

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam

Canto One

With the
Sārārtha-darśinī commentary

by

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Introduction

Reading other Acaryas commentaries

Necessity, Mood, Procedure and
Pitfalls

What is “As It Is” in an “As It Is
Commentary”?

Let us take a few examples.

Please identify which one is an “As
It Is Commentary”?

SP Explanation

|| 12.12 ||

śreyo hi jñānam abhyāsāj
jñānād dhyānam viśiṣyate
dhyānāt karma-phala-tyāgas
tyāgāc chāntir anantaram

If you cannot take to this practice, then engage yourself in the cultivation of knowledge (**śreyo hi jñānam abhyāsāj**). Better than knowledge, however, is meditation (**jñānād dhyānam viśiṣyate**), and better than meditation is renunciation of the fruits of action (**dhyānāt karma-phala-tyāgah**), for by such renunciation one can attain peace of mind (**tyāgāc chāntir anantaram**).

SVCT Explanation

|| 12.12 ||

śreyo hi jñānam abhyāsāj
jñānād dhyānaṁ viśiṣyate
dhyānāt karma-phala-tyāgas
tyāgāc chāntir anantaram

Manana is better than practice (**śreyo hi jñānam abhyāsāt**), but meditation is better than manana (**jñānād dhyānaṁ viśiṣyate**). From meditation, one easily becomes detached from the results of work in the form of bhukti and mukti (**dhyānāt karma-phala-tyāgah**). From this detachment one finally attains lasting peace (absorbing his senses only in Me.) (**tyāgāt śāntir anantaram**)

BVB Explanation

|| 12.12 ||

śreyo hi jñānam abhyāsāj
jñānād dhyānaṁ viśiṣyate
dhyānāt karma-phala-tyāgas
tyāgāc chāntir anantaram

Realization of ātmā is preferable to practicing remembrance of the Lord (**śreyo hi jñānam abhyāsāt**), but practice of meditation on ātmā is preferable to realization of ātmā (**jñānād dhyānaṁ viśiṣyate**). Preferable to practice of meditation is renunciation of the results of work (**dhyānāt karma-phala-tyāgah**). From this detachment one finally gets purity (**tyāgāt śāntir anantaram**).

**Which one of them is an AS IT IS
Translation?**

SP and BVB Explanation

|| 15.16 ||

dvāv imau puruṣau loke
kṣaraś cākṣara eva ca
kṣarah sarvāṇi bhūtāni
kūṭa-stho 'kṣara ucyate

There are two conscious beings in this universe (dvāv imau puruṣau loke kṣarah ca akṣara eva ca): the collective jīvas (kṣarah sarvāṇi bhūtāni) and Brahman (kūṭa-stho akṣara ucyate).

SVCT Explanation

|| 15.16 ||

dvāv imau puruṣau loke
kṣaraś cākṣara eva ca
kṣarah sarvāṇi bhūtāni
kūṭa-stho 'kṣara ucyate

There are two conscious beings mentioned in the Vedas (**dvāv imau puruṣau loke**): the conditioned jīvas and the liberated jīvas (**kṣarah ca akṣara eva ca**). The ^{conscious souls} bound jīvas are all these living entities with bodies (**kṣarah sarvāṇi bhūtāni**). The liberated jīva are fixed with one form for all time (**kūṭa-sthah akṣara ucyate**).

**Which one of them is an AS IT IS
Translation?**

Isopanisd invocation

om pūrṇam adah pūrṇam idam
pūrṇāt pūrṇam udacyate
pūrṇasya pūrṇam ādāya
pūrṇam eva yaśisyate

SP Translation

The Personality of Godhead is perfect and complete, and because He is completely perfect, all emanations from Him, such as this phenomenal world, are perfectly equipped as complete wholes. Whatever is produced of the Complete Whole is also complete in itself. Because He is the Complete Whole, even though so many complete units emanate from Him, He remains the complete balance.

Isopanisd invocation

om pūrṇam adaḥ pūrṇam idaṁ
pūrṇāt pūrṇam udacyate
pūrṇasya pūrṇam ādāya
pūrṇam evāvaśiṣyate

BVB Translation

The unmanifest Brahman is perfect. The manifested Brahman is perfect. From the unmanifest Brahman appears the manifest Brahman as various avataras. When the manifested forms emerge from the unmanifest Brahman, the unmanifest Brahman remains.

Which one of them is an AS IT IS
Translation?

Therefore, what exactly is an “AS IT IS Commentary”?

Which one of these is an “AS IT IS Commentary”?

What exactly is “AS IT IS” in an “AS IT IS Commentary”?

Which one of these is an “AS IT IS Commentary”?

- Actually All
- Every Acarya has an Apurvatha or a specific style of writing
- They give specific emphasis based on the current socio-political and spiritual scenario at that time
- Every Acarya has a specific Sphurti or Revelation given by Krsna

Baladeva Vidyabhusana

- Sanishta, parinishtitha and nirapeksa.
- Sri Vaisnavas challenge. Influence of Madhva and Ramanuja.
- Elaborate and technically sound refutations of mayavad
- Therefore a commentary which could compete with
Ramanujacarya's commentary in its mayavad refutation and so on

Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakur

- Rasik commentary
- Sometimes introduces concepts of Radha and Krishna even in BG commentaries
- Very relishable to GaudiyaVaisnavas
- Pradhani bhuta, guni bhuta
- Doesn't give elaborate and technical refutations of mayavada

Srila Prabhupada

①

- Absolute emphasis on his purports

②

- Absolute emphasis on devotional service

③

- Maximum mileage in his books

Srila Prabhupada

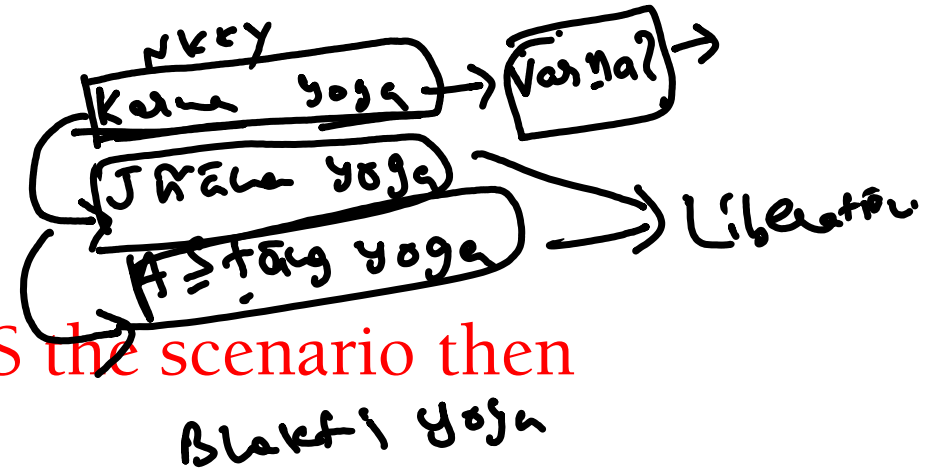
a) Absolute emphasis on his purports

- Why? – Current scenario VS the scenario then
- Gargamuni p and Macmillan pastime

Srila Prabhupada

b) Absolute emphasis on Devotional Service

- **Why?** – Again same reason. Current scenario VS the scenario then
Bhakti yoga
- This is the ultimate conclusion of our scriptures
- Example: 6th chapter of BG – Prabhupada does not want us to become an astanga yogi after reading that chapter or parts of that chapter.



Srila Prabhupada

c) Maximum Mileage in his books

- Pradyumna Prabhu pastime
- Try doing the Anvaya
- But in doing this, sometimes flow has to be compromised

What exactly is “AS IT IS” in an “AS IT IS Commentary”?

- It is certainly not the word to word meaning
- It is certainly not the way a verse is ^{explained} translated.
- It is certainly not the way a particular purport is written
- Then what is AS IT IS – if all of these can be different?

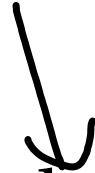
Daśa-mūla-tattva

The Ten Esoteric Truths

(āmnāyah^① prāha tattvam^②) (harim iha paramam^③) (sarva-śaktim^④)
 (rasābdhim^⑤)
 (tad bhinnāmsāmś ca jivān^⑥) (prakṛti-kavalitān^⑦ tad-vimuktāms^⑧) ca
 (bhāvāt^⑨)
 (bhedābedha-prakāśam sakalam api^⑩) (hareh sādhanam śuddha-
 bhaktim^⑪)
 (sādhyam tat-pṛitim^⑫) evety (upadiśati janān^⑬) (gaura-candraḥ svayam^⑭
 saḥ^⑮)

- “The Vedic knowledge that is received through the system of guru-paramparā, disciplic succession, is known as āmnāya, the most authoritative and exhaustive wisdom.

- The Vedas, known as the śruti, and the smṛti scriptures, for example the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, which are fully in line with the śruti, are essentially transcendental and are thus presented as the pramāṇa, proof and evidence.



- The directly perceivable truths propounded and evidenced by the pramāṇa are designated as the prameya.

- They are nine in number:

- (1) parama-tattva, Śrī Hari is the Supreme Absolute Truth;
- (2) sarva-śaktimān, Śrī Hari is omnipotent;
- (3) akila-rasāmṛta-sindhu, Śrī Hari is the shoreless ocean of unlimited nectarean, mellows;
- (4) vibhinnāṁśa-tattva, the entire range of liberated and conditioned jīvas are Śrī Hari's eternally separated parts and parcels and comprise His jīva-śakti;
- (5) baddha-jīva, the conditioned jīva is infected by māyā;

(6) mukta-jīva, the liberated jīva is free from māyā;

(7) acintya-bhedābheda-tattva, all creation either material or spiritual is a manifestation of Śrī Hari's inconceivable potency, which is simultaneously different and non-different from the Lord Himself;

(8) śuddha-bhakti, bhakti is the only sādhana; and

(9) kṛṣṇa-prīti, kṛṣṇa-prema alone is the ultimate sādhyā.

**An “As It Is Gaudiya Vaisnava”
Commentary**

Components of an “AS IT IS Gaudiya Vaisnava Commentary”?

(ārādhyo ^①bhagavān vrajeśa-tanayas) (^②tad-dhāma vr̥ndāvanam)
(ramyā kācid upāsanā ^③vraja-vadhū-vargeṇa yā kalpitā)
(^④śrīmad-bhāgavatam pramāṇam amalaṁ) (^⑤premā pum-artho mahān)
śrī-caitanya-mahāprabhor matam idaṁ tatrādarāḥ na paraḥ

The Supreme Personality of Godhead, the son of Nanda Mahārāja (**ārādhyo bhagavān vrajeśa-tanayah**), is to be worshiped along with His transcendental abode, Vṛndāvana (**tad-dhāma vṛndāvanam**). The most pleasing form of worship (**ramyā kācid upāsanā**) for the Lord is that which was performed by the gopīs of Vṛndāvaṇa (**vraja-vadhū-vargeṇa yā kalpitā**). Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the spotless authority on everything (**śrīmad-bhāgavatam pramāṇam amalam**), and pure love of God is the ultimate goal of life for all men (**premā pum-artho mahān**). These statements, for which we have the highest regard (**tatra ādarāḥ nah paraḥ**), are the opinion of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu (**śrī-caitanya-mahāprabhor matam idam**).

So, Can I write the next Gaudiya
Vaisnava Commentary to Srimad
Bhagavatam?

