darśane*

*sāttvikani purāṇani vijñeyāni śubhāni vai  
brahmāṇḍaṁ brahma-vaivartaṁ mārkaṇḍeyaṁ tathaiva ca*

*bhaviṣyaṁ vāmanaṁ brāhmaṁrājasāni nibodha me  
matsyaṁ kaurmaṁ tathā laiṅgaṁ śaivaṁ skāndaṁ tathaiva ca*

*āgneyaṁ ca ṣaḍ etāni tamasāni 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 *Brahmāṇḍa*, *Brahma-vaivarta*, *Mārkaṇḍeya*, *Bhaviṣya*, *Vāmana*, and *Brahma Purāṇas* are in the mode of passion, and the *Matsya*, *Kūrma*, *Līṅga*, *Śiva*, *Skanda*, and *Agni Purāṇas* are in the mode of ignorance.’”

The verses Śrīla Jīva 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 *Itihāsas*.

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 Jīva Gosvāmī gives the solution to this problem in the next Text.

## TEXT 18

### TEXT 18.1

*tad evaṁ sati tat-tat-kalpa-kathā-mayatvenaiva mātṣya eva prasiddhānām tat-tat-purāṇānām vyavasthā jñāpitā. tāratamyam tu katham syād yenetara-nirṇayaḥ kriyeta. sattvādi-tāratamyenaiveti cet `sattvāt sañjāyate jñānam' iti `sattvam yad brahma-darśanam' iti ca nyāyāt sāttvikam eva purāṇādikaṁ paramārtha-jñānāya prabalam ity āyātam.*

**Gopiparanadhana:** 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 *Purāṇas* 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" [Bhāg. 1.2.24].

BBT: This being the case[—that *Purāṇas* are in various modes of nature—]the *Matsya Purāṇa* classifies them in three divisions based on the stories found in them. But how can we determine the relative importance of the *Purāṇas* 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 *Purāṇas*, 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” [Bhāg. 1.2.24], we will conclude that the *Purāṇas* and other such literature in the mode of goodness are superior means for gaining knowledge of the Absolute Truth.

#### TEXT 18.2

*tathāpi paramārthe 'pi nānā-bhaṅgyā vipratipadyamānānām samādhānāya kiṁ syāt. yadi sarvasyāpi vedasya purāṇasya cārtha-nirṇayāya tenaiva śrī-bhagavatā vyāseṇa brahma-sūtram kṛtam tad-avalokenaiva sarvo 'rtho nirṇeya ity ucyate tarhi nānya-sūtra-kāra-muny-anugatair manyeta. kiṁ cātyanta-gūḍhārthānām alpākṣarānām tat-sūtrāṇām anyārthatvaṁ kaścīd ācaṣṭita tataḥ katarad ivātra samādhānam.*

**Gopiparanadhana:** Even so, what one standard can reconcile all these *Purāṇas*, 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 *Vedānta-sūtra* just to accomplish this task of determining the purport of the entire *Vedas* and *Purāṇas*; therefore, this person will propose, the meaning of all these scriptures should be ascertained by reference to the *Vedānta-sūtra*. 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 *Vedānta-sūtra'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 *Purāṇas* put forward? Someone may propose study of the *Vedānta-sūtra* as the solution, claiming that Bhagavān Vyāsadeva compiled the *Vedānta-sūtra* to present the decisive conclusion of both the *Vedas* and the *Purāṇas* concerning the Absolute Truth. But then the followers of sages who wrote other *sūtras* may be dissatisfied. Moreover, since the aphorisms of the *Vedānta* 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 *Vedānta-sūtra's* meaning?

### TEXT 18.3

*tad evaṁ samādheyam yady ekatamam eva purāṇa-lakṣaṇam apauruṣeyam śāstram sarva-vedetiḥāsa-purāṇānām artha-sāram brahma-sūtropajīvyam ca bhavad bhuvi sampūrṇam pracarad-rūpaṁ syāt. satyam uktam. yata eva ca sarva-pramāṇānām cakravarti-bhūtam asmad-abhimataṁ śrīmad-bhāgavatam evodbhāvitam 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*, *Itihāsas* and *Purāṇas*, gave support to the positions of the *Brahma-sūtra* 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*, *Itihāsas*, and *Purāṇas*, that was based on the *Vedānta-sūtra*, 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 *śabda-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 mahātmanaḥ*

"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 Jīva Gosvāmī is not interested in answering the skepticism of critical scholars in his *Sandarbhās*. 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:

*seyam devataikṣata hantāham imās tisro devatā anena  
jīvenātmānupraviśya nāma-rūpe vyākaravāṇi. tāsām  
tri-vṛtam tri-vṛtam ekaikām karavāṇīti.*

"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-nārāyaṇādīni nāmāni vinānyāni rudrādibhyo harir dattavān* ("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:

*nāma-rūpaṁ ca bhūtānām/ kṛtyānām ca prapañcanam  
veda-sabdebhyo evātau/ devādīnām cakāra saḥ*

"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*. Kṛṣṇa 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 Rṣi'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 Vaiṣṇava 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 Svāmī 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 Viśvanātha 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 Jīva 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 Sūta 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 sāttvic *Purāṇas*, and proponents of rājasic and sāttvic *Purāṇas* likewise reject the *Purāṇas* outside their group. But there cannot actually be several Absolute Truths; therefore the question of which Purāṇic deity is the one Supreme Truth remains to be settled.

For the unbiased seeker of the truth, Śrīla Jīva 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 jñānaṁ 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.” *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.2.24) also states, *tamasas tu rajas tasmāt sattvaṁ 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, Sūta Gosvāmī is explaining which form of worship produces the ultimate good. His opinion is that one can achieve the ultimate good only by worshipping Lord Kṛṣṇa, the personification of pure goodness. The citation from the *Matsya Purāṇa* in the previous Text states that the sāttvic *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 sāttvic *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 sāttvic *Purāṇas* include the *Padma Purāṇa*, the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, and, most prominently, the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, or *Śrīmad-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 *Liṅga Purāṇa*, for example, the sages at Naimiṣāraṇya ask Sūta Gosvāmī to narrate the glory of Liṅga, Lord Śiva. Although Sūta Gosvāmī 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 Liṅga. 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 Hari, 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 *śabda-pramāṇa* we need consider only the sāttvic *Purāṇas*. As the *Padma Purāṇa* states, *sāttvikā mokṣa-dāḥ proktāḥ*: “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 Jīva Gosvāmī 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 Patañjali, 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 Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas*, and also many others; it is the most popular of the *Purāṇas*; it has an intact tradition of Vaiṣṇava 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 āvirbhāvya brahma-sūtram ca praṇīyāpy aparituṣṭena  
tena bhagavatā nija-sūtrāṇām akṛtrima-bhāṣya-bhūtam samādhi-labdham  
āvirbhāvitam yasminn eva sarva-śāstra-samanvayo dr̥śyate sarva-vedārtha-sūtra-  
lakṣaṇām gāyatrīm adhikṛtya pravartitatvāt.*

**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 mātsye:*

*yatrādhikṛtya gāyatrīm varṇyate dharma-vistaraha  
vṛtrāsura-vadhopenam tad bhāgavatam iṣyate*

*likhitvā tac ca yo dadyād dhema-simha-samanvitam  
prauṣṭhapadyām paurṇamāsyām sa yāti paramām gatim  
aṣṭādaśa-sahasrāṇi purāṇam tat prakīrtitam  
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-samvalita-tad-artha  
eveṣyate sarveṣāṁ mantrāṇām ādi-rūpāyās tasyāḥ sākṣāt kathanānarhatvāt. tad-  
arthatā ca `janmādy asya yataḥ' `tene brahma ḥṛdā' iti sarva-lokāśrayatva-buddhi-  
vṛtti-prerakatvādi-sāmyāt. dharma-vistara ity atra dharma-śabdaḥ parama-dharma-  
paraḥ `dharmah projhita-kaitavo `tra paramah' ity atraiva pratipāditatvāt. sa ca  
bhagavad-dhyānādi-lakṣaṇa eveti purastād vyakti-bhaviṣyati.*

**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 Bhāgavatam [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 *gāyatrī* indicates the meaning of the *Gāyatrī mantra*, which includes the word *dhīmahi*. *Dhīmahi* is an indicator of *Gāyatrī*, implying its purport; it would be improper to directly utter *Gāyatrī* itself, the origin of all Vedic *mantras*. The first verse of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* [1.1.1] alludes to the meaning of *Gāyatrī* by the phrases *janmādy asya yataḥ* ("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 *Gāyatrī*, 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 *Bhāgavatam's* words, *dharmah projjhita-kaitavo 'tra paramah* [*Bhāg.* 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 bhāgavatā dharmā/ na prāyeṇa nirūpitāḥ  
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" [*Bhāg.* 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.

*śrī-nārada uvāca  
bhavatānūdita-prāyam/ yaśo bhagavato 'malam  
yenaivāsau na tuṣyeta/ manye tad darśanam 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" [*Bhāg.* 1.5.8].

*atho mahā-bhāga bhavān amogha-dṛk  
śuci-śravāḥ satya-rato dhṛta-vrataḥ  
urukramasyākhila-bandha-muktaye  
samādhinānusmara tad-viçeṣṭitam*

"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 avehy amogha-dṛk  
paraśya puṁsaḥ paramātmānaḥ kalām  
ajam prajātam jagataḥ śivāya tan  
mahānubhāvābhyudayo '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 Vyāsadeva followed this pattern in his transcendental pastimes, busying 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, Vyāsadeva sat in meditation at his āśrama in the Himālayas 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 simple 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" (Kāṭha 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 Jīva Gosvāmī nexts highlights how Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam embodies the purport

of the sacred Vedic mantra known as Gāyatrī. Every twice-born brāhmaṇa 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-vihīnā ye/ mantrās te niṣphalā matāḥ: "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 <ref>]. 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-gāyatrī 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 dhīmahī ("let us meditate").

*tat savitur vareṇyam bhargo devasya dhīmahī dhiyo 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-gāyatrī, without the prefixed praṇava and vyāhṛti].

*janmādy asya yato 'nvayād itarataś cārtheṣv abhijñāḥ sva-rāṭ  
tene brahma hṛdā ya ādi-kavaye muhyanti yat sūrayaḥ  
tejo-vāri-mṛdām yathā vinimayo yatra tri-sargo 'mṛṣā  
dhāmnā svena sadā nirasta-kuhakaṁ satyam param dhīmahī*

"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 conscious 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 mediate upon Him for He is the Absolute Truth" [Bhāg. 1.1.1].

Meditation on the Personality of Godhead, indicated by the injunctive verb dhīmahī, 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.

*ātmā vā are draṣṭavyaḥ śrotavyo mantavyo nididhyāsītavyo maitreyi.*

"My dear Maitreyī, 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" [*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Up.* 4.5.6]

*vedāham etaṁ puruṣaṁ mahāntam  
āditya-varṇaṁ tamaśaḥ parastāt  
tam eva viditvāti mṛtyum eti  
nānyaḥ 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" [*Śvetāśvatara 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, *sūdras*, 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 *Purāṇas* 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:

*jijñāsitaṁ su-sampannam api te mahad adbhutam  
kṛtavān bhārataṁ yas tvaṁ sarvārtha-paribṛmhitam*

"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-varyānukīrtitāḥ  
na tathā vāsudevasya mahimā hy anuvarṇitāḥ*

"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 Jīva will show that it is also the

natural commentary on the *Vedānta-sūtra*.

Various *Purāṇas* mention the relationship between *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and the *Gāyatrī mantra*. Considered the essence of the *Vedas*, *Gāyatrī* is supposed to be recited at dawn, noon, and dusk by every twice-born person (*brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, and *vaiśya*). According to Śrīdhara Svāmī in his *Bhāvārtha-dīpikā*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* begins with the *Gāyatrī mantra*. Commenting on the first verse of the *Bhāgavatam*, he writes, *dhīmahī gāyatrī prārambhena ca gāyatrī-ākhyā-brahma-vidyā-rūpam etat purāṇam iti darśitam*: “That the *Gāyatrī* phrase indicated by the word *dhīmahī* begins this *Purāṇa* shows that this work has the nature of the *brahma-vidyā* [Vedic knowledge of the Supreme] called *Gāyatrī*.” Because *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is based on *Gāyatrī*, 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 galitaṁ phalam*).

The recitation of *Gāyatrī* 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 *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Since anyone may read the *Bhāgavatam*, strictly speaking it would be improper for the *Gāyatrī mantra* to appear there in its original form. *Gāyatrī* is among the Vedic *mantras*, which only the twice-born are allowed to chant. That is why Śrīla Vyāsadeva expressed the form and idea of *Gāyatrī* in the *Bhāgavatam* without using the actual *mantra*. Only one word from *Gāyatrī*, *dhīmahī*, 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 *Gāyatrī* in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is that doing so would have invited misinterpretation. Various schools of thought have explained *Gāyatrī* 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 *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Śrīla Vyāsadeva’s own commentary on the *Vedānta-sūtra*, Vyāsadeva delivers the complete and unambiguous meaning of *Gāyatrī* in the opening verse. He reveals that *Gāyatrī* 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 Paramātma-sandarbha*, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī will explain the *Gāyatrī mantra* in detail, and in the *Kṛṣṇa-sandarbha* he will thoroughly analyze the *Bhāgavatam*’s first verse and show it to be a meditation on Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.

In the next Text of the *Tattva-sandarbha*, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī further introduces the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, describing its distinguishing features and supporting his statements with scriptural references.

## TEXT 20

## TEXT 20.1

*evam skānde prabhāsa-khaṇḍe ca `yatrādhikṛtya gāyatrīm' ity-ādi*

*sārasvatasya kalpasya madhye ye syur narāmarāḥ  
tad-vṛttāntodbhavaṁ loke tac ca bhāgavatam smṛtam*

*likhitvā tac ca...*

*ity-ādi ca.*

*aṣṭādaśa-sahasrāṇi purāṇam tat prakīrtitam*

*iti. tad evam agni-purāṇe ca vacanāni vartante.*

**Gopiparanadhana:** Similarly, the *Prabhāsa-khaṇḍa* [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-khaṇḍa* [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 Gāyatrī, and narrates the slaying of Vṛtrāsura. 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-kṛdbhiḥ pramāṇī-kṛte purāṇāntare ca:*

*grantho 'ṣṭādaśa-sāhasro dvādaśa-skandha-sammitaḥ  
hayagrīva-brahma-vidyā yatra vṛtra-vadhas tathā  
gāyatrī ca samārambhas tad vai bhāgavatam viduḥ*

*iti.*

**Gopiparanadhana:** Another *Purāṇa* cited as authority by the commentator [Śrīla Śrīdhara 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 Gāyatrī."

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 vṛtra-vadha-sāhacaryeṇa nārāyaṇa-varmaivocyate.  
 hayagrīva-śabdenātrāsva-śirā dadhīcir evocyate. tenaiva ca pravartitā nārāyaṇa-  
 varmākhyā brahma-vidyā. tasyāśva-śirastvaṃ ca ṣaṣṭhe `yad vā aśva-śiro nāma' ity  
 atra prasiddhaṃ nārāyaṇa-varmaṇo brahma-vidyātvaṃ ca:*

*etac chrutvā tathovāca dadhyaṇṇ ātharvaṇas tayoh  
 pravargyaṃ brahma-vidyāṃ ca sat-kṛto `satya-śaṅkitaḥ*

*iti svāmi-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 Dadhīci, 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-śirā)." 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, Dadhīci 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” (*Nārāyaṇa-varma*), since it is narrated in the same context as the killing of Vṛtra. The word *haya-grīva* here refers to Dadhīci, the sage with a horse’s head. He taught the knowledge of Brahman called *Nārāyaṇa-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 *Nārāyaṇa-varma* is in fact a standard teaching about the Absolute:  
 “Upon hearing this and feeling honored, Dadhīci, anxious not to break his promise, instructed the twin Aśvinī-kumāras in the knowledge of the Pravargya sacrifice and Brahma-vidyā.”

### TEXT 20.4

*śrīmad-bhāgavatasya bhagavat-priyatvena bhāgavatābhīṣṭatvena ca parama-  
sāttvikatvam. yathā pādme ambarīṣaṁ prati gautama-praśnaḥ:  
purāṇaṁ tvaṁ bhāgavataṁ paṭhase purato hareḥ  
caritraṁ daitya-rājasya prahlādasya ca bhū-pate*

*tatraiva vañjulī-māhātmye tasya tasminn upadeśaḥ*

*rātrau tu jāgaraḥ kāryaḥ śrotavyā vaiṣṇavī kathā  
gītā nāma-sahasraṁ ca purāṇaṁ śuka-bhāṣitam  
paṭhitavyaṁ 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-khaṇḍa* 22.115], in the questions posed to Ambarīṣa 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 Vañjulī Mahā-dvādaśī, Gautama instructs Ambarīṣa, "One should stay awake through the night, hearing narrations related to Lord Viṣṇu--the *Bhāgavad-gītā*, the *Thousand Names of Viṣṇu* 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 Ṛṣi's question to Mahārāja Ambarīṣa, "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-khaṇḍa* 22.115).

Again in the *Padma Purāṇa*, Gautama further instructs Ambarīṣa, in the section glorifying the vow of Vyañjulī Mahā-dvādaśī: "One should stay awake throughout that night and hear scriptures that narrate stories of Lord Viṣṇu and His devotees, especially the *Bhāgavad-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

*tatraivānyatra:*

*ambarīṣa śuka-proktaṁ nityaṁ bhāgavataṁ śṛṇu  
paṭhasva sva-mukhenāpi yadīcchasi bhava-kṣayam*

*skānde prahlāda-saṁhitāyāṁ dvārakā-māhātmye:*



śrī-bhāgavatam bhaktyā paṭhate hari-sannidhau  
jāgare tat-padam yāti kula-vṛnda-samanvitaḥ

**Gopiparanadhana:** Elsewhere in the same work is the statement, "My dear Ambarīṣa, 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-saṁhitā* 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 Ambarīṣa, 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-saṁhitā* of the *Skanda Purāṇa*, in the section describing Dvārakā's glories:

"A person who stays up [on the night of Ekādaśī] 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 Jīva 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-rūpaṁ tām ādyām vidyām ca dhīmahi/ buddhiṁ 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 Purāṇic 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 Viṣṇu.

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]:

*yatrādhikṛtya gāyatrīm/ kīrtyate dharma-vistarahaḥ  
vṛtrāsura-vadhpetam/ tad bhāgavatam ucyate*

*sārasvatasya kalpasya/ proṣṭhapadyām tu tad dadet  
aṣṭādaśa-sahasrāṇi/ hema-simha-samanvitam*

"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 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 Dadhīci, 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 Dadhīci, 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):

*katamā devateti. prāṇa iti hovāca, sarvāṇi ha vā imāni bhūtāni prāṇam  
evābhisamviśanti prāṇam abhyujjihate saiṣā 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 prāṇaḥ* 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-vikārah. kutaḥ? ata eva sarva-bhūtotpatti-pralaya-hetutva-rūpād brahma-liṅgād 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 *Aśvinīs* learned from *Dadhīci* is the *Nārāyaṇa-kavaca*, a meditation on God in many of His personal forms for protection from various kinds of danger. The same *Nārāyaṇa-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 *Dadhīci*, the sage *Viśvarūpa*, to Lord *Indra*. His Divine Grace *Śrīla Prabhupāda* gives more information on the story of *Dadhīci*'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 *Dadhīci* had perfect knowledge of how to perform fruitive activities, and he had advanced spiritual knowledge as well. Knowing this, the *Aśvinī-kumāras* once approached him and begged him to instruct them in spiritual science (*brahma-vidyā*). *Dadhīci* Muni replied, 'I am now engaged in arranging sacrifices for fruitive activities. Come back some time later.' When the *Aśvinī-kumāras* left, *Indra*, the King of heaven, approached *Dadhīci* and said, 'My dear Muni, the *Aśvinī-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 *Dadhīci* in this way, *Indra* returned to heaven. The *Aśvinī-kumāras*, who understood *Indra*'s desires, returned and begged *Dadhīci* for *brahma-vidyā*. When the great saint *Dadhīci* informed them of *Indra*'s threat, the *Aśvinī-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 *Dadhīci* had promised to impart *brahma-vidyā* to the *Aśvinī-kumāras*, he agreed to their proposal. Therefore, because *Dadhīci* 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 *Jīva Gosvāmī* 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 *Devī Bhāgavatam*, rather than *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, was actually the *Bhāgavatam* glorified in the *Purāṇas*. Like *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the *Devī Bhāgavatam* is a *Purāṇa* with twelve cantos, 18,000 verses, and an account of *Vṛtrāsura*'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 *Devī Bhāgavatam*. This seems quite fitting, since *Devī*, or *Durgā*, rides on a lion. (In the case of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *hema-simha* is understood to mean "golden lion-throne.")

*Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī* solves the controversy by citing references that list distinctive

features of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*: it begins with the Gāyatrī *mantra*, it contains the Hayagrīva-brahma-vidyā, the events it narrates happened in the Sārasvata-kalpa, and it was first spoken by Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī to Parīkṣit Mahārāja. Jīva Gosvāmī further supports his opinion by quoting from the *Bhāvārtha-dīpikā*, Śrīdhara Svāmī's commentary on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

The *Devī Bhāgavatam* opens with a statement that appears to be based on Gāyatrī: *om sarva-caitanya-rūpām tām ādyām vidyām ca dhīmahī, buddhim yā naḥ pracodayāt*. There are two reasons this statement should not be equated with Gāyatrī: First, nothing in it corresponds to the words *savituh*, *vareṇyam*, 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 Vṛtrāsura, but in its account Indra kills Vṛtra with ocean foam empowered by Devī. Vṛtrāsura 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 Vṛtrāsura. But one day at dusk Indra surprised Vṛtrāsura 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 Hayagrīva-brahma-vidyā (the *Nārāyaṇa-varma*). For all these reasons it is clear that the *Bhāgavatam* referred to in the verse cited by Śrīdhara Svāmī is not the *Devī Bhāgavatam*.

Hemādri, Ballālsena, Govindānanda, Raghunandana, Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, and Sanātana Gosvāmī have each written noteworthy *dharma-śāstras* (books and essays on religious duties), in which they quote frequently from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* but never from the *Devī Bhāgavatam*. Ballālsena states in his *Dāna-sāgara* that only a few verses of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* specifically recommend acts of charity. In contrast, the entire thirtieth 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 Rāmānujācārya and Nilakaṇṭhācārya, all the great saintly commentators on Prasthāna-trayī either wrote about *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* directly or at least cited it as a standard reference in their books. By contrast, neither Śāṅkara, Madhvācārya, Vallabha, Lord Caitanyadeva, or any other notable *ācārya* ever cited the *Devī Bhāgavatam* to support or prove any important statement.

The ninety-sixth chapter of the first part of the *Nārādīya 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-khaṇḍa* 193.3), states:

*purāṇeṣu tu sarveṣu śrīmad-bhāgavatam param*

*yatra prati-padam kṛṣṇo gīyate bahudharṣibhiḥ*

“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 Purāṇic verses is *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and other *Purāṇas* mention a demon named Hayagrīva, and there is also an incarnation of Lord Viṣṇu called Hayagrīva, who had a horse’s head. But because the Hayagrīva mentioned in this section of the *Tattva-sandarbha* is connected with the slaying of the demon Vṛtra, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī 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 Aśvinī 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 Aśvinī 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 Hayagrīva or Aśvaśirā (“horse-headed one”), and the transcendental knowledge he imparted became famous as the Hayagrīva-brahma-vidyā. As planned, Indra later severed Dadhīci’s horse head and the Aśvinī 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 Tvaṣṭā the same knowledge he had previously taught the Aśvinī Kumāras, and Tvaṣṭā in turn taught it to his son Viśvarūpa. Viśvarūpa taught it to Lord Indra as the Nārāyaṇa Armor, which helped Indra defeat Vṛtrāsura. Thus the Hayagrīva referred to here is Dadhīci, and the Brahma-vidyā is the Nārāyaṇa 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 Gosvāmī 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 Sūta 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 *taṁ 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 santoṣa-kāraṇam*: 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-bhāgavatasyātha śrīmad-bhāgavataḥ sadā  
svarūpam ekam 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 Sūta 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  
trītiya-turyau kathitau yad-ūrū  
nābhis tathā pañcama eva ṣaṣṭho  
bhujāntaram dor-yugalam tathānyau*

*kaṅṭhas tu rājan navamo yadīyo  
mukhāravindam daśamam praphullam  
ekādaśo yaś ca lalāṭa-paṭṭam  
śiro ’pi yad dvādaśa eva bhāti*

*namāmi devam karuṇā-nidhānam  
tamāla-varṇam 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 Jīva Gosvāmī demonstrates that *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the natural commentary on the *Vedānta-sūtra*.

