

Śrī Tattva-sandarbha

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Some of the Contributions of Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī

By His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda
(from *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* *Adi-līla* 10.85 Purport)

In the *Gaura-gaṇoddeśa-dīpikā* (195) it is said that Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī was formerly *Vilāsa-mañjarī gopī*. From his very childhood Jīva Gosvāmī was greatly fond of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. He later came to Navadvīpa to study Sanskrit, and, following in the footsteps of Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, he circumambulated the entire Navadvīpa-dhāma. After visiting Navadvīpa-dhāma he went to Benares to study Sanskrit under Madhusūdana Vācaspati, and after finishing his studies in Benares he went to Vṛndāvana and took shelter of his uncles, Śrī Rūpa and Sanātana. This is described in the *Bhakti-ratnākara*. As far as our information goes, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī composed and edited at least twenty-five books. They are all very much celebrated, and they are listed as follows: (1) *Hari-nāmāmṛta-vyākaraṇa*, (2) *Sūtra-mālikā*, (3) *Dhātu-saṅgraha*, (4) *Kṛṣṇārcā-dīpikā*, (5) *Gopāla-virudāvalī*, (6) *Rasāmṛta-śeṣa*, (7) *Śrī Mādhava-mahotsava*, (8) *Śrī Saṅkalpa-kalpavṛkṣa*, (9) *Bhāvārtha-sūcaka-campū*, (10) *Gopāla-tāpanī-tīkā*, (11) a commentary on the *Brahma-saṁhitā*, (12) a commentary on the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, (13) a commentary on the *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, (14) a commentary on the *Yogasāra-stava*, (15) a commentary on the *Gāyatrī-mantra*, as described in the *Agni Purāṇa*, (16) a description of the Lord's lotus feet derived from the *Padma Purāṇa*, (17) a description of the lotus feet of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, (18) *Gopāla-campū* (in two parts) and (19–25) seven *sandarbhās*: the *Krama-*, *Tattva-*, *Bhagavat-*, *Paramātmā-*, *Kṛṣṇa-*, *Bhakti-* and *Prīti-sandarbhā*. After the disappearance of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and Sanātana Gosvāmī in Vṛndāvana, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī became the ācārya of all the Vaiṣṇavas in Bengal, Orissa and the rest of the world, and it is he who used to guide them in their devotional service. In Vṛndāvana he established the Rādhā-Dāmodara temple, where, after retirement, we had the opportunity to live from 1962 until 1965, when we decided to come to the United States of America. When Jīva Gosvāmī was still present, Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī compiled his famous *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. Later, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī inspired Śrīnivāsa Ācārya, Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura and Duḥkhī Kṛṣṇadāsa to preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness in Bengal. Jīva Gosvāmī was informed that all the manuscripts that had been collected from Vṛndāvana and sent to Bengal for preaching purposes were plundered near Viṣṇupura, in Bengal, but later he received the information that the books had been recovered. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī awarded the designation Kavirāja to Rāmacandra Sena, a disciple of Śrīnivāsa Ācārya's, and to Rāmacandra's younger brother Govinda. While Jīva Gosvāmī was alive, Śrīmatī Jāhnavī-devī, the pleasure potency of Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, went to Vṛndāvana with a few devotees. Jīva Gosvāmī was very kind to the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, the Vaiṣṇavas from Bengal. Whoever went to Vṛndāvana he provided with a residence and prasādam. His disciple Kṛṣṇadāsa Adhikārī listed all the books of the Gosvāmīs in his diary.

Introduction to the Overview of Śrī Tattva-sandarbha

Śrīla Prabhupāda comments in a lecture: “Jīva Gosvāmī has got six sandarbhas, theses: Bhagavat-sandarbha, Kṛṣṇa-sandarbha, Tattva-sandarbha, Pṛīti-sandarbha, like that. So these books are... I don't think it is published in English. So these sandarbhas are so philosophically discussed that throughout the whole world, there is not a single philosopher who can defy these Jīva Gosvāmī's six sandarbhas.”

The Six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana made particularly important contributions to the mission of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. They renounced the comforts of material life and absorbed themselves in the service of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, they recorded in written form the teachings of Lord Caitanya, they uncovered the lost places of Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes in Vṛndāvana, and they established the proper practices of devotional service. Śrīnivāsa Ācārya sings: “they are very expert in scrutinizingly studying all the revealed scriptures with the aim of establishing eternal religious principles for the benefit of all human beings. Thus they are honored all over the three worlds, and they are worth taking shelter of”

Śrīla Jīva Goswami's main service was to establish the philosophical basis of Lord Caitanya's movement, and among his writings his Six Sandarbhas (essays) are very important. Tattva-sandarbha is the first of these six.

Śrī Tattva-sandarbha can be considered logically divided into two parts, although Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī did not specifically indicate this division. The first twenty six texts prove the authority of the Bhāgavatam on the basis of reason and various scriptural authorities. This having been done, the Bhāgavatam itself becomes the prime source of verification, and continues to be so throughout the rest of the Six Sandarbhas. The second part of the Tattva-sandarbha, beginning from text 27, 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 this Overview we have attempted to further subdivide Tattva-sandarbha into natural parts, which reflect the flow of arguments presented by our ācārya. We have summarized our commentary on each verse very briefly, and will expand on these points as the course proceeds.

Although we are not going to deal with them in this course, we can mention that the other five Sandarbhas are Paramātmā-sandarbha, dealing with ātmā and Paramātmā, Bhagavata-sandarbha, establishing that the Bhagavan feature of the Absolute Truth is highest, Kṛṣṇa-sandarbha, establishing that Lord Kṛṣṇa is the supreme aspect of the Bhagavan feature, Bhakti-sandarbha, explaining bhakti, the process for approaching Kṛṣṇa, and Pṛīti-sandarbha, explaining love of God.

Invocation by Śrīla Jīva Goswami

śrī kṛṣṇo jayati

“May Lord Kṛṣṇa be glorified!”

Section 1 — Mangalacarana (Texts 1-8)

TEXT 1

kṛṣṇa-varṇam tviṣākṛṣṇamsāṅgopāṅgāstra-pārṣadamyajñaiḥ saṅkīrtana-prāyairyajanti 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.”

Commentary:

1. Mangalacarana 1 — the principle of mangalacarana.
2. The Yuga avatars.
3. Sridhara Swami's interpretation of this verse.
4. Jiva Goswami's interpretation of this verse.

TEXT 2

antaḥ kṛṣṇam bahir gauramdarśitāṅgādi-vaibhavamkalau saṅkīrtanādyaiḥ smaḥkṛṣṇa-caitanya āśritāḥ

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.

Commentary:

1. Mangalacarana 2 — offering obeisances to one's worshipable Deity.
2. Clarification of Text 1.
3. Lord Caitanya clearly identified.

TEXT 3

*jayatām mathurā-bhūmauśrīla-rūpa-sanātanaūyau vilekhyatas tattvaṁ
jñāpakau pustikām imām*

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.

Commentary:

1. Mangalacarana 3 — Offering blessings and paying respects.
2. The special positions of Śrīla Rūpa Goswami and Śrīla Sanātana Goswami.

TEXT 4

ko 'pi tad-bāndhavo bhaṭṭodakṣiṇa-dvija-varṇsa-jahvivicya vyalikhad granthamlikhitād vṛddha-vaiṣṇavaiḥ

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.

Commentary:

1. Mangalacarana 4 — obeisances to Gopala Bhatta Goswami.

TEXT 5

tasyādyam granthanālekhamaṅkrānta-vyutkrānta-khaṇḍitamparyālocyātha paryāyamkṛtvā likhati jivakaḥ

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 Jiva, have carefully gone over the manuscript and rewritten it more systematically.

Commentary:

1. Mangalacarana 5 — the contributions of Gopala Bhatta Goswami.
2. Some understandings of the word “jivakaḥ”

TEXT 6

yaḥ śrī-kṛṣṇa-padāmbhoja-bhajanaikābhilāṣa-vāntenaiva dṛśyatām etadanyasmai śapatho 'rpitaḥ

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.

Commentary:

1. Mangalacarana 6 — qualifications and disqualifications for reading the Sandarbhas.
2. Lord Kṛṣṇa's parallel instruction in Bhagavad-gītā.

TEXT 7

atha natvā mantra-gurūṅgurān bhāgavatārtha-dānśrī-bhāgavata-sandarbham

sandarbham vaṣmi lekhitum

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

Commentary:

1. Mangalacaraṇa 7 — obeisances to one's teachers.
2. Sandarbha defined.

TEXT 8

*yasya brahmeti samjñāṁ kvacid api nigame yāti cin-mātra-sattāpy
am̐so yasyāmśakaiḥ svair vibhavati vaśayann eva māyām pumāṁś ca
ekam̐ yasyaiva rūpaṁ vilasati parama-vyomni nārāyaṇākhyam̐
sa śrī-kṛṣṇo vidhattām svayam iha bhagavān prema tat-pāda-bhājām*

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.

Commentary:

1. Mangalacarana 8 — defining the book's subject matter, giving blessings.
2. The three features of the Absolute Truth
3. Lord Kṛṣṇa is the original form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Section 2 — Establishing Śrīmad Bhāgavatam as the Supremely Authoritative Source of Knowledge (Texts 9 to 19)

A) The Vedic Literatures are the Best Evidence (Texts 9-11)

TEXT 9

athaivam sūcitānām

śrī-kṛṣṇa-tad-vācya-vācakatā-lakṣaṇa-sambandha-tad-bhājana-lakṣaṇa-vidheya-saparyāyābhidheya-tat-prema-lakṣaṇa-prayojanākhyanām arthānām nirṇayāya tāvat pramāṇaṁ nirṇīyate. tatra puruṣasya bhramādi-doṣa-catuṣṭaya-duṣṭatvāt sutarām alaukikācintya-svabhāva-vastu-sparśāyogyatvāc ca tat-pratyakṣādīny api sa-doṣāni.

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.

Commentary:

1. Defining the four prerequisite topics.
2. Ten types of pramanas.

TEXT 10

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

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 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.

Commented [DDB1]: ??

Commentary:

1. Apauruṣeya śabda-pramāṇa identified as the best source of knowledge.

TEXT 11

tac cānumataṁ 'tarkāpratiṣṭhānāt' ity-ādau 'acintyaḥ khalu ye bhāvā na tāṁs tarkaṇa yojayet' ity-ādau 'śāstra-yonitvāt' ity-ādau 'śrutes tu śabda-mūlatvāt' ity-ādau:

*pitṛ-deva-manuṣyāṇāṁ
vedaś caḥṣus taveśvara
śreyas tv anupalabdhe 'rthe
sādhya-sāadhanayor api*

ity-ādau ca.

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).

Commentary:

1. The Vedic scriptures are the best source of apauruṣeya śabda-pramāṇa.
2. Two negative and three positive opinions from Vyasa’s most important works.

B) The Purāṇas are Vedic (Texts 12 to 15.4)

TEXT 12

Text 12.1

tatra ca veda-śabdasya samprati duṣpāratvād duradhigamārthatvāc ca tad-artha-nirmāyākānām muninām api paraspara-virodhād veda-rūpo vedārtha-nirmāyakaś cetihāsa-purāṇātmakaḥ śabda eva vicāraṇīyaḥ. tatra ca yo vā veda-śabdo nātma-viditaḥ so 'pi tad-dṛṣṭyānumeya eveti samprati tasyaiva pramotpādakatvaṁ sthitam.

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.

Text 12.2

tathā hi mahābhārata mānavīye ca 'itihāsa-purāṇābhyām vedaṁ samupabṛṁhayet' iti 'pūraṇāt purāṇam' iti cānyatra. na cāvedena vedasya bṛṁhanaṁ sambhavati na hy aparipūrṇasya kanaka-valayasya trapuṇā pūraṇam yujyate.

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.