Qualification for Commenting on Bhakti Scriptures

kṛṣṇa-tulya bhāgavata—vibhu, sarvāśraya
prati-śloke prati-akṣare nānā artha kaya

”Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is as great as Kṛṣṇa, (the Supreme Lord
and shelter of everything. In each and every verse of Śrīmad-
Bhāgavatam and in each and every syllable, there are various
meanings. (CC Madhya 24.318)

ei mata kahilun eka ślokerā vyākhyāna
vātulera pralāpa kari' ke kare pramāṇa?

”In this way, like a madman, I have explained the meaning of
just one verse. I do not know who will take this as evidence.
(CC Madhya 24.322)

āmā-hena yebā keha 'vātula' haya
ei-dr̥ṣṭe bhāgavatera artha jānaya”

”If one becomes a madman like Me, he may also understand the meaning of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam by this process.” (CC Madhya 24.323)

- Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu plainly explains that Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam cannot be understood by those who are materially situated.
- In other words, one has to become a madman like Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.
- Apart from being the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is an ācārya who exhibited love of God like a madman.
- According to His own written verse, yugāyitaṁ nimeṣeṇa.

- He says that for Him, "a moment seems to last twelve years."
- Cakṣuṣā prāvṛṣāyitam: "My tears are flowing like torrents of rain."
- Śūnyāyitaṁ jagat sarvaṁ: "I feel as if the entire universe were vacant."
- Why? Govinda-virahena me: "Due to My being separated from Govinda, Kṛṣṇa."

- One can understand Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam only by following in the footsteps of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who was mad for Kṛṣṇa.
- We cannot, of course, imitate Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.
- It is not possible.
- However, unless one is very serious about understanding Kṛṣṇa, he cannot understand Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.

Is it ok to refer to other Acaryas
commentaries?

Aren't Prabhupada's books the
Pramana for the next 10,000
years?

Within the past five hundred years, many erudite scholars and ācāryas like Jīva Gosvāmī, Sanātana Gosvāmī, Viśvanātha Cakravartī, Vallabhācārya, and many other distinguished scholars even after the time of Lord Caitanya made elaborate commentaries on the Bhāgavatam. And the serious student would do well to attempt to go through them to better relish the transcendental messages. (Purport – SB 1.1.1)

It is necessary, therefore, for the (serious students) of Śrīmad-
Bhāgavatam to follow the notes and comments of the great
ācāryas like Jīva Gosvāmī and Viśvanātha Cakravartī. To
others, who are not devotees of the Lord, the comments and
explanations of such ācāryas may appear to be grammatical
jugglery, but to the students who are in the line of disciplic
succession, the explanations of the great ācāryas are quite fit.

(Purport – SB 3.4.28)

Yes, it is perfectly true that Srila Prabhupada's books are
“THE BOOKS” for the next 10,000 years. But, as disciples
and grand disciples of Prabhupada, we should also know
how we can establish that.

Otherwise, we will just sound like fanatics. We will just be
telling others that these are “The Books” for the next 10,000
years but won't be able to defend – “Why they are THE
BOOKS?”.

Mood of referring to other Acarya's
commentaries

Try to understand the apurvatha of that particular acarya, and the socio-political conditions under which the commentary was written.
Then we can save ourselves from unrealistic expectations from any of the acaryas

For example, we won't search in SVCT gita commentary for a very sophisticated refutation of mayavad

Just because one commentary is more equipped to handle one aspect, doesn't mean that the other commentary is inferior.

Some people ask “This Prabhupada’s translation also seems right”

Seems right? – “IT IS RIGHT” – We have to have that conviction.

If we cannot figure out how a particular explanation is right, then it is our problem

Never compare commentaries, rather appreciate and get benefitted by the apurvatha the acarya is bringing in.

Pitfalls and methodologies in
referring to other Acarya's
commentaries

Avoid referring to individual verses – WHY?

1. You may miss out on the terminologies
2. You may miss out on his premises
3. You may miss out on his styles
4. You won't have proper appreciation of his apurvatha

If you have time and enthusiasm, try to refer to it parallelly – but in a systematic way, and from the beginning – because acaryas don't bother to re-define terminologies and re-explain concepts again and again

Canto One – Chapter One

Questions by the Sages

Section – I

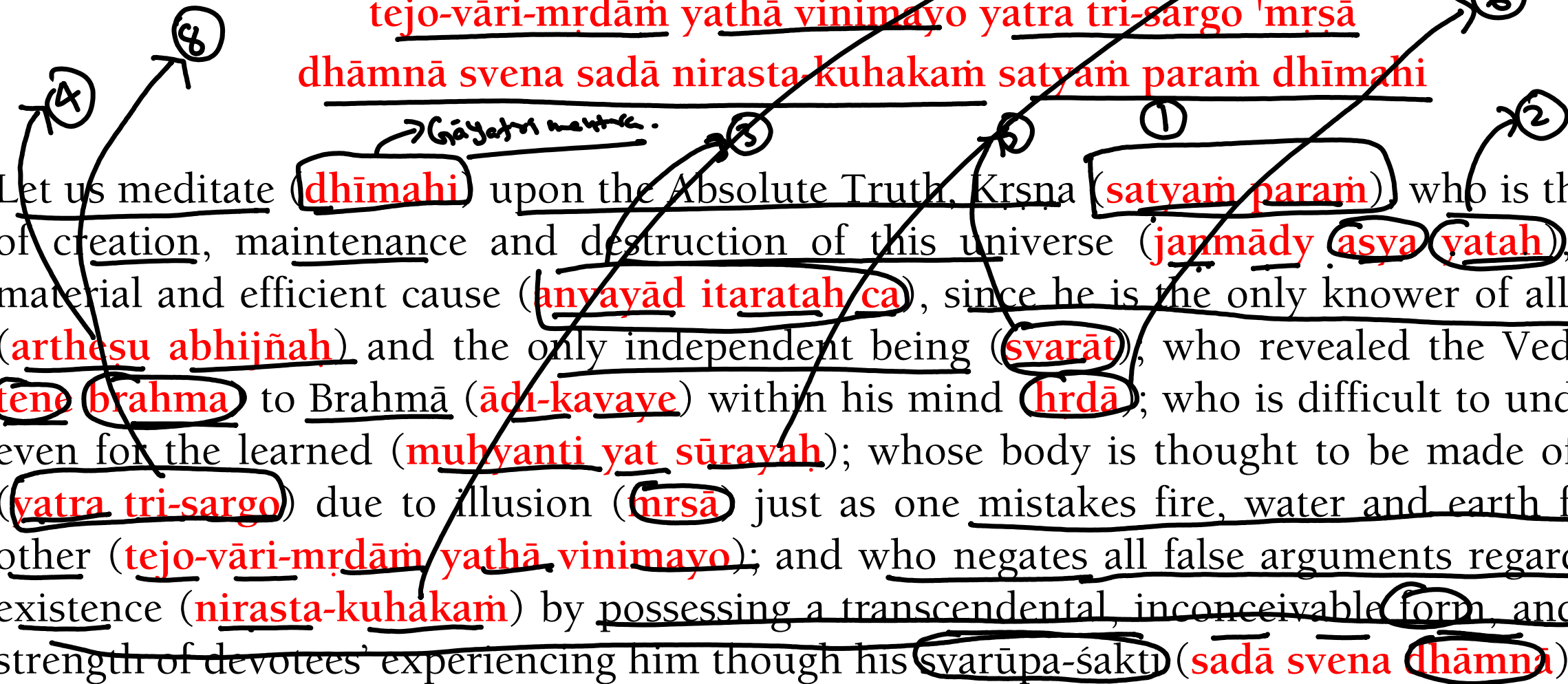
Vaśīṣṭh nirdeśya vage
ascertaining the subject
matter of a book.

|| 1.1.1 ||

om namo bhagavate vāsudevāya
janmādy asya yato 'nvayād itarataś cārthesv abhijñāḥ svarāt
tene brahma hrdā ya ādi-kavaye muhyanti yat sūrayaḥ
tejo-vāri-mrdām yathā vinimayo yatra tri-sargo 'mrsā
dhāmnā svena sadā nirasta-kuhakaṁ satyaṁ param dhīmaḥi

Let us meditate (dhīmaḥi) upon the Absolute Truth, Kṛṣṇa (satyaṁ param) who is the cause of creation, maintenance and destruction of this universe (janmādy asya yataḥ), as the material and efficient cause (anyayād itarataḥ ca), since he is the only knower of all objects (arthesu abhijñāḥ) and the only independent being (svarāt), who revealed the Vedas (yah tene brahma) to Brahmā (ādi-kavaye) within his mind (hrdā); who is difficult to understand even for the learned (muhyanti yat sūrayaḥ); whose body is thought to be made of matter (yatra tri-sargo) due to illusion (mrsā) just as one mistakes fire, water and earth for each other (tejo-vāri-mrdām yathā vinimayo); and who negates all false arguments regarding his existence (nirasta-kuhakaṁ) by possessing a transcendental, inconceivable form, and by the strength of devotees' experiencing him though his (svarūpa-śakti) (sadā svena dhāmnā).

→ Gāyatrī mantra.



The cloud of Śrī-Caitanya has rained a sweet shower of mercy,
producing a river of devotion to himself where the jīvas play like
elephants in the Gaṅgā.

Bhakti → P's Sakti
→ Jīva

May the dark cloud of Lord Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, made golden with a flash
of lightning, illuminate the sky of my mind!

I worship the one absolute truth, Kṛṣṇa, who is eternal bliss and
supreme consciousness, (Nityānanda, Advaita-Caitanya), personified
as the eternal Bhāgavatam which is the complete form of Brahma-
sutra, in its most embellished form and who resides with eternal
bhakti and the eternal devotees in the eternal spiritual abode.

[Note:

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

↗

This Bhāgavatam is the essence of all Vedānta philosophy (**sarva-vedānta-sāraṁ**) because (**yad**) its subject matter is one Brahman (**brahma-ātma-ekatva-lakṣaṇam**), a substance with no duality (**vastv advitīyaṁ**). The main goal of the work (**tad-niṣṭhaṁ eka-prayojanam**) is merging (**kaivalya**). SB 12.13.12]

I take shelter of the eternal form, name and qualities of Kṛṣṇa known from Bhāgavatam, which I studied for a long time by the mercy of guru.

After having studied the Vaisnava-toṣanī of Śanātana and after having understood the conclusions of Lord Caitanya from the Sandarbhas of Jīva, by the mercy of Śrīdhara Svāmī, I produce this commentary to show the essence of Bhāgavatam.

I am not learned. Oh! I am rash in this attempt!

The cause, being either my own foolishness or the causeless mercy of the Lord, gives rise to its manifestation, even in an unqualified person.

If its cause is my foolishness, it will produce mockery, and if its cause is mercy of the Lord, it will produce bliss with every word for the devotees.

I offer myself and everything I have to the absolute Lord who is dearer than life to all the cowherd men and women, and to the service of his dear devotees.

It is not so surprising that this popularly read scripture has
qualities of the absolute entity brahman, comparable to the fruit of
a desire tree, a lamp and the sun.

① ② ③

I praise this work which assumes the form of Mohinī in the
assembly of devas and demons, giving the sweet topics of the Lord
to the devotees, and denying them to the demons.

④

Svayam Bhagavān, the sweet ocean of all auspicious qualities, the
king holding the greatest power, the most splendid sun, shone and
then disappeared at scheduled times over the earth.

The meanings of the various scriptures, Purāṇas and Itihāsas, placed in three groups just as men are classified into three groups, are like night watchmen (guarding the treasure of satisfaction of the heart), but through time, destiny, the appearance of irregularity, and even laziness, some of the meanings have fallen into deep sleep.

Consequently, the great treasure - satisfaction of the heart of all people and the authors of the works - has been stolen by those who have appeared like thieves and given wrong interpretations to those scriptures.