## TEXT 21

### TEXT 21.1

*gāruḍe ca:*

...pūrṇaḥ so 'yam atīśayaḥ  
artho 'yam brahma-sūtrāṇām bhāratārtha-vinirṇayaḥ

gāyatrī-bhāṣya-rūpo 'sau vedārtha-paribr̥mhitah  
*purāṇānām sāma-rūpaḥ sākṣād bhagavatoditah*

*dvādaśa-skandha-yukto 'yam śata-viccheda-samyutaḥ  
grantho 'ṣṭādaśa-sāhasraṁ śrī-bhāgavatābhidhaḥ*

*iti.*

**Gopiparanadhana:** The *Garuḍa 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 *Sāma 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 *Garuḍa 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 *Sāma 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-sūtrāṇām arthas teṣāṁ akṛtrima-bhāṣya-bhūta ity arthaḥ. pūrvam  
sūkṣmatvena manasy āvirbhūtam tad eva saṅkṣīpya sūtratvena punaḥ prakāṭitam  
paścād vistīrṇatvena sākṣāt śrī-bhāgavatam iti. tasmāt tad-bhāṣya-bhūte svataḥ-siddhe*

*tasmin saty arvacīnam anyad anyeṣām sva-sva-kapola-kalpitaṁ tad-anugataṁ  
evodaraṇīyam iti gamyate.*

**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-sūtrāṇam arthaḥ* 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-vinirṇayaḥ:*

*nirṇayaḥ sarva-śāstrāṇāṁ bhāratam parikīrtitam*

*bhāratam sarva-vedās ca tulām āropitaḥ purā  
devair brahmādibhiḥ sarvair ṛṣibhiś ca samanvitaḥ*

*vyāsasyaivāñṇayā tatra tv atiricyata bhāratam  
mahattvād bhāra-vattvāc ca mahābhāratam ucyate*

*ity-ādy-ukta-lakṣaṇasya bhāratasyārtha-vinirṇayo 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 demigods 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 *bhāratārtha-vinirṇayaḥ* ("Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam establishes the meaning of the *Mahābhārata*"), we find the following verses describing the *Mahābhārata*'s importance in the *Mahābhārata* itself [*Ādi-parva* 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 demigods



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 (*bhāra-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 uktaṁ mokṣa-dharme nārāyaṇīye śrī-veda-  
vyāsam prati janamejaya:*

*idaṁ śata-sahasrād dhi bhāratākhyāna-vistarāt  
āmathya mati-manthena jñānodadhim anuttamam*

*nava-nītaṁ yathā dadhno malayāc candanaṁ yathā  
āraṇyam sarva-vedebhya oṣadhībhyo ’mṛtaṁ yathā*

*samuddhṛtam idaṁ brahman kathāmṛtam idaṁ tathā  
tapo-nidhe tvayoktaṁ hi nārāyaṇa-kathāśrayam*

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 *Nārāyaṇīya* sub-section, "This *Nārāyaṇīya* 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 *brāhmaṇa*, like yogurt churned from new butter, sandalwood brought from the Malaya Hills, the *Āraṇyakas* 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 Nārāyaṇa."

**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 *Nārāyaṇīya* section of the *Mahābhārata*'s *Mokṣa-dharma* portion [170.11–14], where Janamejaya says to Śrīla Vyāsadeva:  
"O *brāhmaṇa*, 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 *Nārāyaṇīya* has been extracted from the *Mahābhārata*'s hundred thousand verses. The *Nārāyaṇīya*'s narrations are related to Lord Nārāyaṇa 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.

*tataḥ purāṇam akhilaṁ sarva-śāstra-mayaṁ dhruvam  
nitya-śabda-mayaṁ puṇyaṁ śata-koṭi-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*, *Prabhāsa-khaṇḍa*, 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 galitaṁ phalam*: "This *Bhāgavatam* is the ripened fruit of the desire tree of the *Vedas*" [*Bhāg.* 1.1.3].

*nimna-gānām yathā gaṅgā/ devānām acyuto yathā  
vaiṣṇavānām yathā śambhuḥ/ purāṇānām idaṁ tathā*

"Just as the Gaṅgā is the greatest of rivers, Lord Acyuta the supreme among deities and Lord Śambhu [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 *Garuḍa 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, *śabda-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 *Garuḍa 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 Purāṇic equivalent of the *Sāma Veda*. These qualities are substantiated one after another in this and the next *anuccheda*.

*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 Kṛṣṇa. 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*, *Viṣṇu-sahasra-nāma* and *Nārāyaṇīya*. 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 Parīkṣit 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 Parīkṣit refuses to do anything to avoid the result of the curse. It is necessary to explain the Parīkṣit 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 Vidyābhūṣaṇa—are bona fide.

Sūta Gosvāmī alludes to Veda-vyāsa’s composing two editions of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam:

**sa saṁhitām bhāgavatīm kṛtvānukramya cātmajam  
śukam adhyāpayām āsa nivṛtti-niratam munih**

“The great sage Vyāsadeva, after compiling Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and revising it, taught it to His own son, Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī, who was already absorbed in self-realization” (Bhāg. 1.7.8). Commenting on this verse, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura writes, *atas tadaiva pūrva-nirmitasyaiva śrī-bhāgavatasyānukramaṇam*: “The word *anukramya* 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-rahasyam ca yac cānyat sthāpitaṁ mayā  
saṅgopaniṣadam caiva vedānām vistara-kriyā**

“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):

**ṣaṣṭim śata-sahasrāṇi cakārānyām sa saṁhitām  
triṁśac chata-sahasraṁ ca deva-loke pratiṣṭhitam**

**pitrye pañcadaśa proktaṁ gandharveṣu caturdaśa  
ekam śata-sahasraṁ tu mānuseṣu pratiṣṭhitam**

“Then Śrīla Vyāsadeva compiled another saṁhitā [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 fruitive 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 tṛtīye:*

*munir vivakṣur bhagavad-guṇānām  
sakhāpi te bhāratam āha kṛṣṇaḥ  
yasmin nṛṇām grāmya-kathānuvādair  
matir grhītā 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

*tasmāt `gāyatrī-bhāṣya-rūpo `sau.` tathaiva hi viṣṇu-dharmottarādau tad-vyākhyāne  
bhagavān eva vistareṇa pratipāditah. atra janmādy asya ity asya vyākhyānam ca tathā  
darśayisyate. `vedārtha-paribṛmhitah' vedārthasya paribṛmhaṇam yasmāt. tac coktam  
`itihāsa-purāṇābhyām' ity-ādi.*

Gopiparanadhana: Therefore Bhāgavatam "serves as a commentary on Gāyatrī." So

it is also that in the *Viṣṇu-dharmottara* and other *Purāṇas* 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-paribṛmḥita* 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 *Purāṇas*."

BBT: That *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is a commentary on *Gāyatrī* is shown in the *Viṣṇu-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

ḥpurāṇānām sāma-rūpaḥ' vedeṣu sāma-vat sa teṣu śreṣṭha ity arthaḥ. purāṇāntarānām keṣāñcid āpātato rajas-tamaṣī juṣamānais tat-paratvāpratītatve 'pi vedānām kāṇḍa-traya-vākyaika-vākyatāyām yathā sāmṇā tathā teṣām śrī-bhāgavatena pratipādye śrī-bhagavatya eva paryavasānam iti bhāvaḥ. tad uktam:

vede rāmāyaṇe caiva purāṇe bhārata tathā  
ādāv ante ca madhye ca hariḥ sarvatra gīyate

iti pratipādayisyate ca tad idaṁ 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-paribṛmḥitaḥ* means that *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* explains and expands the *Vedas*. *Purāṇānām sāma-rūpaḥ* ("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*, *Viṣṇu-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 Vaiṣṇava 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-khaṇḍa* 5.16. 40–42, 44, 33).

#### TEXT 22.4

*śākṣād bhagavatoditaḥ' iti 'kasmai yena vibhāṣito 'yam' ity upasamhāra-vākyānusāreṇa jñeyam. 'śata-viccheda-saṃyutaḥ' iti vistara-bhiyā na vivriyate. tad evaṃ śrī-bhāgavatam sarva-śāstra-cakravarti-padam āptam iti sthite 'hema-simha-samanvitam' ity atra 'suvarṇa-simhāsanārūḍham' iti ṭikā-kārair vyākhyātam tad eva yuktam. ataḥ śrīmad-bhāgavatasyaivābhyāsāvāśyakatvaṃ śreṣṭhatvaṃ ca skānde nirṇītam.*

**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-viccheda-saṃyutaḥ* ("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 sahasraiś ca kim anyaiḥ śāstra-saṅgrahaiḥ  
na yasya tiṣṭhate gehe śāstram bhāgavatam kalau*

*katham sa vaiṣṇavo jñeyaḥ śāstram bhāgavatam kalau  
gṛhe na tiṣṭhate yasya sa vipraḥ śva-pacādhamaḥ*

*yatra yatra bhaved vipra śāstram bhāgavatam kalau  
tatra tatra harir yāti tridaśaiḥ saha nārada*

*yaḥ paṭhet prayato nityam ślokaṃ bhāgavatam mune  
aṣṭādaśa-purāṇānām phalam prāpnoti mānavaḥ*

*iti. tad evaṃ paramārtha-vivitsubhiḥ śrī-bhāgavatam eva sāmpratam vicāraṇīyam*

*iti sthitam.*

**Gopiparanadhana:** 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-khaṇḍa 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-cintāmaṇi, Vrata-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-vinirṇayaḥ (“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 Gopiparanandhana 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*, *Viṣṇu-dharmottara 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 *Sūrya-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 (*savitā*). 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



Garbhodakaśāyī 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 hṛdā ya ādi-kavaye* [Bhāg. 1.1.1]. Hearing this first, capsule version of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in four verses, Brahmā became *ādī-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 Gāyatrī. Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, 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 Gāyatrī *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 Jīva Gosvāmī quoted three verses from the *Garuḍa Purāṇa*. 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), *śrāddha* (memorial rituals), and *kāla* (considerations of time). Jīva Gosvāmī's intention in quoting these verses is to show that the *Mahābhārata* is equal to the *Vedas*. In this part of the *Catur-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 *Gāyatrī 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 *Gāyatrī*. Indeed, as we have seen, this is one of the distinctive characteristics of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

In the *Paramātma-sandarbha*, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī will analyze the first verse of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in terms of its being an explanation of the *Gāyatrī mantra*. *Gāyatrī* 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 *Gāyatrī* is meant for worshiping either the sun-god or impersonal Brahman. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī here establishes, however, that the real meaning of *Gāyatrī* 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 *Gāyatrī*. In the *Viṣṇu-dharmottara Purāṇa* (165th chapter, *Prathama Khaṇḍa*), King Vajra asks Mārkaṇḍeya Ṛṣi why *Gāyatrī* is chanted in Vaiṣṇava sacrifices if its presiding deity is the sun-god. Mārkaṇḍeya replies that *Gāyatrī* refers to Lord Viṣṇu, and then he proceeds to show how each word of *Gāyatrī* is related to Lord Viṣṇu. His explanation concludes with this verse:

*kāma-kāmo labhet kāmam gati-kāmas tu sad-gatim  
akāmas tu tad avāpnoti yad viṣṇoḥ paramam padam*

“A person desiring material gain or liberation in the next life can achieve either by chanting *Gāyatrī*, 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 *Gāyatrī* 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 *Gāyatrī* 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 *Gāyatrī*. 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 worshiping the sun-god independently; rather, he is worshiping 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 Sūta 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-sākhā-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 *pratīkopāsanā*.

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 verses from the *Garuḍa 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-gītā* (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 *kāṇḍas*. 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-saṁyuta* literally means that the *Bhāgavatam* “has hundreds of sections.” Although Śrīla Jīva 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 Jīva Gosvāmī has done so as well. The three chapters in question describe the killing of Aghāsura and Lord Brahmā’s bewilderment by Kṛṣṇa. In Chapter Twelve of the Twelfth Canto, Sūta Gosvāmī gives a list of the Lord’s pastimes, and in the twenty-eighth text of that list he mentions the killing of Aghāsura and Lord Brahmā’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 Jīva 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 Jīva 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 Jīva Gosvāmī describes how all the great *ācāryas* and scholars of the past held *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in the highest esteem.

## TEXT 23

### TEXT 23.1

*ata eva satsv api nānā-śāstreṣv etad evoktaṁ `kalau naṣṭa-dṛśāṁ eṣa purāṇārko 'dhunoditaḥ' iti. arkatā-rūpakeṇa tad vinā nānyeṣāṁ samyag-vastu-prakāśakatvam iti pratipādyate. yasyaiva śrīmad-bhāgavatasya bhāṣya-bhūtaṁ śrī-hayaśīrṣa-pañcarātre śāstra-kathana-prastāve gaṇitaṁ tantra-bhāgavatābhidhaṁ tantram. yasya sākṣāt śrī-hanumad-bhāṣya-vāsanā-bhāṣya-sambandhokti-vidvat-kāmadhenu-tattva-dīpikā-bhāvārtha-dīpikā-paramahaṁsa-priyā-śuka-hṛdayādayo vyākhyā-granthās tathā muktā-phala-hari-līlā-bhakti-ratnāvaly-ādayo nibandhās ca vividhā eva tat-tan-mata-prasiddha-mahānubhāva-kṛtā virājante.*

**Gopiparanadhana:** 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 Hayaśīrṣa Pañcarātra's* description of various scriptures, the *tantra* called *Tantra-bhāgavata* is listed as a kind of commentary on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Quite a few actual commentaries on the *Bhāgavatam* are currently available, including *Śrī Hanumad-bhāṣya*, *Vāsanā-bhāṣya*, *Sambandhokti*, *Vidvat-kāmadhenu*, *Tattva-dīpikā*, *Bhāvārtha-dīpikā*, *Paramahaṁsa-priyā* and *Śuka-hṛdaya*, 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 *Śrīmad-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 *Hayaśīrṣa Pañcarātra*, in its chapter classifying various scriptures, describes the *Tantra-bhāgavata* as essentially a commentary on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Among the *Bhāgavatam's* direct commentaries are the *Hanumad-bhāṣya*, *Vāsanā-bhāṣya*, *Sambandhokti*, *Vidvat-kāmadhenu*, *Tattva-dīpikā*, *Bhāvārtha-dīpikā*, *Paramahaṁsa-priyā*, and *Śuka-hṛdaya*;<sup>2</sup> there are also many works written about *Śrīmad-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

*yad eva ca hemādri-granthasya dāna-khaṇḍe purāṇa-dāna-prastāve mastya-purāṇīya-  
tal-lakṣaṇa-dhṛtyā praśastam. hemādri-pariśeṣa-khaṇḍasya kāla-nirṇaye ca kali-  
yuga-dharma-nirṇaye `kalim sabhājayanty āryāḥ' ity-ādikaṁ yad-vākyatvenotthāpya  
yat-pratipādita-dharma eva kalāv aṅgī-kṛtaḥ, saṁvatsara-pradīpe ca tat-kartrā  
`śataśo `tha sahasraiś ca' ity-ādikaṁ prāg-darśitaṁ skānda-vacana-jātam utthāpya  
sarva-kāla-doṣataḥ pāvitrīyāya katicit śrī-bhāgavata-vacanāni lekhyānīti 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, Saṁvatsara-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-khaṇḍa* 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 *Parīśeṣa-khaṇḍa* of the same book, in the *Kāla-nirṇaya* 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-liṅgena nija-  
matasyāpy upari virājamānārthaṁ matvā yad apauruṣeyam vedānta-vyākhyānam  
bhayād acālayataiva śaṅkarāvatāratayā prasiddhena vakṣyamāṇa-sva-gopanādi-  
hetuka-bhagavad-ājñā-pravartitādvaya-vādenāpi etan-mātra-varṇita-viśva-rūpa-  
darśana-kṛta-vrajeśvarī-vismaya-śrī-vraja-kumārī-vasana-cauryādikam  
govindāṣṭakādau varṇayatā taṭa-sthī-bhūya nija-vacaḥ-sāphalyāya sprṣṭam 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 Vedānta. By depicting in his Govindāṣṭaka and other works events described only by the Bhāgavatam--such as the Queen of Vraja's amazement at seeing the total form of the universe and Kṛṣṇa's stealing the clothes of the unmarried girls of Vraja--he kept himself at a respectful distance and merely touched the Bhāgavatam to assure the success of his own words.

BBT: It is widely acknowledged that Śrī Śaṅkarācārya is an incarnation of Lord Śiva. Śaṅkarācārya understood the importance of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, 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 Bhāgavatam, for he recognized it as an exposition of Vedānta philosophy that is without human author. As we shall explain later, on the Supreme Lord's order Śaṅkarācārya taught his doctrine of monism to conceal the Lord's identity. But still, to make his own words successful by saying something about Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, he touched on it indirectly, describing in his Govindāṣṭaka and other hymns certain pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa's that are related only in the Bhāgavatam. These include Mother Yaśodā's amazement at seeing Kṛṣṇa'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-Bhāgavatam especially manifests itself in the ignorant age of Kali as the one transcendental sun of spiritual enlightenment. Only through the light of the Bhāgavatam can the real purpose of life be known in Kali-yuga. In the beginning of the Bhāgavatam, the sages at Naimiṣāraṇya asked Sūta Gosvāmī,

*brūhi yogeśvare kṛṣṇe/ brahmaṇye dharma-varmaṇi  
svām kāṣṭhām adhunopete/ dharmah kam śaraṇam gataḥ*

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

*kṛṣṇe sva-dhāmopagate/ dharma-jñānādibhiḥ saha  
kalau naṣṭa-dṛṣām eṣa/ purāṇārko '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" (Bhāg. 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-Bhāgavatam

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, Sūta Gosvāmī, who was present at the passing away of Parīkṣit, repeated the *Bhāgavatam* to the sages present at the great *soma* sacrifice at Naimiṣāraṇya. 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, Sūta and Śaunaka.

*kasmai yena vibhāsito 'yam atulo jñāna-pradīpaḥ purā  
tad-rūpeṇa ca nāradāya munaye kṛṣṇāya tad-rūpiṇā  
yogīndrāya tad-ātmanātha bhagavad-rātāya kārṇyatas  
tac chuddham vimalam viśokam amṛtam satyam param dhīmahī*

"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-dvaipāyana 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 commentation by self-realized Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas*. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī mentions in this *anuccheda* a number of commentaries by *ācāryas* 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 *śruti* 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-dīpikā*, by Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī, is probably the oldest extant *Bhāgavatam* commentary. Because Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu respected *Bhāvārtha-dīpikā* 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*



*jagad-guru śrīdhara-svāmī `guru' kari' māni*

"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 grahaṇa*

"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 Vidyābhūṣaṇa. Culminating this venerable tradition are the *Bhaktivedanta Purports* of the Founder-Ācārya 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 Vaiṣṇavas' cumulative realizations, going back to the *Bhāgavatam's* original speakers, are transmitted to us in the language of our own times.

The commentary *Paramahansa-priyā* and two other works based on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Muktā-phala* and *Hari-līlā*, were written by the Maharashtrian Vaiṣṇava 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-līlā* 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-ratnāvalī* is a work of Viṣṇu Purī, 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 Jayadharmā Tīrtha; he is different from the Viṣṇu Purī who lived with Caitanya Mahāprabhu in Jagannātha Purī. *Viṣṇu-bhakti-ratnāvalī* 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-cintāmaṇi* and other textbooks for *smārta-brāhmaṇas*, Hemādri corroborated the *Bhāgavatam's* opinion that *saṅkīrtana*, the congregational chanting of God's names, is the appropriate form of religious practice in Kali-yuga.

Śrīpāda Śaṅkarācārya is one of the greatest devotees of Śrī Kṛṣṇa because he is a direct incarnation of his namesake, Lord Śiva. *Vaiṣṇavānām 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 propagate 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 *Govindāṣṭaka*, *Yamunāṣṭaka*, *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 Ṛṣi questioned Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī about where religion would take shelter now that Lord Kṛṣṇa had returned to His own abode, Sūta 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 Viṣṇupāda Paramahansa 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-Bhāgavata Purāṇa*.

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī again refers to the *Catur-varga-cintāmaṇi* (*Dāna-khaṇḍa* 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-cintāmaṇi*, *Pariśeṣa-khaṇḍa*, Hemādri quotes a *Bhāgavatam* verse (11.5.36):

*kalim sabhājayanty āryā guṇa-jñāḥ sāra-bhāginaḥ  
yatra saṅkīrtanaiva sarvaḥ svārtho 'bhilabhyate*

“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 *saṅkīrtana*.”

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

*na hy ataḥ paramo lābho dehinām bhrāmyatām iha  
yato vindeta paramām śāntim naśyati saṁsṛtiḥ*

“Indeed, there is no higher possible gain for embodied souls forced to wander throughout the material world than the Supreme Lord’s *saṅkīrtana* 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.

Śaṅkarācārya 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 anantaṁ nityam anākāśaṁ paramākāśaṁ  
goṣṭha-prāṅgaṇa-riṅgaṇa-lolam anāyāsaṁ paramāyāsam  
māyā-kalpita-nānā-kāram anākāraṁ bhuvanākāraṁ  
kṣamāya nātham anāthaṁ praṇamata govindaṁ 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.”

*mṛtsnām atsīheti yaśodā-tāḍana-śaiśava-santrāsam  
vyādita-vaktrālokita-lokālōka-caturdaśa-lokālīm*

*loka-traya-pura-mūla-stambham lokālokam anālokam  
lokeśam parameśam praṇamata govindam paramānandam*

“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 Yaśodā 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.

*trai-viṣṭapa-ripu-vīra-ghnam kṣiti-bhāra-ghnam bhava-roga-ghnam  
kaivalyaṁ navanītāhāram anāhāram bhuvanāhāram  
vaimalya-sphuṭa-ceto-vṛtti-viśeṣābhāsam anābhāsam  
saivam kevala-śāntam praṇamata govindam paramānandam*

“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 bhū-līlā-vigraha-gopālam kula-gopālam  
gopī-khelana-govardhana-dhṛta-līlā-lālita-gopālam  
gobhir nigadita-govinda-sphuṭa-nāmānam bahu-nāmānam  
gopī-gocara-dūram praṇamata govindam paramānandam*

“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 Dvārakā].”

*gopī-maṇḍala-goṣṭhī-bhedam bhedāvastham abhedābham  
śaśvad go-khura-nirdhūtoddhat-dhūli-dhūsara-saubhāgyam  
śraddhā-bhakti-grhitānandam acintyaṁ cintita-sad-bhāvam  
cintāmaṇim ahimānam praṇamata govindam paramānandam*

“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-yoṣid-vastram upādāyāgam upārūḍham  
vyāditsantīr atha dig-vastrā hy upadātum upākarṣantaṁ  
nirdhūta dvaya-śoka-vimohaṁ buddhaṁ buddher antaḥ-sthaṁ  
sattā-mātra-śarīraṁ praṇamata govindaṁ paramānandaṁ*

“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.”

*kāntaṁ kāraṇa-kāraṇam ādim anādim kālam anābhāsaṁ  
kālindī-gata-kālīyā-śirasi muhur muhuḥ sunṛtyantaṁ  
kālaṁ kāla-kalātītaṁ kalitāśeṣaṁ kali-doṣa-ghnaṁ  
kāla-traya-gati-hetuṁ praṇamata govindaṁ paramānandaṁ*

“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-bhuvi vṛndāraka-gaṇa-vṛndārādhyam vande ’ham  
kundābhāmala-manda-smera-sudhānandaṁ suhṛd-ānandaṁ  
vandyāśeṣa-mahā-muni-mānasa-vandyānanda-pada-dvandvaṁ  
vandyāśeṣa-guṇābdhiṁ praṇamata govindaṁ paramānandaṁ*

“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 Śrīmatī 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.”