Text 12.3

nanu yadi veda-śabdaḥ purāṇam itihāsaṁ copādatte tarhi purāṇam anyad anveṣaṇīyam. yadi tu na na tarhitihāsa-purāṇayor abhedo vedena. ucyate viśiṣṭaikārtha-pratipādaka-pāda-kadambasyāpauruṣeyatvād abhede 'pi svāra-krama-bhedād bheda-nirdeśo 'py upapadyate.

Commented [DDB2]: Can we discuss this translation in reference to SN?

“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.

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-ādina.

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

Commentary:

1. Comparisons of Śruti and Smṛti.
2. Unavailability of majority of Śruti.
3. Commentaries on Vedānta Sūtra give conflicting understandings.
4. The *Itihāsas* and *Purāṇas* are more approachable.
5. Both Śruti and Smṛti confirm the Vedic nature of the *Purāṇas*.

TEXT 13

Text 13.1

ata eva skānde prabhāsa-khaṇḍe:

*purā tapaś cacāro gram amarāṇām pitāmahaḥ
āvirbhūtās tato vedāḥ sa-śaḍ-aṅga-pada-kramāḥ*

*tataḥ purāṇam akhilaṁ sarva-sāstra-mayaṁ dhruvam
nitya-śabda-mayaṁ puṇyam śata-koṭi-pravistaram*

*nirgataṁ brahmaṇo vaktrāt tasya bhedān nibodhata
brāhmaṇ purāṇam prathamam ity-ādi.*

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*. . . .”

Text 13.2

*atra śata-koṭi-saṅkhyā brahma-loke prasiddheti tathoktaṁ tṛtīya-skandhe ca 'rg-yajuḥ-sāmātharvākhyaṇ
vedān pūrvādibhir mukhaiḥ' ity-ādi-prakaraṇe:*

*itihāsa-purāṇāni pañcamāṇ vedam īśvaraḥ
sarvebhya eva vaktrebhyaḥ sasrje sarva-darśanaḥ*

ity api cātra sāksād eva veda-śabdaḥ prayuktaḥ purāṇetihāsayoḥ.

The figure of one billion mentioned here refers to the number of verses extant on Brahmā’s planet. In a passage similar to the one quoted above from the *Skanda Purāṇa*, the Third Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* has a passage that starts “Beginning from the front face of Brahmā, gradually the four *Vedas*—*Rg*, *Yajur*, *Sāma*, and *Atharva*—became manifest” [Bhāg. 3.12.37]. In this passage we find the statement “Then Brahmā created the fifth *Veda*—the *Purāṇas* 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 *Purāṇas* and *Itihāsas*.

Text 13.3

anyatra ca 'purāṇaṇ pañcamo vedah':

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

ity-ādau. anyathā vedān ity-ādāv api pañcamatvaṇ nāvakalpyeta samāna-jātiya-niveśitatvāt saṅkhyāyāḥ.

Elsewhere we find similar statements to the effect that “the *Purāṇa* is the fifth *Veda*”: “The *Itihāsas* and *Purāṇas* 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 *Purāṇas* 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.

Text 13.4

bhaviṣya-purāṇe:

‘kārṣṇaṁ ca pañcamāṁ vedāṁ yaṁ mahābhārataṁ smṛtam’ iti. tathā ca sāmā-kauthumīya-śākhāyāṁ chāndogyopaniṣadi ca: ‘rg-vedaṁ bhagavo ’dhyemi yajur-vedaṁ sāmā-vedam ātharvaṇam caturtham itihāsam purāṇam pañcamāṁ vedānām vedam’ ity-ādi.

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 *R̥g Veda*, the *Yajur Veda*, the *Sāma Veda*, the fourth or *Atharva Veda*, and the *Itihāsa-Purāṇa*, which is the fifth *Veda*.” And so on.

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.

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-āranyaka Upaniṣad*’s statement about “the breath of this Supreme Being” are nothing more than certain parts of the four *Vedas*. The same is said by the words beginning “First is the *Brahma Purāṇa*. . . .”

Commentary:

1. Further evidence from Śruti and Smṛti of the Vedic nature of the *Purāṇas* and *Itihāsas*.

TEXT 14

Text 14.1

pañcamatve kāraṇaṁ ca vāyu-purāṇe sūta-vākyaṁ:

itihāsa-purāṇānām vaktāraṁ samyag eva himāṁ caiva pratijagrāha bhagavān īśvaraḥ prabhuḥ
eka āsīd yajur-vedas taṁ caturdhā vyakalpayat
cāturhotram abhūt tasmīns tena yajñam akalpayat

ādhvaryavaṁ yajurbhis tu ṛgbhir hotraṁ tathaiva ca
audgātraṁ sāmabhiś caiva brahmatvaṁ cāpy atharvabhiḥ

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

yac chiṣṭaṁ tu yajur-veda iti śāstrārtha-nirṇayaḥ

iti.

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."

Text 14.2

brahma-yajñādhyayane ca viniyogo dṛśyate 'miśaṁ 'yad brāhmaṇānīti itihāsa-purāṇāni' iti. so 'pi nāvedatve sambhavati. ato yad āha bhagavān mātṛsy:

kālenāgrahaṇaṁ matvā purāṇasya dvijottamāḥ
vyāsa-rūpaṁ ahaṁ kṛtvā saṁharāmi yuge yuge

iti pūrva-siddham eva purāṇaṁ sukha-saṁgrahaṇāya saṅkalayāmi tatrārthaḥ.

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, forseeing 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."

Text 14.3

tad-anantaraṁ hy uktam:

catur-lakṣa-pramāṇena dvāpare dvāpare sadā
tad aṣṭādaśadhā kṛtvā bhūr-loke 'smin prabhāṣyate

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

iti.

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].

Text 14.4

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

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.

Commentary:

1. The Itihasas and Purāṇas are the Fifth Veda.
2. The Śruti's reference to Brahma yajña establishes the Vedic nature of the Purāṇas.

TEXT 15

Text 15.1

tathaiva darśitaṁ veda-saḥa-bhāvena śiva-purāṇasya vāyaviya-saṁhitāyām

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

*purāṇam api saṅkṣiptaṁ catur-lakṣa-pramāṇataḥ
adyāpy amartya-loke tu śata-kotī-pravistaram*

iti. saṅkṣiptam ity atra teneti śeṣaḥ.

The same picture is drawn, describing the *Purāṇas* in conjunction with the *Vedas*, in the *Vāyaviya-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.

Text 15.2

*skādam āgneyam ity-ādi-samākhyās tu pravacana-nibandhanāḥ kāṭhakādi-vad
ānupūrvī-nirmāṇa-nibandhanā vā. tasmāt kvacid anityatva-śravaṇam tv
āvīrbhāva-tirobhāvāpekṣayā. tad evam itihāsa-purāṇayor vedatvaṁ siddham.*

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.

Text 15.3

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

*madhura-madhuram etan māṅgalam māṅgalānām
sakala-nigama-valli-sat-phalam cit-svarūpam*

sakṛd api parigītaṁ śraddhayā helayā vā
bhṛgu-vara nara-mātraṁ tārayet kṛṣṇa-nāma

iti.

That persons like Sūta Gosvāmī had the privilege to speak the *Itihāsa*s and *Purāṇa*s 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 Bhṛgus, any human being who just chants this name even once, whether with faith or neglectfully, will become 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.

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 *Itihāsa*s and *Purāṇa*s 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 *Purāṇa*s."

Commentary:

1. Dealing with some problems regarding the names of some Vedic literatures.

C) The Purāṇas' Special Importance Because of Their Compiler, Vyāsa (Texts 15.5-16.2)

Text 15.5

kim ca vedārtha-dīpakānām sāstrāṇām 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*

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."

Commentary:

1. The most recent Vyāsa, Kṛṣṇa Dvaipayana, is of special importance.

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 aṣṭāviṃśatime 'ntare
vedam ekaṁ catuṣ-pādam caturdhā vyabhajat prabhuḥ*

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

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

*kṛṣṇa-dvaipāyanaṁ vyāsaṁ viddhi nārāyaṇaṁ prabhum
ko 'nyo hi bhuvi maitreya mahābhārata-kṛd bhavet*

iti.

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*?"

Text 16.2

skānda eva:

*nārāyaṇād viniṣpannaṁ jñānaṁ kṛta-yuge sthitam
kiñcit tad anyathā jātaṁ tretāyāṁ dvāpare 'khilam
gautamasya ṛṣeḥ śāpāj jñāne tv ajñānatām gate
saṅkīrṇa-buddhayo devā brahma-rudra-puraḥsarāḥ*

*śaraṇyaṁ śaraṇaṁ jagmur nārāyaṇam anāmayam
tair vijñāpita-kāryas tu bhagavān puruṣottamaḥ*

*avatīrṇo mahā-yogī satyavatyāṁ parāsarāt
utsannān bhagavān vedān ujjahāra hariḥ svayam*

iti.

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*."

Commentary:

1. Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa is special because He is directly the Supreme Lord.
2. Explanation of Gautama's curse, leading up to the appearance of Śrīla Vyāsadeva and Lord Kṛṣṇa.

D) The Purāṇas are More Important Than the Vedas (Texts 16.3-17.1)

Text 16.3

veda-sabdenātra purāṇādi-dvayam api grhyate. tad evam itihāsa-purāṇa-vicāra eva śreyān iti siddham. tatrāpi purāṇasyaiva garimā dr̥ṣyate. uktam hi nārāḍiye:

*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.

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."

TEXT 17

Text 17.1

skānde prabhāsa-khaṇḍe ca:

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

bibhety alpa-śrutād vedo mām ayaṁ cālayiṣyati
itihāsa-purāṇais tu niścalo 'yaṁ kṛtaḥ purā

yan na dṛṣṭaṁ hi vedeṣu tad dṛṣṭaṁ smṛtiṣu dvijāḥ
ubhayor yan na dṛṣṭaṁ hi tat purāṇaiḥ prajāyate

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

iti.

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."

Commentary:

1. Reasons for the *Purāṇas* being more suitable than the *Vedas* in Kali Yuga.

E) There is a Hierarchy Among the *Purāṇas* (Texts 17.2 to 18.1)

Text 17.2

atha purāṇānāṁ evaṁ prāmāṇye sthite 'pi teṣāṁ api sāmastyenāpracarad-rūpatvān
nānā-devatā-pratipādaka-prāyatvād arvācīnāḥ kṣudra-buddhibhir artho duradhigama iti tad-avastha eva saṁśayaḥ.

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.

Commentary:

1. Some problems with the Purāṇas:
 - a) Unavailability of some texts.
 - b) Substitution of invalid texts in some cases.
 - c) The evidence of Śrīdhara Swamī.

Text 17.3

yad uktam mātṣye:

*pañcāṅgaṁ ca purāṇaṁ syād ākhyānam itarat smṛtam
sāttvikeṣu ca kalpeṣu mähātmyam adhikaṁ hareḥ
rājaseṣu ca mähātmyam adhikaṁ brahmaṇo viduḥ
tadvad agneṣ ca mähātmyaṁ tāmaseṣu śivasya ca
saṅkīrṇeṣu sarasvatyāḥ pitṛñām ca nigadyate*

iti.

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."

Commentary:

1. Understandings of the word "kalpa".

Text 17.4

*atrāgneṣ tat-tad-agnau pratipādyasya tat-tad-yajñasyety arthaḥ. śivasya ceti ca-kārāc chivāyās ca. saṅkīrṇeṣu
sattva-rajasa-tamo-mayeṣu kalpeṣu bahuṣu. sarasvatyā nānā-vāny-ātmaka-tad-upalakṣitāyā nānā-devatāyā ity arthaḥ.
pitṛñām 'karmanā pitṛ-lokaḥ' iti śruteṣ tat-prāpaka-karmanām ity arthaḥ.*

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."

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 saṅjāyate jñānam' iti 'sattvam yad brahma-darśanam' iti ca nyāyāt sāttvikam eva purāṇādikaṁ paramārtha-jñānāya prabalam ity āyātam.

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].

Commentary:

The divisions of *Purāṇas* according to *Padma Purāṇa*.