This is understood from the following:

**jugupsitaṁ dharmā-kṛte 'anuśāsataḥ
svabhāva-raktasya mahān vyatikramaḥ**

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

(SB 1.5.15)

However, under these conditions the Lord makes his appearance:

**yadā yadā hi dharmasya glānir bhavati bhārata |
abhutthānam adharmasya tadātmānam sṛjāmy aham ||**

Whenever (**yadā yadā**) there is destruction in dharma (**dharmasya glānir bhavati**), O Bhārata (**bhārata**), and a rise in adharma (**adharmasya abhyutthānam**), I manifest My own body (**tadā aham ātmānam sṛjāmy**). (BG 4.7)

As well, according to the Gītā, the Lord comes to save the devotees and destroy the demons. (BG 4.8)

Just as he appears for these purposes as Matsya among the fish, as Varāha among the animals, as Haṁsa among the birds, as svayam bhagavān Kṛṣṇa among humans, and as Upendra among the devatās, so the Lord has now appeared as the crown jewel of the scriptures, Śrīmad-bhāgavatam, among the Vedas, for restoring dharma and delivering the devotees.

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

Though Kṛṣṇa left Dvārakā, arrived at Prabhāsa, and then disappeared (**kṛṣṇe sva-dhāma upagate**) along with his six great qualities (**dharma-jñānādibhiḥ saha**), this Purāṇa (**eṣa purāṇah**), another form of the sun (**arkah**), has now risen (**adhunā uditah**) in Kali-yuga (**kalau**) for those who have lost their knowledge (**naṣṭa-dṛśām**). (SB 1.3.43)

This indicates that Bhāgavatam is another form of Kṛṣṇa, similar to the openness of I and mine (Kṛṣṇa and the book about Kṛṣṇa)

Thus, it bears no comparison with other works.

Kṛṣṇa has appeared as Bhāgavatam through Śukadeva and Parīkṣit, and like the sun among the planets, it shines among the Purāṇas.

It has twelve forms (volumes), just as the sun has twelve forms for each of the months of the year.

With eighteen-thousand verses like its leaves, it has appeared like a desire tree to fulfill the goals of the great devotees.

Explanation-I

**Establishing Bhagavan as the Vastu
of the Book**

- Let us meditate (**dhīmahī**) upon the Absolute Truth, Kṛṣṇa (**satyaṁ param**),
- who is the cause of creation, maintenance and destruction of this universe (**janmādy asya yatah**), as the material and efficient cause (**anvayād itaratah ca**),
- since he is the only knower of all objects (**artheṣu abhijñah**) and the only independent being (**svarāt**);
- who revealed the Vedas (**yah tene brahma**) to Brahmā (**ādi-kavaye**) within his mind (**hrdā**);

- who is difficult to understand even for the learned (**muhyanti yat sūrayaḥ**);
- whose body is thought to be made of matter (**yatra tri-sargo**) due to illusion (**mṛṣā**) just as one mistakes fire, water and earth for each other (**tejo-vāri-mṛdāṁ yathā vinimayo**);
- and who negates all false arguments regarding his existence (**nirasta-kuhakaṁ**) by possessing a transcendental, inconceivable form, and by the strength of devotees' experiencing him though his svarūpa-śakti (**sadā svena dhāmnā**).

First Explanation:

In the beginning of the work, the author, Śrī-kṛṣṇa-dvaipāyana - the crown jewel among ācāryas - invokes auspiciousness with meditation on his cherished deity.

Param means “to the highest limit.”

Satyam means “that Supreme Lord who exists in all time and space.”

Dhīmahī means “let us worship or meditate on.”

The plural indicates all the jīvas continuing in time and space as part of one's own group and thus indicates teaching them meditation by these instructions.

The meaning of the sūtra, **athāto brahma jijñāsā** (Vedānta-sūtra 1.1.1) is indicated from this since meditation alone is the result of inquiry.

The Lord's supreme power is indicated in this verse with **janmādy asya yataḥ**. (Vedānta-sūtra 1.1.2)

(Let us meditate on the Supreme Lord) from whom (**yataḥ**) arises creation, maintenance and destruction (**janmādi**) of the universe (**asya**).

Should they meditate on time, which causes all this?

No.

The Lord is the cause because he is the material and efficient cause (**anvyād itarataś ca**).

Anvyād itarataḥ (anvaya and its opposite) can mean anvaya-vyatireka, which, in talking about causality, can refer to cause and effect.

The Lord in relation to the universe is like the earth which, as a material cause, is inherent in the pot, and the pot which, as an effect, is inherent in its material cause, the earth.

Thus this phrase means that the Lord is the material cause (upādāna-kāraṇa).

The word **ca** indicates the efficient cause (nimitta-kāraṇa) which is time, because the Lord takes the form of time to influence prakṛti.

Thus the Lord is the cause (**janma**) by being the material (**anvayād itarataḥ**) and the efficient cause (**ca**).

Or the word **anvaya** (meaning inclusion or entrance into) can also indicate that the Lord is the cause and destruction (**janmādi**) because everything enters the Lord.

The universes enter into the Lord at destruction (and issues from him at the time of creation).

Itarataḥ then indicates divisions of matter taking place at the level of secondary creation outside the Lord.

That means that the Lord is the basis (adhithātr-kāraṇa) of the whole universe, just as water is the basis of earth, and fire is the basis of water.

Thus the Lord is that person from whom creation, maintenance and destruction takes place because everything is contained within him (**anvayāt**) and everything in the secondary creation is outside him, but based on him (**itarataḥ**).

Or the word **anvaya** (meaning sequence) can mean that the Lord is creation and destruction (**janmādi**), because he is the whole sequence of creation, maintenance and destruction.

The Lord enters into the universe, as the final agent of causality, in the process of creation; he enters the universe as the final agent for dispensing results of action in maintenance; and he enters the universe in the form of Śiva as the final agent in the process of destruction.

In this explanation, it should be understood that the cause includes within itself the effect, and the Lord as cause enters into the effect, the universe.

Thus the Lord is identified as creation, maintenance and destruction of the universe.

The universe itself is kept at a distance from the svarūpa of the Lord by the use of the descriptive word **itarataḥ** (different), since the creation, maintenance and destruction of the universe is different from the Lord's svarūpa-śakti.

Ca indicates it is non-different from the māyā-śakti.

Thus **anvayād itarataḥ ca** means the Lord is the creator, maintainer and destroyer since he is non-different from the universe in its phases of creation, maintenance and destruction, but this universe is different from his svarūpa, and non-different from his māyā-śakti.

Thus in the first line the two Vedānta-sūtras, **janmādy asya** (1.1.2) and **tat tu samanvayāt** (1.1.3),

[Note: The usual meaning of this is “That the Lord is the creator is known from the confirming statements of scripture.”

However here it can also mean “The Lord is the creator because he is the material and efficient cause.”]

have been spoken.

“But if the Supreme Lord is said to be the material cause of the universe, he should be devoid of change.

Therefore should one not say that the Supreme Lord is the efficient and prakṛti is the material cause.”

No. It is not so.

The śrutis say **yaḥ sarvajñāh sarva-vit**: he, who is omniscient, knows all. (Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad 2.2.7)

Sa īkṣata lokān: he glanced over the worlds and then created (Aitareya Upaniṣad);

and **tad aikṣata bahusyām prajāyeya**; he glanced and said, “Let me be many, Let me create progeny.” (Chāndogya Upaniṣad 6.2.3)

These verses indicate that only a conscious entity is the cause of the universe, and thus the Lord is both the material cause and the efficient cause of the universe.

Since prakṛti is a śakti of the Lord and the śakti and possessor of the śakti are non-different, the Lord is the material cause through prakṛti.

But the Lord remains unchanged in spite of being the material cause, because by his very nature he transcends prakṛti.

This is explained by the Lord:

**prakṛtir yasyopādānam ādhāraḥ puruṣaḥ paraḥ |
sato 'bhivyañjakaḥ kālo brahma tat tritayaṁ tv aham ||**

Prakṛti is the material cause (**prakṛtir yasya upādānam**), the puruṣa is the foundational cause (**ādhāraḥ puruṣaḥ paraḥ**). Time, the indirect cause (**kālah**), is agitator of prakṛti (**sataḥ abhivyañjakaḥ**). I am all three (**brahma tat tritayaṁ tv aham**). (SB 11.24.19)

Scripture does not state that prakṛti is the material cause independently.

The Lord, conscious of all things, is alone the cause of the universe by his independence.

Unconscious prakṛti is not the cause.

Thus the verse says that the Lord is fully conscious (abhijñāḥ) concerning all matters relating to the creation and destruction of all real objects (artheṣu).

This statement illustrates the meaning of **īkṣater nāśabdam**: being described in the scriptures, the Lord is not beyond the description of words (though he remains beyond the material). (Vedānta-sūtra 1.1.5)

The meaning of the sūtra is this.

The brahman which was discussed is the cause of the universe.
Why?

Because of seeing; because of specialized conclusions arising from seeing, or in other words, from hearing about the Lord in the statements of śruti which describe him as the cause of the universe.

Therefore brahman is not indescribable.

It is not that the Lord cannot be proved by authoritative words.

He can be proved by the scriptures.

The śrutis state that the conscious Lord is the cause:

tad aikṣata bahu syām prajāyeya

He glanced at prakṛti. May I become many; let me create progeny. (Chāndogya Upaniṣad 6.2.3)

Sad eva saumyedaṃ agra asīt

O gentle one! The eternal Lord existed before this universe.
(Chāndogya Upaniṣad 6.2.1)

ātmā vā idam eka evāgra asīt

The Lord existed before this universe. (Chāndogya Upaniṣad 1.1.1)

tasmād vā etasmād ātmana ākāśaḥ sambhūta

From that Lord arose the ether. (Taittirīya Upaniṣad 1)

yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante

From the Lord all creatures arise. (Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa 1)

And the smṛti says:

yataḥ sarvāṇi bhūtāni bhavanty ādi-yugāgame |
yasmimś ca pralayaṁ yānti punar eva yuga-kṣaye ||

From the Lord (**yataḥ**) all creatures (**sarvāṇi bhūtāni**) arise (**bhavanty**) at the beginning of the first yuga (**ādi-yuga āgame**) and in him (**yasmimś ca**) they merge (**punar eva yānti**) at the time of universal destruction (**yuga-kṣaye pralayaṁ**).

One may object that the mahat-tattva and other elements had not arisen so that he could have a body which could perform actions.

Therefore the verse says that the Lord is independent (**svarāt**).

He controls everything by himself (svayam rājate) through his spiritual svarūpa (non-different from himself).

Thus the śruti says:

na tasya kāryaṃ karaṇaṃ ca vidyate
na tat-samaś cābhyadhikaś ca dṛśyate
parāsyā śaktir vividhaiva śrūyate
svābhāvikī jñāna-bala-kriyā ca

In the Lord (**tasya**) there is no (**na vidyate**) material cause and effect (**kāryaṃ karaṇaṃ ca**); he has his own inherent knowledge, strength and action (**svābhāvikī jñāna-bala-kriyā ca**). (Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 6.8)

One may object that in the creation of the universe, one should understand that Lord Brahmā has independent powers, for in the śruti it is said

hiraṇyagarbhaḥ samavartatāgre bhūtasya jātaḥ patir eka asīt

Brahmā was born before other creatures; he alone existed.
(Mahā-nārāyaṇa Upaniṣad 6)

Therefore Brahmā should be the object of worship.

The verse answers this objection in the second line.

It is the Lord, **satyam param**, who revealed (**tene**) the Vedas (**brahma**) — knowledge of himself — to Brahmā (**ādīkavaye**).