*govindāṣṭakam etad adhīte govindārpita-cetā yo  
govindācyuta mādharma viṣṇo gokula-nāyaka kṛṣṇeti  
govindāṅghri-saroja-dhyāna-sudhā-jala-dhauta-samastāgho  
govindaṁ paramānandāmṛtam antaḥ-sthaḥ sa samabhyeti*

“Anyone who who recites this *Govindāṣṭaka*, 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 *Upaniṣads*, the *Bhagavad-gītā*, and *Śrī Viṣṇu-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-khaṇḍa* 71.107) we learn how Lord Viṣṇu ordered Śiva to propagate monism:

*svāgamaiḥ kalpitaḥ tvaṁ ca janān mad-vimukhān kuru  
mām ca gopaya yena syāt sṛṣṭir eṣottarottarā*

“[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 *sūnyavādīs*, 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 *nāsti* 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-khaṇḍa* of *Padma Purāṇa* (236.7) Lord Śiva himself describes Advaita monism as veiled Buddhism: *māyā-vādam asac-chāstram pracchanam baudham ucyate*. “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 *ācāryas* like Rāmānujācārya, Madhvācārya, and Śrīdhara 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, Śrīdhara 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 *vaidhi-bhakti*, the path of regulated devotional service, is *rāga-bhakti*, the path of spontaneous loving devotion to Kṛṣṇa, which one can traverse by following in the footsteps of Vṛndāvana's residents. He also taught that this *rāga-bhakti*, 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-bhakti* 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 kila dṛṣṭvā sāksāt tac-chiṣyatām prāptair api śrī-madhvācārya-caraṇair  
vaiṣṇava-mate praviśya vaiṣṇavāntarāṇām tac-chiṣyāntara-puṇyāraṇyādi-rītika-  
vyākhyā-praveśa-śaṅkayā tatra tātparyāntaram likhadbhir vartmopadeśa kṛta iti ca  
sātvatā varṇayanti.*

**Gopiparanadhana:** Śrī Madhvācārya-caraṇa was a direct disciplic descendant of Śaṅkarācārya. Becoming an adherent of Vaiṣṇava thought after reading *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, he was concerned that other Vaiṣṇavas might be influenced by the kind of commentaries on it written by other followers of Śaṅkara like Puṇyāraṇya. 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 Viṣṇu recount that although Śrī Madhvācārya-carāṇa belonged to the direct disciplic line of Śaṅkarācārya, 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 Puṇyārāṇya, Śrī Madhvācārya wrote *Bhāgavata-tātparyaya*, a gloss on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that showed the proper method of interpretation.

#### TEXT 24.2

*tasmād yuktaṃ uktaṃ tatraiva prathama-skandhe:*

*tad idaṃ grāhayām āsa sutam ātma-vatām varam  
sarva-vedetihāsānām sāraṃ sāraṃ samuddhṛtam  
dvādaśe:*

*sarva-vedānta-sāraṃ hi śrī-bhāgavatam iṣyate  
tad-rasāmṛta-tr̥ptasya nānyatra syād ratiḥ 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 galitaṃ phalaṃ  
śuka-mukhād amṛta-drava-saṃyutam  
pibata bhāgavataṃ rasam ā-layaṃ  
muhur aho rasikā bhuvi bhāvukāḥ*

*ata eva tatraiva:*



*yaḥ svānubhāvam akhila-śruti-sāram ekam  
adhyātma-dīpam atititīrṣatām tamo 'ndham  
saṁsāriṇām karuṇayāha purāṇa-guhyam  
tam vyāsa-sūnum upayāmi guruṁ muninām*

*iti śrī-bhāgavata-mataṁ tu sarva-matānām adhīśa-rūpam iti sūcakam.  
(sarva-muninām sabhā-madhyam adhyāsya upadeṣṭṛtvena teṣām sarva-muninām  
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 nectarean 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 nectarean 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**

Śrīla Madhvācārya, whom the members of his *sampradāya* most commonly call by his *sannyāsa* name, Ānanda Tīrtha, 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 Śaṅkara. Śrī Madhva's predecessors had the *sannyāsa* title Tīrtha, which Madhva accepted

and passed on to his disciplic descendants. Technically, however, this is one of the ten names assigned by Śaṅkarācārya to the *sannyāsīs* of his Advaita *sampradāya*, and is not included in the traditional list of 108 names meant for Vaiṣṇava *sannyāsīs*. 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 *Bhāgavata-tātparyā-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 *jīvas*, 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 Īsvara Purī, who was a great-grand-disciple of the eminent Madhvite *ācārya* Vyāsa Tīrtha. Thus, out of deep respect for the founder-*ācārya* of the Madhva-Gauḍīya-sampradāya, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī here refers to him in the grammatically plural form (*śrī-madhvācārya-caraṇaiḥ*).

*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* contains only the most choice substance (*sāraṁ sāraṁ*) carefully selected from all the *śrutis* 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 *śuka* 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 Parīkṣit 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 Parīkṣit at the Ganges' bank and with Sūta and Śaunaka at Naimiṣāraṇya unanimously acknowledged him as their spiritual preceptor.

### **Purport by BBT Translators**

*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* Is the Topmost Vedic Scripture

Here Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī explains Madhvācārya's reason for commenting on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Śaṅkarācārya 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 Puṅyāranya's, which is now lost. Śrīla Madhvācārya, wanting to protect Vaiṣṇavas from being misled, wrote a gloss called *Bhāgavatātātparya*.

Since Jīva Gosvāmī 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 Jīva Gosvāmī 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 Gosvāmī. 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 *ātmavatām varam*, "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 *Itihāsas*.

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 Jīva Gosvāmī 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 Jīva Gosvāmī shows the importance of the speaker, Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī.

## TEXT 25

### TEXT 25.1

*sarva-munīnām sabhā-madhyam adhyāsya upadeṣṭṛtvena teṣām sarva-munīnām*

*gurutvam api tasya tatra su-vyaktam. yataḥ:*

*tatropajagmur bhuvanam punānā  
mahānubhāvā munayaḥ sa-śiṣyāḥ  
prāyeṇa tīrthābhigamāpadeśaiḥ  
svayaṁ hi tīrthāni punanti santaḥ*

*atrir vaśiṣṭhaś cyavanaḥ śaradvān  
ariṣṭanemir bhṛgur aṅgirās ca  
parāśaro gādhi-suto 'tha rāma  
utathya indrapramadedhmavāhau*

*medhātithir devala ārṣiṣeṇo  
bharadvājo gautamaḥ pippalādaḥ  
maitreya aurvaḥ kavaśaḥ kumbha-yonir  
dvaipāyano bhagavān nāradaś ca*

*anye ca devarṣi-brahmarṣi-varyā  
rājarṣi-varyā aruṇādayaś ca  
nānārṣeya-pravarāms tān sametān  
abhyarcya rājā śirasā vavande*

*sukhopaviṣṭeṣv atha teṣu bhūyaḥ  
kṛta-praṇāmaḥ sva-cikīrṣitaṁ yat  
vijñāpayām āsa vivikta-cetā  
upasthito 'gre niḡhīta-pāṇiḥ*

*ity-ādy-anantaram:*

*tataś ca vaḥ pṛcchyaṁ idaṁ vipṛcche  
viśrabhya viprā iti-kṛtyatāyām  
sarvātmanā mriyamāṇaiś ca kṛtyaṁ  
śuddhaṁ ca tatrāmṛśatābhiyuktāḥ*

*iti pṛcchati rājñi:*

*tatrābhavad bhagavān vyāsa-putro  
yadṛcchayā gām aṭamāno 'napekṣaḥ  
alaksya-liṅgo nija-lābha-tuṣṭo  
vṛtaś ca bālair avadhūta-veśaḥ*

**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, Śaradvān, Ariṣṭanemi, Bhṛgu, Vasiṣṭha, Parāśara, Viśvāmitra, Aṅgirā, Paraśurāma, Utathya, Indrapramada,

Idhmabāhu, Medhātithi, Devala, Ārṣṭiṣeṇa, Bhāradvāja, Gautama, Pippalāda, Maitreya, Aurva, Kavaṣa, Kumbhayoni, Dvaipāyana, and the great personality Nārada. There were also many other saintly demigods, kings, and special royal orders called *aruṇādayas* [a special rank of *rājārṣis*] from different dynasties of sages. When they all assembled to meet the emperor [Parīkṣit], he received them properly and bowed his head to the ground. After all the ṛṣis and others had seated themselves comfortably, the king, humbly standing before them with folded hands, told them of his decision to fast until death” [Bhāg. 1.19.8-12].

Then the king said:

“O trustworthy *brāhmaṇas*, 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” [Bhāg. 1.19.24].

Then, after the king’s query:

“At that moment there appeared the powerful son of Vyāsadeva, 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” [Bhāg. 1.19.25].

**BBT:** Thus it is said [in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 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, Śaradvān, Ariṣṭanemi, Bhṛgu, Vasiṣṭha, Parāśara, Viśvāmitra, Aṅgirā, Paraśurāma, Utathya, Indrapramada, Idhmabāhu, Medhātithi, Devala, Ārṣṭiṣeṇa, Bhāradvāja, Gautama, Pippalāda, Maitreya, Aurva, Kavaṣa, Kumbhayoni, Dvaipāyana, and the great personality Nārada. There were also many other saintly demigods, kings, and special royal orders called *aruṇādayas* [a special rank of *rājārṣis*] from different dynasties of sages. When they all assembled to meet the emperor [Parīkṣit], he received them properly and bowed his head to the ground. After all the ṛṣis 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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## TEXT 25.2

*tataś ca `pratyutthitās te munayaḥ svāsanebhyaḥ' ity-ādy-ante:*

*sa saṁvṛtas tatra mahān mahīyasām  
brahmarṣi-rājarṣi-surarṣi-varyaiḥ  
vyarocatālaṁ bhagavān yathendur  
graharkṣa-tārā-nikaraiḥ parītaḥ*

*ity uktam.*

**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 prabhu

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 ṛṣis 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 Vaiṣṇava 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 Śukadeva Gosvāmī, and the hearers should be as renounced and surrendered as Parīkṣit and the great sages.

### Purport by BBT Translators

Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī Is the Best Scholar of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*

After Śṛṅgī 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 Paraśurāma 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 Śukadeva 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 Śukadeva as *guru*. In this section Jīva Gosvāmī cites the references to support his claim. Since the sages accepted Śukadeva 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 Śukadeva 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 Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

## TEXT 26

### TEXT 26.1

*atra yady api tatra śrī-vyāsa-nāradau tasyāpi guru-parama-gurū tathāpi punas tan-  
mukha-niḥśṛtaṁ śrī-bhāgavatam taylor apy aśruta-caram iva jātam ity evaṁ śrī-śukas  
tāv apy upadideśa deśyam ity abhiprāyaḥ. yad uktam `śuka-mukhād amṛta-drava-  
samyutam' iti. tasmād evaṁ api śrī-bhāgavatasyaiva sarvādhikyam. mātsyādīnām yat  
purāṇādhikyam śrūyate tat tv āpekṣikam iti. aho kiṁ bahunā śrī-kṛṣṇa-pratinidhi-  
rūpam evedam.*

**Gopiparanadhana:** Both Śrīla Vyāsadeva and Nārada were present. Although they were Śukadeva'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, *śuka-mukhād amṛta-drava-saṁyutam*: "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 be said! Indeed, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the very representation of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

## TEXT 26.2

*yata uktam prathama-skandhe:*

*kṛṣṇe sva-dhāmopagate dharma-jñānādibhiḥ saha  
kalau naṣṭa-dṛśām eṣa purāṇārko 'dhunoditaḥ*

*iti. ata eva sarva-guṇa-yuktatvam asyaiva dṛṣṭam `dharmah projjhita-kaitavo 'tra' ity-  
ādinā,*

*vedāḥ purāṇam kāvyam ca prabhur mitram priyeva ca  
bodhayantīti hi prāhus tri-vṛd bhāgavatam punaḥ*

*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 manyantām vā kecit purāṇāntareṣu vedasya sāpekṣatvaṁ śrī-bhāgavate tu tathā sambhāvanā svayam eva nirastety api svayam eva labdham bhavati. ata eva parama-śruti-rūpatvaṁ tasya. Yathoktaṁ:*

*katham vā pāṇḍaveyasya rājarṣer muninā saha saṁvādaḥ samabhūt tāta yatraiṣā sātvatī śrutiḥ*

*iti. atha yat khalu sarvaṁ purāṇa-jātam āvirbhāvyety-ādikaṁ pūrvam uktaṁ tat tu prathama-skandha-gata-śrī-vyāsa-nārada-saṁvādenaiva 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 Parīkṣit 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 Parīkṣit met this great sage, making it possible for this Vedic text for the pure Vaiṣṇavas (*sātvatī śrutiḥ*) 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 Śukadeva spoke to Parīkṣit. "Still *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* as it emanated from his mouth seemed to them as if something they had never heard before." Śukadeva'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, Śukadeva brought the almost forgotten *Bhāgavatam* into this world once again in a new life. A few year later, Sūta 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 Śukadeva'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 *Vedas* 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 *Vedas*; 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 sāt̥tvic *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 gaṇe  
yāvad bhāgavatam naiva/ śrūyate 'mṛta-sāgarām*

"All other Purāṇic 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 Jīva Gosvāmī even suggests that despite the *Bhāgavatam*'s officially belonging along with the other *Purāṇas* to the secondary category of *smṛti*, Vaiṣṇavas can be privy to the confidential fact that *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the most exalted *śruti* scripture. Therefore Śrīla Jīva calls the *Bhāgavatam* the *pratidinidhi-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” (*Taittirīya 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. *Kāvya*, 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 Śukadeva 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. Śukadeva 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 Ṭhākura 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 Yudhiṣṭhira from his bed of arrows after the Kurukṣetra War. Bhīṣma’s main purpose, however, was to convince Yudhiṣṭhira to begin managing his kingdom. By contrast, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* was spoken in just the opposite context: King Parīkṣit, having renounced his kingdom, simply wanted to hear *kṛṣṇa-kathā* and in this way discharge the only duty of a dying man. Śrī Śukadeva 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 Kṛṣṇa. The Lord possesses all good qualities, as Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī explains in his *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (2.1.17) while analyzing various devotional mellows:

*nāyakānām śiro-ratnaṁ 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 Brahman, 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 evaṁ parama-niḥśreyasa-niścayāya śrī-bhāgavatam eva paurvāparyāvirodhena  
vicāryate. tatrāsmin sandarbha-ṣaṭkātmake granthe sūtra-sthānīyam avatārikā-  
vākyaṁ viśaya-vākyaṁ śrī-bhāgavata-vākyaṁ. bhāṣya-rūpā tad-vyākhyā tu samprati  
madhya-deśāu vyāptān advaita-vādinō nūnaṁ bhagavan-mahimānam avagāhayitūṁ  
tad-vādena karvurita-lipīnām parama-vaiṣṇavānām śrīdhara-svāmi-caraṇānām  
śuddha-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 *Sandarbhās* 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-vādīs--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 Svāmi-caraṇa's commentary verbatim when it 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 Śrīdhara 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 Śrīdhara Svāmī's commentary accords with strict Vaiṣṇava principles, we shall quote it verbatim.

#### TEXT 27.2

*kvacit teṣām evānyatra-dṛṣṭa-vyākhyānusāreṇa draviḍādi-deśa-vikhyāta-parama-bhāgavatānām teṣām eva bāhulyena tatra vaiṣṇavatvena prasiddhatvāt śrī-bhāgavata eva*

*kvacit kvacin mahā-rāja draviḍeṣu ca bhūriśaḥ*

*ity anena pramita-mahimnām sāksāc-chrī-prabhṛtitaḥ pravṛtta-sampradāyānām śrī-vaiṣṇavābhidhānām śrī-rāmānuja-bhagavat-pāda-viracita-śrī-bhāṣyādi-dṛṣṭa-mata-prāmānyena mūla-grantha-svārasyena cānyathā ca. advaita-vyākhyānam tu prasiddhatvān nātivitāyate.*

**Gopiparanadhana:** Our explanation of certain *Bhāgavatam* verses will be based on comments given by Śrīdhara 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 Draviḍa-deśa 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 Draviḍa 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 Śrīdhara 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 Vaiṣṇavas of the Śrī-sampradāya, which originated directly with Goddess Lakṣmī. These great devotees are famous throughout India's southern region (Draviḍa-deśa) and elsewhere. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* itself states that they are well known as devotees of Viṣṇu in the south:

“O king, a few Vaiṣṇavas can be seen here and there in this age, but they can be found in abundance in the Draviḍa 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 Jīva Gosvāmī 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 Sandarbhas*. The second part of the *Tattva-sandarbha*, beginning from *anuccheda* 25, ascertains the general nature of the Supreme Truth, or *tattva*, revealed in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. *Paṇḍitas* sometimes call the two parts of *Tattva-sandarbha* the *Pramāṇa-khaṇḍa* and *Prameya-khaṇḍa*; *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 Jīva Gosvāmī discusses some details of his methodology. The principle object of study in the *Sandarbhas* 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 be 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 *anukarāṇas* of one or more *sūtras*. The *sūtras* themselves are usually resolutions of doubts about the correct understanding of particular statements of the *Upaniṣads*. These *viśaya-vākya*s, 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 (*tīkās*) by followers. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī 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 *viśaya-vākya* 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-dīpikā* 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 Madhvites 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 *Ṣaṭ-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 *Vedānta-sūtra*. In the *Sandarbhas*, the introductory statements are like the *sūtras* in the *Vedānta-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 *ācāryas*, 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

Svāmī's true stance.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu also accepted *sannyāsa* in Śaṅkara's line, but from the beginning His teachings refuted the Māyāvāda doctrine. Hence Śrī Caitanya's great respect for Śrīdhara Svāmī and his *Bhāgavatam* commentary is proof enough that Śrīdhara Svāmī was not a Māyāvāda *sannyāsī* at heart, any more than Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was. Caitanya Mahāprabhu considered all Māyāvādīs offenders at the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, yet he would not tolerate even mild or indirect criticism of Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī. When Vallabha Bhaṭṭa told Lord Caitanya he had written a *Bhāgavatam* commentary that surpassed Śrīdhara Svāmī's, Lord Caitanya rebuked Vallabha and refused to hear it (see *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Antya* 113–37). From this incident we can understand the exalted status of Śrīdhara Svāmī as a surrendered, pure devotee of the Lord. We can also be certain that Jīva Gosvāmī, as a loyal follower of Lord Caitanya's, held Śrīdhara Svāmī's *Bhāgavatam* commentary, *Bhāvārtha-dīpikā*, in high esteem. Thus Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī refers to Śrīdhara as *parama-vaiṣṇava*, a topmost devotee.

In this Text Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī tells why Śrīdhara Svāmī inserted some Māyāvādī ideas into his *Bhāvārtha-dīpikā* commentary. Some of Śaṅkara's followers developed a taste for *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* after reading his devotional poems based on the *Bhāgavatam*, but these followers still maintained their overall impersonal outlook. To attract these *sannyāsīs* toward the path of devotion, Śrīdhara Svāmī wrote a mixed commentary on the spotless *Purāṇa*. Just as a fisherman uses bait to catch fish, occasionally Śrīdhara Svāmī would present monistic opinions about some *Bhāgavatam* verses in order to attract the Māyāvādīs who liked to read the *Bhāgavatam*. This was merely part of his preaching strategy; it doesn't make him a Māyāvādī.

Nevertheless, although Jīva Gosvāmī understands Śrīdhara Svāmī's motives, in the *Sandarbhās* he chooses not to cite the impersonal explanations found in the *Bhāvārtha-dīpikā*. In fact, throughout the *Sandarbhās* Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī takes every opportunity to demolish the Māyāvāda view. Clearly he does not consider the Māyāvādīs his primary audience, as Śrīdhara Svāmī must have when he wrote his commentary. Jīva Gosvāmī's intended audience is apparent from his declaration in the sixth Text of the *Tattva-sandarbhā*, where he says that no one should read this book who is averse to serving Lord Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet.

Jīva Gosvāmī'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 Śrīdhara Svāmī's commentary only when it accords with strict Vaiṣṇava principles. This statement has caused some modern scholars to criticize Jīva Gosvāmī for not respecting the liberal sentiments of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, but this criticism arises from a superficial understanding of Lord Caitanya's real attitude.

Śrīdhara Svāmī was not a Māyāvādī, although for the reason mentioned above he did give a monistic slant to some parts of his *Bhāgavatam* commentary. Considering why Śrīdhara Svāmī did this in his *Bhāvārtha-dīpikā*, why should Śrīla



Jīva Gosvāmī, in an entirely different work meant for an entirely different audience, cite those explanations of Śrīdhara's that oppose the true conclusion of the *Bhāgavatam* and even Śrīdhara Svāmī's own convictions? Śrī Jīva has already established *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 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 Śrīdhara insofar as they follow the spirit and intent of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* itself. In this way Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī remains true to the Vaiṣṇavism of Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī and also to his own Gauḍīya-sampradāya.

At the end of this Text, when Jīva Gosvāmī says he is not going to describe the details of the Advaita monistic doctrine because they are already well known, he implies that Māyāvāda, though popular, only apparently explains the meaning of the *śāstras* and is not really worth discussing, and he also implies that he intends to refute it.

Next Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī describes the sources of evidence other than *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that he plans to cite in the *Ṣaṭ-sandarbha*.

## TEXT 28

### TEXT 28.1

*atra ca sva-darśitārtha-viśeṣa-prāmāṇyāyaiva na tu śrīmad-bhāgavata-vākya-prāmāṇyāya pramāṇāni śruti-purāṇādi-vacanāni yathā-dṛṣṭam evodāharanīyāni. kvacit svayam adṛṣṭākarāṇi ca tattva-vāda-gurūṇām anādhunikānām śrīmac-chaṅkarācārya-śiṣyatām labdhvāpi śrī-bhagavat-pakṣa-pātena tato vicchīdya pracura-pracārita-vaiṣṇava-mata-viśeṣānām dakṣiṇādi-deśa-vikhyāta-śiṣyopaśiṣyī-bhūta-śrī-vijayadhvaja-brahmatīrtha-vyāsatīrthādi-veda-vedārtha-vidvad-varāṇām śrī-madhvācārya-caraṇānām śrī-bhāgavata-tātparya-bhārata-tātparya-brahma-sūtra-bhāṣyādibhyaḥ saṅgrhītāni.*

**Gopiparanadhana:** In this book I will be citing various statements from *śruti*, *Purāṇas* 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 *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* says. Sometimes I have not myself seen the original scriptures from which I cite passages; these citations I borrow from from various works of Śrī Madhvācārya-caraṇa, including *Śrī Bhāgavata-tātparya*, *Mahābhārata-tātparya* and *Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya*. Śrī Madhva is the spiritual master of the Tattva-vāda school. He is an old, standard authority. Although he originally belonged to the disciplic line directly descending from Śrīmat Śaṅkarācārya, he separated himself from Śaṅkara's school and joined the party of the Vaiṣṇavas. His special Vaiṣṇava doctrine has been preached widely. Among his disciples and later followers, renowned in South India and elsewhere, are Śrī Vijayadhvaja Tīrtha, Brahmaṇya Tīrtha and Vyāsa Tīrtha, all of whom are very eminent scholars of the *Vedas* and their purports.

