

Theme – II

Nature of Pure Bhakti,
the Essence of all
Scriptures

Nature of Pure Bhakti, the Essence of all Scriptures

|| 1.2.6 ||

**sa vai puṁsām paro dharmo
yato bhaktir adhokṣaje
ahaituky apratihātā
yayātmā suprasīdati**

The supreme dharma for all human beings (sādhana bhakti) (**puṁsām paro dharmo**) is that (**sa vai**) by which (**yato**) prema-bhakti to the Lord arises (**bhaktir adhokṣaje**), which is not caused by anything other than itself (**ahaituky**), cannot be obstructed (**apratihātā**), and which satisfies the mind completely (**yayātmā suprasīdati**).

Nature of Pure Bhakti, the Essence of all Scriptures

This verse answers the second question of the sages: what is the final essence of all the scriptures.

That essence is highest dharma for anyone who is a human being (pumsām), meaning hearing and chanting about the Lord.

It is said:

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It is said:

etāvān eva loke 'smin
puṁsām dharmah paraḥ smṛtaḥ
bhakti-yogo bhagavati
tan-nāma-grahaṇādibhiḥ

Pure bhakti to the Supreme Lord (**bhagavati bhakti-yogah**), beginning with the chanting of the holy name of the Lord (**tad-nāma-grahaṇa ādibhiḥ**), is the real dharma (**etāvān dharmah smṛtaḥ**), the supreme object (**paraḥ**) for the human living in this world (**asmin loke puṁsām**).

SB 6.3.22

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By this statement, The word para along with dharma in the present verse can indicate only bhakti-yoga.

Etavān eva indicates exclusion of other processes as para-dharma.

The essence of scripture is bhakti-yoga by which prema-bhakti (yataḥ bhaktiḥ) appears.

It arises without cause (ahaitukī).

Mixed bhakti is excluded in this definition (since it has cause).

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yam na yogena sāṅkhyena
dāna-vrata-tapo-'dhvaraiḥ
vyākhyā-svādhyāya-sannyāsaiḥ
prāpnuyād yatnavān api

Even though one engages with great endeavour (**yatnavān api**) in the mystic yoga system, philosophical speculation (**yogena sāṅkhyena**), charity, vows, penances (**dāna-vrata-tapo-adhvaraiḥ**), etc (**vyākhyā-svādhyāya-sannyāsaiḥ**), still one cannot achieve Me (**yam na prāpnuyād**). (SB 11.12.9)

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**dāna-vrata-tapo-homa
japa-svādhyāya-saṁyamaiḥ
śreyobhir vividhaiś cānyaiḥ
kṛṣṇe bhaktir hi sādhyate**

Devotion to Krishna is accomplished (**kṛṣṇe bhaktir hi sādhyate**) by such methods as charity, austerities, homa (**dāna-vrata-tapo-homa**), japa, study, sense control (**japa-svādhyāya-saṁyamaiḥ**), and other pious activities (**śreyobhir vividhaiś cānyaiḥ**). (SB 10.47.24)

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“But you are really evading the truth here (saying that prema is not caused by sādhana-bhakti).”

No. Dharma consisting of hearing and chanting about the Lord is called sādhana-bhakti, and in the mature state it is called prema.

Both are called bhakti, for it is said **bhaktyā sañjātayā bhaktyā bibhraty utpulakām tanum**: the devotee possesses a body with ecstatic symptoms by prema developed through sādhana-bhakti. (SB 11.3.31)

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In the verse being discussed, the former bhakti (parodharmo) is the cause of the later type of bhakti (yato bhaktir adhokṣaje), just as an unripe mango is the cause of a ripe mango.

Considering one the cause of the other because of the difference in taste is simply a conception for understanding the different strengths of bhakti, though sādhana-bhakti and prema are not actually different things.

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The various states of infancy, youth and adulthood in one person are actually not conditions of cause and results of that cause (since the person remains).

On the other hand, when pots, cloth and cooked rice arise, the original names and forms of mud, thread and raw rice disappear.

One cannot compare these examples to bhakti and prema.

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One also cannot say that the famous cause of bhakti is association of devotees, for association of devotees is part of bhakti.

It is the second stage, as understood from the statement *ādau śraddhā tataḥ sādhu-saṅgo 'tha bjajana-kriyā*. (BRS 1.3.11)

Nor can it even be said that the mercy of the Lord is the cause of pure bhakti, for it is non-final cause, making one search out a further cause.

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One cannot say that the Lord's mercy is absolute, without further cause, for then it would mean the Lord is unjust and prejudiced in choosing to give mercy without reason to certain individuals and not to others.

However if one says that the cause of bhakti is the mercy of the devotee, it is not so incorrect.

Though the uttama-bhaktas do not make distinctions and are thus not prejudiced, one does see the madhyama-bhakta making distinctions between the Lord, the devotee, the innocent and the demon.

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Thus because the Lord is dependent on the devotee, the Lord's mercy follows after the mercy of the devotee. That is the correct conclusion.

But then how is bhakti said to be without cause (ahaitukum) in this verse?

Because the Lords mercy is included in the mercy of the devotee, and because that mercy is included in association with devotees, and because devotee association is an aṅga of bhakti, bhakti is said to be without cause (since an aṅga of bhakti causes bhakti).

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Moreover the cause of devotee's mercy is but the bhakti present in the heart of the devotee, because without that bhakti in his heart there is no possibility of his mercy arising.

In all ways therefore, bhakti is the cause of bhakti.

Therefore bhakti is said to be without cause.

From the point of view of bhakti, the devotee, bhakti, the Lord, and his mercy are not separate items.

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Even though bhakti appears by bhakti (thus being self-manifesting), it does not negate the fact that bhakti's self-manifesting nature comes from the Lord.

This bhakti cannot be prevented by anything (apratihatā). This is mentioned in the following verse:

**mad-guṇa-śruti-mātreṇa mayi sarva-guhāśaye
mano-gatir avicchinnā yathā gaṅgāmbhaso 'mbudhau**

Just as the water of the Ganges flows naturally down towards the ocean, such devotional ecstasy, uninterrupted by any material condition, flows towards the Supreme Lord. SB 3.29.11

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Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī has also said **sarvathā dhvaṁsa-rahitaṁ saty api dhvaṁsa-kāraṇe**: bhakti is without destruction, though it is the cause of destruction of obstacles. (Ujjvala-nīla-maṇi 14.63)

Apratihata can also mean that this prema-bhakti is not contaminated by jñāna or karma.

By that bhakti (yayā) the mind (ātmā) becomes completely satisfied (suprasīdati).

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Because of the impossibility of the mind being satisfied with the presence of material desires, it is evident that this bhakti being discussed is without any material desires.

yayātmā suprasīdati

What is the Nature of
Satisfaction that comes
through Bhakti?

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|| 1.2.7 ||

vāsudeve bhagavati
bhakti-yogaḥ prayojitaḥ
janayaty āśu vairāgyaṁ
jñānaṁ ca yad ahaitukam

Bhakti dedicated to Lord Kṛṣṇa, endowed with special moods (**vāsudeve bhagavati bhakti-yogaḥ prayojitaḥ**), quickly produces detachment from material goals (**janayaty āśu vairāgyaṁ**) and knowledge of the Lord devoid of the desire for liberation (**jñānaṁ ca yad ahaitukam**).

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What form does that satisfaction of the mind take?

This satisfaction of the mind is filled with knowledge and experience of the form, qualities and sweetness of the Lord, which cause complete disgust with all inferior objects.

That is explained in this verse.

This bhakti is endowed (yojitaḥ) in an excellent manner (pra for prakarṣeṇa), with dāsya, sakhya and other loving emotions.

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Another meaning of bhakti-yogaḥ prayojitaḥ is “bhakti-yoga has been made the only goal (prayojana).”

Separate endeavor for attaining knowledge and detachment are not necessary in the practice of bhakti, for bhakti itself produces them.

Very quickly (āśu) at the time of performing bhakti, they are attained, for it is said:

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**bhaktiḥ pareśānubhavo viraktir
anyatra caiṣa trika eka-kālah
prapadyamānasya yathāśnataḥ syus
tuṣṭiḥ puṣṭiḥ kṣud-apāyo 'nu-ghāsam**

Devotion, direct experience of the Supreme Lord (**bhaktiḥ pareśānubhavo**), and detachment from other things (**anyatra viraktir ca**)—these three occur simultaneously (**eṣa trika eka-kālah syuh**) for one who has taken shelter of Kṛṣṇa (**prapadyamānasya**), in the same way (**yathā**) that pleasure, fullness of the stomach and relief from hunger (**tuṣṭiḥ puṣṭiḥ kṣud-apāyo**) are experienced simultaneously, with each bite (**anu-ghāsam**), for a person engaged in eating (**aśnataḥ**) (**SB 11.2.42**).