Thus Brahmā is dependent on the Lord.

One may object that it is well known that Brahmā did not study the Vedas from anyone.

That is true.

He received it in his mind (**hr̥daye**).

This is stated in the Bhāgavatam.

pracoditā yena purā sarasvatī
vitanvatājasya satīm smṛtiṁ hr̥di
sva-lakṣaṇā prādurabhūt kilāsyataḥ
sa me ṛṣiṇām ṛṣabhaḥ prasīdatām

May the Lord, the best of the sages, be pleased with me (**sa me ṛṣiṇām ṛṣabhaḥ prasīdatām**)! Inspired by him (**yena pracoditā**), at the beginning of the *kalpa* (**purā**), Sarasvatī (**sarasvatī**), whose aim is to reveal Kṛṣṇa (**sva-lakṣaṇā**), appeared from the mouth of Brahmā (**prādurabhūt kila ajasya āsyataḥ**) and revealed (**vitanvatā**) proper memory (**satīm smṛtiṁ**) to carry out creation in his heart (**hr̥di**). (SB 2.4.22)

As well **sudṛṣṭam hr̥ḍi me tadaiva**: why did I not see him in my heart at that time? (SB 10.14.15)

The meaning of the gāyatrī mantra was revealed to him by that method.

It is said in the Matsya Purāṇa (53.20):

yatrādhikṛtya gāyatrīm varṇyate dharmavistarahaḥ |
vr̥trāsura-vadhupetaṁ tad bhāgavatam iṣyate ||

He spoke the Bhāgavatam (**tad bhāgavatam iṣyate**) where (**yatra**) the killing of Vr̥trāsura is described (**vr̥trāsura-vadhupetaṁ**) and where (**yatra**), after starting with gāyatrī (**adhikṛtya gāyatrīm**), dharma is elaborately described (**dharmavistarahaḥ varṇyate**).

In another Purāṇa it is said:

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

The Bhāgavatam is understood (**tad vai bhāgavatam viduḥ**) to be that work starting with gāyatrī mantra (**gāyatrī ca samārambhas**) in which there are eighteen thousand verses (**grantho aṣṭādaśa-sāhasro**) and twelve volumes (**dvādaśa-skandha-sammitaḥ**), and in which (**yatra**) spiritual knowledge spoken by Hayagrīva (**hayagrīva-brahma-vidyā**) and the killing of Vṛtra are described (**vṛtra-vadhas tathā**).

Someone may argue:

“Perhaps Brahmā realized the truth of the Vedas on his own (from within the mind) just as a person sometimes gets a realization during sleep.”

To answer this argument, then it is said that Brahmā, independently, does not have the power to realize this knowledge, for even the greatly learned are bewildered about this (**yad sūrayaḥ muhyanti**).

This explains the following sūtra.

etena netaro 'nupapatteḥ

A jīva is not described (in the mantra "satyam jñānam anantam brahma"), because such an interpretation of the mantra is illogical. (Vedānta-sūtra 1.1.16)

There is another objection.

When we talk about meditation it indicates that we meditate on an object that has a form.

Forms are made of the three guṇas of matter, and must be therefore temporary.

This objection is answered in the third line.

It is like reversal; or one thing appearing as another (**vinimayah**), just as light may appear to be water, or water may appear to be earth or earth in forms like glass may appear to be like water to an ignorant person.

In this way one falsely (**mṛṣā**) thinks that the perfect, spiritual form of the Lord to be made of the three guṇas (**tri-sargah**).

Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad (1.33) says:

**tam ekaṁ govindam sac-cid-ānanda-vigraham
vṛndāvana-sura-bhūruha-talāsīnam**

I saw that one form of Govinda (**tam ekaṁ govindam**), a form of eternity, knowledge and bliss (**sac-cid-ānanda-vigraham**), seated (**āsīnam**) at the base (**tala**) of desire tree in Vṛndāvana (**vṛndāvana-sura-bhūruha**).

Rāma-tāpanī Upaniṣad says:

ardha-mātrātmako rāmo brahmānandaika-vigrahaḥ

Rāma is the half-syllable (**ardha-mātra ātmako rāmah**) and form of spiritual bliss (**brahmānanda eka-vigrahaḥ**).

Nṛsimha-tāpanī Upaniṣad says:

ṛtaṁ satyaṁ param brahma puruṣaṁ nṛ-keśari-vigraham

The form of Nṛsimha (**nṛ-keśari-vigraham**) is the supreme brahman (**param brahma**), the puruṣa (**puruṣaṁ**), knowledge and truth (**ṛtaṁ satyaṁ**).

nirdoṣa-pūrṇa-guṇa-vigraha ātma-tantro
niścetanātmaka-śarīra-guṇaiś ca hīnaḥ |
ānanda-mātra-kara-pāda-mukhodarādiḥ ca |

The Lord has a form full of faultless qualities (**nirdoṣa-pūrṇa-guṇa-vigraha**), which is independent (**ātma-tantraḥ**). He is devoid (**hīnaḥ**) of the qualities (**guṇaiḥ ca**) of lifeless, material bodies (**niścetana ātmaka-śarīra**). All the parts of his body such as hands, feet, head and belly (**kara-pāda-mukha-udara-ādiḥ ca**) are bliss alone (**ānanda-mātra**). (Dhyāna-bindu Upaniṣad)

nanda-vraja-janānandī sac-cidānanda-vigrahaḥ

Kṛṣṇa has a form of eternity, knowledge and bliss (**sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ**) which gives joy to the people of Vraja (**nanda-vraja-janānandī**). (Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa 2.36.25)

**sarve nityāḥ śāśvatāś ca dehās tasya parātmanaḥ |
hānopādāna-rahitā naiva prakṛti-jāḥ kvacit ||**

The bodies of the Lord (**tasya parātmanaḥ dehāḥ**) are all eternal, unchanging (**sarve nityāḥ śāśvatāś ca**), and devoid of faults (**hāna-upādāna-rahitā**). They are never the product of matter (**na eva prakṛti-jāḥ kvacit**). (Mahā varāha Purāṇa)

This is also understood from the Bhāgavatam:

asyāpi deva vapuṣo mad-anugrahasya
svecchā-mayasya na tu bhūta-mayasya ko 'pi
neśe mahi tv avasitum manasāntareṇa
sākṣāt tavaiva kim utātma-sukhānubhūteḥ

My dear Lord (**deva**), neither I nor anyone else can estimate (**kaḥ api na tv avasitum īśe**) the potency (**mahi**) of this transcendental body of Yours (**asyāpi vapuṣah**), which has shown such mercy to me (**mad-anugrahasya**) and which appears just to fulfill the desires of Your pure devotees (**sva icchā-mayasya**). Although my mind (**manasā antareṇa**) is completely withdrawn from material affairs (**na tu bhūta-mayasya**), I cannot understand Your personal form (**na īśe sākṣāt tavaiva**). How, then, could I possibly understand the happiness You experience within Yourself (**kim uta ātma-sukha anubhūteḥ**)? (SB 10.14.2)

**taṁ matvātmajam avyaktaṁ martya-liṅgam adhokṣajam
gopikolūkhale dāmnā babandha prākṛtaṁ yathā**

That unmanifested person (**avyaktaṁ**), who is beyond the perception of the senses (**adhokṣajam**), had now appeared as a human child (**martya-liṅgam**), and mother Yaśodā (**gopikā**), considering Him her own ordinary child (**taṁ matvā prākṛtaṁ ātmajam yathā**), bound Him to the wooden mortar with a rope (**ulūkhale dāmnā babandha**). (SB 10.9.14)

tasmād idam jagad aśeṣam asat-svarūpam
svapnābham asta-dhiṣaṇam puru-duḥkha-duḥkham
tvayy eva nitya-sukha-bodha-tanāv anante
māyāta udyad api yat sad ivāvabhāti

Therefore (**tasmād**) this entire universe (**idam jagad aśeṣam**), which like a dream (**svapnābham**) is by nature unreal (**asat-svarūpam**), nevertheless appears real (**sad iva avabhāti**), and thus it covers one's consciousness (**asta-dhiṣaṇam**) and assails one with repeated miseries (**puru-duḥkha-duḥkham**). This universe appears real (**sad iva avabhāti**) because (**yat**) it is manifested (**udyad**) by the potency of illusion (**māyāta**) emanating from you (**tvayy eva**), whose unlimited (**anante**) transcendental forms (**tanāv**) are full of eternal happiness and knowledge (**nitya-sukha-bodha**). (SB 10.14.22)

tāvat prasanno bhagavān puṣkarākṣaḥ kṛte yuge
darśayām āsa taṁ kṣattaḥ śābdam brahma dadhad vapuḥ

O Vidura! (**kṣattaḥ**) The lotus eyed Lord (**puṣkara akṣaḥ bhagavān**), having a body made of the Vedas (**śābdam brahma dadhad vapuḥ**), pleased with Kardama (**tāvat prasannah**), showed him his form (**darśayām āsa taṁ**) in Satya-yuga (**kṛte yuge**). (SB 3.21.8)

**satya-jñānānantānanda- mātraika-rasa-mūrtayah
aspr̥ṣṭa-bhūri-māhātmyā api hy upaniṣad-dṛśām**

The viṣṇu-mūrtis all had eternal, unlimited forms, full of knowledge and bliss (**jñāna-ananta-ānanda-mātra-eka-rasa-mūrtayah**) and existing beyond the influence of time (**satya**). Their great glory (**bhūri-māhātmyā**) was not even to be touched (**aspr̥ṣṭa**) by the jñānīs engaged in studying the Upaniṣads (**upaniṣad-dṛśām**). (SB 10.13.54)

Even the devotees in Śvetadvīpa and Vaikuṅṭha have forms.

These forms are not material, since the word atīndriya is used.

Nārāyaṇīya says:

**anindriyā anāhārā aniṣpannāḥ sugandhinaḥ |
ekāntinas te puruṣāḥ śveta-dvīpa-nivāsinaḥ ||**

The inhabitants living in Śvetadvīpa (**śveta-dvīpa-nivāsinaḥ**), devoted completely to the Lord (**te puruṣāḥ ekāntinaḥ**), are all fragrant (**sugandhinaḥ**), beyond the material senses (**anindriyā**), without any need for material food (**anāhārā**) and without material movement (**aniṣpannāḥ**). (Mahābhārata 12.323.26)

dehendriyāsu-hīnānām
vaikuṅṭha-pura-vāsinām
deha-sambandha-sambaddham
etad ākhyātum arhasi

The inhabitants of Vaikuṅṭha (**vaikuṅṭha-pura-vāsinām**) are completely spiritual, having no material body, senses or life airs (**deha-indriya-asu-hīnānām**). Therefore, please tell the story (**etad ākhyātum arhasi**) of how they became bound with bodies in this world (**deha-sambandha-sambaddham**).

(SB 7.1.35)

What doubt can there be that their bodies are non-material?

Some persons argue with all these conclusions.

In answer to this, the following is said.

Through the power of realization of the Lord fixed in the devotee's heart by the svarūpa-śakti, or through the Lord's form shining with power and sweetness increasing at every moment (**dhāmnā**), which belongs only to the Lord and which is thus extraordinary (**svena**), throughout all three phases of time (**sadā**), all false arguments (**kuhakam**) about the Lord are negated (**nirasta**).

This is indicated in **tarko 'pratiṣṭhānāt**: argumentation is not accepted concerning the Lord, because it is insubstantial. (Vedānta-sūtra 2.1.11)

**yam evaiṣa vṛṇute tena labhyas
tasyaiṣa ātmā vivṛṇute tanum svām**

The Lord reveals his form to that person whom he chooses. (Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad 3.2.3)

The use of the word svām to modify tanum indicates that the body of the Lord arises from his svarūpa-śakti.