F) Śrīmad Bhāgavatam Established as the Topmost of All Scriptures! (Texts 18.2 to 18.3)

Text 18.2

tathāpi paramārthe 'pi nānā-bhaṅgā 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 alpākṣarāṇām tat-sūtrāṇām anyārthatvam kaścid ācakṣita tataḥ katarad ivātra samādhānam.

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?

Commentary:

1. Further problems with the Purāṇas:
 - a) Non-linear chronology.
 - b) Prehistoric personalities
 - c) Multitude of Deities.
2. Problems with Vedānta-sūtra.

Text 18.3

tad evaṁ samādheyam yady ekatamam eva purāṇa-lakṣaṇam apauruṣeyaṁ śāstraṁ sarva-vedetihāsa-purāṇānām artha-sāraṁ brahma-sūtropajīvyam ca bhavad bhuvi sampūrṇam pracarad-rūpaṁ syāt. satyam uktam. yata eva ca sarva-pramāṇānām cakravartī-bhūtam asmad-abhimatam śrīmad-bhāgavatam evodbhūtam bhavatā.

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*.

Commentary:

1. Five essential conditions to be met in identifying the essential scripture.
2. *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* meets all those conditions!

Section 3 — Identifying and Glorifying Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (Texts 19 to 26)

A) Authoritative Descriptions of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (Texts 19 and 20)

TEXT 19

Text 19.1

*yat khalu sarva-purāṇa-jātaṁ āvirbhāvya brahma-sūtraṁ ca prañīyāpy aparituṣṭena tena bhagavatā
nija-sūtrāṇāṁ akṛtrima-bhāṣya-bhūtaṁ samādhi-labdham āvirbhāvitaṁ yasminn eva sarva-śāstra-samanvayo dṛśyate
sarva-vedārtha-sūtra-lakṣaṇāṁ gāyatrīm adhikṛtya pravartitavāt.*

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*.

Text 19.2

tathāpi tat-svarūpaṁ mātṛsy:

*yatrādhikṛtya gāyatrīm varnyate dharma-vistarah
vṛtrāsura-vadhoptaṁ tad bhāgavatam iṣyate*

*likhitvā tac ca yo dadyād dhema-simha-samanvitam
prauṣṭhapadyāṁ paurṇamāsyāṁ sa yāti paramāṁ gatim
aṣṭādaśa-sahasrāṇi purāṇāṁ tat prakīrtitam*

iti.

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].

Text 19.3

atra gāyatrī-śabdena tat-sūcaka-tad-avyabhicāri-dhīmahi-pada-saṁvalita-tad-artha evesyate sarveṣāṁ mantrāṇāṁ ādi-rūpāyās tasyāḥ sāṁśāt kathanānarhatvāt. tad-arthatā ca 'janmādy asya yataḥ' 'tene brahma hṛdā' iti sarva-lokāśrayatva-buddhi-vṛtti-prerakatvādi-sāmyāt. dharma-vistara ity atra dharma-śabdaḥ parama-dharma-parah 'dharmaḥ projjhita-kaitavo 'tra paramah' ity atraiva pratipāditatvāt. sa ca bhagavad-dhyānādi-lakṣaṇa eveti purastād vyakti-bhaviṣyati.

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 be 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.

Commentary:

1. Vyāsadeva's realizations.
2. The presence of Gayatri in Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, and their relationship.

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-sahasraṇi purāṇaṁ tat prakīrtitam

iti. tad evam agni-purāṇe ca vacanāni vartante.

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*.

Text 20.2

ṭikā-kṛdbhiḥ pramāṇi-kṛte purāṇāntare ca:

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

iti.

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."

Text 20.3

atra 'hayagrīva-brahma-vidyā' iti vṛtra-vadha-sāhacaryeṇa nārāyaṇa-varmaivocyate.
hayagrīva-śabdenātrāsya-śirā dadhīcir evocyate. tenaiva ca pravartitā nārāyaṇa-varmākhyā brahma-vidyā.
tasyāśva-śirastvam ca śaṣṭhe 'yad vā aśva-śiro nāma' ity atra prasiddham nārāyaṇa-varmaṇo brahma-vidyātvam ca:

etac chrutvā tathovāca dadhyān ātharvaṇas tayohpravargyaṁ brahma-vidyām ca sat-kṛto 'satya-śaṅkitaḥ

iti svāmi-ōkoththāpita-vacanena ceti.

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."

Text 20.4

śrīmad-bhāgavatasya bhagavat-priyatvena bhāgavatābhīṣṭatvena ca parama-sāttvikatvam. yathā pādme
ambarīṣaṁ prati gautama-prāśnah:

purāṇaṁ tvaṁ bhāgavatam paṭhase purato hareḥ
caritraṁ daitya-rājasya prahlādasya ca bhū-pate

tatraiva vaṅjuli-māhātmye tasya tasminn upadeśaḥ
rātrau tu jāgaraḥ kāryaḥ śrotavyā vaiṣṇavī kathāgītā nāma-sahasraṁ ca purāṇaṁ śuka-bhāṣitampāṭhitavyam
prayatnena hareḥ santoṣa-kāraṇam

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 Vaṅjuli 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."

Text 20.5

tatraivānyatra:

*ambarīṣa śuka-proktaṁ nityaṁ bhāgavataṁ śṛṇupaṭhasva sva-mukhenāpi yadicchasi bhava-kṣayam
skānde prahlāda-saṁhitāyāṁ dvāṛakā-māhātmye:*

*śrī-bhāgavataṁ bhaktyā paṭhate hari-sannidhau
jāgare tat-padaṁ yāti kula-viṇḍa-samanvitaḥ*

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."

Commentary:

1. The debate regarding the Devi Bhāgavata.
2. The "meditation on the Supreme taught by Hayagrīva".
3. Śrīmad Bhāgavatam is the most sattvic of the sattvic Puranas.

B) The Garuda Purāṇa Glorifies Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (Texts 21 and 22)

TEXT 21

Text 21.1

gāruḍe ca:

...pūrṇaḥ so 'yam atīśayaḥartho 'yam brahma-sūtrāṇām bhāratārtha-viniṣṭhayaḥgāyatrī-bhāṣya-rūpo 'sau
vedārtha-paribṛñhitah
purāṇānām sāma-rūpaḥ sāksād bhagavatoditah
dvādaśa-skandha-yukto 'yam śata-viccheda-saṁyutah
grantho 'ṣṭādaśa-sāhasraṁ śrī-bhāgavatābhidhah

iti.

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*."

Text 21.2

brahma-sūtrāṇām arthas teṣām akṛtrima-bhāṣya-bhūta ity arthaḥ. pūrvaṁ sūkṣmatvena manasy āvirbhūtaṁ tad eva saṅkṣīpya sūtratvena punaḥ prakāṣitaṁ paścād vistirṇatvena sāṅśāt śrī-bhāgavatam iti. tasmāt tad-bhāṣya-bhūte svataḥ-siddhe tasmin saty arvācīnam anyad anyeṣāṁ sva-sva-kapola-kalpitaṁ tad-anugatam evodaraṇīyam iti gamyate.

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*.

Text 21.3

bhāratārtha-vinirṇayaḥ:

nirṇayaḥ sarva-sāstrāṇāṁ bhārataṁ parikīrtitambhārataṁ sarva-vedāś ca tulāṁ āropitāḥ purādevair brahmādibhiḥ sarvair ṛṣibhiḥ ca samanvitaiḥ vyāsasyaivājñayā tatra tv atiricyata bhāratammahattvād bhāra-vattvāc ca mahābhārataṁ ucyate

ity-ādy-ukta-lakṣaṇasya bhāratasyārtha-vinirṇayo yatra saḥ.

"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*."

Text 21.4

śrī-bhagavatya eva tātparyam tasyāpi. tad uktaṁ mokṣa-dharme nārāyaṇīye śrī-veda-vyāsaṁ prati janamejayena:

idaṁ śata-sahasrād dhi bhāratākhyāna-vistarātāmathya mati-manthena jñānodadhim anuttamamṇava-nītaṁ yathā dadhno malayāc candanaṁ yathāāranyaṁ sarva-vedebhya oṣadhībhyo 'mṛtaṁ yathāsamuddhṛtaṁ idaṁ brahman kathāmṛtaṁ idaṁ tathā tapo-nidhe tvayoktaṁ hi nārāyaṇa-kathāśrayam

iti.

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."

Commentary:

1. Discussion based on the Garuda Purana:
 - a) Śrīmad Bhāgavatam is the natural commentary on Vedānta-sūtra.
 - b) It establishes the message of Mahābhārata.

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 kathayām*

iti.

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].

Text 22.2

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

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-paribṛmhitah* 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*."

Text 22.3

'purāṇānām sāma-rūpah' vedeṣu sāma-vat sa teṣu śreṣṭha ity arthah. purāṇāntarāṇām keśāncid āpātato rajas-tamasī juṣamāṇais tat-paratvāpratītatve 'pi vedānām kāṇḍa-traya-vākyaika-vākyatāyām yathā sāmnā tathā teṣām śrī-bhāgavatena pratipādye śrī-bhagavatī eva paryavasānaṁ iti bhāvah. tad uktam:

vede rāmāyaṇe caiva purāṇe bhārata tathāādāv ante ca madhye ca hariḥ sarvatra gīyate iti pratipādayisyate ca tad idam paramātmā-sandarbhah.

"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 *Paramātmā-sandarbhah*.

Text 22.4

'sākṣād bhagavatoditah' iti 'kasmai yena vibhāṣito 'yam' ity upasamhāra-vākyaṇusāreṇa jñeyam. 'śata-viccheda-samyutah' iti vistara-bhīyā na vivriyate. tad evam śrī-bhāgavatam sarva-śāstra-cakravartī-padam āptam iti sthite 'hema-siṁha-samanvitam' ity atra 'suvarṇa-siṁhāsanārūḍham' iti tika-kārair vyākhyātam tad eva yuktam. atah śrīmad-bhāgavatasyaivābhyāsāvaśyakatvaṁ śreṣṭhatvaṁ ca skānde nirṇītam.

"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.

Text 22.5

ata eva skānde:

śataśo 'tha sahasraiś ca kim anyaiḥ śāstra-saṅgrahaiḥ na yasya tiṣṭhate gehe śāstram bhāgavatam kalau
katham sa vaiṣṇavo jñeyah śāstram bhāgavatam kalaugrhe na tiṣṭhate yasya sa viprah śva-pacādhamaḥ yatra
yatra bhaved vipra śāstram bhāgavatam kalau
tatra tatra harir yāti tridaśaiḥ saha nārada

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

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

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*.

Commentary:

1. Further discussion on the Garuda Purana verse presented in Text 21.1.
 - a) It "serves as a commentary on Gāyatrī".
 - aa) Śrīla Jiva Goswami's discussion of Gayatri in relation to Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 1.1.1 in Paramātmā Sandarbha.
 - b) It "completes the message of the Vedas".
 - c) It is "the Sama Veda among the Puranas".
 - d) It is "spoken directly by the Supreme Personality of Godhead".
 - dd) The position of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 12.13.19.

C) Various Commentaries Establish the Position of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (Texts 23 to 24.1)

TEXT 23

Text 23.1

ata eva satsv api nānā-śāstreṣv etad evoktam 'kalau naṣṭa-dṛśam eṣa purāṇārko 'dhunoditah' iti. arkatā-rūpakeṇa
tad vinā nānyeṣāṃ samyag-vastu-prakāśakatvam iti pratipādyate. yasyaiva śrīmad-bhāgavatasya bhāṣya-bhūtam

śrī-hayaśīrṣa-pañcarātre śāstra-kathana-prastāve gaṇitam tantra-bhāgavatābhidhām tantram. yasya sāksāt śrī-hanumad-bhāṣya-vāsanā-bhāṣya-sambandhokti-vidvat-kāmadhenu-tattva-dīpikā-bhāvārtha-dīpikā-paramahansa-priyā-śuka-hṛdayādayo vyākhyā-granthās tathā muktā-phala-hari-līlā-bhakti-ratnāvaly-ādayo nibandhās ca vividhā eva tat-tan-mata-prasiddha-mahānubhāva-kṛtā virājante.