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There is an objection that if one possesses knowledge, one attains liberation.

In answer to this, the verse says that this knowledge is ahaitukam, without motivation for liberation.

Thus in this verse jñānam ahaitukam means “knowledge without the goal of liberation.”

Therefore by practicing bhakti in which knowledge also manifests without the goal of liberation, the liberation of merging does not take place.

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Knowledge in this case means knowledge and experience of the Lord's form, qualities and sweetness.

**Why is Varṇāśrama not
considered to be paro
dharma?**

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|| 1.2.8 ||

**dharmah svanuṣṭhitaḥ puṁsām
viṣvaksena-kathāsu yaḥ
notpādayed yadi ratim
śrama eva hi kevalam**

Varṇāśrama-dharma (**svanuṣṭhitaḥ dharmah**) of the human being (**puṁsām**), which does not produce (**yaḥ na utpādayed**) attraction for topics of the Lord (**viṣvaksena-kathāsu ratim**), is only wasted effort (**śrama eva hi kevalam**).

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Why is dharma in the form of varṇāśrama not considered to be paro dharma? This verse answers.

The śruti says karmaṇā pitṛ-loke: by performance of varṇāśrama duties one goes to Pitṛ-loka in the material world. (Bṛhad Āraṇyaka Upaniṣad 1.5)

Performance of varṇāśrama duties does not produce attraction for the Lord.

Because it does not produce attraction for topics about the Lord it is merely useless endeavor.

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Because of the temporary nature of the results of performing varṇāśrama duties such as attainment of Pitr-loka, one should give up those duties (sva-dharma) and perform the paro dharma mentioned in the previous verse consisting of hearing and chanting about the Lord.

Also, Pure bhakti is independent (yadr̥cchayā), indifferent to other processes.

If by good fortune it happens to appear in a person, then he attains attraction for the Lord's topics.

The meaning of yadr̥cchayā is “by itself.”

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Thus even niṣkāma-karma is not the cause of bhakti. That is said in the present verse.

Paro dharmā is understood from verse 1.2.6 (sa vai puṁsām paro dharmah).

All dharmas other than that, undertaken as one's duties (svanuṣṭhitah), even if they are niṣkāma, and which do not produce affection (ratim) for topics about the Lord, are only useless labor.

The Understanding of
Dharma is Subjective

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|| 1.2.9 ||

dharmasya hy āpavargyasya
nārtho 'rthāyopakalpate
nārthasya dharmaikāntasya
kāmo lābhāya hi smṛtaḥ

Material results are not suitable as the goal (**na arthah arthāyopakalpate**) for the person dedicated to higher spiritual goals (**āpavargyasya hy dharmasya**). Attainment of material assets is not the desire (**na arthasya kāmo lābhāya hi smṛtaḥ**) of the person who is dedicated to the higher path (**dharmā ekāntasya**).

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There are four types of persons in this world: karmīs, jñānīs, yogīs and bhaktas.

It is said dharmād arthaś ca kāmaś ca sa kim artham na sevyate: from performance of dharma comes artha and kāma. Can dharma not be used for any purpose? (Mahābhārata 18.5.49)

Thus, the result of performance of dharma is artha, acquisition of material results. The result of material acquisition is desire, kāma.

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The result of kāma is pleasure of the senses.

When the senses are pleased, for further gain of pleasure, one executes the sequence starting with dharma again.

This is true for the karmīs, but does not apply to the jñānīs, yogīs and devotees.

That is explained in this verse.

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Dharma in this verse refers to control of mind and senses (śama, dama etc.) for the jñānī, to yama and niyama etc. for the yogīs and to hearing, chanting and other devotional processes for the devotee.

Though the material results appear by executing all these processes, they are not suitable as the goal (arthāya na kalpate), for after examining the nature of material gain, one becomes detached from it.

That is indicated in text by the word āpavargyasya.

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It should be understood that by these processes apavarga is the concomitant result of practice.

That apavarga is liberation for the jñānī and yogī, and prema-bhakti for the devotee.

Therefore the desire of the avid practitioner should not be for attaining material results (arthasya kamo labhāya na).

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This is because, for the avid practitioner of apavargadharmā, the practice itself has its own results.

In certain actions the jñānīs use material assets which are favorable for śama and dama and the yogīs uses material assets which are favorable for yama and niyama.

The devotee uses material assets for service to the Lord and his devotees.

This is clear.

Therefore, the Devotee
should strive only for
Perfection of his Bhakti

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|| 1.2.10 ||

kāmasya nendriya-prītir
lābho jīveta yāvatā
jīvasya tattva-jijñāsā
nārtho yaś ceḥa karmabhiḥ

For one who desires apavarga (**kāmasya**), sense pleasure attained from enjoying sense objects (**indriya-prītir**) is not the goal (**na lābhah**) as long as one lives (**yāvatā jīveta**). The goal of life (**jīvasya**) is inquiry into the highest truth (**tattva-jijñāsā**). What is accomplished by prescribed duties (**yaś ca iha karmabhiḥ**) is not the goal (**na arthah**).

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The pleasure of the senses (indriya-pritiḥ) arising from enjoying senses objects is not the goal (lābhaḥ).

Rather, as long as one lives (yāvatā jiveta) one should work for the fulfillment of life (apavarga).

The pleasure of the senses from enjoyment for the jñānīs or the yogīs consisting of the secondary results that appear along with the desired results is designated as “results of action.”

Since jñāna and yoga are transformations of niṣkāma-karma, they perceive whatever happiness and distress they experience as results of karma.

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For the devotees, the pleasure of the senses from sense objects which accompany bhakti however are not called fruits of action (karma) since bhakti is not a transformation of karma.

The devotees, however, perceive happiness to be the result of bhakti only.

They regard suffering as the mercy of the Lord:

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*yasyāham anugṛhṇāmi
hariṣye tad-dhanam śanaiḥ
tato 'dhanam tyajanty asya
svajanā duḥkha-duḥkhitam*

If I especially favor someone (*yasya aham anugṛhṇāmi*), I gradually deprive him of his wealth (*hariṣye tad-dhanam śanaiḥ*). Then the relatives and friends of such a poverty-stricken man abandon him (*tato adhanam tyajanty asya svajanā*). In this way he suffers one distress after another (*duḥkha-duḥkhitam*).

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Taking this statement of the Lord into consideration, according to the particular case, the devotee's suffering should be regarded as direct action of the Lord or a result of devotional offenses.

The goal of life (jīvasya) is inquiry into the highest truth (tattva-jijñāsā).

What is accomplished (iha) by performance of karmas, such as attaining Svarga, is not the goal.

What is tattva-jijñāsā ?

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|| 1.2.11 ||

**vadanti tat tattva-vidas
tattvam yaj jñānam advayam
brahmeti paramātmēti
bhagavān iti śabdyate**

The knowers of truth (**tattva-vidah**) call this truth (**vadanti tat tattvam**) advayam-jñānam, the supreme conscious being (**yaj advayam jñānam**), who is called brahman by the jñānīs (**brahmeti śabdyate**), Paramātmā by the yogīs (**paramātmēti**) and Bhagavān by the devotees (**bhagavān iti**).

The means of
understanding that
Absolute Truth is Bhakti?

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|| 1.2.12 ||

tac śraddadhānā munayo
jñāna-vairāgya-yuktayā
paśyanty ātmani cātmānam
bhaktyā śruta-grhītayā

The seriously inquisitive student or sage (**tac śraddadhānā munayo**), well equipped with knowledge and detachment (**jñāna-vairāgya-yuktayā**), realizes that Absolute Truth (**paśyanty ātmani ca ātmānam**) by rendering devotional service (**bhaktyā**) after hearing from guru (**śruta-grhītayā**).

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This verse describes the practice to realize that tattva.

The sages (munayah) — the jñānīs cultivating contemplation, the yogīs and the devotees — see that jñāna of three forms by bhakti.

Those who conceive of jñāna as brahman realize (paśyanti) the jīva (ātmānam) as the Lord (ātmani). (tat tvam asi: You, jīva, are that, the Lord.)

Those who conceive of the Lord as Paramātmā see through meditation the lord in the heart (ātmānam) in their heart (ātmani).