That his mind and eyes are not material is also understood from the statements **bahu syām** (let me become many) and **sa aikṣata** (he glanced), since these senses are employed before the agitation of prakṛti, which produces material mind and senses.

As well **parāsyā śaktir vividhaiva śrūyate svābhāvikī jñāna-bala-kriyā ca** (Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 6.8) indicates that his knowledge, strength and actions arise from his own nature (svābhāvikī), not prakṛti.

acintyāḥ khalu ye bhāvā na tāms tarkeṇa yojayet |
prakṛtibhyaḥ param yac ca tad acintyasya lakṣaṇam ||

One cannot use (**na yojayet**) material reasoning (**tāms tarkeṇa**) on those things (**ye bhāvā**) which are inconceivable (**khalu acintyāḥ**). Inconceivable refers to (**tad acintyasya lakṣaṇam**) those things existing beyond prakṛti (**yac ca prakṛtibhyaḥ param**). (Mahābhārata 6.6.11)

The potential mood indicates that material arguments are forbidden to be used against the Lord.

It is just as strong as the prohibition: **para-dārān na gacchet**:
one should not have sex with other men's wives.

If the demons, who eagerly take up arrows of logic aimed at
the Lord, fall to hell, let them fall there.

Enough of their discussions!

Explanation-II

**Establishing Krsna as the Vastu of
the Book**

Let us meditate (**dhīmahī**) on Kṛṣṇa who is known as Satya (**satyaṁ param**),

who (**yah**) — through his abode Mathurā and by revelation of his form to his devotees (**svena dhāmnā**) — destroys ignorance concerning himself (**sadā nirasta-kuhakaṁ**);

whose body (**yatra**), though appearing to be material to the demons (**tri-sargo tejo-vāri-mṛdāṁ yathā vinimayo**), is not temporary at all (**amṛṣā**);

who, after appearing in Vasudeva's house (**asya janma ādy yatah**) went to Nanda's house (**itaratah ca anu ayāt**),

knowing how to cheat Kāṁsa and who, knowing the appearance of his devotee's prema in Vraja (**artheṣv abhijñah**), remained there because of his own people (**svarāt**), though he is in all cases independent (**svarāt**);

and who revealed (**yah tene**) that the cows and calves were actually the supreme brahman (**brahma**) to Brahmā (**ādi-kavaye**) by his will (**hrdā**) —

which bewilders even persons such as Nārada (**muhyanti yat sūrayah**).

It is said in Bhāgavatam:

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

The great devotees such as Vidura and Maitreya describe properly (**mahātmānaḥ varṇayanti añjasā**) the nine topics (**navānām iha lakṣaṇam**) in order to impart the highest knowledge of the tenth topic (**daśamasya viśuddhy-artham**), through the words of the scripture and stories to illustrate their meaning (**śrutena ca arthena**). (SB 2.10.2)

Since the Supreme Lord is the aṅgī in relation to all other topics, and since Kṛṣṇa is the chief form of the Lord, and since there is praise for his extraordinary qualities, Kṛṣṇa should be indicated in the first verse.

Thus a second explanation of the first verse has arisen devoted only to Kṛṣṇa.

This is indicated at the beginning with the description of Kṛṣṇa's birth. (**Satyam param dhīmahi** is explained as Kṛṣṇa.)

**satya-vratam satya-param tri-satyam
satyasya yonim nihitam ca satye
satyasya satyam ṛta-satya-netram
satyātmakam tvām śaraṇam prapannāḥ**

O Lord, You never deviate from Your vow (**satya-vratam**), which is always perfect because whatever You decide is perfectly correct and cannot be stopped by anyone (**satya-param**). Being present in the three phases of cosmic manifestation-creation, maintenance and annihilation (**tri-satyam**)—You are the Supreme Truth (**satyasya yonim**). Indeed, unless one is completely truthful, one cannot achieve Your favor, which therefore cannot be achieved by hypocrites (**nihitam ca satye**). You are the active principle, the real truth, in all the ingredients of creation, and therefore you are known as antaryāmī, the inner force (**satyasya satyam**). You are equal to everyone, and Your instructions apply for everyone, for all time (**ṛta-satya-netram**). You are the beginning of all truth (**satyātmakam**). Therefore, offering our obeisances, we surrender unto You. Kindly give us protection (**tvām śaraṇam prapannāḥ**). (SB 10.2.26)

Sañjaya, explaining the derivation of Kṛṣṇa's names, explains why Kṛṣṇa is addressed as Satya:

**satye pratiṣṭhitaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ satyam atra pratiṣṭhitam |
satyāt satyam ca govindas tasmāt satyo hi nāmataḥ ||**

Kṛṣṇa (**kṛṣṇaḥ**) is fixed in the highest truth (**satye pratiṣṭhitaḥ**), and truth is fixed in him (**satyam atra pratiṣṭhitam**). Because all truth arises from him (**satyāt satyam ca**), Govinda (**tasmāt govindah**) is respected as truth or satya (**satyo hi nāmataḥ**). (Mahābhārata 5.68.12)

Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa also says

satyaṁ śrī-kṛṣṇaṁ dhīmaḥi paraṁ brahma narākṛtī

We meditate upon Kṛṣṇa (**satyaṁ śrī-kṛṣṇaṁ dhīmaḥi**), the supreme brahman (**paraṁ brahma**) with human form (**narākṛtī**).

And Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad says

tasmāt kṛṣṇa eva paro devas taṁ dhyāyet

Therefore (**tasmāt**) Kṛṣṇa is the supreme Lord (**kṛṣṇa eva paro devah**), and one should meditate on him (**taṁ dhyāyet**).

Let us meditate on Kṛṣṇa, the jīvas' ignorance of whom (kuhakam) is always destroyed by his abode called Mathurā and by his form (svena dhāmnā) which can be seen by mercy even today.

The two causes are illustrated by the following two verses.

**mathyate tu jagat sarvaṁ brahma-jñānena yena vā |
tat-sāra-bhūtaṁ yad yasyām mathurā sā nigadyate ||**

Mathurā is defined as that place (**mathurā sā nigadyate**) which excites the whole world (**mathyate tu jagat sarvaṁ**) as it is non-different from the Lord (**implied**), or that place (**yad yasyām**) in which (**yena vā**) the essence (**tat-sāra-bhūtaṁ**) of spiritual knowledge (**brahma-jñānena**) is extracted (**mathyate**).

śravaṇāt kīrtanād dhyānāt pūyante 'nte-vasāyinaḥ
tava brahma-mayasyeśa kim utekṣābhimarśinaḥ

O Lord (**īśa**), even outcastes (**ante-vasāyinaḥ**) are purified (**pūyante**) by hearing and chanting your glories and meditating upon you (**tava śravaṇāt kīrtanād dhyānāt**), the Absolute Truth (**brahma-mayasa**). What then to speak of (**kim uta**) those who see and touch you (**īkṣā abhimarśinaḥ**)?
(SB 10.70.43)

According to Amara-koṣa, **dhāma** means house, body, effulgence and influence.

“Whatever is seen by the material eye is temporary. Because Kṛṣṇa’s form can be seen in the material world it must be temporary.”

The bodies made of the three guṇas (**tri-sargaḥ**) by the combination of three visible elements earth, water and air, are false (temporary).

But the form which created those three guṇas is not false (not temporary).

The transcendental body of the Lord, though seen by the demons with material bodies, is seen by them without realization of its sweetness, just as sugar candy has no sweet taste when eaten by a person afflicted with jaundice.

This is because of the will of the Lord, arising from him inconceivable svarūpa, which accomplished his various pastimes.

The devotees, however, can realize that form of sweetness by the influence of the Lord's inconceivable mercy.

ānarta-dhanva-kuru-jāṅgala-kaṅka-matsya-
pāñcāla-kunti-madhu-kekaya-kośalārṇah
anye ca tan-mukha-sarojam udāra-hāsa-
snigdhekṣaṇam nṛpa papur dṛśibhir nr-nāryaḥ
tebhyaḥ sva-vīkṣaṇa-vinaṣṭa-tamisra-dṛgbhyaḥ
kṣemaṁ tri-loka-gurur artha-dṛśam ca yacchan
śṛṇvan dig-anta-dhavalam sva-yaśo 'śubha-ghnam
gītam surair nṛbhir agāc chanakair videhān

The men and women (**nr-nāryaḥ**) of **Ānarta**, **Dhanva**, **Kuru-jāṅgala**, **Kaṅka**, **Matsya**, **Pañcāla**, **Kunti**, **Madhu**, **Kekaya**, **Kośala**, **Arṇa** and many other kingdoms (**anye ca**) drank with their eyes (**papur dṛśibhir**) the nectarean beauty of Lord Kṛṣṇa's lotuslike face (**tan-mukha-sarojam**), which was graced with generous smiles (**udāra-hāsa**) and affectionate glances (**snigdha īkṣaṇam**). Simply by glancing (**dṛgbhyaḥ**) at those who came to see him (**tebhyaḥ sva-vīkṣaṇa**), Lord Kṛṣṇa, the spiritual master of the three worlds (**tri-loka-gurur**), delivered them from the blindness of materialism (**vināṣṭa-tamisra**). As he thus endowed them (**yacchan**) with fearlessness (**kṣemaṁ**) and divine vision (**artha-dṛśam**), he heard (**śṛṇvan**) demigods and men (**surair nṛbhir**) singing his glories (**sva-yaśo gītam**), which purify the entire universe (**dig-anta-dhavalam**) and destroy all misfortune (**aśubha-ghnam**). Gradually, he reached Videha (**śanakair videhān agāt**). (SB 10.86.20-21)

These verses show that by his mercy alone his great powers can be understood.

Nārāyaṇādhyātma says:

**nityāvyakto 'pi bhagavān īkṣate nija-śaktiḥ
tām ṛte paramānandaṁ kaḥ paśyetām itaṁ prabhum**

Though the lord (**bhagavān**) is eternally invisible (**nitya avyakto api**), he is seen (**īkṣate**) by his own energy (**nija-śaktiḥ**). Who can see the Lord (**kaḥ prabhum paśyetām**) full of supreme bliss (**paramānandaṁ**) without that energy (**tām ṛte**)?

Here is an explanatory verse:

**tataḥ svayaṁ prakāśatva-śaktyā svecchā-prakāśayā
so 'bhivyakto bhaven netre na netra-viṣayaḥ kṛtaḥ**

Thus (**tataḥ**) by his self-manifesting energy (**svayaṁ prakāśatva-śaktyā**), arising by his own will (**sva icchā-prakāśayā**), the Lord (**sah**), who is not visible to the eye (**na netra-viṣayaḥ kṛtaḥ**), becomes visible to the eyes (**netre abhivyakto bhavet**).

The śruti says **tāsām madhye sāksāt brahma gopāla-purī hi** in the middle of that expanse one can see the abode of Kṛṣṇa made of brahman. (Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad)

Thus the abodes of the Lord, also made of spiritual matter become visible.

Those who are knowledgeable by the Lord's mercy conclude that things like pots, which are seen and which are not spiritual, are temporary.

Having explained that the cause of the Lord's appearance is his mercy, his pastimes are described.

I meditate upon Kṛṣṇa, who after his birth (**janmādi yataḥ**) in Vāsudeva's house showed the form of Viṣṇu, described his previous appearances, etc. and later went (**anu ayāt**) elsewhere (**itarataḥ**), to the house of Nanda.

Why did he go?

Knowing his own purposes (**abhijñāḥ artheṣu**), such as, how to cheat Kamsa or knowing those who had revealed forms with various types of prema such as vātsalaya in Vraja, he went to Nanda's house.