BBT: Here in the *Ṣaṭ-sandarbhā* 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-tātparyā*, *Bhārata-tātparyā*, *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 Śaṅkarācārya, 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 Vijayadhvaṇa 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 caivam uktam bhārata-tātparye:*

*śāstrāntarāṇi sañjānan vedāntasya prasādataḥ  
deśe deśe tathā granthān dṛṣṭvā caiva pṛthag-vidhān*

*yathā sa bhagavān vyāsaḥ sāksān nārāyaṇaḥ prabhuḥ  
jaḡāda bhāratādyeṣu tathā vakṣye tad-īkṣayā*

*iti. tatra tad-uddhṛtā śrutiś catur-veda-śikhādyā purāṇam ca gāruḍādīnām samprati  
sarvatrāpracarad-rūpam aṁśādīkam saṁhitā ca mahā-saṁhitādīkā tantraṁ ca tantra-  
bhāgavatādīkam brahma-tarkādīkam iti jñeyam.*

**Gopiparanadhana:** Thus in his *Mahābhārata-tātparyā* [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 Nārāyaṇa in person, as he has expressed them in his *Mahābhārata* and other works." It is useful to know that Madhvācārya has cited *śruti* texts such as the *Catur-veda-śikhā*, portions of the *Garuḍa* and other *Purāṇas* which are now not available everywhere, *saṁhitās* like the *Mahā-saṁhitā*, and *tantras* like the *Tantra-bhāgavata* and *Brahma-tarka*.

BBT: In his *Bhārata-tātparyā* 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 Nārāyaṇa, has spoken in His *Mahābhārata* and other works. In this description I will carefully adhere to His viewpoint" (*Bhārata-tātparyā* 2.7.8).<sup>3</sup>

The texts we will cite from the works of Śrī Madhvācārya will include portions from such Vedic *śrutis* as the *Catur-veda-śikhā*, Purāṇic texts from unavailable parts of the *Garuḍa Purāṇa* and other works, *saṁhitā* texts from the *Mahā-saṁhitā*

and similar works, and *tantra* texts from the *Tantra-bhāgavatam*, *Brahma-tarka*, and so on.

### Purport by Gopiparanadhana prabhu

Śrīla Jīva 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 *śabda-pramāṇa*. This is the standard of brahminical scholarship:

*tasmāc chāstraṁ pramāṇaṁ te/ kāryākārya-vyavasthitau  
jñātvā śāstra-pramāṇoktaṁ/ 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 *śāstra* (scripture) before doing anything and before forming and expressing any opinion.

Whenever possible, Śrī Jīva 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 Jīva 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 Vaikuṅṭha, where Supreme Lord Nārāyaṇa is worshiped reverentially. The eternally liberated devotees of Vaikuṅṭha 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 Vaikuṅṭha 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 Bhīma. 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 Vaikuṅṭha, 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. *Ārādhyo bhagavān vrajeṣa tanayas 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 kācit upāsana vraja-vadhū-vargeṇa yā kalpitā*: Furthermore, purer and more elevated than the worship offered to the Lord in Vaikuṅṭha 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 Jīva 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 Jīva. Madhvācārya often quotes from books that by Śrī Jīva'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 Uḍupī, 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 *Sandarbhas* Śrīla Jīva 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": *sarvaṁ vastu satyam iti tattva-vādaḥ*. 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-bhedābheda philosophy. When examined impartially, the Acintya-bhedābheda 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 *śabda-pramāṇa* as the only independently valid means of knowledge, and having established *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* as the topmost form of *śabda-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 namas-kurvann eva tathā-bhūtasya śrīmad-bhāgavatasya tātparyam tad-vaktur  
hṛdaya-niṣṭhā-paryālocanayā saṅkṣepatas tāvan nirdhārayati:*

*sva-sukha-nibhṛta-cetās tad-vyudastānya-bhāvo  
'py ajita-rucira-līlākṛṣṭa-sāras tadīyam  
vyatanuta kṛpayā yas tattva-dīpaṁ purāṇam  
tam akhila-vṛjina-ghnam vyāsa-sūnuṁ nato 'smi*

**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*, Sūta 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 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 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

*ṭikā ca śrīdhara-svāmī-viracitā `śrī-gurum namas-karoti. sva-sukhenaiva nibhṛtaṁ pūrṇaṁ ceto yasya saḥ. tenaiva vyudasto `nyasmin bhāvo bhāvanā yasya tathā-bhūto `py ajitasya rucirābhir līlābhir ākr̥ṣṭaḥ sārāḥ sva-sukha-gataṁ dhairyaṁ yasya saḥ. tattva-dīpaṁ paramārtha-prakāśakaṁ śrī-bhāgavataṁ yo vyatanuta taṁ nato `smi' ity eṣā.*

**Gopiparanadhana:** Here is Śrīdhara Svāmī's commentary on this verse: "He [Sūta Gosvāmī] offers obeisances to his spiritual master. [Sva-sukha-nibhṛta-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 highest goal of life."

**BBT:** Śrīdhara Svāmī explains in his commentary:

“Sūta Gosvāmī 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 illumines the supreme goal of life.”

### TEXT 29.3

*evam eva dvitīye tad-vākyam eva `prāyeṇa munayo rājan' ity-ādi-padya-trayam anusandheyam. atrākhila-vṛjinam tādr̥śa-bhāvasya pratikūlam udāsīnam ca sarvaṁ jñeyam. tad evam iha sambandhi-tattvaṁ brahmānandād api prakṛṣṭo rucira-līlā-viśiṣṭaḥ śrīmān ajita eva. sa ca pūrṇatvena mukhyatayā śrī-kṛṣṇa-samjñā eveti śrī-bādarāyaṇa-samādhau vyaktī-bhaviṣyati. tathā prayojanākhyāḥ puruṣārthaḥ ca tādr̥śa-tad-āsakti-janakaṁ tat-prema-sukham eva. tato `bhidheyam api tādr̥śa-tat-prema-janakaṁ tal-līlā-śravaṇādi-lakṣaṇam tad-bhajanam evety āyātam. atra vyāsa-sūnum iti brahma-vaivartānusāreṇa śrī-kṛṣṇa-varāj janmata eva māyayā tasyāspr̥ṣṭatvaṁ sūcitam. śrī-sūtaḥ śrī-śaunakam.*

**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 Brahman, 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 Bādarāyaṇa 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 Sūta to Śrī Śaunaka.

**BBT:** Similarly worth examining are the three verses Śrī Śuka speaks in the Second Canto that begin with the verse whose first line is *prāyeṇa munayo rājan* [Bhāg. 2.1.7–9]. In the verse under discussion [Bhāg. 12.12.69] we should understand that the words *akhila-vṛjinam* ("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 Śrī 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 Śuka 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 Śuka. 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 Sūta 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 Gosvāmī'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 *Śrīmad-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 *Śrīmad-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-sandarbhā (anuccheda 49)*.

Sūta Gosvāmī's characterization of Śukadeva's heart is confirmed by Śukadeva's own words in the Second Canto:

*prāyeṇa munayo rājan nivṛttā vidhi-ṣedhataḥ  
nairguṇya-sthā ramante sma guṇānukathane hareḥ*

*idaṁ bhāgavatam nāma purāṇam brahma-sammitam  
adhītavān dvāparādau pitur dvaipāyanād aham*

*pariniṣṭhito 'pi nairguṇya uttama-śloka-līlayā  
grhīta-cetā rājarṣe ākhyānam yad adhītavān*

“O King Parīkṣit, 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 *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, which is equal to all the *Vedas*, from my father, Śrīla 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 narration” [*Bhāg.* 2.1.7-9].

**Purport by BBT Translators**



## An Analysis of Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī's Faith

In the preceding Texts, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī compared and contrasted the *Vedas*, *Vedānta*, *Itihāsas*, and *Purāṇas* 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 *maṅgalācaraṇa* to further invoke auspiciousness for his sacred undertaking of writing the *Ṣaṭ-sandarbhā*. Once again he uses a *Bhāgavatam* verse as his invocation. By quoting from Sūta Gosvāmī's prayers to Śukadeva, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī himself reveres Śukadeva Gosvāmī to invoke his blessings, so that Jīva 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 Jīva 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 Vyāsadeva, and also the hearts of the speakers, Śukadeva Gosvāmī and Sūta 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, Sūta 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. Sūta'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 Jīva Gosvāmī informs us that this description is found in the *Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa*.) As we learn from Chapter Seven of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*'s First Canto and from the texts that Śrīla Jīva 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 Vyāsadeva'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 Sūta Gosvāmī quoted here refutes this speculation.

Another reason Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī quotes Sūta'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*:

*prāyeṇa munayo rājan nivṛttā vidhi-ṣedhataḥ  
nairguṇya-sthā ramante sma guṇānukathane hareḥ*

*idaṁ bhāgavatam nāma purāṇam brahma-sammitam  
adhītavān dvāparādaḥ pitur dvaipāyanād aham*

*pariniṣṭhito 'pi nairguṇya uttama-śloka-līlayā  
grhīta-cetā rājarṣe ākhyānam yad adhītavān*

“O King Parīkṣit, 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, Śrīla 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 Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī begins analyzing the heart of Śrīla Vyāsadeva.

## TEXT 30

### TEXT 30.1

*tādṛśam eva tātparyam kariṣyamāṇa-tad-grantha-pratipādyā-tattva-nirṇaya-kṛte tat-  
pravaktṛ-śrī-bādarāyaṇa-kṛte samādhāv api saṅkṣepata eva nirdhārayati:*

*bhakti-yogena manasi samyak praṇihite 'male  
apaśyat puruṣam pūrṇam māyām ca tad-apāśrayām*

*yayā sammohito jīva ātmānam tri-guṇātmakam  
paro 'pi manute 'nartham tat-kṛtam cābhipadyate*

*anarthopaśamaṁ sāksād bhakti-yogam adhokṣaje  
lokasyājānato vyāsaś cakre sāvata-saṁhitām*

*yasyām vai śrūyamāṇāyām kṛṣṇe parama-pūruṣe  
bhaktir utpadyate puṁsaḥ śoka-moha-bhayāpahā*

*sa saṁhitām bhāgavatīm kṛtvānukramya cātmaḥ  
śukam adhyāpayām āsa nivṛtti-nirataḥ munim*

**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 Sūta 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 Sūta 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 nivṛtti-nirataḥ sarvatropekṣako munih  
kasya vā bṛhatīm etām ātmārāmaḥ samabhyasat*

*iti śaunaka-praśnānantaram ca:*

*ātmārāmās ca munayo nirgranthā apy urukrame  
kurvanty ahaitukīm bhaktim ittham-bhūta-guṇo hariḥ*

*harer guṇākṣipta-matir bhagavān bādarāyaṇiḥ  
adhyagān mahad ākhyānam nityam viṣṇu-jana-priyaḥ*

*bhakti-yogena premṇā.:*

*astv evam aṅga bhajatām bhagavān mukundo  
muktim dadāti karhicit sma 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 Sūta 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 transcendental qualities and therefore can attract everyone, including liberated souls. Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī, the son of Śrīla Vyāsadeva, was not only transcendently 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 Ṛṣi 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].

Sūta 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 transcendental qualities and therefore can attract everyone, including liberated souls. Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī, the son of Śrīla Vyāsadeva, was not only transcendently 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

*praṇihite samāhite `samādhinānusmara tad-viceṣṭitam' iti taṁ prati śrī-nāradopadeśāt.  
pūrṇa-padasya mukta-pragrahayā vṛṭtyā:*

*bhagavān iti śabdo `yaṁ tathā puruṣa ity api  
vartate nirupādhiś ca vāsudeve `khilātmani*

*iti pādmottara-khaṇḍa-vacanāvaṣṭambhena, tathā:*

*kāma-kāmo yajet somam akāmaḥ puruṣam param*

*akāmaḥ sarva-kāmo vā mokṣa-kāma udāra-dhīḥ  
tivreṇa bhakti-yogena yajeta puruṣam pūrṇam*

*ity asya vākya-dvayasya pūrva-vākye `puruṣam paramātmānam prakṛty-ekopādhim  
īśvaram' uttara-vākye `puruṣam pūrṇam param nirupādhim' iti ṭikānusāreṇa ca  
pūrṇaḥ puruṣo `tra svayam bhagavān evocyate.*

**Gopiparanadhana:** "Fixed" (*praṇihite*) 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 (*samādhi*)" [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-khaṇḍa* 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 (*puruṣam pūrṇam*)" [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 Śrīdhara Svāmī] 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' (*pūrṇam*), meaning 'supreme' (*param*), that is to say, 'without any conditioning limitation.'"

BBT: The word *prāṇihite* (“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-khaṇḍa 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*:

*smarantaḥ smārayantaś ca mitho 'ghaughā-haram harim  
bhaktyā sañjātayā bhaktyā bibhraty utpulkām 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 sañjātayā 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 pūrṇam*, 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 Śrīdhara 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 *vyāsaś cakre* instead of *vidvān cakre* in Text 1.4.6 and *puruṣam pūrṇam* instead of *puruṣam param* 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 Jīva Gosvāmī analyzes Vyāsa's trance, which is the source of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and reveals its essential idea. With this analysis accomplished, Jīva makes it the basis for his explication of the whole *Bhāgavatam* in his *Ṣaṭ-sandarbha*. He has therefore dedicated twenty Texts of the *Tattva-sandarbha* (30–49) just to explore the inner purpose of Śrīla Vyāsadeva's heart and show how Śukadeva Gosvāmī's heart perfectly reflects it.

In the previous Text Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī described Śukadeva's heart even before beginning to analyze Śrīla Vyāsadeva's. Jīva 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 Sūta Gosvāmī spoke in glorification of his *guru*. By contrast, Vyāsadeva's trance is described in six verses. It was thus also more convenient for Jīva Gosvāmī to discuss Śukadeva's mood before Vyāsadeva's. In doing so he follows the *sūcī-kaṭāha-nyāya*, or "the principle of the needle and the kettle,"<sup>4</sup> 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 bhaktiḥ sādhanam bhāvaḥ premā ceti tridhoditā*. “*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: *sāndrānanda-viśeṣātmā śrī-kṛṣṇākarsīṇī 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 Jīva 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*, *jīva-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-saṁhitā*,<sup>5</sup> *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 *utpadyate* 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

devotee by the blessings of the Lord and His pure devotee.

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī goes on to explain that although there are various *puruṣa* incarnations of the Supreme Lord who create, maintain, and destroy this world, the term *puruṣam pūrṇam* in *Bhāgavatam* 1.7.4 indicates the original Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. 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 *pūrṇa-puruṣa* in *Bhāgavatam* 1.7.4, the unrestricted meaning (*mukhya-vṛtti*) of the word *pūrṇa* (literally “complete” or “perfect”) indicates Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is free of all limitations. Lord Viṣṇu’s *puruṣa* incarnations are also supreme and perfect, but They appear limited in some ways, and these limitations distinguish them from the *pūrṇa-puruṣa*. This distinction is implied in the *Bhāgavatam* statement *ete cāṁśa-kalāḥ puṁsaḥ 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 Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the original Personality of Godhead” (*Bhāg.* 1.3.28). In the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (2.1.43) Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī explains how Kṛṣṇa 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 *pūrṇa* is further supported by the use of the phrase *kṛṣṇe parama-pūruṣe* in *Bhāgavatam* 1.7.7. Here *parama-pūruṣe* is in apposition to the name Kṛṣṇa, clearly indicating equivalence. Commenting on the use of a virtually identical term—*puruṣam param*—in the Second Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* (2.3.10), Śrīdhara Svāmī says that it refers to the *pūrṇa-puruṣa*, or Complete Person.

Etymologically, *puruṣa* means “one who lies down in the city,” the city here being a metaphor for the body. Thus the word *puruṣa* 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 Śrī Kṛṣṇa, on the other hand, is never [DDB107] directly involved with the material nature at all, though He controls it through His *puruṣa* expansions.

Śrīdhara Svāmī uses the word *nirupādhi* (“free from all limiting adjuncts”) in reference to Kṛṣṇa, who is not the mere *puruṣa* but the *pūrṇa-puruṣa*. Unlike the Supersoul, [DDB108]who is seemingly limited by the *upādhi* of involvement with the material energy, Kṛṣṇa is free from all *upādhis*. This term, *upādhi*, 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 *upādhi*’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-puruṣa* 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 *puruṣa*, 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 *adhokṣaja* 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 Pūtānā. The *Hari-vamśa Purāṇa* (*Viṣṇu-parva* 101.30–32) confirms this:

*adho ’nena śayānena śakaṭāntara-cāriṇā  
rākṣasī nihatā raudrā śakuni-veṣa-dhāriṇī*

*pūtānā-nāma ghorā sā mahā-kāyā mahā-balā  
viśādigdham stanam raudram prayacchantī janārdane*

*dadṛṣur nihatām tatra rākṣasīm vana-gocarāḥ  
punar jāto ’yam ity āhur uktas tasmād adhokṣajaḥ*

“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 Kṛṣṇa, but Kṛṣṇa killed her. The residents of Vraja saw Pūtanā, who was gigantic, powerful, and terrible to look at, lying dead in the forest. But Lord Kṛṣṇa 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 pāṭhe `pūrvam evāham ihāsam' iti `tat puruṣasya puruṣatvam' iti śrauta-nirvacana-viśeṣa-puraskāreṇa ca sa evocyate. tam apaśyat śrī-veda-vyāsa iti svarūpa-śakti-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-śakti*, 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 ādyaḥ puruṣaḥ sākṣād īśvaraḥ prakṛteḥ paraḥ*

*māyām vyudasya cic-chaktyā kaivalye sthita ātmani*

*ity uktam. ata eva `māyām ca tad-apāśrayām' ity anena tasmin apa apakṛṣṭa āśrayo yasyā nilīya sthitatvād iti māyāyā na tat-svarūpa-bhūtatvam ity api labhyate. vakṣyate ca `māyā paraity abhimukhe ca vilajjamānā' iti.*

**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" (*māyām ca tad-apāśrayām*) imply that Māyā 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] “Māyā, 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 *māyām ca tad-apāśrayām* [in *Bhāgavatam* 1.7.4] to mean that Māyā takes shelter of Him in an inferior position, hiding from His sight; thus she does not constitute His *svārūpa*, or essential nature. As it is said later on, “Māyā, feeling ashamed, runs away from the Lord’s direct presence” [Bhāg. 2.7.47].

### TEXT 31.3

*svārūpa-śaktir iyam atraiva vyakti-bhaviṣyati `anarthopaśamaṁ sāksād bhakti-yogam adhokṣaje' ity anena `ātmārāmās ca' ity anena ca. pūrvatra hi bhakti-yoga-prabhāvaḥ khalv asau māyābhībhāvakatayā svarūpa-śakti-vṛttitvenaiva gamyate paratra ca te guṇā brahmānandasyāpy upari-caratayā svarūpa-śakteḥ parama-vṛttitām evārhantīti. māyādhiṣṭhāṭṭr-puruṣas tu tad-amśatvena brahma ca tādīya-nirviṣeṣāvirbhāvatvena tad-antar-bhāvenāpṛthak-dṛṣṭatvāt pṛthaṅ نکته iti jñeyam. tad etac ca dvitīya-trtīya-sandarbhayoḥ suṣṭhu pratipatsyate. ato `tra pūrva-vad eva sambandhi-tattvaṁ nirdhāritam.*

**Gopiparanadhana:** We will describe this internal energy of the Lord's later, in our discussion of the textns "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 Puruṣa 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 Sandarbhas. So thus we have again ascertained, as before [Text 29.3], the sambandhi-tattva.

BBT: We shall explain the Lord's *svarūpa-śakti* when we discuss the two verses beginning *anarthopāśamaṁ sākṣād bhakti-yogam adhokṣaje* and *ātmārāmaś ca* [Bhāgavatam 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-śakti*'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 Jīva Gosvāmī was aware that some manuscripts of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam read *yajeta puruṣaṁ pūrvam* instead of *yajeta puruṣaṁ param* in Text 2.3.10. This variant also refers to the same Personality of Godhead. The Complete Person (*puruṣaṁ pūrṇam*), Supreme Person (*puruṣaṁ param*) and Primeval Person (*puruṣaṁ pūrvam*) are one and the same. To substantiate this, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī presents two related statements of śruti. 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 Śrīdhara 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: *govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi* ("I worship Govinda [Kṛṣṇa], 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--Kāraṇodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu and Kṣīrodakaśāyī 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 Puruṣa. When all forms of life are then sent forth into creation, the Lord becomes the third Puruṣa, entering along with each living soul into their material bodies. In this way, the Supreme Person as the Puruṣa expands Himself to become the Paramātmā; Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu is the Supersoul of the total universe (samaṣṭi-paramātmā) and Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu is the Paramātmā accompanying each individual soul (vyaṣṭi-paramātmā).

Śrīla Rādhā-mohana Gosvāmī points out that lexicographers have explained the derivation of the word puruṣa in similar terms. One etymology of puruṣa is purā āsit ("He existed previously.") and another is puri śarīre śete ("He sits down in the pur, the material body."). Nārada Muni also speaks like this in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (7.14.37):

*purāṇy anena sṛṣṭāni/ nṛ-tiryag-ṛṣi-devatāḥ  
śete jīvena rūpeṇa/ pureṣu puruṣo 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 [śete] with the living beings as Paramātmā. Thus He is known as the Puruṣa avatāra."

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 anuccheda, His internal svarūpa-śakti and His external Māyā. The Lord's svarūpa-śakti 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 Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, in Her unlimited spiritual expansions which join each of the expanded forms of Godhead, and in the devotional service of liberated jīvas. When Mahā-Viṣṇu lies down to create the material world in His mystic sleep (yoga-nidrā), He is actually enjoying within Himself with His internal pleasure potency: ātmanā ramayā reme tyakta-kālam sisṛkṣayā (Brahma-saṁhitā 5.7, "As He intends to send forth His separated energy, He continues enjoying with His internal consort.").

Māyā is also a personal energy of the Lord, an expansion of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, 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. Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa 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 *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* have the word *pūrvam* ("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”: *purā āsīt iti puruṣaḥ*. 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 prabhavaḥ*. “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-śakti-balaiśvarya-vīrya-tejāmsy aśeṣataḥ  
bhagavac-chabda-vācyāni vinā heyair 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, *hlādinī sandhinī samvit tvayy ekā sarva-saṁśraye*: “The *hlādinī*, *sandhinī*, and *samvit* potencies exist only in You [the Supreme Lord], who are the shelter of everything.” *Hlādinī* is the Lord’s pleasure potency, *sandhinī* His supporting potency, and *samvit* His cognition potency. These three potencies constitute the Lord’s *svarūpa*, or His [DDB111] essential, internal nature. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī will give a detailed explanation of these potencies in the *Bhagavat-sandarbhā*.

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 Jīva Gosvāmī 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. Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī 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 Śrīmatī 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 *jīvas*). *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 *Māyādevī*, 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 vilajjamānā*: “*Māyādevī* keeps away from the Lord, feeling ashamed to come before



[DDB113]Him.” Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa 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 ātmānaṁ tri-guṇātmakam  
paro ’pi manute ’nartham tat-kṛtam cābhipadyate*

“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-gītā* (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 *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.7.9), Maitreya Muni responds to a question from Vidura as follows:

*seyam bhagavato māyā yan nayena virudhyate  
īśvarasya vimuktasya kārpaṇyam 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 Cakravartī Ṭhākura 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-gītā* (9.10) Lord Kṛṣṇa says, *mayādhyakṣeṇa prakṛtiḥ 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 Kṛṣṇa and is entirely dependent on Him, the description of Vyāsadeva’s trance need not mention the Paramātmā separately. The same holds true for Brahman, which is nothing but the effulgence emanating from the Lord’s transcendental body. Like the Paramātmā, Brahman has no existence independent of the Lord. Kṛṣṇa confirms this in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (14.27): *brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham*. “I am the basis of the impersonal Brahman.” According to the *Nirukti* dictionary, *pratiṣṭhīyate asminn iti pratiṣṭhā*: “*Pratiṣṭhā* means ‘shelter’ or ‘basis.’” Just as the sun globe is the basis of the sunshine, so Kṛṣṇa is the basis of the Brahman 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 Kṛṣṇa, and that the process for attaining Him is *bhakti-yoga*. Brahman 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 Kṛṣṇa, automatically realizes Brahman 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 prāk pratipāditasyaivābhidheyasya prayojanasya ca sthāpakam jīvasya svarūpata  
eva parameśvarād vailakṣṇyam apaśyad ity āha yayeti. yayā māyayā sammohito  
jīvaḥ svayaṁ cid-rūpatvena tri-guṇātmakāḥ jaḍāt paro ’py ātmānam tri-guṇātmakam  
jaḍam dehādi-saṅghātam manute tan-manana-kṛtam anarthaṁ saṁsāra-vyasanam  
cābhipadyate.*

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 cid-rūpatve ’pi yayā sammohitaḥ iti manute iti ca svarūpa-bhūta-  
jñāna-śālitvaṁ vyanakti prakāśaika-rūpasya tejasah sva-para-prakāśana-śakti-vat.*

*ajñānenāvṛtaṁ jñānaṁ tena muhyanti jantavaḥ*

*iti śrī-gītābhyaḥ. tad evam upādher eva jīvatvaṁ tan-nāśasyaiva mokṣatvam iti matāntaraṁ pariḥṛtavān. atra yayā sammohita ity anena tasyā eva tatra kartṛtvam bhagavatas tatrodāsīnatvam (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 sammohitaḥ* (“deluded by that [Māyā]”) and *manute* (“he considers”) and confirmed by the following words [in *Bhagavad-gītā* 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 uninvolved.