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*, *Paramahansa-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.

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 sahasraś ca' ity-ādikaṁ prāg-darśitaṁ skānda-vacana-jātam utthāpya sarva-kāla-doṣataḥ pāvitrīyāya katicit śrī-bhāgavata-vacanāni lekhyāniti likhitāni.

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 Skānda 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.

Text 23.3

atha yad eva kaivalyam apy atikramya bhakti-sukha-vyāhārādi-liṅgena nija-matasyāpy upari virājamānārthaṁ matvā yad apauruṣeyaṁ vedānta-vyākhyānaṁ bhayād acālayataiva śaṅkarāvatāratayā prasiddhena vakṣyamāṇa-sva-gopānādi-hetuka-bhagavad-ājñā-pravartitādvaya-vādenāpi etan-mātra-varṇita-viśva-rūpa-darśana-kṛta-vrajeśvarī-vismaya-śrī-vraja-kumārī-vasana-cauryādikaṁ govindāṣṭakādau varṇayatā taṭa-sthi-bhūya nija-vacaḥ-sāphalyāya spṛṣṭam iti.

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.

Commentary:

1. Śrīmad Bhāgavatam alone can dispell the darkness of Kali Yuga.
2. Various commentaries on Śrīmad Bhāgavatam.
3. Comments of Hemadri.
4. Comments of Śaṅkarācārya.

TEXT 24

Text 24.1

yad eva kila dṛṣṭvā sāksāt tac-chiṣyatām prāptair api śrī-madhvacārya-caraṇair vaiṣṇava-mate praviśya vaiṣṇavāntarāṇām tac-chiṣyāntara-puṇyāranyādi-rītika-vyākhyā-praveśa-śaṅkayā tatra tātparyāntaraṁ likhadbhir varimopadeśa kṛta iti ca sātvatā varṇayanti.

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 Puṇyāranya. 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.

Commentary:

1. The contribution of Madhvācārya.

**D) Śrīmad Bhāgavatam Explains Its Own Position
(Texts 24.2 to 24.3)**

Text 24.2

tasmād yuktam uktam tatraiva prathama-skandhe:

*tad idaṁ grāhayām āsa sutam ātma-vatām varam
sarva-vedetihāsānām sārām sārām samuddhṛtam*

dvādaśe:

*sarva-vedānta-sārām hi śrī-bhāgavatam iṣyate
tad-rasāmṛta-tṛptasya nānyatra syād ratih kvacit*

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].

Text 24.3

tathā prathamē:

*nigama-kalpa-taror galitaṁ phalaṁ
śuka-mukhād amṛta-drava-samyutam
pibata bhāgavatam rasam ā-layaṁ
muhur aho rasikā bhuvi bhāvukāḥ*

ata eva tatraiva:

*yaḥ svānubhāvam akhila-śruti-sāram ekam
adhyātma-dīpam atitīrṣatām tamo 'ndham
saṁsāriṇām karuṇayāha purāṇa-guhyam
taṁ vyāsa-sūnam upayāmi guruṁ muninām*

iti śrī-bhāgavata-mataṁ tu sarva-matānām adhīṣa-rūpam iti sūcakam.

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.

Commentary:

1. Four important *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* verses glorify the book in different ways.

E) The Pre-eminent Position of Śukadeva Goswami (Texts 25 to 26.1)

TEXT 25

Text 25.1

sarva-muninām sabhā-madhyam adhyāśya upadeṣṭṛtvena teṣāṁ sarva-muninām gurutvam api tasya tatra su-vyaktaṁ. yataḥ:

*tatropajagmur bhuvaṇaṁ punānā
mahānubhāvā munayaḥ sa-siśyāḥ
prāyeṇa tīrthābhigamāpadeśaiḥ
svayaṁ hi tīrthāni punanti santaḥ*

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

*medhātithir devala ārṣṭiṣeṇo
bharadvājo gautamaḥ pippalādah
maitreya auruvaḥ kavaśaḥ kumbha-yonir
dvaipāyano bhagavān nāradaś ca*

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

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

ity-ādy-anantaram:

*tataś ca vaḥ prcchyaṁ idaṁ viprcche
viśrabhya viprā iti-kṛtyatāyām
sarvātmanā mriyamāṇaiś ca kṛtyaṁ
śuddhaṁ ca tatrāmṛsatābhiyuktāḥ*

iti prcchati rājñi:

*tatrābhavad bhagavān vyāsa-putro
yadṛcchayā gām atamāno 'napekṣaḥ
alakṣya-liṅgo nija-lābha-tuṣṭo
vrtaś ca bālair avadhūta-veśaḥ*

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].

Text 25.2

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

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

ity uktam.

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].

Commentary:

1. On his arrival, Śukadeva was given the role of guru, even among the greatest sages.

TEXT 26

Text 26.1

*atra yady api tatra śrī-vyāsa-nāradau tasyāpi guru-parama-gurū tathāpi punas tan-mukha-niḥsṛtaṁ
śrī-bhāgavataṁ tayoṛ apy aśruta-caram iva jātaṁ ity evaṁ śrī-śukas tāv apy upadiśa deśyam ity abhiprāyah. yad
uktaṁ 'śuka-mukhād amṛta-drava-saṁyutaṁ' iti. tasmād evaṁ api śrī-bhāgavatasyaiva sarvādhikyam. mātṣyādināṁ
yat purāṇādhikyam śrūyate tat tv āpekṣikam iti. aho kiṁ bahunā śrī-kṛṣṇa-pratinidhi-rūpam evedam.*

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.

Commentary:

1. Even Vyāsa (Śuka's guru) and Nārada (Vyāsa's guru) accepted Śuka as guru.

**F) Concluding Confirmations of the Unique Importance of
Śrīmad Bhāgavatam
(Texts 26.2 to 26.3)**

Text 26.2

yata uktaṁ prathama-skandhe:

*kṛṣṇe sva-dhāmopagataḥ dharma-jñānādibhiḥ saha
kalau naṣṭa-dṛṣṭam eṣa purāṇārko 'dhunoditaḥ*

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

*vedāḥ purāṇaṁ kāvyam ca prabhur mitraṁ priyeva ca
bodhayantīti hi prāhus trī-vṛd bhāgavatam punaḥ*

iti muktā-phale hemādri-kāra-vacanena ca.

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."

Text 26.3

tasmān manyantāṁ vā kecit purāṇāntareṣu vedasya sāpekṣatvaṁ śrī-bhāgavate tu tathā sambhāvanā svayam eva nīrastety api svayam eva labdhaṁ bhavati. ata eva parama-śruti-rūpatvaṁ tasya. yathoktaṁ:

*kathaṁ vā pāṇḍaveyasya rājarṣer muninā saha
saṁvādaḥ samabhūt tāta yatraiṣā sātvaṁ śrutiḥ*

*iti. atha yat khalu sarvaṁ purāṇa-jātaṁ āvirbhāvyety-ādikaṁ pūrvam uktaṁ tat tu
prathama-skandha-gata-śrī-vyāsa-nārada-saṁvādenaiva prameyam.*

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.

Commentary:

1. The Pramana Section concludes establishing Śrīmad Bhāgavatam's unassailable position as the best source of knowledge.

Section 4 — Methodology and Sources of Reference for Tattva Sandarbha (Texts 27 and 28)

TEXT 27

Text 27.1

tad evaṁ parama-niḥśreyasa-niścayāya śrī-bhāgavatam eva paurvāparyāvirodhena vicāryate. tatrāsmiṁ sandarbha-ṣaṭkātmake granthe sūtra-sthānīyam avatārikā-vākyam viśaya-vākyam śrī-bhāgavata-vākyam. bhāṣya-rūpā tad-vyākhyā tu samprati madhya-deśāu vyāptān advaita-vādinō nūnam bhagavan-mahimānam avagāhayitūṁ tad-vādena karvurita-lipināṁ parama-vaiṣṇavānāṁ śrīdhara-svāmi-caraṇānāṁ śuddha-vaiṣṇava-siddhāntānugatā cet tarhi yathāvad eva vilikhyate.

Therefore to ascertain what is actually the highest good in life we should focus our investigation on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, carefully reconciling its statements with what precedes and follows them. With this aim, in this work consisting of six *Sandarbhas* the introductory sentences [in each *anuccheda*] will serve the function of *sūtras*. The quotations from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* will be the scriptural texts under consideration. Śrīdhara Svāmī's explanation of the *Bhāgavatam* will serve as our primary commentary.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī is a perfect Vaiṣṇava. But to entice the Advaita-vādis — 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 Svāmī-caraṇa's commentary verbatim when it agrees with the conclusions of pure Vaiṣṇava philosophy.

Text 27.2

kvacit teṣāṁ evānyatra-dṛṣṭa-vyākhyānusāreṇa draviḍādi-deśa-vikhyāta-parama-bhāgavatānāṁ teṣāṁ eva bāhulyena tatra vaiṣṇavatvena prasiddhatvāt śrī-bhāgavata eva

kvacit kvacin mahā-rāja draviḍeṣu ca bhūriśaḥ

ity anena pramita-mahimnāṁ sāṅśāc-chrī-prabhṛtītaḥ pravṛtta-sampradāyānāṁ śrī-vaiṣṇavābhidhānāṁ śrī-rāmānuja-bhagavat-pāda-viracita-śrī-bhāṣyādi-dṛṣṭa-mata-prāmāṇyena mūla-grantha-svāsyena cānyathā ca. advaita-vyākhyānam tu prasiddhatvān nātivitāyate.

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-vādis are already so well-known we will not bother to elaborate on them much.

TEXT 28

Text 28.1

*atra ca sva-darśitārtha-viśeṣa-prāmāṇyāya na tu śrīmad-bhāgavata-vākya-prāmāṇyāya pramāṇāni
śruti-purāṇādi-vacanāni yathā-dṛṣṭam evodāharāṇīyāni. kvacit svayam adṛṣṭākarāṇi ca tattva-vāda-gurūṇām
anādhunikānām śrīmac-chaṅkarācārya-śiṣyatām labdhvāpi śrī-bhagavat-pakṣa-pātena tato vicchidyā
pracura-pracārīta-vaiṣṇava-mata-viśeṣānām
dakṣiṇādi-deśa-vikhyāta-śiṣyopāśiṣyī-bhūta-śrī-vijayadhvaja-brahmatīrtha-vyāsātīrthādi-veda-vedārtha-vidvad-varā
nām śrī-madhvacārya-caraṇānām śrī-bhāgavata-tātparya-bhārata-tātparya-brahma-sūtra-bhāṣyadibhyaḥ
saṅgrhītāni.*

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 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.

Text 28.2

taiś caivam uktam bhārata-tātparye:

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

*yathā sa bhagavān vyāsaḥ sāksān nārāyaṇaḥ prabhuḥ
jagāda bhāratādyeṣu tathā vaksye tad-ikṣaya*

*iti. tatra tad-uddhṛtā śrutiś catur-veda-śikhādyā purāṇaṁ ca gāruḍādīnāṁ samprati sarvatrāpracarad-rūpam
aṁśādikaṁ saṁhitā ca mahā-saṁhitādikā tantraṁ ca tantra-bhāgavatādikam brahma-tarkādikam iti jñeyam.*

Thus in his *Mahābhārata-tātparya* [2.7.8] Śrī Madhva says, "It is by the mercy of the *Vedānta-sūtra* that I have correctly understood other scriptures, having engaged myself in studying many different kinds of books located in various places. Here I will speak my opinions according to the views of Bhagavān Vyāsa, the Supreme Lord 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*.

Section 5 — Defining the Message of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam by Considering the Realizations of Śukadeva Goswami and Vyasadeva (Texts 29 to 49)

A) Understanding Their Realizations (Texts 29 to 34)

TEXT 29

Text 29.1

*atha namas-kurvann eva tathā-bhūtasya śrīmad-bhāgavatasya tātparyaṁ tad-vaktur
hṛdaya-niṣṭhā-paryālocanayā sankṣepatas tāvaṁ nirdhārayati:*

*sva-sukha-nibhṛta-cetās tad-vyudastānya-bhāvo
'py ajita-rucira-līlākṛṣṭa-sāras tadyam
vyatanuta kṛpāyā yas tattva-dīpaṁ purāṇaṁ
tam akhila-vṛjina-ghnaṁ vyāsa-sūnuṁ nato 'smi*

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].