But this does not mean that he is dependent on others.

He is independent, ruling over himself (**svarāt** = svena rājate).

Or **svarāt** can mean that he remained there in Vraja (virājate) because of his relatives such as Nanda (svaiḥ).

Because of his performing such pastimes under the control of prema of his devotees in Vraja, one should not think that he is a fool.

He revealed (**tene**) the calves and cowherd boys to be brahman (**brahma**) even unto Lord Brahmā (**ādi-kavaye**), by his will alone (**hr̥dā**), by which, through his power of yoga-māyā, even the intelligence of persons like Śiva and Nārada are bewildered.

Or Kṛṣṇa by the statements of his svāmśa form Matsya revealed his form as impersonal brahman to Satyavrata (**ādi-kavaye**), who was the wise man (kavi) and founder of his dynasty (ādi).

This is described in the following verse:

**madīyaṁ mahimānaṁ ca param brahmeti śabditam |
vetsyasy anugṛhītaṁ me sampraśnair vivṛtaṁ hṛdi ||**

By my mercy (**me anugṛhītaṁ**), you will realize (**vetsyasy**) my power (**madīyaṁ mahimānaṁ**) known as the impersonal Brahman (**param brahmeti śabditam**), which will be disclosed in your heart (**hṛdi vivṛtaṁ**) through questions and answers (**sampraśnair**). (SB 8.24.38)

Śrīdhara Svāmī explains this verse as follows:

You will directly see (vetsyasi) this brahman, which will be by my mercy (me ahugṛhītam); it will be explained at the beginning of the prayers of the Personified Vedas (SB10.87.2) that the brahman is realized by the Lord's mercy alone.

Explanation-III

Establishing Madhura-Rasa as the
Vastu of the Book

Let us meditate on Kṛṣṇa (**satyaṁ param dhīmahī**),

from whom (**yatah**) arises (**janma**) madhura-rasa (**ādyasya**) through meeting and separation (**anvayād itaratah ca**);

who, as the hero, most skilful in everything related to rasa (**arthesv abhijñah**), is beyond the material realm (**svarāt**);

who conveyed (**yah hṛdā tene**) to Bharata Muni (**ādi-kavaye**) the same madhura-rasa (**brahma**), about which other poets are bewildered (**muhyanti yat sūrayaḥ**);

in whom alone arises the three types of literary meaning (**tejo-vāri-mṛdāṃ yathā yatra tri-sargh vinimayo**), in extraordinary form (**amṛṣā**);

and who defeats the withered arguers (**sadā nirastakuḥakam**) by the extraordinary influence of the experience of madhura-rasa (**svena dhāmnā**).

Another meaning is revealed in the verse, showing the highest choice of Kṛṣṇa's rasa, with the appearance of the highest sweetness with the gopīs, even though he has other associates in śānta, dāsya, sakhya and vātsalya.

**tatrātiśuśubhe tābhir bhagavān devakī-sutaḥ
madhye maṇinām haimānām mahā-marakato yathā**

In the midst of the dancing gopīs (**tatra tābhir madhye**), Lord Kṛṣṇa (**devakī-sutaḥ**) appeared most brilliant (**atiśuśubhe**), like an exquisite sapphire (**yathā mahā-marakato maṇinām**) in the midst of golden ornaments (**haimānām**). (SB 10.33.6)

Let us meditate on Kṛṣṇa from whom appears the highest rasa śṛṅgāra-rasa (**janma ādyasya**).

Previously this rasa, though existing, had disappeared because of the censure by conservative spiritual aspirants.

By meeting (**anvayāt**) and separation (**itarataḥ**) this rasa with the gopīs is accomplished.

Just as Bhīmasena is represented by the word Bhīma, so the ādya-rasa is represented by the word ādya.

Or because Bhāgavatam is considered to the scriptural form of madhura-rasa (**pibata bhāgavatam rasam**) by the proximity of the verses the word ādyasya can infer the word rasasya as the object which is being described.

The state created by meeting and separation actually establishes the rasa as its counterpart.

Thus there is no worry that the original form of rasa is degraded by this condition.

Rather such a state indicates the secret nature of this madhura-rasa.

Next there is an elaboration of the vibhāva in the form of the ālambana.

Kṛṣṇa is knowledgeable of, or skilful in (**abhijñah**), all things suitable for rasa such as the sixty four arts.

But unlike material heroes such as Nala who are affected by time and karma, Kṛṣṇa, the viṣaya of spiritual rasa, is independent and spiritual (**svarāt**).

Rasa should not be accredited to other persons.

He alone conveyed the truth about ādi-rasa (**brahma**) through his mind (**hr̥dā**) unto Bharata Muni (**ādi-kavaye**), the famous exponent of material rasa.

This reveals that rasa originates only from Kṛṣṇa.

Amara-koṣa says that **brahma** can mean Vedas, truth or austerity.

In this truth (**yatra**) the poets are bewildered because of the descriptions with concentration on material heroes such as Nala.

An example is given.

Just as one mistakes fire or earth for water, people think the rasa directed only to the Lord should be directed to material persons.

There is no rasa in material heroes whose temporary bodies end in ashes and worm waste.

Rather, on consideration, in this there is a contradiction to rasa — distaste or disgust — because of the perversion of the object of love, vibhāva.

The unintelligent describe rasa in such persons.

In the Lord there is the creation of the three meanings; literal, metaphorical and suggested, or creation of allusion (dhvani), skill in composition (guṇa) and literary ornaments (alaṅkāra).

These are real (**amṛṣā**) and become amazing because of their extraordinary nature in Kṛṣṇa.

The life force of the material hero made simply of proud words of poets is false.

Some persons do not accept rasa.

By the amazing influence of the direct experience of tasting madhura-rasa (**dhāmnā**) which is extraordinary (**svena**), Kṛṣṇa defeats the withered Mīmāṃsakas.

Explanation-IV

**Establishing Radha and Krsna as
the Vastu of the Book**

Without deceit (**nirasta-kuhakaṁ**), in correct manner (**satyaṁ**), aspiring for the highest goal (**paraṁ**), we meditate on Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa (**dhīmaḥi**)

from whom (**yataḥ**) arises (**janma**) the height of madhura-rasa (**ādyasya**).

By giving up the other gopīs (**itarataś ca**) and following only her (**anuyād**),

as dhīra-lalita he showed his expertise in the chief aspects of rasa (**ārtheṣv abhijñah**) and she exhibited herself as an independent lover (**svarāt**).

Kṛṣṇa imparted (**yah tene**) through the heart (**hr̥dā**) to Śukadeva, knower of this rasa from birth (**ādi-kavaye**), the Bhāgavatam (**brahma**), by which the devotees faint in ecstasy (**muhyanti yat sūrayaḥ**)

and undergo transformation (**vinimayo**), just as fire, water and earth reverse their properties (**tejo-vāri-mṛdām yathā**)

by whose influence (**yatra svena dhāmnā**) the three śaktis (**tri-sargaḥ**) remain eternally (**sadā amṛṣā**).

Kṛṣṇa imparted through the heart to Śukadeva, knower of this rasa from birth, the Bhāgavatam, by which the devotees faint in ecstasy and undergo transformation, just as fire, water and earth reverse their properties and by whose influence the three śaktis remain eternally.

Among all the gopīs, the peak of sweetness arises in the company of the queen of Vṛndāvana, the principal gopī.

This is indicated in the following verses:

**kasyāḥ padāni caitāni yātāyā nanda-sūnunā
aṁsa-nyasta-prakoṣṭhāyāḥ kareṇoh kariṇā yathā**

Here we see the footprints of some gopī (**kasyāḥ padāni ca
etāni**) who must have been walking along with the son of
Nanda Mahārāja (**yātāyā nanda-sūnunā**). He must have put his
arm on her shoulder (**aṁsa-nyasta-prakoṣṭhāyāḥ**), just as an
elephant rests his trunk on the shoulder of an accompanying
she-elephant (**kareṇoh kariṇā yathā**). (SB 10.30.27)

**anayārādhito nūnam bhagavān harir īśvaraḥ
yan no vihāya govindaḥ prīto yām anayad rahaḥ**

Certainly (**nūnam**) this particular gopī (**anayā**) has perfectly worshiped (**ārādhitaḥ**) the all-powerful Personality of Godhead (**bhagavān harir īśvaraḥ**), Govinda (**govindaḥ**), since he was so pleased with Her (**yad prītaḥ**) that he abandoned the rest of us (**nah vihāya**) and brought her (**yām anayad**) to a secluded place (**rahaḥ**).
(SB 10.30.28)

A meaning which indicates this should be found in the first verse of Bhāgavatam.

We meditate upon the Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa from whom there is the appearance (**janma**) of madhura-rasa (**ādyasya**).

This means that these two are the supreme receptacle of the art of madhura-rasa.

Giving up all other gopī lovers (**itarataḥ**), he followed her alone and became obedient to her (**anvayāt**).

Itarataḥ has an ablative meaning (from others) and indicates a suppressed indeclinable participle.

[Note: Lyab lope karmaṇy adhikaraṇe ca: an inclinable participle can be suppressed in favor its object being put in ablative case. “Giving up other gopīs” becomes “from other gopīs (itarataḥ). Varttikā on Pāṇini’s sūtras.]

The following verse shows how he followed only Rādhā.

atrāvaropitā kāntā puṣpa-hetor mahātmanā
atra prasūnāvacaḥ priyārthe preyasā kṛtaḥ

And over here (**atra**) that intelligent boy (**mahātmanā**) must have put her down (**avaropitā kāntā**) to gather some flowers (**puṣpa-hetoh**). Just see how in this place (**puṣpa-hetor**) dear Kṛṣṇa (**preyasā**) collected flowers (**prasūna avacaḥ kṛtaḥ**) for his beloved (**priyārthe**). (SB 10.30.31-32)

Because he gave up other gopīs and followed her alone, he is known as dhīra-lalita lover, [Note: Dhīra-lalita is a male lover, skilful in the arts of pleasing his beloved and controlled by her.] favorable for cultivating rasa.

He is thus called “one who is fully knowledgeable of the chief rasas filled with madhura-rasa (**artheṣu abhijñah**).”

And because he is dhīra-lalita, she alone remains with her lover (svarāt), as a svādhīna-kāntā, a woman who controls Kṛṣṇa.

In order to reveal all this, he imparted through the heart the Bhāgavatam (**brahma**) containing as its essence the five chapters on rasa to Śukadeva, knower of this tattva (**kavaye**) from his birth (**ādi**).

The Bhāgavatam is called brahma in the following verse.

idaṁ bhāgavatam nāma purāṇam brahma-sammitam

This Bhāgavata Purāṇa (**idaṁ bhāgavatam nāma purāṇam**) is furnished with brahman (**brahma-sammitam**). (SB 1.3.40)

śuka-mukād amṛta-drava-samyutam

Bhāgavatam is sweetness flowing from the mouth of Śuka.
(SB 1.1.3)

Śuka-vāg-amṛtābdhīduḥ

Kṛṣṇa is the moon (**induh**) rising from the sweet ocean (**amṛta abdhi**) of words of Śuka (**Śuka-vāg**). (Kṛṣṇa-astottara-śata-nāma-stora, Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa)

From hearing the Bhāgavatam (yad) since it has rasa, the devotees faint in ecstasy from tasting the rasa (**yad sūrayaḥ muhyanti**).

Or because Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are the objects of their hearing and seeing, their close associates (**sūrayaḥ**), though most wise, become bewildered.

This means that they take on qualities opposite their normal qualities, out of ecstasy.