### Text 32.3

*vakṣyate ca:*

*vilajjamānayā yasya sthātum īkṣā-pathe ’muyā  
vimohitā vikatthante mamāham iti durdhiyaḥ*

*iti. atra vilajjamānayā ity anenedam āyāti, tasyā jīva-sammohanaṁ karma śrī-bhagavate na rocata iti yady api sāvayaṁ jānāti tathāpi bhayaṁ dvitīyābhīniveśataḥ syād īśād apetasya iti diśā jīvānām anādi-bhagavad-ajñāna-maya-vaimukhyam asahamānā svarūpāvaraṇam asvarūpāveśaṁ 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” (*vilajjamānayā*) 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 (*pāramārthika*) 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 *sammohitaḥ* (“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 Kṛṣṇa therefore says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (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 Kṛṣṇa 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):

*kṛṣṇa bhuli' sei jīva anādi-bahirmukha  
ataeva māyā tāre deya samsāra-duḥkha*

“Forgetting Kṛṣṇa, 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 Kṛṣṇa, he is immediately entrapped by the illusory, external energy. The living entity is originally part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa and is therefore the superior energy of Kṛṣṇa. . . . [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 Kṛṣṇa. 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 Kṛṣṇa, 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 *sādhana-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-sandarbhā*, 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 bewildering the *jīva*. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī answers this question in the next Text.

## TEXT 33

Text 33.1

*śrī-bhagavānś cānādita eva bhaktāyām prapañcādhikāriṇyām tasyām dākṣiṇyam  
laṅghitum na śaknoti. tathā tad-bhayenāpi jīvanām sva-sāmmukhyam vāñchann  
upadiśati:*

*daivī hy eṣā guṇa-mayī mama māyā duratyayā  
mām eva ye prapadyante māyām etām taranti te*

*satām prasaṅgān mama vīrya-saṁvido  
bhavanti hṛt-karṇa-rasāyanāḥ kathāḥ  
taj-joṣaṇād āśv apavarga-vartmani  
śraddhā ratir bhaktir anukramiṣyati*

*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

*līlayā śrīmad-vyāsa-rūpeṇa tu viśiṣṭatayā tad upadiṣṭavān ity anantaram evāyāsyati  
anarthopaśamaṁ sāksād iti. tasmād dvayor api tat tat samañjasaṁ jñeyam. n māyā  
khalu śaktiḥ śaktiś ca kārya-kṣamatvaṁ tac ca dharma-viśeṣaḥ, tasyāḥ katham  
lajjādikam. ucyate evaṁ saty api bhagavati tāsām śaktīnām adhiṣṭhātṛ-devyaḥ  
śrūyante yathā kenopaniṣadi mahendra-māyayoḥ saṁvādaḥ. tad āstām prastutaṁ  
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 *anarthopaśamaṁ sākṣād* [*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 Jīva 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 Jīva 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 Jīva Gosvāmī answers this question by citing the verse beginning *satām prasaṅgān mama vīrya-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:

*buddhīndriya-manaḥ-prāṇān janānām asṛjat prabhuh  
mātrārtham ca bhavārtham 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 *jīva* 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-gītā* (4.37):

*yathaidhāmsi samiddho 'gnir bhasma-sāt kurute 'rjuna  
jñānāgniḥ sarva-karmāṇi 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 *jīvas* 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 *jīvas* 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 transcendental understanding because one's mind becomes too disturbed to contemplate scriptural truths. Second, ceaseless misery is not necessary because any *jīva* with even a little rudimentary transcendental knowledge will realize that there is no real happiness in this material world. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (8.15) Lord Kṛṣṇa characterizes this world as temporary and devoid of happiness: *anityam asukhaṁ 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-duḥkha-sukhaṁ dhīraṁ so 'mṛtatvāya 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 *jīvas*: 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 Jīva Gosvāmī will discuss this point in more detail in Śrī Bhagavat-sandarbhā.) 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 Māyādevī 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 Kṛṣṇa answers in the Bhagavad-gītā (14.4):

*sarva-yoniṣu kaunteya murtayaḥ sambhavanti yāḥ  
tāsāṃ brahma mahad yonir ahaṃ bīja-pradāḥ pitā*

"It should be understood that all species of life, O son of Kuntī, 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 Kṛṣṇa confirms in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (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 tādṛṣa-cid-rūpatve 'pi parameśvarato vailakṣaṇyaṃ tad-apāśrayāṃ iti  
yayā sammohita iti ca darśayati.*

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-apāśrayam*. 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's inner apartments.

While unable to influence the Lord or His internal potencies, Māyā can influence the *jīva*, as the words *yayā sammohitaḥ* 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 *jīvas* are different from the Lord, though they are qualitatively equal with Him in some respects.

Commenting on *Bhāgavatam* 1.7.4, Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa 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”), *sammohitaḥ* (“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 *Bhāllaveya-śruti* states, *atha ha vāva nityāni puruṣaḥ prakṛtir ātmā kālāḥ*: “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):

*anādir bhagavān kālo nānto 'sya dvija vidyate  
avyucchināstataḥ tv ete sarga-sthity-anta-saṁyamāḥ*

“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 Kṛṣṇa says :

*prakṛtiṁ puruṣaṁ caiva viddhy anādī ubhāv api  
vikārāṁś ca guṇāṁś caiva viddhi 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-varṣiṇī*, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī [DDB132] Ṭhākura says, *māyā-jīvayor api mac-chaktīvena anādītvāt tayor saṁśleśo 'py anādir iti bhāvah*: “[Lord Kṛṣṇa 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 nānāditvāt*. “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*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

In the next eight Texts, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī shows that Śrī Vyāsa's experience refutes the popular monistic philosophy of Śrī Śāṅkarācārya.

## TEXT 35

*yarhy eva yad ekaṁ cid-rūpaṁ brahma māyāśrayatā-balitaṁ vidyā-mayaṁ tarhy eva  
tan māyā-viśayatāpannam avidyā-paribhūtaṁ cety ayuktam iti jīveśvara-vibhāgo  
'vagataḥ. tataś ca svarūpa-sāmarthyā-vailakṣaṇyena tad dvitayaṁ mitho vilakṣaṇa-  
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 śṛṇu kila sarvātma-gilanīḥ*: “My dear mind, never listen to talk about liberation, which is like a tigress who swallows everything, including the self” (*Manaḥ-śikṣā* 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, *māyāvādi-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 Madhvācārya presented forceful refutations of the Māyāvāda theory in a similar vein. One of his most impressive efforts in this line was his *Māyāvā*[DDB135]*da-khaṇḍanam*. 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 Śaṅkarācārya 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-gītā*. 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 ānandaṁ brahma* (“Brahman is consciousness and bliss”; *Bṛhad-āranyaka Up.* 3.9.28), and *neha nānāsti kiñcana* (“Ultimately no variety exists in this world”; *Bṛhad-āranyaka Up.* 4.4.19).

But then to explain the obvious variety in this world, the Māyāvādīs are forced to introduce the idea of some beginningless entity called Māyā, or illusion. The Māyāvādīs 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 Śāṅkarites quote the Vedic statement *rte jñānān na muktiḥ*: “There is no liberation without knowledge.”

A favorite analogy the Māyāvādīs 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 Māyāvādīs 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 Parīkṣit Mahārāja imparted by Śukadeva, the leader of all transcendentalists:

*ghaṭe bhinne yathākāśa ākāśaḥ syād yathā purā  
evaṁ 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,

*ahaṁ brahma param dhāma brahmāhaṁ paramaṁ param  
evaṁ samīkṣann ātmānam 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*, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī will briefly discuss why such verses seem to have an impersonal slant, and in *Śrī Paramātmā-sandarbha*, Texts[DDB140] 72–84, he will provide a more detailed discussion.

Śrīla 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. Śrīla Vyāsa saw all this in His trance.

In the next Text, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī states that the difference between the *jīva* and the Lord is real and not just empirical.

## TEXT 36

*na copādhi-tāratamya-maya-pariccheda-pratibimbatvādi-vyavasthayā tayor vibhāgaḥ 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 (*ghaṭākāśa*).

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 so 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 by *vidyā* 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 *Vedānta-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 *Śuka-rahasya Upaniṣad* (2.12) they quote the statement *kāryopādhir ayam jīvaḥ kāraṇopādhir īśvaraḥ*: “The *jīva* is a reflection [of Brahman] in the *antaḥ-karaṇa*, or heart, and the *īśvara* is a reflection in Māyā.”<sup>7</sup>

Also: *yathā hy ayam jyotir ātmā vivasvān āpo bhittvā bahudhaiko 'nugacchan upādhinā kriyate bheda-rūpo devaḥ kṣetreṣv evam ajo 'yam ātmā*[DDB155]. “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.”<sup>8</sup> (This text is quoted by Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa in his *Tattva-sandarbhā* commentary.)

Some Advaita monists also cite *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in support of their *pratibimba-vāda* and *pariccheda-vāda*:

*na hi satyasya nānātvam avidvān yadi manyate  
nānātvam chidrayor yadvaj jyotiṣor 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”<sup>9</sup> (*Bhāg.* 12.4.30).

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, following in Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s footsteps, contends that Śrī Vyāsadeva’s experience in trance contradicts both of these Māyāvāda doctrines—namely, *pratibimba-vāda* and *pariccheda-vāda*. This contradiction is evident from the analysis Jīva Gosvāmī 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 vāstavatvaṁ tarhy aṣṭayasya tasya pariccheda-  
viṣayatvāsambhavaḥ. nirdharmakasya vyāpakasya niravayavasya ca  
pratibimbatvāyogo ’pi upādhi-sambandhābhāvād bimba-pratibimba-bhedābhāvād  
dṛśyatvābhāvāc ca. upādhi-parichinnākāśa-stha-jyotir-aṁśasyaiva pratibimbo dṛśyate  
na tu ākāśasya dṛśyatvābhāvād eva.*

If we assume that these *upādhis* 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—

*prātibhāsika* (merely apparent reality), *vyāvahārika* (ordinary, empirical reality), and *pāramārthika* (absolute reality). *Prātibhāsika* 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 *prātibhāsika-sattā*. It cannot be considered an empirical reality because it is private and temporary.

According to the Māyāvādīs, empirical reality, *vyāvahārika-sattā*, refers to our perception of the material world in ordinary waking consciousness. Ultimate reality, *pāramārthika-sattā*, is present in all objects of the material world, pervading them as the blissful source of all manifest varieties. In his *Dṛg-dṛśya-viveka* (20) Śrīpāda Śaṅkarācārya writes:

*asti bhāti priyaṃ rūpaṃ nāma cety aṁśa-pañcakam  
ādyā-trayaṃ brahma-rūpaṃ jagad-rūpaṃ 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 Māyāvādīs claim that the *pāramārthika-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, *prātibhāsika* and *vyāvahārika*, are not perceived on this level of consciousness.

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī refutes both the *pariccheda-vāda* (the theory of division) and the *pratibimba-vāda* (the theory of reflection) by considering the Śaṅkarites’ 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 Jīva Gosvāmī 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-gītā* (13.13) Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa confirms this:

*jñeyam yat tat pravakṣyāmi yaj jñātvāmṛtam aśnute  
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 Śaṅkarācārya, this *Gītā* 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 Śaṅkara writes:

[DDB157]

*idaṁ tu jñeyam atīndriyatvena śabdaika-pramāṇa-gamyatvān na ghaṭādi-vad ubhaya-buddhy-anugata-pratyaya-viṣayam ity ato na san na asad ity ucyate. yat tv uktaṁ 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 *asad*.”

“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 Māyāvādīs’ 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” (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka 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-gītā*, which the Māyāvādīs 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.

Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa states that even if the above point is overlooked, other inconsistencies abound in the Māyāvāda conception: The *jīvas* and the [DDB162]*īśvara* 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 *upādhis*[DDB168]; in this case all-pervading Brahman must also exist in the *upādhis*, in which it supposedly reflects. But if the reflected object, Brahman, is already present in the reflecting medium, the *upādhis*, 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: *niṣkalam niṣkriyam śāntam*. “Brahman contains no limbs or parts. It is inactive and peaceful” (*Śvetāśvatara 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, *asaṅgo hy ayam puruṣaḥ*: “Brahman is free from any relation or association” (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka 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 *Praśnopaniṣad* (4.10) confirms this when it states, *tad acchāyam aśarīram 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 Jīva Gosvāmī presents more arguments against the Māyāvāda doctrine, hypothetically considering Brahman’s *upādhis* as real.

## TEXT 38

*tathā vāstava-paricchedātau sati sāmānādhikarāṇya-jñāna-mātreṇa na tat-tyāgaś ca bhavet. tat-padārtha-prabhāvas tatra kāraṇam iti ced asmākam eva mataṁ*

sammataṃ.

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).

*Tad ātmānam eva vedāham brahmāsmi*: “It knew Itself: [DDB169]I am Brahman” (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Up.* 1.4.10).

*Tat tvam asy-ādi-vākyebhyaḥ jñānam mokṣasya sādhanam*: “The means to liberation is knowledge arising from [DDB170]such dictums as “Thou art that”” (*Bṛhan-nāradiya Pur.* 35.68).

*Brahma veda brahmaiva bhavati*: “He who knows that Brahman becomes Brahman” (*Muṇḍaka Up.* 3.2.9).

*Tarati śokam 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/ nānyaḥ 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-gītā* (4.37) Lord Kṛṣṇa says:

*yathaidāmsi 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 sadṛśam pavitram iha vidyate*: “Nothing is as purifying as knowledge”; and *jñānam labdhvā parām śāntim acireṇādhigacchati*: “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 [DDB172]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 *sādhana-catustaya*, 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 asi*: [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 asi* 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-lakṣaṇā*, 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 *śruti* statements cannot be meaningless, Śaṅkara contends, this is the only way to understand the *mahā-vākya*.

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī 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 *śāstras*, 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 viddhy uddhava śarīriṇām  
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-gītā* (7.14):

*daivī hy eṣā guṇa-mayī mama māyā duratyayā  
mām eva ye prapadyante māyām 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 viditvā ati mṛtyum eti*, the word *viditvā* (“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-gītā* (4.9):

*janma karma ca me divyam evaṁ yo vetti tattvataḥ  
tyaktvā dehaṁ punar janma naiti mām 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 *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (4.4.21) bears out our conclusion that *vidyā* indicates knowledge with devotion: *vijñāya prajñam kurvīta*. “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:

*nāham vedair na tapasā na dānena na cejyayā  
śakya evaṁ-vidho draṣṭuṁ dṛṣṭavān asi mām yathā*

*bhaktyā tv ananyayā śakya aham evaṁ-vidho ’rjuna  
jñātuṁ draṣṭuṁ ca tattvena praveṣṭuṁ 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-sandarbhā* 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

*upādher āvidyakatve tu tatra tat-paricchinnatvāder apy aghaṭamānatvād*

*āvidyakatvam eveti ghaṭākāśādiṣu vāstavopādhi-maya-tad-darśanayā na teṣāṃ  
avāstava-svapna-drṣṭāntopajīvinām siddhāntaḥ sidhyati ghaṭamānāghaṭamānayoḥ  
saṅgateḥ kartum aśakyatvāt. tataś ca teṣāṃ tat tat sarvam avidyā-vilasitam eveti  
svarūpam aprāptena tena tena tad tad vyavasthāpayitum aśakyam.*

Conversely, if the *upādhis* are only apparently real, then Brahman's delimitation (*pariccheda-vāda*) and reflection (*pratibimba-vāda*) are also apparently real, since these processes would not in fact occur. Because in this case the Māyāvādīs' 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 Māyāvādīs' theories of division and reflection are nothing but the play of illusion, unprovable by their faulty application of analogies.

## COMMENTARY

Further Refutations of *Pratibimba-vāda* and *Pariccheda-vāda*

In previous Texts, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has shown that if Brahman's *upādhis* are empirically real one cannot satisfactorily explain the existence of either the *jīvas* or the *īśvara*. Now he will consider the Śāṅkarites' second option, that Brahman's *upādhis* are only apparent. In this Text the *upādhis* are called *āvidyaka*, or "illusory," a specific reference to *prātibhāsika* reality as defined in Māyāvāda theory. In this context the Śāṅkarites do not intend "illusory" to mean altogether nonexistent, for nonexistence can never give rise to either the *jīva* or the *īśvara*. 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 (*prātibhāsika-sattā*) is inferior to the empirical world and to absolute reality. Nonetheless, the Māyāvādīs posit that such apparent *upādhis* can cause Brahman to take on the characteristics of *jīvas* and the *īśvara*.

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 whiles 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 nor 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 *prātibhāsika* 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] *īśvara* and the *jīvas*.

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī offers still more refutations of impersonalism in the next Text.

## TEXT 40

*iti brahmāvidyayoḥ paryavasāne sati yad eva brahma cin-mātratvenāvidyā-yogasyātyantābhāvāspadatatvāc chuddham tad eva tad-yogād aśuddhyā jīvaḥ punas tad eva jīvāvidyā-kalpita-māyāśrayatvād īśvaras tad eva ca tan-māyā-viṣayatvāj jīva iti virodhas tad-avastha eva syāt. tatra ca śuddhāyām city avidyā tad-avidyā-kalpitopādhau tasyām īśvarākhyāyām vidyēti tathā vidyā-vatte 'pi māyikatvam ity asamañjasā ca kalpanā syād ity-ādy anusandheyam.*

In this way, by basing their ideas on Brahman and *avidyā* alone, the Māyāvādīs contradict themselves when they say that the one undivided Brahman, 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 Māyāvādīs, that same Brahman 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, Brahman supposedly once more becomes the *jīva*. Here we have *avidyā* within the pure spiritual being (Brahman), *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 Brahman becomes divided into the many *jīvas*, still the contradiction between Brahman's perfection and the superimposition of *avidyā* will remain unresolved.

How can Brahman, 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, Brahman cannot become fragmented to manifest the *jīvas*. Moreover, the absolute existence cannot include Māyā (*avidyā*), but only Brahman alone. For Māyā to be involved with Brahman, either Brahman would have to degrade itself to Māyā's empirical level so it could be adulterated by *upādhis*, or else Māyā would have to elevate herself to the absolute plane of Brahman so that she could influence it. The first of these alternatives is impossible because Brahman is without attributes and cannot change. The second alternative

amounts to dualism, because then Māyā 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 Māyā 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 Māyā'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 Māyāvādīs 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 Māyāvādīs say that after Brahman comes under the influence of *avidyā* He is called the [DDB185]*jīva*. Then this *jīva* creates Māyā by his imagination. A portion of Brahman next gives shelter to Māyā and becomes known as the [DDB186]*īśvara*, or the Supreme Lord. From that point on Māyā follows the [DDB187]*īśvara*'s dictates and controls the *jīva*, who is Brahman covered by Māyā. So the [DDB188]*īśvara* is the basis of Māyā, and the *jīva* is her *viśaya*, or object of action.

This is self-contradictory. This explanation is plagued with the logical fault called *anyonyāśraya-doṣa*, or “the defect of mutual dependence”: Māyā's existence supposedly originates from the *jīva*, and the *jīva*'s existence also originates from Māyā. This means that without Māyā there is no *jīva* and without the [DDB189]*jīva* there is no Māyā. In addition, a part of Brahman supposedly becomes the [DDB190]*īśvara* by contacting Māyā, but then Māyā 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 Māyā. So ultimately the [DDB191]*īśvara* is dependent on Māyā for His existence.

Another absurdity in the *pariccheda-vāda* and *pratibimba-vāda* presentations is the claim that Māyā has two features—*vidyā* and *avidyā*. The *upādhi* delimiting Brahman as the [DDB192]*īśvara* is supposedly Māyā's *vidyā* 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 Māyāvādīs cannot explain how such a division of Māyā 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 Māyāvāda 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 Vaiṣṇava 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-vyākāraṇa* (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 (*anirvacanīya*). But in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.16) Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa recognizes only two categories, *sat* and *asat*:

*nāsato vidyate bhāvo nābhāvo vidyate sataḥ  
ubhayor api dṛṣṭo 'ntas tv anayos tattva-darśibhiḥ*

“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 (*anirvacanīya* or

*mithyā*), neither real nor unreal, the Śāṅkarites 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 *anirvacanīya*, inexplicable, and to it the Śāṅkarites 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 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 asi* (“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 Śāṅkarites 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 Śāṅkara 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), *mamaivāṁśo jīva-loke jīva-bhūtaḥ sanātanaḥ*: “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 Māyāvādīs' philosophy is opposed to the truths revealed in Vyāsadeva's meditative experience, and having highlighted some of the prominent defects in their logic, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī next argues that the monistic conclusion also contradicts the experience of Śukadeva Gosvāmī, the principal speaker of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

## TEXT 41

*kiṁ ca yady atrābheda-vāda eva tātparyam abhaviṣyat tarhy ekam eva brahmājñānena bhinnam jñānena tu tasya bheda-mayaṁ duḥkham vilīyata ity apaśyad ity evāvakṣyat. tathā śrī-bhagaval-līlādīnām vāstavatvābhāve sati śrī-śuka-hṛdaya-virodhaś ca jāyate.*

Furthermore, if the *jīvas*' absolute oneness with Brahman were the actual purport of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Sūta Gosvāmī 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 Jīva Gosvāmī now proceeds to disprove it by reference to *śabda-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 *śabda-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 Tattva-sandarbhā*, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī 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 adhokṣaje*), not imagining a state of oneness with Him.

In Sūta Gosvāmī's prayers to Śukadeva Gosvāmī, his spiritual master, Sūta confirms that merging with impersonal Brahman is an inferior goal. While speaking *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to the sages at Naimiṣāraṇya, Sūta Gosvāmī specifically mentions that originally Śukadeva was absorbed in the bliss of Brahman. 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. *Śuka* 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 Gosvāmī's lips and then tasted by Parīkṣit Mahārāja, it became sweeter than ever.

Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī'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 Gosvāmī, the most eminent of all Brahman-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 Gosvāmī explains the purpose of the monistic statements found in the Vedic scriptures.

## TEXT 42

*tasmāt pariccheda-pratibimbatvādi-pratipādaka-śāstrāṇy api kathaṅcit tad-sādrśyena gaunyaiva vṛtṭyā pravarteran. ambu-vad-agrahaṇāt tu na tathātvam, vṛddhi-hrāsa-bhāktatvam antar-bhāvād ubhaya-sāmañjasyād evam iti pūrvottara-pakṣa-maya-*

nyāyābhyām.

Therefore scriptural passages that appear to favor such doctrines as *pariccheda-vāda* 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 *gaunī-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 *apauruṣeya* 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 *apauruṣeya-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 (*pādas*). These are further divided into *adhikaraṇas*. Each *adhikaraṇa* includes a topic 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 *saṅgati*, a demonstration of how the *adhikaraṇa* relates to other *adhikaraṇas*. 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 copamā sūryakādi-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 Vidyābhūṣaṇa 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 *śruti* 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 [DDB198] 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 *śāstra*, 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

*tata evābheda-śāstrāṅy ubhayoś cid-rūpatvena jīva-samūhasya tad-ekatve 'pi durghaṭa-ghaṭanā-paṭīyasyā svābhāvika-tad-acintya-śaktyā svabhāvata eva tad-raśmi-paramāṇu-gaṇa-sthānīyatvāt tad-vyatirekeṇāvvyatirekeṇa ca virodham pariḥṛtyāgre muhur api tad-etad-vyāsa-samādhi-labdha-siddhānta-yojanāya yojanīyāni.*

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 Jīva Gosvāmī gives his definitive opinion about the relation between the *jīvas* and the Supreme Lord. Both the Lord and the *jīvas* 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 *jīvas* are sometimes described as nondifferent from Him.