Text 29.2

*ṭīkā ca śrīdhara-svāmī-viracitā 'śrī-guruṁ namas-karoti. sva-sukhenaiva nibhṛtaṁ pūrṇaṁ ceto yasya saḥ. tenaiva
vyudasto 'nyasmin bhāvo bhāvanā yasya tathā-bhūto 'py ajitasya rucirābhir līlābhir ākṛṣṭaḥ sārāḥ sva-sukha-gataṁ
dhairyaṁ yasya saḥ. tattva-dīpaṁ paramārtha-prakāśakaṁ śrī-bhāgavatam yo vyatanuta tam nato 'smi' ity eṣā.*

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."

Text 29.3

evam eva dvitiye tad-vākyaṁ eva `prāyeṇa munayo rājan' ity-ādi-padya-trayaṁ anusandheyam. atrākhila-vrjinaṁ tādṛśa-bhāvasya pratikūlam udāsinaṁ 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 vyakti-bhaviṣyati. tathā prayojanākhyāḥ puruṣārthaś ca tādṛśa-tad-āsakti-janakam tat-prema-sukham eva. tato 'bhidheyam api tādṛśa-tat-prema-janakam tal-līlā-śravaṇādi-lakṣaṇam tad-bhajanam evety āyātam. atra vyāsa-sūnum iti brahma-vaivartānusaṛeṇa śrī-kṛṣṇa-varāj janmata eva māyayā tasyāsprṣṭatvaṁ sūcitam. śrī-sūtaḥ śrī-śaunakam.

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 devotional service to 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.

Commentary:

1. Understanding the message of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam by understanding the heart of its speaker, Śukadeva Goswami, as expressed in the 12th Canto of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam.

TEXT 30

Text 30.1

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

*bhakti-yogena manasi samyak praṇihite 'male
apaśyat puruṣaṁ pūrṇaṁ māyām ca tad-apāśrayām*

*yayā sammohito jīva ātmānaṁ tri-guṇātmakam
paro 'pi manute 'nartham tat-kṛtaṁ cābhipadyate*

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

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

*sa saṁhitām bhāgavatīm kṛtvānukramya cātmajam
śukam adhyāpayām āsa nivr̥tti-nirataṁ munim*

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].

Text 30.2

tatra:

sa vai nivṛtti-nirataḥ sarvatropeṣako munih
kasya vā bṛhatim etām ātmārāmaḥ samabhyasat

iti śaunaka-praśnānantaram ca:

ātmārāmāś ca munayo nirgranthā apy urukrame
kurvanty ahaitukim bhaktim ittham-bhūta-guṇo hariḥ

harer guṇākṣipta-matir bhagavān bādarāyaṇih
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.

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].

Text 30.3

praṇihite samāhite `samādhinānusmara tad-viceṣṭitam' iti taṁ prati śrī-nāradaopadeśāt. pūrṇa-padasya mukta-pragrahayā vṛttyā:

*bhagavān iti śabda 'yaṁ tathā puruṣa ity api
vartate nirupādhiś ca vāsudeve 'khlātmani*

iti pādmottara-khaṇḍa-vacanāvaśāmbhena, tathā:

kāma-kāmo yajet somam akāmaḥ puruṣaṁ param

*akāmaḥ sarva-kāmo vā mokṣa-kāma udāra-dhīḥ
tīvreṇa bhakti-yogena yajeta puruṣaṁ pūrṇam*

*ity asya vākya-dvayaśya pūrva-vākye 'puruṣaṁ paramātmānaṁ prakṛty-ekopādhiṁ īśvaram' uttara-vākye
'puruṣaṁ pūrṇam param nirupādhiṁ' iti tīkānusāreṇa ca pūrṇaḥ puruṣo 'tra svayam bhagavān evocyate.*

"Fixed" (*prañihite*) 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 (*puruṣaṁ 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.'"

Commentary:

1. Understanding the message of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam by understanding the heart of the author, Vyāsadeva, as expressed in the 7th Chapter of the 1st Canto of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam.
2. Further considerations regarding Śukadeva's realizations as described in the "ātmārāma" verse (Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 1.7.10).
3. Understanding the term "upādhi".

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 apaśyat ity ukte kānti-mantam apaśyad iti labhyate.

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.

Text 31.2

ata eva:

*tvam ādyaḥ puruṣaḥ sāksād īśvaraḥ prakṛteḥ paraḥ
māyāṁ vyudasya cic-chaktyā kaivalye sthita ātmani*

ity uktam. ata eva 'māyāṁ ca tad-apāśrayām' ity anena tasmin apa apakṛṣṭa āśrayo yasyā nīliya sthitatvād iti māyāyā na tat-svarūpa-bhūtatvam ity api labhyate. vaksyate ca 'māyā paraity abhimukhe ca vilajjamānā' iti.

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" (*māyāṁ 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."

Text 31.3

svarūpa-śaktir iyam atraiva vyakti-bhaviṣyati 'anarthopāśamaṁ sāksād bhakti-yogam adhoḥśaje' ity anena 'ātmārāmāś ca' ity anena ca. pūrvatra hi bhakti-yoga-prabhāvaḥ khalv asau māyābhibhāvakatayā svarūpa-śakti-vṛttitvenaiva gamyate paratra ca te guṇā brahmānandasyāpy upari-caratayā svarūpa-śakteḥ parama-vṛttitām evārhannti. māyādhiṣṭhāṇi-puruṣas tu tad-amśatvena brahma ca tadīya-nirviṣeṣāvirbhāvatvena tad-antar-bhāvenāprthak-dṛṣṭatvāt prthaṁ nokte iti jñeyam. tad etac ca dvitīya-tṛtīya-sandarbhayoḥ suṣṭhu pratipatsyate. ato 'tra pūrva-vad eva sambandhi-tattvaṁ nirdhāritam.

We will describe this internal energy of the Lord's later, in our discussion of the texts "The material miseries of the living entity, which are superfluous to him, can be directly mitigated by the linking process of devotional service" [*Bhāg.* 1.7.6] and "All different varieties of

ātmārāmas" [Bhāg. 1.7.10]. In the first of these texts, the influence of devotional service is understood to be a function of the Lord's internal energy by the fact of its overcoming the power of illusion. In the second, the qualities of the Lord prove themselves the highest functions of His internal energy by their superiority to even the bliss of Brahman. The reason why the 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.

Commentary:

1. Further considerations in terms of Vyasa's realizations in trance.
2. An alternative reading of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 1.7.4.
3. The Lord's internal and external energies.

TEXT 32

Text 32.1

*atha prāk pratipāditasyaivābhidheyasya prayojanasya ca sthāpakam jīvasya svarūpata eva parameśvarād
vailakṣaṇyam apaśyad ity āha yāyati. yayā māyayā sammohito jīvaḥ svayaṁ cid-rūpatvena tri-guṇātmakāḥ jadāt paro
'py ātmānam tri-guṇātmakam jadām dehādi-saṅghātam manute tan-manana-kṛtam anartham 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 evaṁ jīvasya cid-rūpatve 'pi yayā sammohitaḥ iti manute iti ca svarūpa-bhūta-jñāna-sālitvaṁ vyanakti
prakāśaika-rūpasya tejasah sva-para-prakāśana-śakti-vat.*

ajñānenāvṛtam jñānam tena muhyanti jantavaḥ

*iti śrī-gītābhyah. tad evaṁ upādher eva jīvatvaṁ tan-nāśasyaiva mokṣatvaṁ iti matāntaram pariḥṛtavān. atra
yayā sammohita ity anena tasyā eva tatra kartṛtvaṁ bhagavatas tatrodāśinatvaṁ (matam)*

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

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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:

*vilajjamāṇayā yasya sthātum iṅśa-pathe 'muyā
vimohitā vikatthante mamāham iti durdhiyaḥ*

iti. atra vilajjamāṇayā ity anedam āyāti, tasyā jīva-sammohanam karma śrī-bhagavate na rocata iti yady api sā svayaṁ jñāti tathāpi bhayaṁ dvitīyābhiniveśataḥ syād īśād apetasya iti diśā jīvānām anādi-bhagavad-ajñāna-maya-vaimukhyam asahamānā svarūpāvaraṇam asvarūpāveśam 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” (*vilajjamāṇayā*) 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:

1. Understanding abhidheya and prayojana in terms of Vyāsa’s realization.
2. The *jīva* is an eternal conscious being.
3. The position of Māyā.

TEXT 33

Text 33.1

śrī-bhagavānś cānāḍita eva bhaktāyām prapañcādhikāriṇyām tasyām dākṣiṇyam laṅghitum na śaknoti. tathā tad-bhayaṇāpi jīvānām sva-sāmmukhyam vāñchann upadiśati:

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

satām prasāṅgān 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. Only those who have surrendered unto Me can easily cross beyond it.”

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.”

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Text 33.2

līlayā śrīmad-vyāsa-rūpeṇa tu viśiṣṭatayā tad upadiṣṭavān ity anantaram evāyāsyati anarthopāśamaṁ sākṣād iti. tasmād dvayor api tat tat samāñjasaṁ jñeyam. n māyā khalu śaktiḥ śaktiś ca kārya-kṣamatvaṁ tac ca dharma-viśeṣaḥ, tasyāḥ kathāṁ lajjādikam. ucyate evaṁ saty api bhagavati tāsāṁ śaktināṁ adhīṣṭhātṛ-devyaḥ śrūyante yathā kenopaniṣādi mahendra-māyayoh saṁvādaḥ. tad āstāṁ prastutāṁ prastūyate.

In His pastime form of Śrī Vyāsa, 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 *anarthopāśamaṁ 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:

1. Some considerations regarding Māyā:
 - a) She is a devotee
 - b) She is dear to the Lord, despite the fact that she deludes the jivas.
 - c) She is a person, not just an energy

B) Sambandha — Defeating Mayavāda and Establishing Acintya Bhedābheda Tattva on the Basis of Vyasa's Realization (Texts 34 to 43)

TEXT 34

tatra jivasya tādṛśa-cid-rūpatve 'pi paramēśvarato vailakṣyaṇyaṁ tad-apāśrayaṁ 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-apāśrayaṁ* ("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:

1. The position of the *jīva*.
2. Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa's commentary on this verse.

Commented [DDB6]: Here jīva directly calls Vyasa a līla-avatar. Does this bear on our cap-or-no-cap problem?

TEXT 35

*yarhy eva yad ekam cid-rūpaṁ brahma māyāśrayatā-balitaṁ vidyā-mayaṁ tarhy eva tan māyā-viśayatāpannam
avidyā-paribhūtaṁ cety ayuktam iti jīveśvara-vibhāgo 'vagataḥ. tataś ca svarūpa-sāmarthya-vailakṣanyena 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:

1. It cannot be all one.

TEXT 36

na copādhi-tāratamya-maya-pariccheda-pratibimbatvādi-vyavasthayaḥ tayoṛ 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:

1. Pariccheda-vāda and pratibimba-vāda, two common forms of Mayavāda.

TEXT 37

*tatra yady upādher anāvidyakatvena vāstavatvaṁ tarhy aviśayasya tasya pariccheda-viśayatvasambhavaḥ.
nīrdharmakasya vyāpakasya niravayavasya ca pratibimbatvāyogo 'pi upādhi-sambandhābhāvād
bimba-pratibimba-bhedābhāvād dṛśyatvābhāvāt ca. upādhi-parichinnākāśa-sṭha-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. 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:

1. Defeating pariccheda-vāda and pratibimba-vāda, if the *upādhis* are real.

Commented [DDB7]: I'm confused here. In just what aspects does Brahman resemble the sky--in the ways that follow the colon or in the ways that precede the sentence that ends in a colon?