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Those who conceive of Bhagavān see Bhagavān (ātmānam) in the mind (ātmani) and also directly in front of them (ca), and taste the sweetness of the Lord with their very eyes.

The sages realize their form of the Lord by bhakti, which is first heard from the guru (śruta) and then practiced (grhītayā).

The word bhaktyā is used with its conventional meaning, indicating hearing and chanting about the Supreme Lord, Bhagavān.

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The worshippers of brahman and Paramātmā must also perform bhakti directed to Bhagavān in order to perfect their own sādhanas.

Jñāna and vairāgya mentioned in this verse are the two sādhanas for the jñānīs and yogīs only.

For the devotee these two arise only from bhakti and indicate the loving nature of bhakti (because he loves the Lord he strives to know the Lord and shows distaste for everything else), since separate cultivation of jñāna and vairāgya are forbidden in pure bhakti:

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tasmān mad-bhakti-yuktasya
yogino vai mad-ātmanah
na jñānam na ca vairāgyam
prāyaḥ śreyo bhaved iha

Therefore (**tasmād**), for a devotee engaged in bhakti (**mad-bhakti-yuktasya yoginah**), with mind fixed on me (**mad-ātmanah**), the cultivation of knowledge and renunciation (**jñānam ca vairāgyam**) is generally not beneficial for bhakti (**na prāyaḥ śreyo bhaved iha**). (**SB 11.20.31**)

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Or by mentioning jñāna, vairāgya and bhakti, the verse can express the idea that the devotees can realize through bhakti all the three aspects of the Lord: brahman, Paramātmā and Bhagavān.

Some who have that particular faith (tac craddhadhānāḥ) develop the desire to realize all the three forms.

Then, by bhakti, they can see all the three forms.

Thus the goals of the sādhanas of jñāna and yoga for realizing brahman and Paramātmā will be accomplished only by bhakti.

For a Devotee, is there not
some worry in giving up
karma, jñāna and yoga?

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|| 1.2.13 ||

ataḥ pumbhir dvija-śreṣṭhā
varṇāśrama-vibhāgaśaḥ
svanuṣṭhitasya dharmasya
samsiddhir hari-toṣaṇam

O best of the brāhmaṇas (**dvija-śreṣṭhā**)! The complete perfection (**samsiddhih**) of dharma (**svanuṣṭhitasya dharmasya**), according to divisions of varṇāśrama (**varṇāśrama-vibhāgaśaḥ**) by men (**pumbhih**), is pleasing the Lord (**hari-toṣaṇam**).

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Verse 1.2.8 has already stated that varṇāśrama duties (dharmah svānuṣṭhitaḥ) are wasted endeavor.

And even jñāna and yoga, devoid of bhakti, are wasted endeavor.

From this chapter it has already been understood that only by pure bhakti, unmixed with karma, jñāna or yoga, the mind becomes satisfied.

A doubt arises.

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Is there not some worry in giving up jñāna and yoga?

And in not doing nitya-karmas, is there not the calamity of great sin in omission of action, and ending up in hell?

This verse answers.

Though jñāna and yoga have some attraction, they depend on getting their results by performance of bhakti.

But bhakti gives its results without the assistance of jñāna or yoga at all.

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Therefore if one pleases the Lord by bhakti only, that is the perfection of dharma.

The person who does not get for the most part perfection even though performing all the rules and regulations of karma attains perfection directly through bhakti, even though he does not perform the karmas.

This is understood from the Lord's own words:

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yat karmabhir yat tapasā jñāna-vairāgyataś ca yat
yogena dāna-dharmeṇa śreyobhir itarair api

sarvaṁ mad-bhakti-yogena mad-bhakto labhate 'ñjasā
svargāpavargaṁ mad-dhāma kathañcid yadi vāñchati

Everything that can be achieved by fruitive activities, penance (**yat karmabhir yat tapasā**), knowledge, detachment (**jñāna-vairāgyataś ca yat**), mystic yoga, charity, religious duties (**yogena dāna dharmeṇa**) and all other means of perfecting life (**śreyobhir itarair api**) is easily achieved by My devotee (**sarvaṁ mad-bhaktah labhate 'ñjasā**) through loving service unto Me (**mad-bhakti-yogena**). If somehow or other My devotee desires (**kathañcid mad-bhaktah yadi vāñchati**) promotion to heaven, liberation, or residence in My abode (for service) (**svargāpavargaṁ mad-dhāma**), he easily achieves such benedictions (**sarvaṁ anjasā labhate**). (SB 11.20.32-33)

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Thus the idea that the devotee incurs sin by not performing karmas is discarded.

If dharma is perfected by bhakti, will the performer of dharma still obtain the results of dharma?

Yes.

If one performs dharma with material desires, one will attain those desires, but if one performs dharma without material desires, one will not attain material results.

According to the following verse, since all dharmas are perfected by bhakti, the necessity of the devotees performing dharma is rejected.

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yathā taror mūla-niṣecanena
tr̥pyanti tat-skandha-bhujopaśākhāḥ
prāṇopahārāc ca yathendriyāṇām
tathaiva sarvārhaṇam acyutejyā

Just as the branches and twigs are satisfied (**yathā tr̥pyanti tat-skandha-bhujupaśākhāḥ**) by watering the root (**taror mūla-niṣecanena**), and just as the senses are satisfied (**yathā indriyāṇām**) by nourishing the life air (**prāṇa upahārāt**), by worshipping the Supreme Lord (**tathā eva acyuta ijyā**) all are worship is accomplished (**sarva arhaṇam**). (SB 4.31.14)

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tāvat karmāṇi kurvīta
na nirvidyeta yāvatā
mat-kathā-śravaṇādau vā
śraddhā yāvan na jāyate

As long as one does not become detached from daily and periodic duties (**na nirvidyeta yāvatā**) or has not awakened his faith (**śraddhā yāvan na jāyate**) in hearing topics about me (**mat-kathā-śravaṇādau vā**), one must perform one's prescribed duties of varṇāśrama (**tāvat karmāṇi kurvīta**). (SB 11.20.9)

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**sarva-dharmān parityajya
mām ekaṁ śaraṇam vraja**

Give up all dharma and just surrender to me. (BG 18.66)

Based on these verses, the meaning of the verse yathā toror mūla-niśecanena is as follows.

Nature of Pure Bhakti, the Essence of all Scriptures

Just as worship of the Lord takes the place of worshiping all devatās, and satisfaction of the Lord is the perfection of performance of varṇāśrama duties, when the Lord is satisfied with his worship, the goal of performing one's duties including worship of devatās is automatically achieved.

In the example, by watering the root of the tree the watering of the branches and leaves takes place automatically.

Nature of Pure Bhakti, the Essence of all Scriptures

When the pure devotees of Bengal or other places perform a few karmas out of obligation because of pressure from family traditions, this is actually not performance of karmas, and does not give karmic results, because they do not have faith in the worship of devatās.

The Lord says:

Nature of Pure Bhakti, the Essence of all Scriptures

aśraddhayā hutam dattam
tapas taptam kṛtam ca yat
asad ity ucyate pārtha
na ca tat pretya no iha

O son of Pṛthā (**pārtha**), whatever is offered in the fire (**hutam**), whatever is given in charity (**dattam**), whatever else is undertaken (**kṛtam ca yat**), but which is done without faith (**aśraddhayā**), is called asat (**asad ity ucyate**) since it bears no result now or in the next life (**na ca tat pretya no iha**). (BG 17.28)

Therefore, one should
perform Bhakti with one-
pointed attention

Nature of Pure Bhakti, the Essence of all Scriptures

|| 1.2.14 ||

tasmād ekena manasā
bhagavān sātvatām patiḥ
śrotavyaḥ kīrtitavyaś ca
dhyeyaḥ pūjyaś ca nityadā

Therefore (**tasmād**), with mind dedicated only to bhakti, devoid of karma and jñāna (**ekena manasā**), one should constantly (**nityadā**) hear about, glorify (**śrotavyaḥ kīrtitavyaś ca**) and meditate upon (**dhyeyaḥ pūjyaś ca**) the Supreme Lord (**bhagavān**) — the master of the devotees (**sātvatām patiḥ**).

Because of this, one should worship the Supreme Lord with the mind devoid of the desire to perform karma and jñāna (**ekena manasā**).