And others are included in this ecstasy also.

This is illustrated through an example.

Their ecstasy is just like earth, water and fire reversing their properties.

For instance the moon, a form of fire, on seeing the rāsa-līlā of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, gave up its quality of moving and became stunned like earth.

Water, on hearing the sound of the flute, became stunned like earth.

Stones made of earth became liquid like water.

By the influence of these two (**yatra dhāmnā svena**) the creation of the three consorts (**tri-sargaḥ**) Śrī, Bhū and Līlā; or the gopīs, the queens and Lakṣmīs; or the internal, external and marginal potencies becomes factual (**amṛsā**).

This means that the consorts such as Śrī who have been manifested by Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, by their influence, by their being the basis of the consorts, exist eternally because of their eternal relationship.

We meditate on them without deceit, as in real forms (**satyam**) and as the most excellent forms (**param**).

Thus the object of worship (Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, viṣaya) of the Bhāgavatam has been shown as the subject of the first verse.

Explanation-V

**Establishing Bhakti as the Vastu of
the Book**

Let us meditate (**dhīmahī**) on the most beneficial spiritual process (**satyaṁ**) which is beyond the guṇas (**paraṁ**),

which brings about the appearance of the Lord (**yatah ādyasya janma**) as Bhagavān (**anvayād**) and by which there is realization of brahman and Paramātmā in the processes of jñāna and yoga (**itarataś ca**);

which is complete knowledge (**artheṣu abhijñah**), independent of other processes (**svarāt**);

which was revealed (**yah tene**) by Nārada (**brahma hr̥dā**) to Vyāsa (**ādi-kavaye**),

but which is bewildering to even great sages (**muhyanti yat sūrayaḥ**);

which is not mixed with the three guṇas (**yatra tri-sargo mṛṣā tejo-vāri-mṛdām yathā vinimayo**);

and which defeats its opponents (**sadā nirasta-kuhakaṁ**) by its very nature of giving direct experience of bliss (**svena dhāmnā**).

The process of bhakti is indicated by scriptures as the abhidheya by which the āśraya, Kṛṣṇa, can be attained.

It brings about the highest realization and attracts even Kṛṣṇa.

That bhakti then becomes the prayojana, prema.

Thus bhakti-yoga should also be considered as the subject of this verse.

Because of this, another meaning is included as an essential theme of this verse.

Thus it is said in the Twelfth Canto:

**mṛṣā giras tā hy asatīr asat-kathā
na kathyate yad bhagavān adhokṣajaḥ
tad eva satyaṁ tad u haiva maṅgalaṁ
tad eva puṇyaṁ bhagavad-guṇodayam**

Words (**tā**) that do not describe (**yad na kathyate**) the transcendental Lord (**bhagavān adhokṣajaḥ**) but instead deal with temporary matters (**asatīh**) are simply false (**mṛṣā giras**), harsh and useless (**hy asat-kathā**). Only those words that manifest the qualities of the Supreme Lord (**bhagavad-guṇodayam**) are actually truthful (**tad eva satyaṁ**), auspicious (**tad u haiva maṅgalaṁ**) and pure (**tad eva puṇyaṁ**).

tad eva ramyaṁ ruciraṁ navam navam
tad eva śaśvan manaso mahotsavam
tad eva śokārṇava-śoṣaṇam nr̥ṇām
yad uttamaḥśloka-yaśo 'nugīyate

Those words (**yad**) describing (**anugīyate**) the glories of the all-famous Lord (**uttamaḥśloka-yaśah**) are attractive (**tad eva ramyaṁ**), relishable (**ruciraṁ**) and ever fresh (**navam navam**). They are a perpetual festival for the mind (**tad eva śaśvan manaso mahotsavam**), and they dry up the ocean of misery (**tad eva śokārṇava-śoṣaṇam nr̥ṇām**).

(SB 12.12.49-50)

Taking bhakti as the subject of the verse, **param**, the best, then means “beyond the three guṇas,” since bhakti is another form of the real substance (vāstava-vastu).

Satyam refers to bhakti-yoga which is full of the most auspicious qualities beneficial for spiritual practitioners (sat).

Satyam param dhimahi then means “let us meditate on transcendental bhakti-yoga.”

lakṣaṇam bhakti-yogasya nirguṇasya hy udāhṛtam

It is filled (**hy udāhṛtam**) with the qualities (**lakṣaṇam**) of bhakti-yoga (**bhakti-yogasya**), which is beyond the guṇas (**nirguṇasya**). (SB 3.29.12)

na hy aṅgopakrame dhvaṁso
mad-dharmasyoddhavāṅv api
mayā vyavasitaḥ samyaṅ
nirguṇatvād anāśiṣaḥ

O Uddhava (**aṅga uddhava**)! Because I have personally established it (**mayā samyag vyavasitaḥ**), this process of niṣkāma-bhakti (**mad-dharmasya anāśiṣaḥ**) is beyond the guṇas (**nirguṇatvād**). Even by starting and not completing the process (**upakrame**), there is no destruction of results (**na hy aṅu api dhvaṁsah**). (SB 11.29.20)

**vijñāna-ghana ānanda-ghanah
sac-cidānandaika-rase
bhakti-yoge tiṣṭhati**

The Lord full of knowledge (**vijñāna-ghana**) and bliss (**ānanda-ghanah**) is situated in bhakti-yoga (**bhakti-yoge tiṣṭhati**) which is also eternity, knowledge and bliss (**sac-cid-ānanda-eka-rase**). (Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad 2.78)

Then the power of bhakti is described.

From bhakti (**yataḥ**) there is an appearance (**janma**) of the Supreme Lord (**ādyaśya**) in the worshippers as Bhagavān.

As well, by the association of bhakti (**anvayāt**) there is realization of the Supreme Lord as brahman and Paramātmā in other processes (**itarataḥ artheṣu**) — niṣkāma-karma-yoga, jñāna-yoga and aṣṭāṅga-yoga.

“But it is well known that cultivation of pure jñāna alone gives realization of brahman.”

No. The Supreme Lord is jñāna in complete form (**abhijñah**).

Because jñāna is in the mode of sattva only, without the association (**anvaya**) of bhakti, there can be no realization of brahman or Paramātmā.

Thus it is said:

**naiṣkarmyam apy acyuta-bhāva-varjitam
na śobhate jñānam alam nirañjanam
kutaḥ punaḥ śaśvad abhadram īśvara
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 ca arpitam**)? (SB 1.5.12)

**bhaktyā mām abhijānāti yāvān yaś cāsmi tattvataḥ
tato mām tattvato jñātvā viśate tad-anantaram**

Only by bhakti can a person know Me as Brahman (**bhaktyā mām abhijānāti yāvān yaś cāsmi tattvataḥ**). Then, knowing Me as Brahman by that bhakti (**tato mām tattvato jñātvā**), he merges with Me (**viśate tad-anantaram**).

(BG 18.55)

“Jñāna-yoga, for realizing brahman, is dependent on bhakti, and bhakti, for realizing Bhagavān, is dependent on jñāna.”

To counteract this argument, it is said that this bhakti-yoga reigns independently (**svarāt**).”

The king being independent is not dependent on anyone.

akāmaḥ sarva-kāmo vā mokṣa-kāma udāra-dhīḥ |
tīvreṇa bhakti-yogena yajeta puruṣaṁ param ||

The person desiring destruction of all desires (**akāmaḥ**), the person with all desires (**sarva-kāmo vā**), and even the person with an intense desire for liberation (**mokṣa-kāma**), if he has good intelligence (**udāra-dhīḥ**), will worship the Supreme Lord (**yajeta puruṣaṁ param**) with pure bhakti (**tīvreṇa bhakti-yogena**). (SB 2.3.10)

Tivreṇa bhakti-yogena means “by pure bhakti.”

Bhakti should remain unmixed with jñāna or other elements, just as the sun’s rays remain untouched by the clouds.

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)

On the other hand mixed bhakti is prohibited for devotees:

**tasmān mad-bhakti-yuktasya
yogino vai mad-ātmanah
na jñānaṁ na ca vairāgyaṁ
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 (**jñānaṁ ca vairāgyaṁ**) is generally not beneficial for bhakti (**na prāyaḥ śreyo bhaved iha**). (SB 11.20.31)

However such pure bhakti cannot be attained without the mercy of devotees.

This is next stated in the verse.

That bhakti was revealed (**tene**) by mercy to Vyāsa (**ādi-kavaye**) by Nārada, who has Brahman (Kṛṣṇa) in his heart (**brahma-hṛdā**).

“But how can we understand that even omniscient Vyāsa’s knowledge of bhakti is dependent on another person (Nārada)?”

Even the sages such as Vasiṣṭa are bewildered about bhakti-yoga which is beyond the guṇas.

Because it is impossible for minds and intelligences generated from the guṇas, to understand by themselves about bhakti-yoga without the mercy of devotees, those persons only attain ignorance (**muhyanti**).

This is mentioned in the Haṁsa-guḥya prayers:

**yac-chaktayo vadatām vādinām
vai vivāda-saṁvāda-bhuvo bhavanti
kurvanti caiṣām muhur ātma-mohaṁ
tasmai namo 'nanta-guṇāya bhūmne**

I offer respects to the great Lord of eternal qualities (**tasmai namah ananta-guṇāya bhūmne**), whose material energy (**yat-śaktayah**) is the cause of agreement and disagreement (**vivāda-saṁvāda-bhuvah**) among those who make philosophies and then argue with others (**vadatām vādinām**), and whose material energy continually bewilders them as to the real nature of ātmā (**kurvanti eṣām muhuh ātma-mohaṁ**). (SB 6.4.31)

“But bhakti is not completely beyond the guṇas.

This is shown in the Third Canto where bhakti is described as sāttvika, rājasika and tāmasika.”

In this bhakti (**yatra**) the idea that it is made of the three guṇas (**tri-sargaḥ**) is unfounded (**mṛṣā**).

Although milk is not made of fire, water or dust in its natural state, it can become burned by fire, diluted by water and contaminated with dirt.

Similarly, bhakti-yoga, beyond the three guṇas, is called sāttvika, rājasika or tāmasika only because of the sattva, rajas and tamas possessed by persons practicing bhakti.

“Many people will object if you say bhakti-yoga is beyond the guṇas.”

This bhakti-yoga defeats all the arguers because of its very nature (**dhāmnā svena**) -- being filled with unprecedented sweetness that can be realized by the devotees.

This means that since it is directly realized, it does not depend on any other proof to defeat the arguers.

Bhāgavatam is compared to a lamp in the following two verses:

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

I surrender (**upayāmi**) to the son of Vyāsa (**taṁ vyāsa-sūnum**), the incomparable guru of all the sages (**gurum muninām**), who mercifully spoke (**yaḥ karuṇayā āha**) the Purāṇa full of hidden meanings (**purāṇa-guhyam**), the essence of all the scriptures, the essence of hearing (**akhila-śruti-sāram ekam**), for all the people of this world, even in the future (**saṁsāriṇām**); who spoke the Bhāgavatam, which revealed the excellence of rasa to Śukadeva (**yaḥ svānubhāvam**), and which is the revealer of ātmā (**adhyātma-dīpam**) for those desiring to cross dense ignorance with ease (**atitīrṣatām tamo andham**). (SB 1.2.3)

**kasmai yena vibhāsito 'yam atulo jṣāna-pradīpaḥ purā
tad-rūpeṇa ca nārādāya munaye kṛṣṇāya tad-rūpiṇā
yogīndrāya tad-ātmanātha bhagavad-rātāya kāruṇyatas
tac chuddhaṁ vimalaṁ viśokam amṛtaṁ satyaṁ paraṁ dhīmahi**

I meditate upon that pure, spotless Nārāyaṇa, who is free from suffering and death and who previously revealed this incomparable lamp of knowledge to Brahmā. Brahmā then spoke it to the sage Nārada, who narrated it to Kṛṣṇa-dvaipāyana Vyāsa. Śrīla Vyāsa revealed this Bhāgavatam to the greatest of sages, Śukadeva Gosvāmī, and Śukadeva mercifully spoke it to Mahārāja Parīkṣit.