- a) Brahman is transcendental to any limiting factors.
- b) It has no form, so it cannot be reflected.
- c) It has no attributes, so it cannot have upādhis.
- d) It may be compared to the sky.

TEXT 38

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

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:

1. The irony of certain *pariccheda* and *pratibimba* concepts.

TEXT 39

*upādher āvidyakatve tu tatra tat-paricchinnatvāder apy aghaṭamānatvād āvidyakatvam eveti ghaṭākāśādiṣu
vāstavopādhi-maya-tad-darśanayā na teṣāṁ avāstava-svapna-dṛṣṭāntopajīvināṁ siddhāntaḥ sidhyati
ghaṭamānāghaṭamānayoḥ saṅgateḥ kartum aśakyatvāt. tataś ca teṣāṁ tat tat sarvaṁ 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. Therefore the Māyāvādīs' theories of division and reflection are nothing but the play of illusion, unprovable by their faulty application of analogies.

Commented [DDB8]: *****New

Commentary:

1. Defeating *pariccheda* and *pratibimba*, if the *upādhis* are not real:
 - a) There would be no limiting effects
 - b) There must be the fault of drawing real conclusions from unreal evidence.

TEXT 40

iti brahmāvidyayoḥ paryavasāne sati yad eva brahma cin-mātratvenāvidyā-yogasyātyantābhāvāspadatattvāc chuddham tad eva tad-yogād aśuddhyā jīvaḥ punas tad eva jīvāvidyā-kalpita-māyāśrayatvād īśvaras tad eva ca tan-māyā-viśayatvāj jīva iti virodhas tad-avastha eva syāt. tatra ca śuddhāyām cīty avidyā tad-avidyā-kalpitopādḥau tasyām īśvarākhyāyām vidyeti 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:

1. Some serious contradictions in Mayavāda philosophy.

TEXT 41

kiṁ ca yady atrābheda-vāda eva tātparīyam abhaviṣyat tarhy ekam eva brahmājñānena bhinnam jñānena tu tasya bheda-mayaṁ duḥkham vītyata ity apaśyad ity evāvakṣyat. tathā śrī-bhagaval-līlādīnam 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:

1. Vyāsa’s realizations contradict Mayavāda.

TEXT 42

tasmāt pariccheda-pratibimbatvādi-pratipādaka-śāstrāṇy api kathaṁcit tad-sādṛśyena gaūnyaiva 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:

1. How to deal with scriptural statements that appear to favour *pariccheda-vāda* or *pratibimba-vāda*.

TEXT 43

tata evābheda-sāstrāṇy ubhayaś cid-rūpatvena jīva-samūhasya tad-ekatve 'pi durghaṭa-ghaṭanā-paṭiyasyā svābhāvika-tad-acintya-śaktyā svābhāvata eva tad-raśmi-paramāṇu-gaṇa-sthānīyatvāt tad-vyatirekenāvyatirekeṇa ca virodhaṁ pariṇītyāgre 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:

1. Understanding the nondifference in terms of Vyāsa's conclusions.

B) Abhidheya and Prayojana Understood on the Basis of Vyāsa's Realization (Texts 44 to 49)

TEXT 44

tad evaṁ māyāśrayatva-māyā-mohitatvābhyām 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 (*abhidheya*). 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."

Commentary:

1. The conclusions arrived at above lead us to understand that devotional service is the *abhidheya*.

Commented [gpd9]: Page: 15

Gopi: It appears that *daivé hy eṣā ity-ādi-nyāyena* is not in the edition SNP used. Yet we've included it here. Check texts. SNP's quoting *daivī hy eṣa* in the commentary, with no mention of its being quoted by Jiva, is a bit strange.

TEXT 45

*ataḥ śrī-bhagavata eva sarva-hitopadeṣṭṛtvāt sarva-duḥkha-haratvād raśmīnām sūrya-vat sarveṣāṃ
parama-svarūpatvāt sarvādhika-guṇa-śālitvāt parama-prema-yogatvam iti prayojanaṃ 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:

1. These conclusions also lead us to understand that love of God is the *prayojana*.

TEXT 46

Text 46.1

*tatrābhidheyam ca tādṛṣatvena dṛṣṭavān api yatas tat-pravṛtty-arthaṃ śrī-bhāgavatākhyāṃ imām
sātvata-saṃhitām pravartitavān ity āha anartheti. bhakti-yogo 'tra śravaṇa-kīrtanādi-lakṣaṇaḥ sādhana-bhakti-yogo
na tu prema-lakṣaṇaḥ. anuṣṭhānaṃ hy upadeśāpekṣaṃ prema tu tat-prasādāpekṣaṃ 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-garbhavāt sāksād evānarthopāśamanatvam, na tv
anya-sāpekṣatvena yat karmabhir yat tapasā jñāna-vairāgyayataś ca yat ity-ādau sarvaṃ mad-bhakti-yogena
mad-bhaktō labhate 'njasā svargāpavargam ity-ādeḥ. jñānādes tu bhakti-sāpekṣatvam eva śreyah-sṛtiṃ bhaktim
ity-ādeḥ. atha vā anarthasya saṃsāra-vyasanasya tāvat sāksād avyavadhānenopāśamanam sammohādi-dvayasya tu
premākhyā-sviya-phala-dvārenety 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 (*anarthopāśamaṃ 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 *anarthopaśamaṁ sākṣād* 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].

Text 47

Text 47.1

atha pūrva-vad eva prayojanaṁ ca spaṣṭayituṁ pūrvoktasya pūrṇa-puruṣasya ca śrī-kṛṣṇa-svarūpatvaṁ vyañjayitum grantha-phala-nirdeśa-dvārā tatra tad-anubhavāntaraṁ pratipādayann āha yasyām iti. bhaktiḥ premā śravaṇa-rūpayā sādhana-bhaktiḥ sādhayatvāt. utpadyate āvirbhavati. tasyānuṣaṅgikāṁ guṇaṁ āha śoketi atraiśāṁ saṁskāro 'pi nāśyatīti 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 svayamīty-ādi-sāstra-sahasra-bhāvitāntaḥ-karaṇānāṁ paramparayā tat-prasiddhi-madhya-pātināṁ cāsaṅkhyā-lokānāṁ tan-nāma-śravaṇa-mātreṇa yaḥ prathama-pratīti-viśayaḥ syāt tathā tan-nāmnāḥ prathamākṣara-mātrāṁ mantrāya kalpyamānaṁ yasyābhimukhyāya syāt tad-ākāre ity arthaḥ. āhuḥ ca nāma-kaumudī-kārāḥ kṛṣṇa-śabdasya tamāla-syāmala-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.’”

TEXT 48

atha tasyaiva prayojanasya brahmānandānubhavād api paramatvam anubhūtavān. yatas tādṛśam śukam api tad-ānanda-vaiśiṣṭya-lambhanāya tām adhyāpayām āsety āha sa saṁhitām iti. kṛtvānukramya ceti prathamataḥ svayaṁ saṁkṣepeṇa kṛtvā paścāt tu śrī-nāradaopadeśād anukrameṇa vivṛtyety arthaḥ. ata eva śrīmad-bhāgavatam bhāratānantaram kṛtam yad atra śrūyate yac cānyatrāṣṭādaśa-purāṇānantaram bhāratam iti tad dvayam api saṁhitam syāt. brahmānandānubhava-nimagnatvāt nivṛtti-niratam sarvato nivṛttau niratam tatṛvyaḥcāriṇam apity 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.

Text 49

Text 49.1

tam etaṁ śrī-veda-vyāsaya samādhi-jātānubhavam śrī-śaunaka-praśnottaratvena viśadayan sarvātmārāmānubhavaṁ sa-hetukam saṁvādayati ātmārāmāś ceti. nirgranthā vidhi-niṣedhātītā nirgatāhaṅkāra-granthayo vā. ahaitukīm phalābhisandhi-rahitām. atra sarvākṣepa-parihārārtham āha ittham-bhūta ātmārāmāṇām apy ākarṣaṇa-svabhāvo guṇo yasya sa iti.

In reply to a question posed by Śrī Śaunaka [Bhāg. 1.7.9], Sūta Gosvāmī speaks the verse beginning *ātmārāmāś 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 anubhavana saṁvādayati harer guṇeti. śrī-veda-vyāsa-devād yat kiñcic chrutena harer guṇena pūrvam ākṣiptā matir brahmānandānubhavo yasya sah. paścād adhyagād mahad viśtīrnam iti. tataś ca tat-saṁkathā-sauhārdena nityam viṣṇu-janāḥ 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-nivāraṇe sati kṛtārtham manyatayā svayam ekāntam eva gatavān. tatra śrī-veda-vyāsaś tu tam vaśī-kartum tad-ananya-sādhnam śrī-bhāgavatam eva jñātvā tad-guṇātīśaya-prakāśa-mayāṁ tadīya-padya-viśeṣān kathaṁcic chrāvayitvā tena tam ākṣipta-matim kṛtvā tad eva pūrvam tam adhyāpayām āseti bhāgavata-mahimātīśayaḥ proktaḥ.

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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* 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 darśitam 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 niṣṭāṅkitam. 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.

Section 6 — Śrīmad Bhāgavatam's Message Defined in Terms of Understanding the Jīva and the Supreme Brahman (Texts 50 to 55)

A) The Absolute Truth is Nondual Consciousness; the Jīvas are His Parts (Texts 50-52)

TEXT 50

*atha krameṇa vistaratas tathaiva tātparyam nirṇetuṁ sambandhābhidheya-prayojaneṣu ṣaḍbhiḥ sandarbhair
nirṇesyamāneṣu prathamam yasya vācya-vācakatā-sambandhidam sāstram tad eva dharmah projjhita-kaitava
ity-ādi-padye sāmānyākāratas tāvad āha vedyam vāstavam atra vastu iti. ĥikā 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 prayojana, one after the other. This first book, the *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 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:

1. The structure of the Six Sandarbhas.
2. Śrīmad Bhāgavatam teaches us definitively what is the ultimate reality.

TEXT 51

atha kim-svarūpam tad vastu-tattvam ity atrāha:

vadanti tat tattva-vidas tattvam yaj jñānam advayam

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iti. jñānaṁ cid-eka-rūpaṁ. advayatvaṁ cāśya svayaṁ-siddha-tādṛśātādṛśa-tattvāntarābhāvāt
sva-śakty-eka-sahāyatvāt paramāśrayaṁ taṁ vinā tāsāṁ asiddhatvāc ca. tattvaṁ iti parama-puruṣārthatā-dyotanaṁ
parama-sukha-rūpaṁ tasya bodhyate. ata eva tasya nityatvaṁ ca darśitam. śrī-sūtaḥ.

“What is the nature of this absolute reality?”

Sūta Gosvāmī answers [Bhāg. 1.2.11]:

“The knowers of that absolute reality 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, is the embodiment of the highest bliss and is therefore also eternal.

The verse under discussion was spoken by Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī.

Commentary:

1. Understanding nonduality.

TEXT 52

Text 52.1

nanu nīla-pītādy-ākāraṁ kṣaṇikam eva jñānaṁ dṛṣṭaṁ tat punar advayaṁ nityaṁ jñānaṁ kathaṁ lakṣyate
yan-niṣṭhaṁ idaṁ śāstraṁ ity atrāha

sarva-vedānta-sāraṁ yad brahmātmaikyatva-lakṣaṇam
vastu advitīyaṁ tan-niṣṭhaṁ kaivalyaika-prayojanam

iti. satyaṁ jñānaṁ anantaṁ brahma iti yasya svarūpaṁ uktam yenāśrutaṁ śrutaṁ bhavati iti, yad-vijñānena
sarva-vijñānaṁ pratijñātam, sad eva saumyedaṁ agra āśid ity-ādinā nikhila-jagad-eka-kāraṇatā, tad aikṣata bahu
syām ity anena satya-saṅkalpatā ca yasya pratipādītā tena brahmaṇā svarūpa-śaktibhyāṁ sarva-bhāttamena
sārdham, anena jīvenātmaneti tadyoktāṁ idantā-nirdeśena tato bhinnatve 'py ātmātā-nirdeśena
tad-ātmāṁśa-viśeṣatvena labdhasya bādarāyaṇa-samādhi-dṛṣṭa-yukter aty-abhinnatā-rahitasya jīvātmano yad
ekatvaṁ tat tvam asi ity-ādau jñātā tad-āṁśa-bhūta-cid-rūpatvena samānākāratā, tad eva lakṣaṇam prathamato jñāne
sādhakatamaṁ yasya, tathā-bhūtaṁ yat sarva-vedānta-sāraṁ advitīyaṁ vastu, tan-niṣṭhaṁ tad-eka-viśayaṁ 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].