Thus we should never misunderstand the Vedic statements about oneness to mean that the Lord and the *jīva* 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 *jīva*’s and Brahman’s oneness, our criterion always remaining whether our interpretation is consistent with the principles derived from Śrīla Vyāsadeva’s trance.

Śrīla Jīva 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 *jīvas* are like atomic rays of light in relation to the sunlike Lord. As the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (6.8) states, *parāśya 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 *jīvas* are simultaneously one with and different from the Lord. The *Vedas*’ descriptions of nondifference refer to the qualitative oneness of the Lord and the *jīvas*, and the *Vedas*’ descriptions of difference refer to their quantitative difference.

The *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (2.1.20) provides an analogy to help us understand: *yathāgneḥ visphulingā vyuccaranti evam eva asmād ātmanaḥ sarve prāṇāḥ sarve lokāḥ sarve devāḥ sarvāṇi bhūtāni 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 *jīvas* 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 Māyāvādīs 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 *Īsopaniṣad* (5):

*tad ejati tan naijati tad dūre tad v antike  
tad antarasya sarvasya tad u sarvasyāśya 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 Vidyābhūṣaṇa 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 Māyāvādīs 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-kukkuṭī*,”<sup>10</sup> 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 Brahman, is by nature purely conscious.
2. The *jīva*, like Brahman, is distinct from matter.
3. The *jīva* is one of Brahman's energies.
4. The *jīva* is eternally dependent on Brahman.
5. The *jīva* can never be absolutely one with Brahman.
6. The *jīva* is constitutionally the eternal servitor of Brahman.
7. The analogies of reflection and delimitation help us understand the purely spiritual nature of Brahman.

In the *Paramātma-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 evaṁ māyāśrayatva-māyā-mohitatvābhyāṁ sthite dvayor bhede daivī hy eṣā ity-  
ādi-nyāyena tad-bhajanasyaivābhidheyatvam 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 Vyāsadeva 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*: *yayā sammohito jīvaḥ* (*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 Vyāsadeva 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): *daivī hy eṣā guṇa-mayī mama māyā duratyayā/ mām eva ye prapadyante māyām etāṁ 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 Yudhiṣṭhira Mahārāja (*Bhāg.* 7.15.28–29):

*ṣaḍ-varga-saṁyamaikāntāḥ sarvā niyama-codanāḥ  
tad-antā yadi no yogān āvaheyuḥ śramāvahāḥ*

*yathā vārtādayo hy arthā yogasyārtham na bibhrati  
anarthāya bhaveyuḥ sma pūrtam iṣṭam 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 *bhede* (“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 he 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

*ataḥ śrī-bhagavata eva sarva-hitopadeṣṭṛtvāt sarva-duḥkha-haratvād rāsmīnām sūrya-  
vat sarveṣāṁ parama-svarūpatvāt sarvādhika-guṇa-śālitvāt parama-prema-yogatvam  
iti prayojanam 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 *puruṣārthas*, 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 Gosvāmī 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 *puruṣārtha*; 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-puruṣārtha*): *premā pum-artho mahān*. Lord Caitanya established this *puruṣārtha* with reference to the *Vedas*, and in the course of doing so He relied especially on "the spotless *Purāna*," *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 Jīva Gosvāmī 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 Prīti-sandarbhā*.

In this Text Śrīla Jīva 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:

*sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja  
ahaṁ tvām sarva-pāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ*

“[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)11:

*siddhāntatas tv abhede 'pi kṛṣṇa-śrīśa-svarūpayoḥ  
rasenotkṛṣyate kṛṣṇa-rūpam eṣa 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 parama-pūruṣe 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

*tatrābhidheyam ca tādr̥śatvena dṛṣṭavān api yatas tat-pravṛtṭy-artham śrī-  
bhāgavatākhyām imām sātṛvata-saṁhitām pravartitavān ity āha anartheti. bhakti-yogo  
'tra śravaṇa-kīrtanādi-lakṣaṇaḥ sādhana-bhakti-yogo na tu prema-lakṣaṇaḥ.  
anuṣṭhānaṁ hy upadeśāpekṣam prema tu tat-prasādāpekṣam 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 Sūta 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

*tathāpi tasya tat-prasāda-hetos tat-prema-phala-garbhatvāt sāksād  
evānarthopāśamanatvaṁ, na tv anyā-sāpekṣatvena yat karmabhir yat tapasā jñāna-  
vairāgyayataś ca yat ity-ādau sarvaṁ mad-bhakti-yogena mad-bhakto labhate ’ñjasā  
svargāpavargam ity-ādeḥ. jñānādes tu bhakti-sāpekṣatvam eva śreyāḥ-ṣṭim bhaktim  
ity-ādeḥ. atha vā anarthasya saṁsāra-vyasanasya tāvat sāksād  
avyavadhānenopāśamanam sammohādi-dvayasya tu premākhyā-svīya-phala-  
dvāreṇety arthaḥ. ataḥ pūrva-vad evātrābhidheyam darśitam.*

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 (*anarthopāśamanam sāksād*), without depending on anything else. As the Lord states in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* [11.20.32–33], “Everything that can be achieved by fruitive 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 *anarthopāśamanam 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 bewilderment 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 Jīva Gosvāmī concluded from his analysis of 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, Śukadeva 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, *sādhana-bhakti*. Unlike *sādhana-bhakti*, *prema-bhakti* does not depend on instruction because at that stage a devotee offers devotional service to the Lord spontaneously.

*Sādhana-bhakti* 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 *sādhana-bhakti* 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 *sādhana-bhakti*. 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:

*samyañ-masṛṇita-svānto mamatvātiśayāṅkitaḥ  
bhāvaḥ sa eva sāndrātmā budhaiḥ premā 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 *aṣṭāṅga-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 Śukadeva Gosvāmī lists various demigods one may worship to fulfill material desires, he concludes:

*akāmaḥ sarva-kāmo vā mokṣa-kāma udāra-dhīḥ  
tīvreṇa bhakti-yogena yajeta puruṣaṁ 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, *anarthopaśamaṁ sākṣād bhakti-yogam*: “*Bhakti-yoga* directly mitigates the miseries of the conditioned soul.” Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī gives two explanations of the word *sākṣād* (“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 Jīva 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-svarūpatvaṁ vyañjayitum grantha-phala-nirdeśa-dvārā tatra tad-  
anubhavāntaraṁ pratipādayann āha yasyām iti. bhaktiḥ premā śravaṇa-rūpayā  
sādhana-bhaktyā sādhyatvāt. utpadyate āvirbhavati. tasyānuṣaṅgikam guṇam āha  
śoketi atraiṣāṁ saṁskāro ’pi naśyatīti bhāvaḥ, prītir 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, Sūta 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 *śoka-moha-bhayāpaha*—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

*parama-pūruṣe pūrvokta-pūrṇa-puruṣe. kim-ākāre ity apekṣāyām āha kṛṣṇe. kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayamity-ādi-śāstra-sahasra-bhāvitāntaḥ-karaṇānām paramparayā tat-prasiddhi-madhya-pātinām cāsaṅkhyā-lokānām tan-nāma-śravaṇa-mātreṇa yaḥ prathama-pratīti-viśayaḥ syāt tathā tan-nāmaḥ prathamākṣara-mātram mantrāya kalpyamānam yasyābhimukhyāya syāt tad-ākāre ity arthaḥ. āhuś ca nāma-kaumudī-kārāḥ kṛṣṇa-śabdasya tamāla-śyāmala-tviṣi yaśodāyāḥ stanana-dhaye para-brahmaṇi rūḍhiḥ iti.*

In this verse [Bhāg. 1.7.7] the word *parama-pūruṣe* (“for the Supreme Person”) refers to the same *pūrṇa-puruṣa* (“complete person”) mentioned earlier [Bhāg. 1.7.4]. What is His form? To this Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī replies, “Kṛṣṇa.” In other words, for those whose hearts are enriched with thousands of scriptural statements such as *kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam* (“Kṛṣṇa 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 Kṛṣṇa in this verse [Bhāg. 1.7.7]. This is confirmed by the author of *Nāma-kaumudī*: “The conventional meanings of the name Kṛṣṇa are ‘one who is black like a *tamāla* tree,’ ‘He who was breast-fed by Śrī Yaśodā,’ and ‘the Supreme Brahman.’”

## COMMENTARY

Devotional Service Completely Frees One from Material Miseries

In Text 45 Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī summarized Śrīla Vyāsadeva’s realizations concerning *prayojana-tattva*. Sūta 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. *Bhakti* 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 śreṣṭhā govinda-hṛta-mānasāḥ  
yeṣāṃ śrīṣa-prasādo'pi mano hartuṃ 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 Ṛṣabhadeva 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 *prajoyana* 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*[DDB203]*ruṣa*, 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 Śrīmatī Kuntīdevī addresses Lord Kṛṣṇa as Kṛṣṇa-sakha, “the friend of Kṛṣṇa [Arjuna].” And Vyāsadeva was also sometimes called Kṛṣṇa. Nonetheless, as soon as Vaiṣṇavas 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 Vidyābhūṣaṇa, this is the spontaneous experience of eminent personalities like Sūta Gosvāmī, Śaunaka Ṛṣi, 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 “Kṛṣṇa” is Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Śrī Lakṣmīdhara Paṇḍita, while commenting on the meanings of various names of the Lord in his *Nāma-kaumudī*, defines “Kṛṣṇa” as “He who is black like the *tamāla* tree.” In Vaiṣṇava literature Kṛṣṇa’s bodily hue is often likened to the color of the *tamāla* tree, which is commonly found in the Vṛndāvana area. Just defining Kṛṣṇa’s complexion, however, leaves open the possibility that the Kṛṣṇa referred to is the son of Devakī in Mathurā and Dvārakā. Therefore Lakṣmīdhara further specifies the meaning as “the one who was suckled by Śrīmatī Yaśodā.” This fixes the primary meaning of “Kṛṣṇa” as the young cowherd son of Yaśodā in Vṛndāvana, since the older Kṛṣṇa of Mathurā does not drink Mother Yaśodā’s breast milk. If doubts still linger about this Kṛṣṇa’s being the Supreme Lord—since there could always be someone else named Kṛṣṇa from Vṛndāvana who has a blackish complexion and a mother named Yaśodā—Lakṣmīdhara further limits the meaning of “Kṛṣṇa” 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 “Kṛṣṇa,” the derived meaning is also the Supreme Person, as the *Mahābhārata* (*Udyoga-parva* 70.5) explains:

*kṛṣir bhū-vacakaṃ śabdaṃ naś ca nirvṛti-vācakaḥ  
viṣṇus tad-bhāva-yogāc ca kṛṣṇo bhavati śāsvataḥ*

“The syllable ‘kṛṣ’ denotes existence, and the syllable ‘na’ denotes bliss. The eternal Lord Kṛṣṇa is also always Viṣṇu in both these senses.”

The *Amara-kośa* Sanskrit dictionary (1.18) states, *viṣṇur nārāyaṇaḥ kṛṣṇo vaikuṅṭha viṣṭara-śravāḥ*: “The names Viṣṇu, Nārāyaṇa, Kṛṣṇa, and Vaikuṅṭha are synonymous.” One may say that these are names of Viṣṇu, but after listing thirty-nine such names, the *Amara-kośa* states, *vasudevo ’sya janakaḥ*: “His father is Vasudeva.” By way of further confirmation that Kṛṣṇa is supreme, the author then immediately lists the names of Lord Balarāma, Kṛṣṇa’s brother.

Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa quotes the following verse in his commentary on *Śrī Viṣṇu-sahasra-nāma* (20), while defining the name “Kṛṣṇa”:

*kṛṣir bhū-vacakaḥ śabdaṃ naś ca nirvṛti-samjñakaḥ  
tayloraikyaṃ param brahma kṛṣṇa ity abhidhīyate*

“The syllable ‘kṛṣ’ means ‘existence,’ and the syllable ‘na’ means ‘bliss.’ The combination of these two is ‘Kṛṣṇa,’ the name of the Supreme Personality of Godhead” (*Gopāla-tāpanī Up., Pūrva* 1.1). In this way both the conventional and the derived meanings of the name “Kṛṣṇa” 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 Kṛṣṇa in His trance, the ultimate goal of life must be to attain love of Kṛṣṇa.

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. yatas tādrśam śukam api tad-ānanda-vaiśiṣṭya-lambhanāya tām adhyāpayām āsety āha sa saṁhitām iti. kṛtvānukramya ceti prathamataḥ svayam saṅkṣepeṇa kṛtvā paścāt tu śrī-nāradopadeśād anukrameṇa vivṛtyety arthaḥ. ata eva śrīmad-bhāgavatam bhāratānantaram kṛtam yad atra śrūyate yac cānyatrāṣṭādaśa-purāṇānantaram bhāratam iti tad dvayam api saṁhitām syāt. brahmānandānubhava-nimagnatvāt nivṛtti-nirataṁ sarvato nivṛttau nirataṁ tatrāvyabhicāriṇam apīty arthaḥ.*

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 Śukadeva Gosvāmī *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* so he could taste the special bliss derived from love of Godhead, even though Śukadeva was already absorbed in *brahmānanda*. Sūta Gosvāmī states this in the verse beginning *sa-saṁhitām* [*Bhāg.* 1.7.8]. In this verse the phrase *kṛtvānukramya* (“after compiling and revising”) indicates that Vyāsadeva first wrote *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in an abbreviated form and that later on, after being instructed by Śrī Nārada 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 [the *Skanda Purāṇa*, *Prabhāsa-khaṇḍa* 2.94], saying that the *Mahābhārata* was compiled after the eighteen *Purāṇas*. The word *nivṛtti-nirata* (“attached to renunciation”) implies that because of his absorption in the bliss of Brahman, Śrī Śukadeva 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 *bhakty-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):

*brahmānando bhaved eṣa cet parārdha-guṇī-kṛtaḥ  
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 Śukadeva Gosvāmī. But being Vyāsadeva’s son was not [DDB205]the only qualification Śukadeva possessed. Perfectly fixed in renunciation, he had no material desires (*nivṛtti-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 Śukadeva 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 Jīva 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*:

*strī-śūdra-dvija-bandhūnām trayī na śruti-gocarā  
karma-śreyasi mūḍhānām śreya evaṁ bhaved iha  
iti bhāratam ākhyānam kṛpayā muninā kṛtam*

*evam pravṛttasya sadā bhūtanām śreyasi dvijāḥ  
sarvātmakenāpi yadā nātuṣyad 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 Vidyābhūṣaṇa, in his commentary on this Text of the *Tattva-sandarbhā*, cites the *Matsya Purāṇa* (53.70):

*aṣṭādaśa-purāṇani kṛtvā satyavatī-sutaḥ*

*cakre bhāratam ākhyānam vedārthair upabṛmhitam*

“After compiling the eighteen *Purāṇas*, Vyāsadeva, the son of Satyavatī, composed the great history called the *Mahābhārata*, which serves as a commentary on the *Vedas*.”

To resolve this apparent contradiction in the chronology, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī 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 *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the one currently available.

Moreover, from *Śrīmad-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. Parīkṣit 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 *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* manifested before the *brāhmaṇa* boy Śṛṅgi had cursed Mahārāja Parīkṣit, an event that occurred after the disappearance of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa:

*kṛṣṇe sva-dhāmopagate dharma-jñānādibhiḥ saha  
kalau naṣṭa-dṛśām eṣa purāṇārko ’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 Gosvāmī 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 *Śrīmad-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 *Śrīmad-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 *saṁhitā* 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, Parīkṣit's son. Another reference traditional scholars give to support their contention that there were two versions of the *Mahābhārata* is the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka 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 Jīva Gosvāmī shows that Śrīla Vyāsadeva's realization in trance constitutes the epitome of all philosophies, as confirmed by Sūta Gosvāmī.

## TEXT 49

### TEXT 49.1

*tam etaṁ śrī-veda-vyāsaya samādhi-jātānubhavaṁ śrī-śaunaka-prāśnottaratvena  
viśadayan sarvātmārāmānubhavaṇa sa-hetukaṁ saṁvādayati ātmārāmās ceti.  
nirgranthā vidhi-niṣedhātītā nirgatāhaṅkāra-granthayo vā. ahaitukīm phalābhisandhi-  
rahitām. atra sarvākṣepa-parihārārtham āha ittham-bhūta ātmārāmāṇām apy  
ākaraṣaṇa-svabhāvo guṇo yasya sa iti.*

In reply to a question posed by Śrī Śaunaka [*Bhāg.* 1.7.9], Sūta Gosvāmī speaks the verse beginning *ātmārāmās 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 *ahaitukīm* ("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

*tam evārtham śrī-śukasyāpy anubhavaṇa saṁvādayati harer guṇeti. śrī-veda-vyāsa-  
devād yat kiñcic chrutena harer guṇena pūrvam ākṣiptā matir brahmānandānubhavo  
[NEW208] yasya saḥ. paścād adhyagād mahad vistīrṇam iti. tataś ca tat-  
saṅkathā-sauhārdena nityam viṣṇu-jaṇāḥ priyā yasya tathā-bhūto vā teṣāṁ  
priyo vā svayam abhavad ity arthaḥ. ayam bhāvo brahma-vaivartānusāreṇa  
pūrvam tāvad ayam garbha-vāsam ārabhya śrī-kṛṣṇasya svairitayā māyā-  
nivāratvaṁ jñātavān. tataḥ sva-niyojanayā śrī-vyāsa-devenānītasya tasyāntar-  
darśanāt tan-nivāreṇa sati kṛtārtham manyatayā svayam ekāntam eva gatavān.  
tatra śrī-veda-vyāsaś tu taṁ vaśī-kartuṁ tad-ananya-sādhanam śrī-bhāgavatam  
eva jñātvā tad-guṇātīśaya-prakāśa-mayāṁs tadīya-padya-viśeṣān kathañcic*

chrāvayitvā tena tam ākṣipta-matiṁ kṛtvā tad eva pūrṇaṁ tam adhyāpayāṁ  
āseti bhāgavata-mahimāśayaḥ proktaḥ.

In the next verse (beginning *harer guṇā*; [Bhāg. 1.7.11]), Sūta reiterates this idea by relating Śukadeva Gosvāmī's experience. First, when Śukadeva Gosvāmī heard Śrīla Vyāsadeva recite a few selected *Bhāgavatam* verses describing Lord Hari's attributes, Śukadeva's attention was drawn away from the bliss of impersonal Brahman and his heart was captivated. Later Śukadeva 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*<sup>12</sup> relates how Śrī Śukadeva, 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 Śukadeva's request, Vyāsadeva brought the Lord to His hermitage, and when Śukadeva saw Lord Kṛṣṇa before him even as he lay within the womb, he became free from Māyā's influence. Considering his life successful, Śukadeva at once departed alone. Thereafter Śrīla Vyāsadeva, knowing that He could control Śukadeva only with *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, somehow made him hear some selected *Bhāgavatam* verses describing Lord Kṛṣṇa's superexcellent characteristics. In this way He captivated Śukadeva's heart, and later He taught him the entire narrative. Thus is declared the supreme glory of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

### TEXT 49.3

*tad evaṁ darśitaṁ vaktuḥ śrī-śukasya śrī-veda-vyāsasya ca samāna-hṛdayam. tasmād  
vaktur hṛdayānurūpam eva sarvatra tātparyam paryālocanīyam nānyathā. yad yat  
tad-anyathā paryālocanam tatra tatra kupatha-gāmitaiveti niṣṭaṅkitam. śrī-sūtaḥ.*

From the above we can see that the speaker (Śukadeva Gosvāmī) and Śrīla Vyāsadeva had the same realizations. And therefore we should always study the message of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in the light of Śukadeva'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 Sūta 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 Śukadeva's heart. Then he analyzed Śrīla Vyāsadeva'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 Sūta 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 *Śrīmad-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 Ṛṣi 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 Sūta 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 Sūta 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 Sūta 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 Śrīdhara Svāmī inserted some impersonalistic ideas into his commentary on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Śrīdhara 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 Śrīdhara Svāmī's opinions. This scholar suggests that Jīva Gosvāmī is not a true follower of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who highly revered Śrīdhara Svāmī's *Bhāvārtha-dīpikā*.

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 Sūta 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, Prakāśānanda 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 Māyāvād[[DDB211](#)]a commentary on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is unlikely and not at all credible.

Vaiṣṇavas coming in disciplic succession do not have the slightest confusion on this point. Lord Caitanya revered Śrīdhara Svāmī's commentary for two reasons: first, because Śrīdhara 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 Śrīdhara Svāmī gave did not express his true heart. For example, while commenting on the first verse of the *Bhāgavatam* he states, *śrīmad-bhagavad-guṇa-anuvarṇana-pradhānam bhāgavata-śāstram*: “*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-śabdena vastuno 'mśo jīvaḥ, vastunaḥ śaktir māyā ca, vastunaḥ kāryam jagat, tat sarvaṁ vastv 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 Jīva Gosvāmī for not using the impersonalistic portions of Śrīdhara’s commentary here in his *Ṣaṭ-sandarbha*.

One can fathom the true essence of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* only from the viewpoint of Śrī Vyāsa and Śukadeva Gosvāmī. Because Śrīla Jīva 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. Jīva 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.

Jīva Gosvāmī was the leading disciple of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, two principal followers of Śrī Caitanyadeva. 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 Jīva 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 Jīva 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 Jīva Gosvāmī. Indeed, earlier in *Śrī Tattva-sandarbha* Jīva Gosvāmī declared that he was writing this work under their order. Moreover, he succeeded Śrīla Rūpa and Sanātana Gosvāmīs as leader of the Gauḍīya 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-vaivarta 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 Vyāsadeva.

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:

*yaṁ manyase mātuleyaṁ priyaṁ mitraṁ suhṛt-tamam  
akaroḥ sacivaṁ dūtaṁ sauhṛdād 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 bakī yaṁ stana-kāla-kūṭam  
jighāmsayāpāyayad apy asādhvī  
lebhe gatim dhātry-ucitām tato 'nyam  
kaṁ vā dayāluṁ śaraṇam 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)

*barhāpīḍam naṭa-vara-vapuḥ karṇayoḥ karṇikāram  
bibhrad vāsaḥ kanaka-kapiśam vaijayantīm ca mālām  
randhrān veṅor adhara-sudhayāpūrayan gopa-vṛndair  
vṛndāranyaṁ sva-pada-ramaṇam prāviśad gīta-kīrtiḥ*

“Wearing a peacock-feather ornament upon His head, blue *karṇikāra* flowers on His ears, a yellow garment as brilliant as gold, and a Vaijayantī 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 Vidyābhūṣaṇa 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 Śaṭ-sandarbhā*.

## TEXT 50

*atha krameṇa vistaratas tathaiva tātparyam nirṇetum sambandhābhidheya-  
prayojaṇeṣu ṣadbhiḥ sandarbhair nirṇeṣyamāṇeṣu prathamam yasya vācya-vācakatā-  
sambandhīdam śāstram tad eva dharmah projjhita-kaitava ity-ādi-padye  
sāmānyākāratas tāvad āha vedyam vāstavam atra vastu iti. tīkā ca atra śrīmati  
sundare bhāgavate vāstavam paramārtha-bhūtam vastu vedyam na tu vaiśeṣikādi-vad  
dravya-guṇādi-rūpam ity eṣā. śrī-veda-vyāsaḥ.*

Hereafter, to delineate systematically and thoroughly the message of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, we shall explain in these six *Sandarbhas* the principles of *sambandha*, *abhidheya*, and *prajojana*, 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 *Ṣaṭ-sandarbha*

Here Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī informs us that in the six *Sandarbhas* he will explain in great detail the same *sambandha*-, *abhidheya*-, and *prajojana-tattva* that Śrī Vyāsadeva and Śukadeva Gosvāmī 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*-, *Bhagavat*-, *Paramātma*-, and *Kṛṣṇa-sandarbha* treat the *sambandha-tattva*, [DDB216]the *Bhakti-sandarbha* discusses the *abhidheya-tattva*, and the *Prīti-sandarbha* explains the *prajojana-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 Kaṇāda, 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 Kaṇāda, 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), *viśeṣa* (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 Jīva Gosvāmī explains the nature of this reality in the next Text.