How one gets faith?

|| 1.2.15 ||

yad-anudhyāsinā yuktāḥ
karma-granthi-nibandhanam |
chindanti kovidās tasya
ko na kuryāt kathā-ratim ||

Who will not develop attraction for topics of the Lord (kah kovidāḥ na kuryāt tasya kathā-ratim), remembrance of whom, like a sword (yad-anudhyā sinā yuktāḥ), will cut (chindanti) the knots of karma (karma-granthi-nibandhanam)?

Nature of Pure Bhakti, the Essence of all Scriptures

The qualification for bhakti is faith in topics of the Lord. This is illustrated in the following verses:

**tāvat karmāṇi kurvīta
na nirvidyeta yāvatā
mat-kathā-śravaṇādau vā
śraddhā yāvan na jāyate**

As long as one is not satiated by fruitive activity and has not awakened his taste for devotional service by śravaṇam kīrtanam viṣṇoḥ [SB 7.5.23] one has to act according to the regulative principles of the Vedic injunctions. SB 11.20.9

Nature of Pure Bhakti, the Essence of all Scriptures

śraddhālur mat-kathāḥ śṛṇvan su-bhadrā loka-pāvanīḥ
gāyann anusmaran karma janma cābhinayan muhuḥ

mad-arthe dharma-kāmārthān ācaran mad-apāśrayaḥ
labhate niścalām bhaktim mayy uddhava sanātane

A person with natural faith should constantly hear topics about me, should sing and remember my topics which purify the world, and enact my exploits and birth. He should perform dharma, kāma and artha as service to me. Having taken shelter of me, he will attain permanent bhakti to me, whose form is permanent. SB 11.11.23-24

Nature of Pure Bhakti, the Essence of all Scriptures

jāta-śraddho mat-kathāsu nirviṇṇaḥ sarva-karmasu
veda duḥkhātmakān kāmān parityāge 'py anīśvaraḥ

tato bhajeta mām prītaḥ śraddhālur dr̥ḍha-niścayaḥ
juṣamāṇaś ca tān kāmān duḥkhodarkāṁś ca garhayan

Having developed faith in topics about me and being disgusted with all karmas, he knows that all enjoyments are filled with misery. But he is unable to give them up. Still, with affection for me, with faith and determination, he will continue worshipping me, at the same time SB 11.20.27-28

Nature of Pure Bhakti, the Essence of all Scriptures

How does that faith arise?

This verse answers.

Remembrance of the Lord is a sword.

Equipped with that sword (asinā), persons cut the bondage caused by the knot of false ego which ties one up with karma.

Nature of Pure Bhakti, the Essence of all Scriptures

Or another meaning is as follows.

People tie up small amounts of money in knots of their clothing for the purpose of daily eating by dividing up their savings and spending a little each day.

This knot of money for enjoyment is compared to the karmas allotted in this life for enjoyment.

Thus the sword of remembering the Lord cuts this knot of prārabdha-karma.

Nature of Pure Bhakti, the Essence of all Scriptures

Who will not have attraction for topics concerning the Lord, whose remembrance cuts the knots of karma?

Attraction for those topics arises suddenly (in all people, before having faith)!

The verse indicates that a person who is more qualified, who has faith, will be even more attracted.

Hear how attraction for
topics of the Lord arises ?

|| 1.2.16 ||

śuśrūṣoḥ śraddadhānasya
vāsudeva-kathā-ruciḥ
syān mahat-sevayā viprāḥ
puṇya-tīrtha-niṣevanāt

O brāhmaṇas (**viprāḥ**)! Attraction for topics concerning Kṛṣṇa (**vāsudeva-kathā-ruciḥ**) will arise (**syāt**) by service to the great devotees (**mahat-sevayā**), followed by faith (**śraddadhānasya**), by surrender to the feet of the pure guru (**puṇya-tīrtha-niṣevanāt**), and by the desire to hear (**śuśrūṣoḥ**).

Nature of Pure Bhakti, the Essence of all Scriptures

Hear how attraction for topics of the Lord arises!

It arises by service to the great devotees, caused by the good fortune of mercy of those great devotees.

By that one develops faith (śraddadhānasya).

By faith one takes shelter of the feet of pure guru (puṇya-tīrtha-niṣevanāt).

Being eager to hear those topics (śuśrūṣoḥ), he develops taste for those topics.

Bhajana Kriya and Anartha Nivrtti

|| 1.2.17 ||

śṛṅvatām sva-kathāḥ kṛṣṇaḥ
pūṇya-śravaṇa-kīrtanaḥ
hṛdy antaḥ stho hy abhadrāṇi
vidhunoti suhṛt satām

Kṛṣṇa (**kṛṣṇaḥ**), who purifies by the processes of hearing and chanting (**pūṇya-śravaṇa-kīrtanaḥ**), who is the benefactor of the devotees (**suhṛt satām**) who hear about him (**śṛṅvatām sva-kathāḥ**), enters the hearts of the devotees (**hṛdy antaḥ stho**) and destroys their sins (**abhadrāṇi vidhunoti**).

Nature of Pure Bhakti, the Essence of all Scriptures

Then from hearing with taste, one begins to hear and chant.

Then Kṛṣṇa, being situated within, destroys the sins (abhadraṇi) in the heart.

[Note: This is the stage of anartha-nivṛtti.]

Kṛṣṇa being situated within refers to the process of smaraṇam, remembering.

Niṣṭhā

|| 1.2.18 ||

naṣṭa-prāyeṣv abhadreṣu
nityam bhāgavata-sevayā
bhagavaty uttama-śloke
bhaktir bhavati naiṣṭhikī

As the impediments to bhakti (**abhadreṣu**) become generally destroyed (**naṣṭa-prāyeṣu**) by constant service to the devotees and Bhāgavatam (**nityam bhāgavata-sevayā**), the stage of niṣṭhitā bhakti to Bhagavān (**bhagavaty naiṣṭhikī bhaktih**), who is praised by the greatest sages (**uttama-śloke**), becomes established (**bhavati**).

Nature of Pure Bhakti, the Essence of all Scriptures

Bhāgavata-sevayā means by service to the devotees of Bhagavān and service to (such as hearing) the Śrīmad-bhāgavatam.

By serving the devotees and Bhāgavatam, the major portion of nāmāparādhas (abhadreṣu) becomes weak.

[Note: In Mādhurya-kadambinī Viśvanāth analyzes the abhadra or anarthas into four types: arising from sin, arising from piety, arising from aparadha and arising from performance of bhakti. The effects of aparādha take longer to destroy and continue in the stage of bhāva.]

Nature of Pure Bhakti, the Essence of all Scriptures

This weakening of aparādhas continues till the stage of rati (bhāva).

Naiṣṭhikī refers to niṣṭhā, where the mind can easily concentrate on the Lord.

When the anarthas are for the most part destroyed, the devotee attains the stage of niṣṭhā.

Ruci and Asakti

|| 1.2.19 ||

tadā rajas-tamo-bhāvāḥ
kāma-lobhādayaś ca ye
ceta etair anāviddham
sthitam sattve prasīdati

The mind (**tadā cetah**) becomes unaffected (**anāviddham**) by lust, greed, anger, hatred and illusion (**etair kāma-lobhādayaś ca ye**) which arise from rajas and tamas (**rajas-tamo-bhāvāḥ**). Then the mind becomes fixed in the form of the Lord at the stage of āsakti (**sthitam sattve**) and becomes satisfied (**prasīdati**).

Nature of Pure Bhakti, the Essence of all Scriptures

The mind is not transformed (anāviddham) by the agitations of lust, greed and other qualities such as anger, illusion, and hatred, which arise from (bhāvāḥ) rajas and tamas.

This means that by lack of taste for material objects, the state of ruci — the appearance of relishing of hearing, chanting and other processes — arises.

In the previous state, the mind was pierced by the sharp arrows of lust and greed etc.

How could the mind be satisfied in that state?

Nature of Pure Bhakti, the Essence of all Scriptures

How could the mind attain real taste for chanting in that state?

A person afflicted with pain cannot relish food.

After this, the mind becomes fixed (sthitam) in the śuddha-sattva deity of the Lord (sattve).

This is the stage of āsakti.

Bhava and Prema

|| 1.2.20 ||

evam prasanna-manaso
bhagavad-bhakti-yogataḥ
bhagavat-tattva-vijñānam
mukta-saṅgasya jāyate

Then the mind becomes joyful and satisfied on attaining rati (**evam prasanna-manaso**). Finally prema develops (**bhagavad-bhakti-yogataḥ**), accompanied by the appearance of complete detachment (**mukta-saṅgasya**). The devotee then experiences the Lord's form, qualities, pastimes, powers and sweetness (**bhagavat-tattva-vijñānam jāyate**).