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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, *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].

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Text 52.2

yathā janma-prabhṛti kaścīd grha-guhāvaruddhaḥ sūryaṁ vividiṣuḥ kathaṁcid gavākṣa-patitaṁ sūryāṁsu-kaṇaṁ darśayitvā kenacid upadiśyate eṣa sa ity etat-tad-aṁśa-jyotiḥ-samānākāratayā tan mahā-jyotir-maṇḍalam anusandhiyatām ity arthas tad-vat. jīvasya tathā tad-aṁśatvaṁ ca tad-acintya-śakti-viśeṣa-siddhatvenaiva paramātmā-sandarbhe sthāpayisyāmaḥ.

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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 *Paramātmā-sandarbha* we will establish that the *jīva* is similarly a fractional portion of the Supreme Brahman, manifested by one of His inconceivable potencies.

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Text 52.3

tad-etaj-jivādi-lakṣaṇāṁśa-viśiṣṭatayaivopaniṣadas tasya sāmśatvaṁ 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-sandarbhe 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:

1. Objections from some Buddhists regarding the nature of consciousness.
2. “Tat tvam asi” understood.
3. Summarizing the oneness and difference of the jivas and the Absolute Truth.

B) Understanding the Absolute Truth by Understanding the Jīva (Texts 53 to 55)

TEXT 53

Text 53.1

tatra yadi tvam-padārthasya jīvātmano jñānatvaṁ nityatvaṁ ca prathamato vicāra-gocaraḥ syāt tadaiva tad-padārthasya tādṛśatvaṁ su-bodham syād iti tad bodhayitum anyārthaś ca paramārśaḥ iti nyāyena jīvātmanas tad-rūpatvaṁ āha.

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nātmā jajāna na mariṣyati naidhate 'sau
na kṣīyate savana-vid vyabhicārīṇām hi
sarvatra śaśvad anapāy 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.”

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 nirastaḥ. hi yasmāt. vyabhicārīṇām 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. *Vyabhicārīṇām* 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.”

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Text 53.3

nanu nīla-jñānaṁ naṣṭaṁ pīta-jñānaṁ jātaṁ iti pratīter na jñānasyānapāyitvam. tatrāha indriya-baleneti. sad eva jñānaṁ ekam indriya-balena vividhaṁ kalpitam. nīlādy-ākārā vṛttaya eva jāyante naśyanti ca na jñānaṁ iti bhāvaḥ. ayam āgamāpāyī-tad-avadhi-bhedena prathamā tarkaḥ. draṣṭṛ-dṛśya-bhedena dvitīyo 'pi tarko jñeyah. vyabhicāriṣv avasthitasāvyabhicāre 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] 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.

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Commentary:

1. “Tat tvam asi” helps us understand the Absolute Truth through the insight it gives us into the jivas nature.
2. The first of two Śrīmad Bhāgavatam verses which help us in the same regard.

TEXT 54

Text 54.1

dṛṣṭāntaṁ vivṛṇvanṁ indriyādi-layena nirvikārātmopalabdhiṁ darśayati:

*anḍeṣu peṣiṣu taruṣv aviniściteṣu
prāṇo hi jīvaṁ upadhāvatī tatra tatra
sanne yad indriya-gaṇe 'hami ca prasupte
kūṭa-sṭha āśayam ṛte tad-anusmṛtīr naḥ*

anḍeṣu anḍa-jeṣu. peṣiṣu jarāyu-jeṣu. taruṣu udbhij-jeṣu. aviniściteṣu sveda-jeṣu. upadhāvatī anuvartate.

Expanding further on this example, Pippalāyana Ṛṣi uses the analogy of the senses' dissolution to demonstrate the soul's changelessness:

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“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 *andeṣu* 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.”

Text 54.2

evam dṛṣṭānte nirvikāratvaṁ pradarśya dārṣṭāntike 'pi darśayati. katham. tadaivātmā sa-vikāra iva pratīyate yadā jāgare indriya-gaṇo yadā ca svapne tat-saṁskāravān ahaṁkārah. yadā tu prasuptaṁ tadā tasmin prasupta indriya-gaṇe sanne line aham ahaṁkāre ca sanne line kūṭa-stho nirvikāra eva ātmā. kutah. āśayam rte liṅga-śarīram upādhiṁ vinā vikāra-hetor upādher abhāvād ity arthah.

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 rte*: without the “containing vessel,” the limitation of the subtle body. That is to say, he is free from the *upādhis* that impose changes upon him.

Text 54.3

nanv ahaṁkāra-paryantasya sarvasya laye śūnyam evāvaśiṣyate kva tadā kūṭa-stha ātmā. ata āha tad-anusmṛtir nas tasyākhaṇḍātmanah suṣupti-sākṣiṇah smṛtir naḥ asmākaṁ jāgrad-draṣṭṛñām jāyate etāvantaṁ kālāṁ sukham aham asvāpāṁ na kiñcid avedīṣaṁ iti. ato 'nanubhūtasya tasyāsmaraṇād asty eva suṣuptau tādṛg-ātmānubhavo viśaya-sambandhābhāvāc ca na spaṣṭa iti bhāvah.

But, one may object, when everything up to and including the ego is dissolved, only a void should remain. Why then is it said that even at this time the changeless soul is present? Pippalāyana answers, *tad-anusmṛtir naḥ*: “We remember it.” When we, the perceivers of waking life, wake up from deep sleep, we each remember 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.

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Text 54.4

ataḥ sva-prakāśa-mātra-vastunaḥ sūryādeḥ prakāśa-vad upalabdhi-mātrasyāpy ātmana uplabdhiḥ svāśraye 'sty evety āyātām. tathā ca śrutiḥ, yad vai tan na paśyati paśyan vai draṣṭavyān na paśyati na hi draṣṭur dṛṣṭer viparilopo vidyate iti. ayaṁ sākṣi-sākṣya-vibhāgena tṛtīyas tarkaḥ. duḥkhi-premāśpadatva-vibhāgena caturtho 'pi tarko 'vagantavyaḥ.

We can therefore conclude that the soul, who is pure awareness, is also aware of himself, 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]; 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:

1. A second Śrīmad Bhāgavatam verse gives further insight into the jivas' nature, and thereby the nature of the Absolute Truth.

TEXT 55

tad uktam:

anvaya-vyatirekākhyas tarkaḥ syāc catur-ātmakaḥ
āgamāpāyī-tad-(bādha)avadhī-bhedena prathamā mataḥ

draṣṭṛ-dṛśya-vibhāgena dvitīyo 'pi matas tathā
sākṣi-sākṣya-vibhāgena tṛtīyaḥ sammataḥ satām
duḥkhi-premāśpadatvena caturthaḥ sukha-bodhakaḥ

iti. śrī-pippalāyano nimim.

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[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:

1. Summarizing the previous two texts.

Section 7 — Conclusion — Understanding the Absolute Truth by Understanding Śrīmad Bhāgavatam's Ten Topics (Texts 56 to 63)

A) Śrīmad Bhāgavatam's Ten Topics, as Presented by Śukadeva Goswami (Text 56 to 58)

TEXT 56

Text 56.1

*evam-bhūtānām jīvānām cin-mātram yat svarūpaṁ tayaivākṛtayā tad-amṣitvena ca tad-abhinnaṁ yat tattvaṁ tad
atra vācyaṁ 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*). 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), *iśānukathā* (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].

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Text 56.2

manv-antarāṇi ceśānukathāś ca manv-antareśānukathāḥ. atra sargādayo daśārthā lakṣyanta ity arthaḥ. tatra ca daśamasyāśrayasya viśuddhy-arthaṁ tattva-jñānārthaṁ navānāṁ lakṣaṇāṁ svarūpaṁ varṇayanti. nanv atra naivāṁ pratiyate. ata āha śruteṇa śrutyā kaṇṭhoktyaiva stuty-ādi-sthāneṣu añjasā sāṅśād varṇayanti arthena tātparya-vṛtṭyā 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:

1. Śrīmad Bhāgavatam is a Maha Purāṇa.
2. The Śrīmad Bhāgavatam’s ten topics help us understand the Supreme Brahman, the subject of the book, from the aggregate point of view.
3. Descriptions of the first nine topics are to help us understand the tenth.

TEXT 57

Text 57.1

*tam eva daśamaṁ viśpaṣṭayitūṁ teṣāṁ daśānāṁ vyutpādikāṁ sapta-slokaṁ āha:
bhūta-mātrendriya-dhiyāṁ janma sarga udāhṛtaḥ
brahmaṇo guṇa-vaiśamyād visargaḥ pauraṣaḥ smṛtaḥ*

bhūtāni khādīni mātṛāṇi ca śabdādīni indriyāṇi ca. dhī-śabdena mahad-ahankārau. guṇānāṁ vaiśamyāt parīṇāmāt. brahmaṇaḥ paramēśvarāt kartur bhūtādīnāṁ janma sargaḥ. puruṣo vairājo brahmā tat-kṛtaḥ pauraṣaḥ, 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*].

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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.

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Text 57.2

*sthitiṁ vaikuṇṭha-vijayaḥ poṣaṇam tad-anugrahaḥ manv-antarāṇi sad-dharma ūtayaḥ
karma-vāsanāhavatārānucaritam hareḥ cāsyānūvartināmpuṁsām īśa-kathāḥ proktā nānakhyānopabṛmhitāḥ
vaikuṇṭhasya bhagavato vijayaḥ sṛṣṭānām tat-tan-maryādā-pālanenotkarṣaḥ sthitiḥ sthānam. tataḥ sthiteṣu
sva-bhakteṣu tasyānugrahaḥ poṣaṇam. manv-antarāṇi tat-tan-manv-antara-sthītānām manv-ādinām
tad-anugrhitānām satām caritāni tāny eva dharmas tad-upāsānakhyāḥ sad-dharmāḥ. tatraiva sthitaḥ
nānā-karma-vāsanā ūtayaḥ. sthītā eva harer avatārānucaritam asyānūvartinām ca kathā īśānukathāḥ proktā ity
arthah.*

“*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 *vaikuṇṭha-vijaya*, the victory of Lord Vaikuṇṭha, 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 worshipping 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.

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Text 57.3

*nīrodho 'syānuśayanam ātmanah saha śaktibhiḥ
muktir hitvānyathā-rūpaṁ svarūpeṇa vyavasthitiḥ*

*sthity-anantaram cātmano jīvasya śaktibhiḥ svopādhibhiḥ sahāśya harer anuśayanam hari-śayanānugatatvena
śayanam nīrodha ity arthaḥ. tatra harer śayanam prapañcam prati dṛṣṭi-nimilanam jīvānām śayanam tatra laya iti
jñeyam. tatraiva nīrodhe 'nyathā-rūpaṁ avidyādhyaṣtam ajñatvādikam hitvā svarūpeṇa vyavasthitiḥ muktir.*

“The merging of the living entity, along with his conditioning, with the mystic lying down of [Mahā-Viṣṇu] is called the winding up of the cosmic manifestation [nīrodha]. 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 nīrodha (“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:

1. Explaining nine of the ten subjects.

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TEXT 58

*ābhāsaś ca nīrodhaś ca yato 'sty adhyavasiyatesa āśrayaḥ param brahma paramātmēti śabdyate
ābhāsaḥ sṛṣṭir nīrodho layaś ca yato bhavati adhyavasiyate upalabhyate jīvānām jñānendriyeṣu prakāśate ca sa
brahmēti 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 nīrodha (“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 (adhyavasiyate), 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:

1. An introductory understanding of the tenth subject.
2. The tenth subject is the āśraya, the shelter of all.
3. Ultimately He is the Bhagavan feature of the Absolute Truth.