## TEXT 51

*atha kim-svarūpaṁ tad vastu-tattvam ity atrāha:*

*vadanti tat tattva-vidas tattvaṁ yaj jñānam advayam*

*iti. jñānaṁ cid-eka-rūpaṁ. advayatvaṁ cāsya svayam-siddha-tādṛśātādṛśa-tattvāntarābhāvāt sva-śakty-eka-sahāyatvāt paramāśrayaṁ taṁ vinā tāsām asiddhatvāc ca. tattvam iti parama-puruṣārthatā-dyotanayā parama-sukha-rūpatvaṁ tasya bodhyate. ata eva tasya nityatvaṁ ca darśitam. śrī-sūtaḥ.*

“What is the nature of this [DDB218]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 Jīva 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 Jīva 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 *sajātīya-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 *vi-jātīya-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 Sūta 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 *svāmśa* (selfsame) 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 *svāmśa* expansions belong to the same class, no difference of the *sajātīya-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 *vi-jātīya-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 *vi-jātīya-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 Jīva Gosvāmī concludes, therefore, that although the Lord’s energies render Him service in various ways, they have no existence separate from Him (*taṁ 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 *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (2.4.5) states, *na vā are patyuh kāmāya patih priyo bhavaty ātmanas tu kāmāya patih priyo bhavati*: “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 *Śikṣāṣṭaka*, where He prayed:

*āśliṣya vā pāda-ratām pinaṣtu mām  
adarśanān marma-hatām karotu vā  
yathā tathā vā vidadhātu lampāṭo  
mat-prāṇa-nāthas tu sa eva nāparaḥ*

“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):

*aham sarvasya prabhavo mattaḥ sarvaṁ pravartate  
iti matvā bhajante mām budhā bhāva-samanvitāḥ*

*mac-cittā mad-gata-prāṇā bodhayantaḥ parasparam  
kathayantaś ca mām nityaṁ tuṣyanti 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 *ānanda* (bliss). This relationship is clearly indicated in such *śruti* statements as *vijñānam ānandaṁ brahma*: “Brahman is pure consciousness and bliss” (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka 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 nīla-pītādy-ākāraṁ kṣaṇikam eva jñānaṁ dṛṣṭaṁ tat punar advayaṁ nityaṁ  
jñānaṁ kathaṁ lakṣyate yan-niṣṭham idaṁ śāstram ity atrāha*

*sarva-vedānta-sāraṁ yad brahmātmaikatva-lakṣaṇam  
vastv advitīyaṁ tan-niṣṭham kaivalyaika-prayojanam*

*iti. satyaṁ jñānam anantaṁ brahma iti yasya svarūpam uktam yenāśrutaṁ śrutaṁ  
bhavati iti, yad-vijñānena sarva-vijñānaṁ pratijñātam, sad eva saumyedaṁ agra āsīd  
ity-ādinā nikhila-jagad-eka-kāraṇatā, tad aikṣata bahu syām ity anena satya-  
saṅkalpatā ca yasya pratipāditā tena brahmaṇā svarūpa-śaktibhyāṁ sarva-  
brhattamena sārddham, anena jīvenātmaneti tadīyoktāv idantā-nirdeśena tato bhinnatve  
'py ātmatā-nirdeśena tad-ātmāmśa-viśeṣatvena labdhasya bādarāyaṇa-samādhi-dṛṣṭa-  
yukter aty-abhinnatā-rahitasya jīvātmano yad ekatvaṁ tat tvam asi ity-ādau jñātā  
tad-amśa-bhūta-cid-rūpatvena samānākāratā, tad eva lakṣaṇam prathamato jñāne  
sādhakatamaṁ yasya, tathā-bhūtaṁ yat sarva-vedānta-sāraṁ advitīyaṁ vastu, tan-  
niṣṭham tad-eka-viśayam idaṁ śrī-bhāgavatam iti prāktana-padya-sthenānuṣaṅgaḥ.*

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 Gosvāmī 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” [*Taittirīya 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 *ātmanā* (“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 *Upaniṣads* 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

*yathā janma-prabhṛti kaścīd gr̥ha-guhāvaruddhaḥ sūryam vividiṣuḥ kathañcid  
gavākṣa-patitam sūryāṁsu-kaṇam darśayitvā kenacid upadiśyate eṣa sa ity etat-tad-  
amśa-jyotiḥ-samānākāratayā tan mahā-jyotir-maṇḍalam anusandhīyatām ity arthas  
tad-vat. jīvasya tathā tad-amśatvam ca tad-acintya*[NEW240]-śakti-viśeṣa-  
siddhatvenaiva paramātma-sandarbhe sthāpayiṣyāmaḥ.

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

*tad-etaj-jīvādi-lakṣaṇāṁśa-viśiṣṭatayaivopaniṣadas tasya sāmśatvam api kvacid  
upadiśanti. niraṁśatvopadeśikā śrutis tu kevala-tan-niṣṭhā. atra kaivalyaika-  
prayojanam iti caturtha-pādaś ca kaivalya-padasya śuddhatva-mātra-vacanatvena  
śuddhatvasya ca śuddha-bhaktitvena paryavasānena prīti-sandarbhē vyākhyāsyate.  
śrī-sūtaḥ.*

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 *Prīti-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 Jīva Gosvāmī established that the Absolute Truth is eternal, nondual consciousness. One sect of Buddhists, the Kṣaṇika-vijñāna-vādīs, 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-vādīs raise [DDB246] against Jīva 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 Vijñāna-vādīs' argument Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī replies not with a logical refutation but by quoting *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the supreme *pramāṇa*. The *Bhāgavatam* 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-jñāna*, the essence of all the *Upaniṣads* and the subject matter of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*;[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-jñāna* is endowed with multifarious potencies. It is called Brahman because it is the greatest and because it can make others great: *bṛhattvād bṛmhanatvāc ca yad brahma paramam viduḥ* (*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 Kṣaṇika-vijñāna-vādīs does not agree with either *śruti* or *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

The Vijñāna-vādīs' theory of reality is based on their assumption that there is no absolute, pure consciousness. The Vijñāna-vādīs do not know that the absolute reality is a person possessing *acintya-śakti*, inconceivable potencies, through which He causes everything while remaining unaffected. As the *Īsopaniṣad* declares in its opening verse,

*om pūrṇam adaḥ pūrṇam idaṁ pūrṇāt pūrṇam udacyate  
pūrṇasya pūrṇam ādāya pūrṇam evavaśiṣyate*

“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 Vijñāna-vādīs' 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 Vijñāna-vādīs, 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 Vijñāna-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 Vijñāna-vādīs claim that the external objects are separately real, then they are agreeing with our Vaiṣṇava 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 *vijñāna-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 vyākaravāṇi*: "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-saṁvādinī*, 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 Sūta Gosvāmī in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.2.11): *brahmeti paramātmēti bhagavān iti śabdyate*. “This nondual consciousness is called Brahman, Paramātmā, and Bhagavān” Here Sūta 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 Kṛṣṇa, 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 *śabdyate* (“it is designated”) here. The Brahman described in the Vedic scriptures is Bhagavān, the Supreme Person, Kṛṣṇa.

In the *śruti* 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 nityānām cetanaś cetanānām* (“That one eternal conscious being is the support for the many eternal conscious beings”; *Kaṭha Up.* 2.2.13) belong to the *bheda* class. Statements such as *sarvaṁ khalv idaṁ 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 *Prīti-sandarbhā*.

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-padārthasya jīvātmano jñānatvaṁ nityatvaṁ ca prathamato vicāra-*

*gocaraḥ syāt tadaiva tad-padārthasya tādr̥śatvaṁ su-bodham syād iti tad bodhayitum  
anyārthaś ca paramārśaḥ iti nyāyena jīvātmanas tad-rūpatvam āha.*

*nātmā jajāna na mariṣyati naidhate 'sau  
na kṣīyate savana-vid vyabhicāriṇām hi  
sarvatra śaśvad anapāyy upalabdhi-mātram  
prāṇo yathendriya-balena vikalpitaṁ sat*

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

*ātmā śuddho jīvaḥ na jajāna na jāto janmābhāvād eva tad-anantarāstitā-lakṣaṇo  
vikāro 'pi nāsti. naidhate na vardhate vṛddhy-abhāvād eva vipariṇāmo 'pi nirastah. hi  
yasmāt. vyabhicāriṇām āgamāpāyinām bāla-yuvādi-dehānām deva-manuṣyādy-ākāra-  
dehānām vā. savana-vit tat-tat-kāla-draṣṭā. na hy avasthāvatām draṣṭā tad-avastho  
bhavatīty arthaḥ. niravasthaḥ ko 'sāv ātmā. ata āha upalabdhi-mātram jñānaika-  
rūpam. katham-bhūtam. sarvatra dehe śaśvat sarvadā anuvartamānam iti.*

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. *Vyabhicāriṇām* 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 nīla-jñānam naṣṭam pīta-jñānam jātam iti pratīter na jñānasyānapāyitvam.  
tatrāha indriya-baleneti. sad eva jñānam ekam indriya-balena vividham kalpitam.*

*nīlādy-ākārā vṛttaya eva jāyante naśyanti ca na jñānam iti bhāvaḥ. ayam āgamāpāyitad-avadhi-bhedena prathamā tarkaḥ. draṣṭṛ-dṛśya-bhedena dvitīyo 'pi tarko jñeyaḥ. vyabhicāriṣv avasthitasyāvyabhicāre dṛṣṭāntaḥ prāṇo yatheti.*

“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[DDB256]] 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 *Vedānta-sūtra* (1.3.20): *anyārthaś ca parāmarśaḥ*. “One reflects [on the *jīva*] for the sake of understanding the other [Paramātmā].” Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa 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): [DDB257]The Supersoul is free from sin, old age, death, sorrow, hunger, and thirst. He has unfulfilling desires and unfulfilling 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 real nature. He is called the *puruṣottama*.” This *puruṣottama*, according to Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, 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 *jīva* mentioned? To answer this doubt, the above *sūtra* (Vs. 1.3.20) is quoted. The reference to the *jīva* in the *dahara-vidyā* is not simply to convey knowledge about the *jīva* but to lead to knowledge about the Supersoul, and by knowing the Supersoul the *jīva* attains his real nature. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.3.38, Pippalāyana Yogendra similarly instructs King Nimi about the *jīva* 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 vipariṇamate 'paksīyate 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 Kṛṣṇa 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-vādīs 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 *prāṇa*, *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 Jīva 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 changelessness and transformation cannot be attributed to the same object, the unchanging soul must be distinct from the changing body.

Śrī Jīva'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 Jīva Gosvāmī presents further logic to help distinguish the self from the body.

## TEXT 54

### [DDB258]TEXT 54.1

*dr̥ṣṭāntam vivṛṇvann indriyādi-layena nirvikārātmopalabdhiṁ darśayati:*

*aṅdeṣu peśiṣu taruṣu aviniściteṣu  
prāṇo hi jīvam upadhāvati tatra tatra  
sanne yad indriya-gaṇe 'hami ca prasupte  
kūṭa-stha āśayam ṛte tad-anusmṛtir naḥ*

*aṅdeṣu aṅda-jeṣu. peśiṣu jarāyu-jeṣu. taruṣu udbhij-jeṣu. aviniściteṣu sveda-jeṣu.  
upadhāvati anuvartate.*

Expanding further on this example, Pippalāyana Ṛṣi 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 *prāṇa*, 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 *aṅdeṣu* means “among those born from eggs,” *peśiṣu* means “among those born from wombs,” *taruṣu* means “among those born from plants,” *aviniściteṣu* means “among those born from perspiration or heat,” and *upadhāvati* means “follows.”

### [DDB259]TEXT 54.2

*evam dṛṣṭānte nirvikāratvaṃ pradarśya dārṣṭāntike 'pi darśayati. katham. tadaivātmā sa-vikāra iva pratīyate yadā jāgare indriya-gaṇo yadā ca svapne tat-saṃskāravān ahaṅkāraḥ. yadā tu prasuptaṃ tadā tasmin prasupta indriya-gaṇe sanne līne ahami ahaṅkāre ca sanne līne kūṭa-stho nirvikāra eva[NEW260] ātmā. kutaḥ. āśayam ṛte līṅga-śarīram upādhiṃ vinā vikāra-hetor upādher abhāvād ity arthaḥ.*

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? *Āśayam ṛte*: 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 ahaṅkāra-paryantasya sarvasya laye śūnyam evāvaśiṣyate kva tadā kūṭa-stha ātmā. ata āha tad-anusmṛtir nas tasyākhaṇḍātmanaḥ suṣupti-sākṣiṇaḥ smṛtir naḥ asmākaṃ jāgrad-draṣṭṛṇāṃ jāyate etāvantaṃ kālaṃ sukham aham asvāpaṃ na kiñcid avedīṣam iti. ato 'nanubhūtasya tasyāsmaraṇād asty eva suṣuptau tādṛg-ātmānubhavo viśaya-sambandhābhāvāc ca na spaṣṭa iti bhāvaḥ.*

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-anusmṛtir naḥ*: “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-vastunaḥ sūryādeḥ prakāśa-vad upalabdhi-mātrasyāpy ātmana uplabdhiḥ svāśraye 'sty evety āyātam. tathā ca śrutih, yad vai tan na paśyati paśyan vai draṣṭavyān na paśyati na hi draṣṭur dṛṣṭer viparilopo vidyate iti. ayam sākṣi-sākṣya-vibhāgena tṛtīyas tarkaḥ. duḥkhī-premāspadatva-vibhāgena caturtho 'pi tarko 'vagantavyaḥ.*

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” (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka 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 Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī 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 *purītat* nerve in the heart: *atha yadā suṣupto bhavati yadā na kasyacana veda hitā nāma nādyo dvā-saptatiḥ sahsrāṇi hṛdayāt purītatam abhipratiṣṭhante, tābhiḥ pratyavasṛpya purītati 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 (*hita*) spreading out from the heart and enters into the nerve called *purītat*, where it rests [DDB268]” (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka 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 *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka 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 tarkaḥ syāc catur-ātmakaḥ  
āgamāpāyi-tad-(bādha)avadhi[NEW275]-bhedena prathamo mataḥ*

*draṣṭṛ-dṛśya-vibhāgena dvitīyo 'pi matas tathā  
sākṣi-sākṣya-vibhāgena tṛtīyaḥ sammataḥ satām  
duḥkhi-premāśapadatvena caturthaḥ 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 Pippalāyana's Teachings

Here Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī summarizes the conclusions of the last two Texts. According to Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, 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, Jīva Gosvāmī 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 Gosvāmī begins a new analysis, one based on the total situation of the universe.

## TEXT 56

### TEXT 56.1

*evam-bhūtānām jīvānām cin-mātram yat svarūpaṁ tayaiivākṛtayā tad-amśitvena ca tad-abhinnaṁ yat tattvaṁ tad atra vācyam iti vyaṣṭi-nirdeśa-dvārā proktam. tad eva hy āśraya-samjñakam. mahā-purāṇa-lakṣaṇa-rūpaiḥ sargādibhir arthaiḥ samaṣṭi-nirdeśa-dvārāpi lakṣyata ity atrāha dvābhyām:*

*atra sargo visargaś ca sthānaṁ poṣaṇam ūtayaḥ  
manv-antareśānukathā nirodho muktir āśrayaḥ*

*daśamasya viśuddhy-arthaṁ navānām iha lakṣaṇam  
varṇayanti mahātmānaḥ śrutenārthena cāñjasā*

By 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 (*vyaṣṭi*) 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 (*samaṣṭi*), [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), *poṣaṇa* (mercy), *ūti* (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].

### TEXT 56.2

*manv-antarāṇi ceśānukathāś ca manv-antareśānukathāḥ. atra sargādayo daśāsthā lakṣyanta ity arthaḥ. tatra ca daśamasyāśrayasya viśuddhy-arthaṁ tattva-jñānārthaṁ navānām lakṣaṇam svarūpaṁ varṇayanti. nanv atra naivam pratīyate. ata āha śrutenā śrutyā kaṅṭhoktyaiva stuty-ādi-sthāneṣu añjasā sākṣād varṇayanti arthena tātparyavṛtṭyā ca tad-tad-ākhyāneṣu.*

*Manvantareśānukathāḥ* 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 Jīva 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-vidāḥ* (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 Ṛṣi.

[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 *vyāṣṭi* perspective, focusing on the situation of the individual *jīvas*.

Now Jīva Gosvāmī begins explaining the [DDB281]absolute reality from the viewpoint of the aggregate—the *samaṣṭi* 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 Parikṣit Mahārāja from Aśvatthāmā's atomic weapon and of how Śukadeva Gosvāmī was captivated when he heard verses about Lord Kṛṣṇa's attributes.

In this way Śrīla Jīva 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], *svarūpa* (personal) and *tata-stha* (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 our 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*—*athāto brahma-jijñāsā*: “Now, therefore, inquire into Brahman”—he begins discussing the Lord’s marginal characteristics in the next *sūtra*—*janmādy 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 *Sandarbhās* 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-śakti*. 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):

*avajānanti mām mūḍhā mānuṣīm tanum āśritam  
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:

*janma karma ca me divyam evaṁ yo vetti tattvataḥ  
tyaktvā dehaṁ punar janma naiti mām eti so ’rjuna*

“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 summum bonum, Śukadeva Gosvāmī 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 Vaiṣṇava 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):

*nāhaṁ prakāśaḥ sarvasya yoga-māyā-samāvṛtaḥ  
mūḍho 'yaṁ 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 arthāḥ 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):

*yaḥ śāstra-vidhim utsṛjya vartate kāma-kārataḥ  
na sa siddhim avāpnoti na sukhaṁ na parāṁ gatim*

“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 Jīva Gosvāmī begins explaining each of the ten topics by quoting their definitions from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

## TEXT 57

### TEXT 57.1

*tam eva daśamaṁ vispaṣṭayitum teṣāṁ daśānāṁ vyutpādikāṁ sapta-ślokim āha:*

*bhūta-mātrendriya-dhiyāṁ janma sarga udāhṛtaḥ  
brahmaṇo guṇa-vaiṣamyād visargaḥ pauruṣaḥ smṛtaḥ*

*bhūtāni khādīni mātrāṇi ca śabdādīni indriyāṇi ca. dhī-śabdena mahad-ahaṅkārau.  
guṇānāṁ vaiṣamyāt pariṇāmāt. brahmaṇaḥ parameśvarāt kartur bhūtādīnāṁ janma  
sargaḥ. puruṣo vairājo brahmā tat-kṛtaḥ pauruṣaḥ, carācara-sargo visarga ity arthaḥ.*

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 vaikuṅṭha-vijayaḥ poṣaṇaṁ tad-anugrahaḥ  
manv-antarāṇi sad-dharma ūtayaḥ karma-vāsanāḥ*

*avatārānucaritam hareś cāsyānuvartinām  
puṁsām īśa-kathāḥ proktā nānākhyānopabṛmhitāḥ*

*vaikuṅṭhasya bhagavato vijayaḥ sṛṣṭānāṁ tat-tan-aryādā-pālanenotkarṣaḥ sthitiḥ  
sthānam. tataḥ sthiteṣu sva-bhakteṣu tasyānugrahaḥ poṣaṇam. manv-antarāṇi tat-tan-  
manv-antara-sthitānāṁ manv-ādīnāṁ tad-anugṛhītānāṁ satām caritāni tāny eva  
dharmas tad-upāsanākhyāḥ sad-dharmaḥ. tatraiva sthitau nānā-karma-vāsanā  
ūtayaḥ. sthitāv eva harer avatārānucaritam asyānuvartinām ca kathā īśānukathāḥ  
proktā ity arthaḥ.*

“*Sthiti* is the victory of Lord Viṣṇu, and *poṣaṇa* is the grace He bestows on His devotees. The word *manv-antara* indicates the principles of transcendental religion, while *ūti* refers to desires for material activities. *Īśānukathā* 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].

*Sthiti* (“maintenance”) is *vaikuṅṭha-vijaya*, the victory of Lord Vaikuṅṭha, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In other words, *sthiti* indicates the supreme glory of the Lord shown by His maintaining all created beings in their respective situations under His laws. *Poṣaṇam* (“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, *ūti* (“impetuses for action”) are desires for various fruitive activities. *Īśānukathāḥ* (“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 ’syānuśayanam ātmanaḥ saha śaktibhiḥ  
muktir hitvānyathā-rūpaṁ svarūpeṇa vyavasthitih*

*sthity-anantaram cātmano jīvasya śaktibhiḥ svopādhibhiḥ sahāsya harer anuśayanam  
hari-śayanānugatatvena śayanam nirodha ity arthaḥ. tatra harer śayanam prapañcam  
prati drṣṭi-nimīlanam jīvānām śayanam tatra laya iti jñeyam. tatraiva nirodhe  
'nyathā-rūpam avidyādhyastam ajñatvādikam hitvā svarūpeṇa vyavasthitir muktiḥ.*

“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 [*mukti*] 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 *mukti* (“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, *ahaṅkāra*. From *ahaṅkāra* 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):

*paritrāṇāya sādḥūnām vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām  
dharma-saṁsthāpanārthāya 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 *manv-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 *ūti*. 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 ikṣata lokān nu sṛjati, sa imāl lokān asṛjata*. “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 *jīvas* 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 *jīvas* is called sleep, corresponding to the Lord’s sleep, and this phase of existence is called *nirodha*. When the time comes for the creation cycle, the *jīvas* 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 *nirodha*. However, in contrast to the *nirodha* that occurs at the time of universal annihilation, when the *jīva* 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

*ābhāsaś ca nirodhaś ca yato ’sty adhyavasīyate*  
sa āśrayaḥ paraṁ brahma paramātmēti śabdyate

*ābhāsaḥ sṛṣṭir nirodho layaś ca yato bhavati adhyavasīyata upalabhyate jīvānām  
jñānendriyeṣu prakāśate ca sa brahmeti paramātmēti prasiddha āśrayaḥ kathyate. iti-  
śabdaḥ 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 *yataḥ* refers to the one from whom the

creation emanates, by whom it is made perceivable to the *jīvas*' senses (*adhyavasīyate*), 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 *jīvas* 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 *jīvas* 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 *aṣṭāṅga-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 *poṣaṇa*. 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 paramātmēti bhagavān iti śabdya* (*Bhāg.* 1.2.11), which states that the nondual supreme consciousness is called Brahman, Paramātmā, and Bhagavān.

In the next Text Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī gives further arguments to support the proposition that the Supreme Lord is the *āśraya*, or shelter of everything.

## TEXT 59.1

*sthitau ca tatrāśraya-svarūpam aparokṣānubhavana vyāṣṭi-dvārāpi spaṣṭam  
darśayitum adhyātmādi-vibhāgam āha:*

*yo 'dhyātmiko 'yam puruṣaḥ so 'sāv evādhidaivikaḥ  
yas tatrobhaya-vicchedaḥ puruṣo hy ādhibhautikaḥ*

*ekam ekatarābhāve yadā nopalabhāmahe  
tritayam tatra yo veda sa ātmā svāśrayāśrayaḥ*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī next discusses the divisions of *adhyātmika*, *adhidaivika*, and *adhibhautika*. 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 *ādhyātmika-puruṣa* is the same as the *ādhidaivika-puruṣa*, and he who creates the differentiation between these two is called the *ādhibhautika-puruṣa*. 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 'yam ādhyātmikaḥ puruṣaś cakṣur-ādi-karaṇābhīmānī draṣṭā jīvaḥ sa  
evādhidaivikaś cakṣur-ādy-adhiṣṭhātā sūryādiḥ. deha-srṣṭeḥ pūrvaṁ karaṇānām  
adhiṣṭhānābhāvenākṣamatayā karaṇa-prakāśa-kartrtvābhīmānī-tat-sahāyayor  
ubhayor api tayor vṛtti-bhedānudayena jīvatva-mātrāviśeṣāt. tataś cobhayaḥ  
karaṇābhīmānī-tad-adhiṣṭhātr-devatā-rūpo dvi-rūpo vicchedo yasmāt sa ādhibhautikaś  
cakṣur-golakādy-upalakṣito dr̥śyo dehaḥ puruṣa iti puruṣasya jīvasyopādhiḥ. sa vā eṣa  
puruṣo 'nna-rasa-mayaḥ ity-ādi-śruteḥ.*

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 *adhibhautika*, 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 [*adhibhautika*] person consists of food and vital fluids” [Taittirīya 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 *ādhidāivika-puruṣa*, and the visible physical body, along with the sense objects, is called the *ādhibhautika-puruṣa*.