Nature of Pure Bhakti, the Essence of all Scriptures

By this method, with the development of āśakti, with worship of Kṛṣṇa at every moment, rati then appears (prasanna-manasaḥ).

Without rati, there could never be constant detachment from objects of material enjoyment, and without constant detachment, there could never be satisfaction of the mind.

Then prema to Bhagavān appears (bhagavad-bhakti-yogataḥ).

Nature of Pure Bhakti, the Essence of all Scriptures

From that arises realization (vijñānam) of the Lord's form, qualities, pastimes, powers and sweetness.

The desired result of bhakti has thus been explained. Accompanying results were previously mentioned with *janayaty āśu variāgyam jñānam ca yad ahaitukam*.

Here also they are mentioned with the phrase “appearance of *vairāgya*” (*mukta-saṅgasya*).

Destruction of ignorance

|| 1.2.21 ||

bhidyate hṛdaya-granthiḥ
chidyante sarva-saṁśayāḥ
kṣīyante cāsyā karmāṇi
dr̥ṣṭa evātmanīśvare

Ignorance is cut (**bhidya**te hṛdaya-granthih) and all doubts are destroyed (**chidya**nte sarva-saṁśayāḥ). On seeing the Lord in the mind and with the eyes (**dr̥ṣṭa** eva ātmani īśvare), all karmas are destroyed (**kṣīya**nte ca asya karmāṇi).

Nature of Pure Bhakti, the Essence of all Scriptures

The knot in the heart, ignorance, is cut.

This is a reflexive verb form (karma-kartari) which indicates that destruction of ignorance is not the main result sought in bhakti.

All doubts, such as thinking that the attainment is impossible, are destroyed.

Having seen the Lord, who is the soul (ātmani), all karmas are destroyed.

Nature of Pure Bhakti, the Essence of all Scriptures

Or the Lord, being in the mind (ātmani), and then being seen directly, all karmas are destroyed.

Thus both the sphurti of the Lord in the mind and direct appearance to the eyes are indicated.

Nature of Pure Bhakti, the Essence of all Scriptures

satām kṛpā mahat-sevā śraddhā guru-padāśrayaḥ |
bhajaneṣu sprhā bhaktir anarthāpagamas tataḥ |
niṣṭhā rucir athāsaktī ratiḥ premātha darśanam |
harer mādhuryānubhava ity arthāḥ syuś caturdaśe

The fourteen steps are as follows: mercy of devotees, service to devotees, faith, surrender to guru, desire for worship (or hearing), bhakti, clearance of anarthas, niṣṭhā, ruci, āsakti, rati, prema, seeing the Lord, and experiencing the Lord's sweetness

**Even Sadhana Bhakti is
Blissful**

|| 1.2.22 ||

ato vai kavayo nityam
bhaktim paramayā mudā
vāsudeve bhagavati
kurvanty ātma-prasādanīm

Thus the wise (**ato vai kavayah**) constantly perform (**nityam kurvanty**) bhakti (**bhaktim**) - which gives joy to the mind (**ātma-prasādanīm**) - to Lord Kṛṣṇa (**vāsudeve bhagavati**) with great joy (**paramayā mudā**).

Nature of Pure Bhakti, the Essence of all Scriptures

By saying “with great joy” it is indicated that even at the stage of sādhana-bhakti there are no difficulties.

**One Should worship
Bhagavan alone and not
Devatas**

|| 1.2.23 ||

sattvaṃ rajas tama iti prakṛter guṇās tair
yuktaḥ parama-puruṣa eka ihāsyā dhatte |
sthity-ādaye hari-viriñci-hareti samjñāḥ
śreyāṃsi tatra khalu sattva-tanor nṛṇāṃ syuḥ ||

The one supreme puruṣa (**parama-puruṣa ekah**), accepting the guṇas of prakṛti (**dhatte prakṛter guṇāḥ**) known as sattva, rajas and tamas (**sattvaṃ rajas tama iti**), for creation, maintenance and destruction (**sthity-ādaye**), is called Viṣṇu, Brahmā and Śiva (**hari-viriñci-hareti samjñāḥ**). The best results for the devotees (**tatra nṛṇāṃ śreyāṃsi**) will come from Viṣṇu with śuddha-sattva-śakti (**khalu sattva-tanor syuḥ**).

Nature of Pure Bhakti, the Essence of all Scriptures

It has just been explained that one should perform bhakti alone rather than karma or jñāna.

Similarly one should worship Bhagavān alone, giving up worship of the devatās.

That Lord, though one, appears in many forms as avatāra for pastimes.

Nature of Pure Bhakti, the Essence of all Scriptures

Thus the Tenth Canto says bahu-mūrty-eka-mūrtikam: he is one form and many forms. (SB 10.40.7)

The avatāras are of two types: those which are related to the cit-śakti and those related to the māyā-śakti.

Those which are related to the cit-śakti, such as Matsya and Kūrma are to be worshipped.

Nature of Pure Bhakti, the Essence of all Scriptures

Those which are related to the māyā-śakti, through sattva, rajas and tamas, are Viṣṇu, Brahmā and Śiva. Among them, Viṣṇu is to be worshipped.

That is stated in this verse.

Even though there is only one puruṣa or ādi-puruṣa in this universe, for creation, maintenance and destruction (sthity-ādaye) of the universe (asya), the Lord, joined with sattva, rajas and tamas, accepts the names Viṣṇu, Brahmā and Śiva.

Nature of Pure Bhakti, the Essence of all Scriptures

The Lord is described as parama (beyond) because though he is linked with the guṇas, by his inconceivable energy he is situated separately from them, untouched by them.

Among those forms, Viṣṇu will bestow the desired results to the devotees (śreyāṁsi).

Viṣṇu is addressed as sattva-tanoḥ.

By seeing verse 25 in this chapter this can only mean that Viṣṇu possesses a body of viśuddha-sattva, not material sattva.

Nature of Pure Bhakti, the Essence of all Scriptures

Otherwise there would be a contradiction to other statements in śruti and smṛti :

Sākṣī cetā kevalo nirguṇaś ca

Viṣṇu is the one conscious witness, beyond the guṇas.
Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 6.11

Sattvādayo na santiśe yatra ca prākṛtā gunā

In Viṣṇu there are no material guṇas. Viṣṇu Purāṇa
1.9.44

Nature of Pure Bhakti, the Essence of all Scriptures

Harir hi nirguṇaḥ sākṣāt puruṣaḥ prakṛteḥ paraḥ

Viṣṇu is devoid of the guṇas; he is the person beyond matter. SB 10.88.5

Though Viṣṇu is involved with the material sattva-guṇa, he is not at all contaminated by it.

Viṣṇu would not take up a material body of sattva, since sattva has the qualities of revelation or knowledge and indifference to enjoyment.

Nature of Pure Bhakti, the Essence of all Scriptures

Sattva should not eclipse the spiritual manifestation of eternity, knowledge and bliss.

Rajas is agitating and causes addition (creation); and tamas is obscuring and causes subtraction (destruction).

Thus rajas and tamas will disturb and cover bliss.

Nature of Pure Bhakti, the Essence of all Scriptures

Thus Brahma and Śiva accept bodies of rajas and tamas because those guṇas eclipse bliss.

They have bodies composed of guṇas, whereas Viṣṇu does not.

This is the logical explanation.

Nature of Pure Bhakti, the Essence of all Scriptures

Viṣṇu is without guṇas since by being the manifest form of sattva, he accepts proximity to sattva.

Thus he carries the function of protecting the universe but does this with no contamination of the qualities of material sattva.

One cannot say that his existence beyond the guṇas is negated by his participation in the world, because he does not possess material sattva by relationship of contact or inherence.

Nature of Pure Bhakti, the Essence of all Scriptures

He is situated in sattva only by being next to it.

It should be understood however that his protection of the devotees does not arise from sattva but from śuddha-sattva of his svarūpa.

Brahmā is a jīva, since he is Hiraṇyagarbha (with a material body made of mahat-tattva).

The distinction between the supreme brahman and Brahmā is based on the context of descriptions of Brahmā, just as the identity of brahman is confirmed the context.

Nature of Pure Bhakti, the Essence of all Scriptures

Netaro 'nupapatter: the supreme brahman is not a jīva by the context of the discussion in Upaniṣads.

Only because of the powers conferred by the supreme Lord on Brahmā situated in rajas, he is considered an avatāra.