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B) Śukadeva's Understanding of the Tenth Topic, the Absolute Truth, as the Shelter of All Shelters, Who is His Own Shelter (Texts 59 to 60)

TEXT 59

Text 59.1

sthītau ca tatāśraya-svarūpam aparokṣānubhavaṇa vyāṣṭi-dvārāpi spaṣṭam darśayitum adhyātmādi-vibhāgam āha:

*yo 'dhyātmiko 'yam puruṣaḥ so 'sāv evādhidaivikah
yas tatrobhaya-vicchedaḥ puruṣo hy ādhibhautikah*

*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 *adhyātmika-puruṣa* is the same as the *adhidaivika-puruṣa*, and he who creates the differentiation between these two is called the *adhibhautika-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 ādhyātmikah puruṣaś cakṣur-ādi-karaṇābhīmānī draṣṭā jīvaḥ sa evādhidaivikaś cakṣur-ādy-adhiṣṭhātā sūryādiḥ. deha-sṛṣṭeḥ pūrvam karaṇānām adhiṣṭhānābhāvenākṣamatayā karaṇa-prakāśa-kartṛtvābhīmānī-tat-sahāyayor ubhayor api tayor vṛtti-bhedānundayena jīvatva-mātrāviśeṣāt. tataś cobhayaḥ karaṇābhīmānī-tad-adhiṣṭhātr-devatā-rūpo dvi-rūpo vicchedo yasmāt sa ādhibhautikaś cakṣur-golakādy-upalakṣito dṛṣyo dehaḥ puruṣa iti puruṣasya jīvasyopādhiḥ. sa vā eṣa puruṣo 'nna-rasa-mayaḥ ity-ādi-sruteḥ.

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.

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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:

1. Defining the *adhyātmika*, *adhidaivika* and *adhibhautika* *puruṣas*.
2. Even though it may appear that they are *āśrayas* for each other, actually it is the Supersoul who is the real shelter.

TEXT 60

Text 60.1

ekam ekatarābhāva ity eṣāṃ 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 sūryādīn na ca taṃ vinā karaṇaṃ pravartate na ca tad vinā dṛśyaṃ ity ekatarasyābhāva ekam nopalabhāmahe. tatra tadā tat tritayam ālocanātmakena pratyayena yo veda sāksitayā paśyati sa paramātmā āśrayaḥ. teṣāṃ api parasparam āśrayatvaṃ astīti tad-vyavacchedārthaṃ viśeṣaṇaṃ svāśrayo 'nanyāśrayaḥ, sa cāsāv anyeṣāṃ āśrayaś ceti. tatrāṃśāśinoḥ śuddha-jīva-paramātmānora abhedāṃśa-svikāreṇaivāśraya 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-suṣuptaṃ ca guṇato buddhi-vṛttayaḥ
tāsāṃ vilakṣaṇo jīvaḥ sāksitvena viniścitaḥ*

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iti suddho vicaṣṭe hy avīsuddha-kartuḥ ity-ādy-uktasya sāksi-samjñināḥ suddha-jīvasyāśrayatvaṁ na sankaniyam.
atha vā nanv ādhyātmikādinām apy āśrayatvaṁ 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*.

Alternatively, one might propose that the aspects of *ādhyātmika* 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 sāksiṇa evāstām āśrayatvam. tatrāha tritayam iti. sa ātmā sāksi jīvas tu yaḥ svāśrayo 'nanyāśrayaḥ
paramātmā sa evāśrayo yasya tathā-bhūta ity anayor bhedaḥ. vakṣyate ca haṁsa-guhya-stave:

Commented [DDB50]: This conclusion puzzles me because it's not self-evident. The first quote supports it--How could the ultimate shelter identify Himself with the material modes?--but the second and third quotes could be describing the Supersoul--Isn't the SS a "pure agent" who witnesses the actions of the mind? Isn't the SS distinct from the functions of waking, etc., and their witness? Now, in the verse from the 5th canto there is a clear distinction made between the supreme witness and the little jiva witness, but that's not reflected in the phrase suddho vicaṣṭe etc. Then, to top it off, we say "Alternatively, one might propose . . . are ALSO asrayas." Why "also" if we've just dismissed the reasonability of proposing the jiva as the asraya? Have we got this one right? Please check.

Commented [DDB51]: But the jiva is the adhyatmika; didn't he just say it's unreasonable to say the jiva is the asraya?

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sarvaṁ pumān veda guṇāṁś ca taj-jño
na veda sarva-jñān anantam īde

iti. tasmād ābhāśaś cety-ādinoktaḥ paramātmaivāśraya iti. śrī-sukaḥ.

“Then let the witness (the *jīva*) be the shelter.” 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-guhya* 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 *ābhāśaś ca* [Bhāg. 2.10.7], is alone the *āśraya*.

The verse under discussion [Bhāg. 2.10.9] was spoken by Śrī Śuka.

Commentary:

1. The interdependency of these three *puruṣas*.
2. The Supersoul is their shelter, and His own shelter.
3. In certain senses the three *puruṣas* may be considered shelters.

C) Suta Goswami Lists the Ten Topics of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, and Confirms that the Absolute Truth is Kṛṣṇa, the Ultimate Shelter (Texts 61 to 63)

TEXT 61

Text 61.1

asya śrī-bhāgavatasya mahā-purāṇatva-vyañjaka-lakṣaṇaṁ prakāraṇtarena 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-vyavasthaya

antarāṇi manv-antarāṇi.

Commented [DDB53]: But didn't we just dismiss this proposal in 60.2?? Help.

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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; *ṛtti*, 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
vaṁśānucaritaṁ ceti purāṇaṁ pañca-lakṣaṇam*

*iti kecid vadanti. sa ca mata-bhedo mahad-alpa-vyavasthayā mahā-purāṇam alpa-purāṇam iti
bhinnādhihikāraṇatvena. 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 *vaṁśānucaritaṁ*, 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 arthānāṁ skandheṣu yathā-kramaṁ praveśo na vivakṣitas teṣāṁ dvādaśa-saṅkhyatvāt.
dviṭīya-skandhoktānāṁ teṣāṁ tṛtīyādiṣu yathā-saṅkhyāṁ na samāveśaḥ. nirodhādīnām daśamādiṣv aṣṭama-varjam
anyeṣāṁ 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.

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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-prādhānyaḥ tair vivakṣitam. uktam ca svayam eva. daśame daśamaḥ lakṣyam āśrītaśraya-vigrahaḥ*

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 'rithāḥ sarveṣv eva skandheṣu gaṇatvena vā mukhyatvena vā nirūpyanta ity eva teṣāṃ
abhimatam. śrutenārthena cāñjasā ity atra tathaiva pratīpannam sarvatra tat-tat-sambhavāt. tataś ca
prathama-dvītiyayor api mahā-purāṇatāyāṃ 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.

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Commentary:

1. Sūta Goswami, in the 12th Canto, substantiates that Śrīmad Bhāgavatam is a Maha-Purāṇa by giving a different list of ten topics.
2. In doing so he also shows that Lord Kṛṣṇa is the āśraya.
3. Generally lesser Purāṇas have five subjects.
4. The ten topics in Śrīmad Bhāgavatam are not presented consecutively.

TEXT 62

Text 62.1

atha sargādinām lakṣaṇam āha:

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

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

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

*puruṣānugrhitānām eteṣāṃ vāsanā-mayaḥ
visargo 'yaṁ samāhāro bijād bijam carācaram*

*puruṣaḥ paramātmā. eteṣāṃ mahad-ādinām jīvasya pūrva-karma-vāsanā-pradhāno 'yaṁ samāhāraḥ
kārya-bhūtaḥ carācara-prāṇi-rūpo bijād bijam iva pravāhāpanno visarga ucya. vyaṣṭi-sṛṣṭir visarga ity arthaḥ.
anenotir apy uktā.*

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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 carāṇām acarāṇi ca
kṛtā svena nṛṇām tatra kāmāc codanayāpi vā*

carāṇām bhūtānām sāmānyato 'carāṇi ca-kārāc carāṇi ca kāmād vṛttih. 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
tiryāṇ-martyarṣi-deveṣu hanyante yais trayi-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].

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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-antaraṁ manur devā manu-putrāḥ sureśvarāḥ
ṛṣayo 'mśāvatārās ca hareḥ śad-vidham ucyate*

manv-ādy-ācaraṇa-kathanena śad-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 *śad-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

rājñāṁ brahma-prasūtānāṁ vāmśas trai-kāliko 'nvayaḥ vāmśyānucaritaṁ teṣāṁ vṛttaṁ vāmśa-dharās ca ye

teṣāṁ rājñāṁ ye ca vāmśa-dharās teṣāṁ vṛttaṁ vāmśyānucaritam.

“Dynasties (*vāmśa*) 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 (*vāmśyānucarita*)” [*Bhāg.* 12.7.16].

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

Commentary:

1. Sūta Goswami describes the features of the ten topics.
2. Even though his list appears different from Śukadeva's, it is not.

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TEXT 63

Text 63.1

naimittikaḥ prākṛtiko nitya ātyantiko layaḥ

saṁstheti kavibhiḥ proktaḥ caturdhāsyā svabhāvataḥ

asya parameśvarasya. svabhāvataḥ śaktiḥ. 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 Parameśvara, 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. yaṁ eva hetuṁ kecic
cāitanya-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 *anuśayī* (“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-samādhī-labdhārtha-virodhād atra ca jīva-śuddha-svarūpam evāśrayatvena na vyākhyāyate. kintv
ayam evārtho jāgrat-ādiṣv avasthāsu māyā-mayeṣu māyā-śakti-kalpiteṣu mahad-ādi-dravyeṣu ca kevala-svarūpeṇa
vyatirekaḥ parama-sākṣitayānvayaś ca yasya tad brahma ca jīvanām vṛttiṣu śuddha-svarūpatayā sopādhitayā ca
vartaneṣu sthitiṣv apāśrayaḥ sarvaṁ 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:

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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. 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.

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Text 63.4

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

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

*virameta yadā cittam 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].

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Text 63.5

rūpa-nāmātmakeṣu padārtheṣu ghaṭādiṣu yathā dravyaṁ prthivy-ādi yutam ayutam ca bhavati kārya-drṣṭiṁ vināpy upalambhāt tathā tan-mātraṁ śuddhaṁ jīva-caitanya-mātraṁ vastu garbhādhānādi-pañcatāntāsu navasv apy avasthāsv avidyayā yutam svatas tv ayutam iti śuddham ātmānam ithaṁ jñātvā nirviṇṇaḥ sann apāśrayānusandhāna-yogyo bhavaty āha virameteti. vṛtti-trayaṁ jāgrat-svapna-sūṣupti-rūpam. ātmānam paramātmānam. svayam vāmadevāder iva māyā-mayatvānusandhānena devahūty-āder ivānuṣṭhitena yogena vā. tatas cehāyā tad-anuśīlana-vyatirikta-ceṣṭāyāḥ. 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

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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 *vīrameta* [Bhāg. 12.7.21].

The *vṛtti-trayam* (“three functional states”) are the states of waking, dreaming, and deep sleep. *Ātmānam* (“Self”) here means the Supersoul. *Svayam* (“by oneself”) means by carefully studying the illusory nature of the world, as the sage Vāmadeva did. *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-sanātana-nusāsana-bhārati-garbhe śrī-bhāgavata-sandarbhā tattva-sandarbhā nāma prathamāḥ sandarbhaḥ.

Thus ends the *Tattva-sandarbhā*, the first book of the *Bhāgavata-sandarbhā*, 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:

1. Liberation is included as one of the types of destructions.
2. According to Vyāsa’s realization the ultimate shelter, the *apāśraya*, is Lord Kṛṣṇa.
3. The goal of life for the *jīva* is to take shelter of Him by devotional service.

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