The *ādhibhautika-puruṣa* creates the distinction between the *ādhyātmika-puruṣa* and the *ādhidāivika-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 Vidyābhūṣaṇa writes, *dehotpatteḥ pūrvam api jīvena sārḍham indriyāṇi tad-devatās 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 ekatarābhāva ity eṣām anyonya-sāpekṣa-siddhatvena anāśrayatvaṃ darśayati. tathā hi dṛśyaṃ vinā tat-pratīty-anumeyaṃ karaṇaṃ na sidhyati nāpi draṣṭā na ca tad vinā karaṇa-pravṛtṭy-anumeyas tad-adhiṣṭhātā sūryādir na ca tam vinā karaṇaṃ pravartate na ca tad vinā dṛśyam ity ekatarasyābhāva ekam nopalabhāmahe. tatra tadā tat tritayam ālocanātmakena pratyayena yo veda sāksitayā paśyati sa paramātmā āśrayaḥ. teṣām api parasparam āśrayatvam astīti tad-vyavacchedārthaṃ viśeṣaṇaṃ svāśrayo 'nanyāśrayaḥ, sa cāsāv anyeṣām āśrayaś ceti. tatrāmśāmsinoḥ śuddha-jīva-paramātmanor abhedāṃśa-svīkāreṇaivāśraya uktaḥ.*

The verse beginning *ekam ekatarābhāve* [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 *jīva* and the Supersoul, who are related as part and whole, respectively.

## TEXT 60.2

*ataḥ paro 'pi manute 'nartham iti,:*

*jāgrat-svapna-suṣuptam ca guṇato buddhi-vṛttayaḥ  
tāsām vilakṣaṇo jīvaḥ sāksitvena viniścitaḥ*

*iti śuddho vicaṣṭe hy aviśuddha-kartuḥ ity-ādy-uktasya sāksi-saṃjñinaḥ śuddha-jīvasyāśrayatvaṃ na śaṅkaniyam. atha vā nanv ādhyātmikādīnām apy āśrayatvam asty eva. satyam, tathāpi parasparāśrayatvān na tatrāśrayatā-kaivalyam iti te tv āśraya-śabdena mukhyatayā nocyanta ity āha ekam iti.*

The pure *jīva* 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 *jīva* being characterized thus, it cannot reasonably be proposed that this *jīva*, 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 sākṣiṇa evāstām āśrayatvam. tatrāha tritayam iti. sa ātmā sākṣī jīvas tu yaḥ svāśrayo 'nanyāśrayaḥ paramātmā sa evāśrayo yasya tathā-bhūta ity anayor bhedaḥ. vakṣyate ca haṁsa-guhyā-stave:*

*sarvaṁ pumān veda guṇāṁś ca taj-jñō  
na veda sarva-jñāṁ anantam īde*

*iti. tasmād ābhāsaś cety-ādinoktaḥ paramātmaivāśraya 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 *Haṁsa-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*, *Śrīmad-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 *ādhyātmika-puruṣa*), the gross body (the *adhibhautika-puruṣa*), and the demigods (the *adhi*[DDB304]*daivika-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-purāṇatva-vyañjaka-lakṣaṇaṁ prakārāntareṇa ca vadann  
api tasyaivāśrayatvam āha dvayena:*

*sargo 'syātha visargaś ca vṛttī rakṣāntarāṇi ca  
vaṁśo vaṁśānucaritaṁ saṁsthā hetur apāśrayaḥ*

*daśabhir lakṣaṇair yuktaṁ purāṇaṁ tad-vido viduḥ  
kecit pañca-vidhaṁ brahman mahad-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 *brāhmaṇa*, 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; *rakṣā*, the sustenance of all living beings; *antarāṇi*, the rule of various Manus; *vaṁśa*, the dynasties of great kings; *vaṁśānucarita*, the activities of such kings; *saṁsthā*,

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:*

*sargaś ca pratisargaś ca vaṁśo manv-antarāṇi ca  
vaṁśānucaritam ceti purāṇam pañca-lakṣaṇam*

*iti kecid vadanti. sa ca mata-bhedo mahad-alpa-vyavasthayā mahā-purāṇam alpa-  
purāṇam iti bhinnādhikāraṇatvena. 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; *vaṁśa*, genealogy; *manv-antarāṇi*, the reign of Manus; and *vaṁśānucaritam*, 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 skandheṣu yathā-kramam praveśo na vivakṣitas teṣām  
dvādaśa-saṅkhyatvāt. dvitīya-skandhoktānām teṣām tṛtīyādiṣu yathā-saṅkhyam na  
samāveśaḥ. nirodhādīnām daśamādiṣu aṣṭama-varjam anyeṣām apy anyeṣu yathokta-  
lakṣaṇatayā samāveśanāśakyatvād eva.*

In *Śrīmad-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 *āśraya* 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-svāmibhir eva:*

*daśame kṛṣṇa-sat-kīrti-vitānāyopavarṇyate  
dharma-glāni-nimittas tu nirodho duṣṭa-bhū-bhujām*

*prākṛtādi-caturdhā yo nirodhaḥ sa tu varṇitaḥ iti. ato 'tra skandhe śrī-kṛṣṇa-rūpasyāśrayasyaiva varṇana-prādhānyam tair vivakṣitam. uktaṁ ca svayam eva. daśame daśamaṁ lakṣyam āśritāśraya-vigraham*

*iti. evam anyatrāpy unneyam.*

Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī also indicates this [absence of a strict correspondence between the *Bhāgavatam*'s topics and cantos]:

“To spread Lord Kṛṣṇa'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 Kṛṣṇa. 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

*ataḥ prāyaśaḥ sarve 'rthāḥ sarveṣv eva skandheṣu gaṇatvena vā mukhyatvena vā nirūpyanta ity eva teṣāṁ abhimatam. śrutenārthena cāñjasā ity atra tathaiva pratipannaṁ sarvatra tat-tat-sambhavāt. tataś ca prathama-dvītīyayor api mahā-purāṇatāyām praveśaḥ syāt. tasmāt kramo na gṛhītaḥ.*

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 Sūta Gosvāmī Lists the Ten Topics of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*

Previously Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī showed that Sūta Gosvāmī, Śukadeva Gosvāmī, and Śrīla Vyāsadeva [DDB310] are all in agreement concerning the essential message of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Here Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī reiterates this conclusion by citing Sūta Gosvāmī's statements regarding the characteristics of a *Mahā-purāṇa*. Although the ten topics Śrī Sūta lists seem to differ from those listed by Śukadeva Gosvāmī, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī shows that in essence they are the same. In the *Bhāvārtha-dīpikā*, while commenting on verse 12.7.9 of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Śrīdhara Svāmī offers the following reconciliation between Śukadeva's list and Sūta's list: “*Sarga* and *visarga* are found in both lists. *Sthānam* in the first list is called *vṛtti* in the second, *poṣaṇa* is called *rakṣā*, *ūti* is

called *hetu*, *manvantara* is called *antara*, and *īśānukathā* is called *vaṁśa* and *vaṁśānucaritam*. *Nirodha* and *mukti* are both called *saṁsthā* in the second list.” (*Mukti* 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

Listed by Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī

Listed by Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī

1. <i>Sarga</i> (primary creation)	<i>Sarga</i>
2. <i>Visarga</i> (secondary creation)	<i>Visarga</i>
3. <i>Sthānam</i> (maintenance)	<i>Vṛtti</i>
4. <i>Poṣaṇa</i> (sustenance)	<i>Rakṣā</i>
5. <i>Ūti</i> (material desires)	<i>Hetu</i>
6. <i>Manv-antara</i> (reigns of Manus)	<i>Antara</i>
7. <i>Īśānukathā</i> (acts. Lord + devotees)	<i>Vaṁśa, Vaṁśānucarita</i>
8. <i>Nirodha</i> (annihilation)	<i>Samsthā</i>
9. <i>Mukti</i> (liberation)	<i>Samsthā</i>
10. <i>Āśraya</i> (the supreme shelter)	<i>Apāśraya</i>

A *Mahā-purāṇa* deals extensively with these ten topics, while a lesser *Purāṇa* deals with only five—*sarga*, creation; *pratisarga*, dissolution; *vaṁśa*, the genealogies of kings or sages; *manv-antarās*, the reigns of Manus; and *vaṁśānucarita*, 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*:

1. <i>Sarga</i>	<i>Sarga, Visarga, Āśraya</i>
2. <i>Pratisarga</i>	<i>Nirodha, Mukti</i>
3. <i>Vaṁśa</i>	<i>Īśānukathā</i>
4. <i>Manv-antara</i>	<i>Manv-antara, Sthānam</i>
5. <i>Vaṁśānucaritam</i>	<i>Īśānukathā, Poṣaṇa, Ūti, Āśraya</i>

*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 Jīva Gosvāmī 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 Jīva Gosvāmī 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 Śukadeva 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 Jīva 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 Jīva Gosvāmī further says that although *nīrodha* 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, *nīrodha*, and the Twelfth Canto the tenth topic, *āśraya*. Undoubtedly the Tenth Canto discusses *nīrodha*, but its principal topic is the *āśraya*, whom it establishes to be Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

In Śrīla Jīva 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-sāmvādinī*, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī specifies which topics are covered extensively in each canto:

Topic	Cantos Primarily Discussed In
1. <i>Sarga</i>	2, 3
2. <i>Visarga</i>	2, 3, 4
3. <i>Vṛtti</i>	3, 7, 11
4. <i>Rakṣā</i>	throughout
5. <i>Manvantara</i>	8
6. <i>Vamśa</i>	4, 9
7. <i>Vamśānucarita</i>	4, 9
8. <i>Samsthā</i>	11, 12
9. <i>Hetu</i>	3, 11
10. <i>Apāśraya</i>	10

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 depreciate the first two cantos. From the very start of the *Tattva-sandarbhā*, Śrīla Jīva 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-sandarbhā*.

In the next Text Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī presents Sūta Gosvāmī's definitions of the first seven of the ten topics.

## TEXT 62

### TEXT 62.1

*atha sargādinām lakṣaṇam āha:*

*avyākṛta-guṇa-kṣobhān mahatas tri-vṛto 'hamah  
bhūta-mātrendriyārthānām sambhavaḥ sarga ucyate*

*pradhāna-guṇa-kṣobhān mahān tasmāt tri-guṇo 'haṅkāras tasmād bhūta-mātrānām  
bhūta-sūkṣmānām indriyānām ca sthūla-bhūtānām ca tad-upalakṣita-tad-devatānām  
ca sambhavaḥ sargaḥ. kāraṇa-sṛṣṭiḥ sarga ity arthaḥ.*

Sūta 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

*puruṣānugṛhītānām eteṣām vāsanā-mayaḥ  
visargo 'yaṁ samāhāro bījād bījam carācaram*

*puruṣaḥ paramātmā. eteṣām mahad-ādinām jīvasya pūrva-karma-vāsanā-pradhāno  
'yaṁ samāhāraḥ kārya-bhūtaś carācara-prāṇi-rūpo bījād bījam iva pravāhāpanno  
visarga ucyate. vyaṣṭi-sṛṣṭir visarga ity arthaḥ. anenotir apy uktā.*

Sūta 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 *eteṣām* (“of these”) indicates the elements, beginning with the *mahat*. The primary reason the elements combine is the *karma* the *jīvas* 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

*vṛttir bhūtāni bhūtānām carānām acarāṇi ca  
kṛtā svena nṛṇām tatra kāmāc codanayāpi vā*

*carānām bhūtānām sāmānyato 'carāṇi ca-kārāc carāṇi ca kāmād vṛttiḥ. tatra tu  
nṛṇām svena svabhāvena kāmāc codanayāpi vā yā niyatā vṛttir jīvikā kṛtā sā vṛttir  
ucyata ity arthaḥ.*

“*Vṛtti* means the process of sustenance, by which the moving beings live upon the nonmoving. For a human being, *vṛtti* 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 *vṛtti*.

### TEXT 62.4

*rakṣācyutāvatārehā viśvasyānu yuge yuge  
tiryaṅ-martyarṣi-deveṣu hanyante yais trayī-dviṣaḥ*

*yair avatāraiḥ. aneśa-kathā sthānaṁ poṣaṇaṁ ceti trayam uktam.*

“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 *yaiḥ* (“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

*manv-antaram manur devā manu-putrāḥ sureśvarāḥ  
ṛṣayo 'mśāvatārās ca hareḥ ṣaḍ-vidham ucyate*

*manv-ādy-ācaraṇa-kathanena sad-dharma evātra vivakṣita ity arthaḥ. tataś ca  
prāktana-granthenaikārthyam.*

“In each reign of Manu (*manv-antara*), 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

*rājñām brahma-prasūtānām vaṁśas trai-kāliko 'nvayaḥ  
vaṁśy[DDB317]ānucaritam teṣām vṛttam vaṁśa-dharās ca ye*

*teṣām rājñām ye ca vaṁśa-dharās teṣām vṛttam vaṁśy[DDB318]ānucaritam.*

“Dynasties (*vaṁśa*) 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 (*vaṁśy[DDB319]ānucarita*)” [*Bhāg.* 12.7.16].

The activities of the *vaṁśa-dharāḥ* (prominent members of those dynasties) constitutes *vaṁśānucaritam* (“dynastic history”).

## COMMENTARY

Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī Defines the *Bhāgavatam*'[DDB320]s Topics

At the end of the Second Canto Śukadeva Gosvāmī lists and defines the ten topics of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and in the Twelfth Canto Sūta 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 *jīvas*. Lord Kṛṣṇa 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)

#### **AHĀṆKĀRA (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*, *ahañkāra*, mind, and intelligence are considered internal senses. These four, plus the five working senses (legs, hands, anus, voice[DDB323], 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 Paramātmā can be counted as the twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth. Time (*kāla*) is not counted separately, being an energy of the Paramātmā. 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 *pañcī-karaṇam*. 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, Vasiṣṭha, Dakṣa, Manu, and others. Some of these sons are Prajāpatis, 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 *vṛtti*, sustenance. As stated in Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (1.13.47), one living being is generally sustained by eating others:

*ahastāni sa-hastānām apadāni catuṣ-padām  
phalgūni tatra mahatām jīvo jīvasya jīvanam*

“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 *rakṣā*, protection. The Lord does not restrict His appearances only to the human species. As Prahlāda Mahārāja says in his prayers to Lord Nṛsiṃha, *ittham nṛ-tiryag-rṣi-deva-jhaṣāvātārair lokān vibhāvayasi haṁsi 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, Dvāpara, 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-antarās*. 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-ṛṣis*,[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:

MANU	MANU’S FATHER	NAME OF AVATAR	
INDRA			
1. Svāyambhuva Yajña	Brahmā	Yajña	
2. Svārociṣa Rocana	Agni	Vibhu	
3. Uttama Satyajit	Priyavrata	Satyasena	
4. Tāmasa Triśikha	Priyavrata	Hari	
5. Raivata Vibhu	Priyavrata	Vaikuṅṭha	
6. Cākṣuṣa Mantradruma	Cakṣu	Ajita	
7. Vaivasvata Purandara	Vivasvān	Vāmana	
8. Sāvarṇi	Vivasvān	Sārvabhauma	Bali
9. Dakṣa-sāvarṇi Adbhuta	Varuṇa	Rṣabha	
10. Brahma-sāvarṇi Śambhu	Upaśloka	Viṣvaksena	
11. Dharma-sāvarṇi Vaidhṛta	Upaśloka	Dharmasetu	
12. Rudra-sāvarṇi Rtadhāmā	Upaśloka	Svadhāmā	
13. Deva-sāvarṇi	Upaśloka	Yogeśvara	

Divaspati  
14. Indra-sāvarṇi  
Śuci

Upaśloka

Bṛhadbhānu

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 *vaṁśyānucaritam*.

In the next Text Śrīla Jīva 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

*naimittikaḥ prākṛtiko nitya ātyantiko layaḥ*

*saṁstheti kavibhiḥ proktaś caturdhāsyā svabhāvataḥ*

*asya paramēśvarasya. svabhāvataḥ śaktitaḥ. ātyantika ity anena muktir 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 (*saṁsthā*)” (*Bhāg.* [12.7.17].

In this verse the word *asya* (“His”) refers to the Paramēśvara, the Supreme Lord, while *svabhāvataḥ* (“due to nature”) means “by His energy.” The term *ātyantikaḥ* (“ultimate”) implies that *mukti* (liberation) is included in this kind of dissolution.

#### TEXT 63.2

*hetur jīvo 'sya sargāder avidyā-karma-kāraḥ*  
*yaṁ cānuśayinaṁ prāhur avyākṛtam utāpare*

*hetur nimittam. asya viśvasya. yato 'yam avidyayā karma-kāraḥ. yam eva hetum kecic caitanya-prādhānyenānuśayinaṁ prāhur apara upādhi-prādhānyenāvyākṛtam 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 *jīvas*, who act in ignorance. Some call that same cause the *anuśāyī* (“underlying personality”), highlighting the principle of consciousness, while others call him the *avyākṛta* (“unmanifest”), focusing attention on the *jīvas’ upādhis*.

### TEXT 63.3

*vyatirekānvayau yasya jāgrat-svapna-susuptiṣu  
māyā-mayeṣu tad brahma jīva-vṛttiṣv apāśrayaḥ*

*śrī-bādarāyaṇa-samādhi-labdhārtha-virodhād atra ca jīva-śuddha-svarūpam  
evāśrayatvena na vyākhyāyate. kintv ayam evārtho jāgrad-ādiṣv avasthāsu māyā-  
mayeṣu māyā-śakti-kalpīteṣu mahad-ādi-dravyeṣu ca kevala-svarūpeṇa vyatirekaḥ  
parama-sākṣitayānvayaś ca yasya tad brahma ca jīvānām vṛttiṣu śuddha-svarūpatayā  
sopādhitayā ca vartaneṣu sthitiṣv apāśrayaḥ sarvam aty atikramyāśraya ity arthaḥ.  
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 transcendental to everything; the prefix *apa* refers to “abandonment,” which here amounts to the idea of transcending.

### TEXT 63.4

*tad evam apāśrayābhivyakti-dvāra-bhūtaṁ hetu-śabda-vyapadiṣṭasya jīvasya śuddha-  
svarūpa-jñānam āha dvābhyām*

*padārtheṣu yathā dravyaṁ tan-mātraṁ rūpa-nāmasu  
bījādi-pañcatāntāsu hy avasthāsu yutāyutam*

*virameta yadā cittaṁ hitvā vṛtti-trayaṁ 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

*rūpa-nāmātmakeṣu padārtheṣu ghaṭādiṣu yathā dravyaṁ pṛthivy-ādi yutam ayutaṁ ca bhavati kārya-dṛṣṭiṁ vināpy upalambhāt tathā tan-mātraṁ śuddhaṁ jīva-caitanya-mātraṁ vastu garbhādhānādi-pañcatāntāsu navasv apy avasthāsv avidyayā yutaṁ svatas tv ayutaṁ iti śuddhaṁ ātmānam itthaṁ jñātvā nirviṇṇaḥ sann apāśrayānusandhāna-yogyo bhavatīty āha virameteti. vṛtti-trayaṁ jāgrat-svapna-susupti-rūpam. ātmānaṁ paramātmānam. svayaṁ vāmadevāder iva māyā-mayatvānusandhānena devahūty-āder ivānuṣṭhitena yogena vā. tataś cehāyās tad-anuśīlana-vyatirikta-ceṣṭyāḥ. śrī-sūtaḥ. uddiṣṭaḥ sambandhaḥ.*

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 *āśraya*. That is the purport of the verse beginning *virameta* [*Bhāg.* 12.7.21].

The *vṛtti-trayaṁ* (“three functional states”) are the states of waking, dreaming, and deep sleep. *Ātmānam* (“Self”) here means the Supersoul. *Svayaṁ* (“by oneself”) means by carefully studying the illusory nature of the world, as the sage Vāmadeva did. *Yogena* (“by *yoga*”) indicates that one may conduct this study by means of the kind of meditation Śrīmatī Devahūti and others practiced. *Īhāyāḥ nivartate* (“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-kṛṣṇa-*

*caitanya-deva-caraṇānucara-viśva-vaiṣṇava-rāja-sabhā-sabhājana-bhājana-śrī-rūpa-sanātanānuśāsana-bhāratī-garbhe śrī-bhāgavata-sandarbhhe tattva-sandarbho nāma prathamah sandarbhaḥ.*

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 *saṁsthā*, of which Sūta Gosvāmī says there are four kinds—*naimittika*, *prākṛtika*, *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 *prākṛtika*, 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-saṁvādinī* 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 Purāṇa*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and the *Bhārata-tātparyā* of Śrī Madhvācārya. Part of the reference from the *Viṣṇu-dharmottara Purāṇa* (1.75.1, 2) states:

*vajra uvāca*  
*manv-antare parikṣiṇe yādṛṣī dvija jāyate*  
*samavasthā mahā-bhāga tādrṣīm vaktum arhasi*

*mārkaṇḍeya uvāca*  
*manv-antare parikṣiṇe deva manv-antareśvarāḥ*  
*mahar-lokam athāsādyā tiṣṭhanti gata-kalmaṣāḥ*

“King Vajra asked, ‘[DDB336]O *brāhmaṇa*, what is the situation of the world when a *manv-antara* ends? Please explain this to me.’

“Mārkaṇḍeya 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.”

Mārkaṇḍeya goes on to explain that the seven sages, Manu, and Indra go to Brahmaloḥka 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-vaṁśa Purāna* 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-kāraka*, 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-bhūtāṁ mahā-bāho yayedaṁ 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 *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.87.2):

*buddhīndriya-maṇaḥ-prāṇān janānāṁ aṣṛjat prabhuḥ  
mātrārthaṁ ca bhavārthaṁ 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 Sūta 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 *bhinnā 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):

*māyā tatam idaṁ sarvaṁ jagad avyakta-mūrtinā  
mat-sthāni sarva-bhūtāni na cāhaṁ teṣv avasthitāḥ*

“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 Jīva 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-jijñāsā*: 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 *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 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 Jīva 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-sandarbhā*: The first eight Texts, which are in verse form, make up the invocation, or *maṅgalācaraṇa*. In these verses Śrīla Jīva 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 Jīva Gosvāmī discusses Gauḍīya 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 Jīva 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 Jīva Gosvāmī recommends the *Purāṇas*, which, along with the *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata*, constitute the fifth *Veda*. Next Śrīla Jīva 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 Jīva Gosvāmī proposes *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* as the most suitable *Purāṇa* for investigation. From Text 19 to 26 Śrīla Jīva reveals the supreme qualities of *Śrīmad-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 *Gāyatrī mantra*, the essence of the *Vedas*, and that it is the natural commentary on the *Vedānta-sūtra*. In Texts 27 and 28 Śrīla Jīva describes the basic scheme of the *Sandarbhās*, 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 *Śrīmad-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 Jīva Gosvāmī first examines the inner mood of Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī, the speaker of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. In Text 29 he quotes and analyzes Śrī Sūta 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 Vyāsadeva realized in trance, [DDB347]this realization [DDB348]being the basis upon which [DDB349]Vyāsa composed *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. While describing Vyāsa's trance, Śrīla Jīva 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 Jīva shows that *Śrīmad-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 *jīva*—namely, that the *jīva*, 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 *jīva* 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 Toṣaṇī [DDB354] Commentary on *Śrī Tattva-sandarbha*, the first book of *Śrī Ṣaṭ-sandarbha*, by Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī Prabhupāda.