Nature of Pure Bhakti, the Essence of all Scriptures

**bhāsvān yathāśma-śakaleṣu nīeṣu tejaḥ
svīyam kiyat prakāṭayaty api tadvad atra |
brahmā ya eṣa jagad-aṇḍa-vidhāna-kartā
govindam ādi-puruṣam tam aham bhajāmi ||**

I worship the supreme lord Govinda who becomes Brahmā, the creator of the universe (by bestowing his powers to that jīva), just as the sun displays a small portion of its powers of heat and light in all the sun stones which represent it. Brahma-saṁhitā 5.49

Nature of Pure Bhakti, the Essence of all Scriptures

Because Śiva is not a jīva, he is considered to be the Supreme Lord associated with the guṇas. Thus it is said:

**kṣīram yathā dadhi vikāra-viśeṣa-yogāt
sañjāyate na hi tataḥ pṛthag asti hetoḥ |
yaḥ śambhutām api tathā samupaiti kāryād
govindam ādi-puruṣam tam aham bhajāmi ||**

I worship the supreme lord Govinda who becomes the form of Śiva who is said to be non-different from Govinda, but who is also different because of his contact with the transformations of prakṛti, just as milk becomes yogurt, which can be said to be non-different from its cause, but acts in a different manner. Brahma-saṁhitā 5.45

Nature of Pure Bhakti, the Essence of all Scriptures

Some say that, of Brahmā and Śiva, Śiva is īśvara or the supreme lord.

Others say that he is connected with the guṇas. They explain as follows.

It should be understood that yoga means connection by proximity, by contact and by supervision.

The puruṣa, connected with the guṇas only as the supervisor, is devoid of guṇas, being situated in his svarūpa.

Nature of Pure Bhakti, the Essence of all Scriptures

Brahmā and Śiva however are connected to rajas and tamas by contact, and therefore called sa-guṇa, endowed with the guṇas.

[Note: Rūpa Gosvāmī explains in Laghu-bhāgavatamṛta that Śiva appears to be covered by tamas, but actually is not.]

Being related to sattva-guṇa only by proximity, the puruṣa in the form of Kśīrodakaśāyī-viṣṇu is devoid of guṇas, being situated in his svarūpa.

Nature of Pure Bhakti, the Essence of all Scriptures

Thus it is said:

yogo niyāmakatayā
guṇaiḥ sambandha ucyate |
ataḥ sa tair na yujyate
tatra svāmśaḥ parasya yaḥ ||

The relationship of the puruṣa with the guṇas is that of being their controller. Among the three, he who is the svāmśa of svayaṁ-rūpa Kṛṣṇa, is not bound by the guṇas. Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta 1.2.18

**Sattva is Superior to rajas
and Tamās in Realizing
the Lord**

|| 1.2.24 ||

pārthivād dāruṇo dhūmas
tasmād agnis trayīmayah |
tamasas tu rajas tasmāt
sattvaṁ yad brahma-darśanam ||

Smoke is superior to dull wood (**pārthivād dāruṇo dhūmah**), and fire, sacred to the Vedas, is superior to smoke (**tasmād agnis trayīmayah**). Similarly rajas is superior to tamas (**tamasas tu rajas**), and sattva is superior to rajas (**tasmāt sattvaṁ**), since sattva is favorable for realizing the Lord (**yad brahma-darśanam**).

Nature of Pure Bhakti, the Essence of all Scriptures

Tamas, rajas and sattva have the respective qualities of obscuring, agitating and revealing knowledge.

Of these sattva is the best because it is not unfavorable for śuddha-sattva.

This is shown through an example.

Superior to wood — which is devoid of the quality of action and unable to reveal its nature (being unconscious) — is smoke. Smoke has an active nature.

Nature of Pure Bhakti, the Essence of all Scriptures

Superior to smoke however is fire, which has the qualities of action and revelation.

It is called trayīmayah (related to the Vedas) because it is used in rituals mentioned in the Vedas.

Rajas, which is agitating, is superior to tamas which is inert.

Sattva, being devoid of inertia and agitation, is superior since it gives a vision of brahman.

|| 14.17 ||

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

Knowledge arises from sattva (**sattvāt sañjāyate jñānam**). Greed arises from rajas (**rajaso lobha eva ca**). Inattention, confusion and ignorance (**pramāda-mohau ajñānam eva ca**) arise from tamas (**tamaso bhavatah**).

Nature of Pure Bhakti, the Essence of all Scriptures

It is not obstructive to śuddha-sattva and does not cover it.

It does not interfere with seeing brahman.

It is thus an assistant in spiritual life.

Without bhakti however, seeing the Lord (or even impersonal brahman) is impossible.

This is confirmed later in the Bhāgavatam.

Nature of Pure Bhakti, the Essence of all Scriptures

It is said of the Lord's form ānando brahmaṇo rūpam: the supreme lord has a form of bliss.

The guṇas of māyā - tamas, rajas and sattva - cannot act independently of him.

Māyā paraity abhimukhe ca vilajjamānā: māyā flees from the Lord, being ashamed. (SB 2.7.47)

Nature of Pure Bhakti, the Essence of all Scriptures

Thus it is by the will of the lord, by his touch alone, that ānanda becomes qualified by agitation in the form of Brahmā.

Being qualified by revelation, ānanda becomes Viṣṇu and being qualified with obscuration, ānanda becomes Śiva.

Since there is no damage when ānanda is combined with revelation (sattva), Viṣṇu is worthy of worship.

Because one can realize fire through wood but not through smoke, tamas should be considered superior to rajas.

Nature of Pure Bhakti, the Essence of all Scriptures

In deep sleep (tamas) one has realization of oneness with ātmā.

Thus some persons argue that between Brahmā and Śiva, Śiva is better.

These three are equal in that they are all avatāras of the Lord.

Nature of Pure Bhakti, the Essence of all Scriptures

They are unequal in that Viṣṇu is not covered by the guṇas, whereas Brahmā and Śiva are.

This is how the contrary statements of difference and non-difference of the Purāṇas can be harmonized.

Nature of Pure Bhakti, the Essence of all Scriptures

The śruti says asaṅgo hy ayam puruṣaḥ: the ātmā is not contaminated by the guṇas. (Bṛhad Āraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.3.15)

Though both Paramātmā and jīvātmā are by their constitution devoid of the guṇas, because Paramātmā is the supreme lord, an ocean of cit, because he is independent in his actions, he remains ātmārāma, self enjoying, not subject to birth in the world, without diminution of his knowledge of himself, even though, by his will, he contacts the guṇas and thus is in possession the effects of the guṇas such as anger.

Nature of Pure Bhakti, the Essence of all Scriptures

However the jīva, because he is only a particle of cit, having very little ability of knowledge and because he is controlled by the Lord and not independent, and has very little power, he loses his knowledge of his real nature and takes birth in this world by contacting the guṇas where the guṇas act upon him.

Therefore the Sages
worshipped the Supreme
Lord

|| 1.2.25 ||

bhejire munayo 'thāgre
bhagavantam adhokṣajam |
sattvaṁ viśuddhaṁ kṣemāya
kalpante ye 'nu tān iha ||

Therefore (**atha**) the ancient sages (**agre munayah**) worshipped (**bhejire**) the Supreme Lord, beyond the material senses (**bhagavantam adhokṣajam**), composed of viśuddha-sattva (**sattvaṁ viśuddhaṁ**). Those who follow the sages (**ye anu tān**) attain liberation (**kṣemāya kalpante**) in this world (**iha**).

Nature of Pure Bhakti, the Essence of all Scriptures

Thus (ataḥ), the sages in ancient times worshipped the Supreme Lord, who is viśuddha-sattva.

Viśuddha-sattva means having a body composed of the cit-śakti arising from his svarūpa (not material sattva), because the śruti says vidyāvidyābhyām bhinnam: the Lord is neither material knowledge (sattva) nor ignorance. (Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad 2.20)

Nature of Pure Bhakti, the Essence of all Scriptures

Furthermore the smṛti says chāyātapau yatra na gṛdhra-pakṣau: in the Lord there is no ignorance or knowledge which causes prejudice towards the jīva. (SB 8.5.27)

satya-jñānānantānanda-mātraika-rasa-mūrtayaḥ: the viṣṇu-mūrtis all had eternal, unlimited forms, full of knowledge and bliss and existing beyond the influence of time. (SB 10.13.54)

Nature of Pure Bhakti, the Essence of all Scriptures

Because the body of Viṣṇu is beyond māyā, one cannot say that viśuddha-sattva means the vidyā arising from māyā-śakti.

The persons who follow after (anu) these sages are qualified for liberation (kṣemāya) in this world (iha).

One should even give up
worship of Lord Siva

|| 1.2.26 ||

mumukṣavo ghora-rūpān
hitvā bhūta-patīn atha |
nārāyaṇa-kalāḥ śāntā
bhajanti hy anasūyavaḥ ||

Rejecting (**hitvā**) the frightful forms (**ghora-rūpān**) of Śiva or others devatās (**atha bhūta-patīn**), persons desirous of liberation (what to speak of the devotees) (**mumukṣavaḥ**), without criticizing those devatās (**anasūyavaḥ**), worship (**bhajanti hy**) the avatāras of Nārāyaṇa (**nārāyaṇa-kalāḥ śāntā**).

Nature of Pure Bhakti, the Essence of all Scriptures

Bhūta-patīn as well as meaning forms of Śiva, also indicates Pitṛs, Brahmā and others.

Anasūyavaḥ means they do not criticize those devatās.

Why do people worship
the Demigods?

|| 1.2.27 ||

rajas-tamaḥ-prakṛtayaḥ
sama-śīlā bhajanti vai |
pitṛ-bhūta-prajeśādīn
śriyaiśvarya-prajepsavaḥ ||

Desirers of progeny and power along with wealth (**śriyaiśvarya-prajā īpsavaḥ**), having natures of rajas and tamas (**rajas-tamaḥ-prakṛtayaḥ**), corresponding to the natures of their deities (**sama-śīlā**), worship (**bhajanti vai**) the Pitṛs, Śiva, Brahmā and others (**pitṛ-bhūta-prajeśa ādīn**). (SB 1.2.27)

**The Conclusion of all the
Vedas is Vasudeva**

|| 1.2.28-29 ||

vāsudeva-parā vedā vāsudeva-parā makhāḥ |
vāsudeva-parā yoga vāsudeva-parāḥ kriyāḥ ||
vāsudeva-param jñānam vāsudeva-param tapaḥ |
vāsudeva-paro dharmo vāsudeva-parā gatiḥ ||

Vāsudeva is the purport of the Vedas (**vāsudeva-parā vedā**). Vāsudeva is the object of all sacrifices (**vāsudeva-parā makhāḥ**). Yoga, varṇāśrama, knowledge and austerities are all dependent on Vāsudeva (**vāsudeva-parā yoga vāsudeva-parāḥ kriyāḥ vāsudeva-param jñānam vāsudeva-param tapaḥ**). Bhakti is dependent on Vāsudeva (**vāsudeva-paro dharmo**). Prema and liberation are dependent on Vāsudeva (**vāsudeva-parā gatiḥ**).

Nature of Pure Bhakti, the Essence of all Scriptures

“But Pitṛs and devatās are said to be worshippable by the Vedas. What is wrong with them?”

The Vedas have as their purport Vāsudeva.

**kālena naṣṭā pralaye
vāṇīyaṁ veda-samjñitā
mayādau brahmaṇe proktā
dharmo yasyām mad-ātmakah**

By the influence of time, the Vedic knowledge was lost at the time of annihilation. Therefore, when the subsequent creation took place, I spoke to Brahmā the Vedic knowledge in which bhakti is the essence. SB 11.14.3

Nature of Pure Bhakti, the Essence of all Scriptures

kim vidhatte kim ācaṣṭe
kim anūdya vikalpayet
ity asyā hr̥dayam loke
nānyo mad veda kaścana

What do the Vedas instruct as action? What is the final meaning of the Vedas? What alternatives do the Vedas raise? No one except me or my dear devotee knows the intended meaning of the Vedas. SB 11.21.42

Nature of Pure Bhakti, the Essence of all Scriptures

**mām vidhatte 'bhidhatte mām vikalpyāpohyate tv aham
etāvān sarva-vedārthaḥ śabda āsthāya mām bhidām
māyā-mātram anūdyānte pratiṣidhya prasīdati**

The Vedas indicate bhakti as the action, and indicate me as the meaning. I am the meaning of all the Vedas. I, as karma and jñāna, am proposed and rejected as alternatives. The Vedas, taking shelter of me, proposing karma and jñāna and then rejecting them as māyā, become happy by giving the devotees bliss. SB 11.21.43

Thus these people, not knowing the purport of the Vedas, worship the Pitṛs and others.

Nature of Pure Bhakti, the Essence of all Scriptures

“But it is clearly seen that the Vedas are concerned with sacrifice and yoga.” That is true.

**svam lokam na vidus te vai yatra devo janārdanaḥ
āhur dhūmra-dhiyo vedam sakarmakam atad-vidaḥ**

Those who are less intelligent accept the Vedic ritualistic ceremonies as all in all. They do not know that the purpose of the Vedas is to understand one’s own home, where the Supreme Personality of Godhead lives. Not being interested in their real home, they are illusioned and search after other homes. SB 4.29.48

Nature of Pure Bhakti, the Essence of all Scriptures

Thus according to the words of Nārada, sacrifice and yoga are not meaning of the Vedas.

The Lord himself says dharmo yasyām mad-ātmakaḥ: I Myself am the religious principles enunciated in the Vedas. (SB 11.14.3)

Devahūti says

**aho bata śva-paco 'to gariyān
yaj-jihvāgre vartate nāma tubhyam
tepus tapas te juhuvuḥ sasnur āryā
brahmānūcur nāma gṛṇanti ye te**

How astonishing! The outcaste on the tip of whose tongue is your name is the guru! All those who chant your name, most respectable, have completed all austerities, all sacrifices, all bathing and all study of the Vedas. SB 3.33.7

Nature of Pure Bhakti, the Essence of all Scriptures

Nārada, in saying *yathā taror mūla-niṣecanena* (SB 4.31.14), has indicated that Vāsudeva is the conclusion of the Vedas.

Thus it is clear that the meaning of all the Vedas is simply devotion to Bhagavān alone.

Or, all sacrifices are dedicated to Vāsudeva can mean that the sacrifices worship Indra and others as the limbs of Vāsudeva.

This is well known in the story of Bharata.

Nature of Pure Bhakti, the Essence of all Scriptures

[Note: Mahārāja Bharata expertly understood how the offering made to different demigods was simply an offering to the different limbs of the Lord.

For instance, Indra is the arm of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and Sūrya [the sun] is His eye.

Thus Mahārāja Bharata considered that the oblations offered to different demigods were actually offered unto the different limbs of Lord Vāsudeva. (SB 5 7.6)]

Nature of Pure Bhakti, the Essence of all Scriptures

Yoga is dedicated to meditation of the Lord.

This is well known from the story of Kapila.

All karmas are dependent on the Lord since they cannot bestow results without including worship of the Lord.

Jñāna and tapas are also dependent on the Lord for results.

Nature of Pure Bhakti, the Essence of all Scriptures

Since karma-yoga has already been mentioned by the words vāsudeva-parā kriyaḥ, vāsudeva-paro dharmah means parama-dharma, the actions of bhakti such as hearing and chanting.

These are all dedicated to Vāsudeva.

Paro dharmā and the goal (gati), prema and liberation, are dependent on Vāsudeva alone for results.

**All Scriptures are
Consistent in establishing
Bhagavan as the Supreme**

|| 1.2.30 ||

sa evedaṁ sasarjāgre
bhagavān ātma-māyayā |
sad-asad-rūpayā cāsau
guṇamayāguṇo vibhuḥ ||

The powerful Lord alone (**sah vibhuḥ bhagavān eva**), devoid of material guṇas (**āguṇah**), previously created this universe (**idaṁ sasarja agre**) by his material energy (**ātma-māyayā**) composed of material guṇas (**guṇamaya**) and endowed with cause and effect (**sad-asad-rūpayā**).

Nature of Pure Bhakti, the Essence of all Scriptures

The creator of all those who are recommended for worship such as Pitṛs, Śiva and Brahmā is Vāsudeva alone.

Thus he is worthy of worship.

The Lord is without guṇas, but he creates the universe using matter composed of guṇas and material cause and effect (sad-asad-rūpayā).

Karma is useless unless it
leads to bhakti and jñāna
is useless if not performed
along with bhakti

|| 1.5.12 ||

naiṣkarmyam apy acyuta-bhāva-varjitam
na śobhate jñānam alam nirañjanam
kutaḥ punaḥ śaśvad abhadram īśvare
na cārpitam karma yad apy akāraṇam

Even the stage of jñāna without the bondage of karma (**naiṣkarmyam jñānam apy**) is not glorious (**na śobhate**) if it is devoid of bhakti to the Supreme Lord (**acyuta-bhāva-varjitam**). What is the use of having destroyed ignorance (**alam nirañjanam**)? What then to speak of sakāma-karma which causes suffering, both during practice and at the stage perfection (**kutaḥ punaḥ śaśvad abhadram**), and niṣkāma-karma (**yad apy akāraṇam karma**), when not offered to the Lord (**īśvare na cārpitam**)?

- Not only are the words important.
- If there is no bhakti, the work is useless.
- The realization coming from the words of the Vedas is useless without bhakti, what to speak of mere scriptural knowledge, and what to speak of niṣkāma-karma.
- And so much more, sakāma-karma is useless without bhakti.
- Even knowledge devoid of fruitive intentions does not appear wonderful without bhakti, in which one thinks of the Lord who has a form of knowledge and bliss (acyuta-bhāva).
- Even if bhakti is present in jñāna and one thinks that the Lord and bhakti are mixed with māyā, then that does not produce liberation.
- Though devoid of ignorance (nirañjanam), though one has realized knowledge, what is the use of that knowledge (alam)?

- What then to speak of unrealized scriptural knowledge!
- One should not say that you can achieve liberation just by destroying ignorance. By the inconceivable energy of the Lord, the destroyed ignorance again arises.
- The Pariśiṣṭā-vacanam of the Vāsanā-bhāṣya says:

**jīvan-muktā api punar
 bandhanam yānti karmabhiḥ |
 yady acintya-mahā-śaktau
 bhagavaty aparādhinaḥ |**

Even the liberated persons again get bound by karma if they commit offense against the Lord, possessor of great, inconceivable powers.

**jīvan-muktā prapadyante kvacit saṁsāra-vāsanām |
 yogino na vilipyante karmabhir bhagavat-parāḥ ||**

Liberated souls sometimes are subjected to birth and death, but the yogīs who surrender to the Lord are not touched by karma.

- Thus the effect of jñāna is destruction of karma. jñānāgniḥ sarva-karmāṇi bhasmasāt kurute 'rjuna: O Arjuna, by the fire of knowledge all karmas are burned to ashes. (BG 4.33)
- But that is not so wonderful because it is also said concerning rathayātrā in Viṣṇu-bhakti-candrodaya of another Purāṇa:

**nānuvrajati yo mohād vrajantaṁ jagad-īśvaram |
jñānāgni-dagdha-karmāpi sa bhaved brahma-rākṣasaḥ ||**

He who does not follow the Lord in his chariot when he moves becomes a brahma-rakṣasa even though he has destroyed all karmas with the fire of knowledge.

- It will also be said later āruhya kṛcchreṇa param padam tataḥ patanty adho 'nādrta-yuṣmad-aṅghrayaḥ: after reaching the height of liberation with great difficulty, again they fall down because they do not worship the lotus feet of the Lord. (SB 10.2.32)

- Since jñāna is devoid of real bhakti to the Lord, the offense caused by thinking that the Lord is material is unavoidable.
- If such jñāna devoid of bhakti is useless, what then to speak of karma which is filled with desires for enjoyment and which causes suffering (abhadram) at all times (śāśvat)--during practice and at the time of receiving the result.
- And even if the karma is without the goal of enjoyment (akāraṇam), because it is not offered to the Lord it is not successful.

|| 1.5.15 ||

jugupsitaṁ dharma-kṛte 'nuśāsataḥ
svabhāva-raktasya mahān vyatikramah
yad-vākyato dharma itītarah sthito
na manyate tasya nivāraṇaṁ janah

You have created a great disturbance (**mahān vyatikramah**) by teaching a condemned subject (**jugupsitaṁ anuśāsataḥ**) to people (**itarah janah**) attached to material enjoyment (**svabhāva-raktasya**) in order to make them accept dharma (**dharma-kṛte**). Thinking that what you have taught is real dharma (**yad-vākyato dharma iti sthitah**), they do not consider giving it up (**na manyate tasya nivāraṇaṁ**).

|| 3.5.12 ||

**munir vivakṣur bhagavad-guṇānām
sakhāpi te bhāratam āha kṛṣṇaḥ
yasmin nr̥ṇām grāmya-sukhānuvādair
matir gr̥hītā nu hareḥ kathāyām**

O sage! Your friend Vedavyāsa (**te sakhāpi munih kṛṣṇaḥ**), desiring to describe (**vivakṣuh**) the qualities of the Lord (**bhagavad-guṇānām**), wrote Mahābhārata (**bhāratam āha**). In that work (**yasmin**) he attracted men's attention (**gr̥hītā nr̥ṇām matih**) to topics of the Lord (**hareḥ kathāyām**) through topics about material happiness (**grāmya-sukha anuvādaih**).

- As Vidura said, in order to make people accept worship of the Lord (dharma-kṛte) you have taught what is condemned, karma (jugupsitam).
- A great disturbance has come about for materialistic people who are attached to enjoy from impressions arising from sense objects (svabhāva-raktasya) because you have taught material dharma.
- But though your intention was to help them, you have actually injured them. How?
- Because materially minded men ascertaining what you explained to be the correct path (dharma iti)—thinking that it is not a fault to offer meat to the devatās and pitṛs, do not consider giving up that path, and do not consider what is actually to be done: sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇam vraja.
- They think that this statement is not part of the path you have outlined for enjoyment.

|| 1.5.17 ||

tyaktvā sva-dharmam caraṇāmbujam harer
bhajann apakvo 'tha patet tato yadi
yatra kva vābhadram abhūd amuṣya kim
ko vārtha āpto 'bhajatām sva-dharmataḥ

If a person having given up his duties in varṇāśrama (**tyaktvā sva-dharmam**), begins the worship of the Lord's lotus feet (**hareh caraṇāmbujam bhajann**), and happens to deviate or not reach perfection (**apakvo vā atha patet tato yadi**), there is no misfortune for him at all in the future (**amuṣya kim kva abhadram abhūd**). But what does (**kah vā arthah**) the person who follows all duties of varṇāśrama (**sva-dharmataḥ**) but does not worship the Lord (**abhajatām**) gain (**āptah**)?

- “But Bhagavad-gītā says “**na buddhi-bhedam janayed**” - Thus it is forbidden to give up karma.”
- That is true.
- This instruction is given to one who is teaching jñāna to another person. Practicing jñāna depends on inner purification, and that purification depends on niṣkāma-karma.
- This is not an instruction for one teaching another person about bhakti, for bhakti is independently powerful, not depending on prior inner purification.

॥ 6.9.50 ॥

svayaṁ niḥśreyasaṁ vidvān
na vakty ajñāya karma hi
na rāti rogiṇo 'pathyaṁ
vāñchato 'pi bhiṣaktamaḥ

One who knows the highest good (**svayaṁ niḥśreyasaṁ vidvān**) will never instruct a foolish person (**na vakty ajñāya**) to engage in material enjoyment (**karma hi**), just as an experienced physician (**bhiṣaktamaḥ**) does not give his patient (**na rogiṇo rāti**) food injurious to his health (**apathyaṁ**), even if the patient desires it (**vāñchatah api**).

- Therefore the Lord says sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja (BG 18.66) and as well:
- dharmān santyajya yaḥ sarvān mām bhajeta sa tu sattamaḥ (11.11.32)

- From the strength of these statements one should teach only bhakti to the Lord, while giving up attachment to daily and periodic duties in varṇāśrama.
- With this intention the verse is spoken.
- Even in the beginning stage of bhakti, practice of karma is forbidden.
- Having given up ones dharma (tyaktvā svadharmān) even at the beginning stages of bhakti, a person who worships the lotus feet of the Lord will incur no sin by giving up that dharma.
- This is understood also from - **devarṣi-bhūtāpta-nṛṇām**

- And if the person dies without being qualified to attain the Lord, or (vā), if while alive falls down because of sinful acts, being attached to material pleasures, even then, there is no misfortune incurred by having given up karmas, because the impressions created by bhakti are indestructible, and remain in subtle form.
- In such a state one should not revert to performance of karma.
- Is there any misfortune somewhere (yatra kva), in his next life?
- No there is no misfortune at all.
- Vā indicates a remote possibility of falling.
- His falling after leaving the present body is actually not a fall— one does not take a low body because of omitting karmas.