(SB 12.13.19)

Bhāgavatam is compared to the sun:

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

Though Kṛṣṇa, departing Dvārakā, arrived at Prabhāsa, and then disappeared along with his six opulences, this Purāṇa, another form of the sun, has now risen in Kali-yuga for those who have lost their knowledge. (SB 1.3.43)

Bhāgavatam is described as giving a tasty fruit in the third verse of this chapter with

nigama-kalpa-taror galitaṁ phalaṁ rasam

It is the matured fruit (of rasa) of the desire tree of the Vedas.
(SB 1.1.3)

Bhāgavatam is compared to Mohinī avatāra because it gives different results to different people:

**ādi-madhyāvasāneṣu vairāgyākhyāna-saṁyutam
hari-līlā-kathā-vrātā-mṛtānandita-sat-suram
sarva-vedānta-sāraṁ yad brahmātmaikatva-lakṣaṇam
vastv advitīyaṁ tan-niṣṭhaṁ kaivalyaika-prayojanam**

From beginning to end, the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is full of the Lord's pastimes which give bliss to the devotees, endowed with a sense of renunciation. This Bhāgavatam is the essence of all Vedānta philosophy because its subject matter is one Brahman, a substance with no duality. The main goal of the work is merging. (SB 12.13.11-12)

The first explanation of this first verse of Bhāgavatam shows its nature as a light (giving deliverance from misery through general understanding of the Lord or adhyātmā).

The second explanation shows it as the sun (more powerful, destroying misconceptions of the demons, bringing joy to the devotees).

The third, fourth and fifth explanations show it is the bestower of tasty fruit full of rasa (revealing madhura-rasa, Rādhā and pure bhakti).

The devotees, being the rightful recipients, are considered to be like the devatās, since they receive the nectar in the form of relishing the rarest taste of these five meanings.

The Bhāgavatam is considered to be like Mohinī, serving out these different meanings of Bhāgavatam to the devotees.

Though all twelve cantos of the Bhāgavatam are like the tasty fruit, the sun and the lamp, the topics of creation and destruction (sarga and nirodha) and various verses describing this are considered to be the lamp, since those topics reveal only the general aspect of the Lord (adhyātmā).

Secondary creation (visarga), maintenance (sthāna), protection (poṣaṇa) and other topics (ūti, manvantara, īśānukathā, and mukti) are considered to be the sun since they reveal, in addition, the results of forbidden practices for enjoyment and renunciation available in dharma, artha, kāma, mokṣa and their unlimited sub-varieties.

Topics dealing with the appearance and pastimes of the Lord (āśraya) and his devotees, and with bhakti and prema, are considered to be the tasty fruit of rasa.

All the topics however give joy to the devotees of the Lord by taking on a meaning favorable for bhakti.

The same topics however are like Mohinī and take on a different meaning for bewildering the demonic group who give meanings unfavorable for bhakti.

One should not say that it is unbecoming to eulogize the unfavorable meanings of the Bhāgavatam which is directly filled with bhakti-rasa.

The Supreme Lord is full of all śaktis and so is the Bhāgavatam.

Thus it takes meanings corresponding to the minds of various types of persons (adhikāris of this śāstra), for such revelation is befitting the person (the Lord) who possesses all powers.

mallānām aśanir nr̥ṇām nara-varaḥ strīṇām smaro mūrtimān
gopānām sva-jano 'satām kṣiti-bhujām śāstā sva-pitroḥ śiśuḥ
mr̥tyur bhoja-pater virāḍ aviduṣām tattvaṁ param̐ yoginām
vr̥ṣṇīnām para-devateti vidito raṅgam̐ gataḥ sāgrajaḥ

The various groups of people in the arena regarded Kṛṣṇa in different ways when He entered it with His elder brother. The wrestlers saw Kṛṣṇa as a lightning bolt, the men of Mathurā as the best of males, the women as Cupid in person, the cowherd men as their relative, the impious rulers as a chastiser, His parents as their child, the King of the Bhojas as death, the unintelligent as a material form, the yogīs as the Absolute Truth and the Vr̥ṣṇis as their supreme worshipable Deity.

(SB 10.43.17)

In the above verse it is mentioned **virāḍ aviduṣām**: for the foolish he appeared to be a material person.

Thus everything is in agreement.

|| 1.1.2 ||

**dharmah projjhita-kaitavo 'tra paramo nirmatsarāṇām satām
vedyam vāstavam atra vastu śivadam tāpa-trayonmūlanam
śrīmad-bhāgavate mahā-muni-kṛte kim vā parair īśvaraḥ
sadyo hr̥dy avarudhyate 'tra kṛtibhiḥ śuśrūsubhis tat-kṣaṇāt**

The Supreme Lord becomes immediately captured in the heart of the accomplished devotees by hearing Bhāgavatam and even by those who have suddenly developed a desire to hear it. This does not happened with other works. In the Bhāgavatam alone, created by the Lord himself, is presented the real, permanent object which can be understood by those without selfish intentions, and which bestows auspiciousness and release from the material world of miseries. In the Bhāgavatam alone is presented the process for attaining that highest object, devoid of all material goals and liberation.

Since Bhāgavatam is the essence of all scripture, and, among all scriptures, shows what is beneficial and unbeneficial for the jīva, and since it has discerned with conviction the root of all benefit, it laments for the great diversity of recommendations of what is beneficial and unbeneficial for the jīva, arising from people's different qualifications and from different philosophical opinions.

Bhāgavatam gives bliss to all the listeners and thus allows everyone to achieve the highest object completely.

That is made clear in this verse.

Through the hearing process, the Bhāgavatam (**atra**) which is most auspicious (**śrīmat**), the Lord (**īśvaraḥ**), the shelter of all else, Śrī-kṛṣṇa, is immediately brought under control and captured (**avarudhyate**) in the heart by the accomplished persons (**kṛtibhiḥ**), the persons devoid of selfishness (**nirmatsarāṇām**), who are mentioned in the verse as being qualified for this scripture.

This indicates that prema arises in the devotees, since the Lord is brought under control only by prema.

praṇaya-raśanayā dhṛtāṅghri-padmaḥ

The Lord's lotus feet are tied by ropes to the devotee.

(SB 11.2.55)

na rodhayati mām yogo na sāṅkhyam dharmā eva ca
na svādhyāyas tapas tyāgo neṣṭā-pūrtam na dakṣiṇā
vratāni yajñaś chandāmsi tīrthāni niyamā yamaḥ
yathāvarundhe sat-saṅgaḥ sarva-saṅgāpaho hi mām

O Uddhava! Only by associating with my pure devotees one can destroy material attachment and attain me. One cannot attain me by aṣṭāṅga-yoga, distinction of ātmā from body, practice nonviolence, study of the Vedas, austerity, sannyāsa, sacrifices, charitable projects, donations, vows, worship of devatās, secret mantras, holy places, and observing prohibitions and rules. (SB 11.12.1-2)

Kṛṣṇa enters the hearts of even those who have suddenly developed the desire to hear from the moment they begin listening.

Since they develop the desire to hear from that moment, even before having faith, it means that they develop prema simply by hearing Bhāgavatam.

Then how much more quickly they would develop prema if they begin hearing with faith!

**madhura-madhuram etan maṅgalaṁ maṅgalānāṁ
sakala-nigama-vallī-sat-phalaṁ cit-svarūpam
sakṛd api parigītaṁ śraddhayā helayā vā
bhṛguvara nara-mātraṁ tārayet kṛṣṇa-nāma**

The name of Kṛṣṇa is sweeter than the sweetest, the most auspicious of all things auspicious, the highest fruit in the tree of all the Vedas, and is composed entirely of pure consciousness. O best of Bhṛgu's dynasty! Heard once with faith or in negligence, it can deliver any human being. (Prabhāsa-khaṇḍa, Padma Purāṇa)

This verse indicates the inconceivable power in the extraordinary words denoting Kṛṣṇa.

**durūhādbhuta-vīrye 'smin śraddhā dūre 'stu pañcake |
yatra svalpo 'pi sambandhaḥ sad-dhiyām bhāva-janmane ||**

The last five items have inconceivable and astonishing power. What to speak of faith, where there is just a little relationship with these items, persons who are devoid of offenses attain the level of bhāva. (BRS 1.2.238)

The verse from Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu shows that the mind becomes fixed in the Lord.

This is called the highest attainment for the human being.

And the Lord, becoming captured by the mind, cannot leave.

That imprisonment occurs immediately — this means without even faith.

Somehow this has the power to attract Kṛṣṇa completely.

Bhāgavatam thus should be understood to be a great science.

And if the two words **sadhyaḥ** and **kṛtibhiḥ** are taken together, then it means Kṛṣṇa is brought under control immediately for those who are accomplished or qualified (**kṛtibhiḥ**); whereas it happens after a slight delay for those who are not so qualified.

Both types of persons, — the accomplished and unaccomplished — are qualified for Bhāgavatam.

Thus it is said:

**pibata bhāgavatam rasam ālayam
muhur aho rasikā bhuvi bhāvukāḥ**

O expert and thoughtful men, relish Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, the mature fruit of the desire tree of Vedic literatures. (SB 1.1.3)

yaḥ svānubhāvam akhila-śruti-sāram ekam
adhyātma-dīpam atititīrṣatām tamo 'ndham
saṁsāriṇām karuṇayāha purāṇa-guhyam
taṁ vyāsa-sūnum upayāmi munīnām

I surrender to the son of Vyāsa, the incomparable guru of all the sages, who mercifully spoke the Purāṇa full of hidden meanings, the essence of all the scriptures, the essence of hearing, for all the people of this world, even in the future; who spoke the Bhāgavatam, which revealed the excellence of rasa to Śukadeva, and which is the revealer of ātmā for those desiring to cross dense ignorance with ease. (SB 1.2.3)

Tat-kṣaṇāt can also mean because of Kṛṣṇa's (tat) merriment or festival (kṣaṇāt) he becomes caught in the devotee's heart.

Since Kṛṣṇa becomes supremely blissful by being trapped in the heart filled with prema, this also indicates that Kṛṣṇa is happy and filled with prema when the devotees hear Bhāgavatam.

This result is not achieved by any other scripture or other practices (**kim vā paraiḥ**).

Having described the excellent results of this scripture, the verse describes the excellence of the maker.

Mahāmuni indicates that the Lord himself became the sage and planned the work, for this is explained in the scriptures.

The Bhāgavatam was first revealed in abbreviated form by the Lord himself in four verses.

kasmai yena vibhāsito 'yam atulo jñāna-pradīpaḥ purā
tad-rūpeṇa ca nārādāya munaye kṛṣṇāya tad-rūpiṇā
yogīndrāya tad-ātmanātha bhagavad-rātāya kārūṇyatas
tac chuddham vimalam viśokam amṛtam satyam param dhīmaḥi

I meditate upon that pure, spotless Nārāyaṇa, who is free from suffering and death and who previously revealed this incomparable lamp of knowledge to Brahmā. Brahmā then spoke it to the sage Nārada, who narrated it to Kṛṣṇa-dvaipāyana Vyāsa. Śrīla Vyāsa revealed this Bhāgavatam to the greatest of sages, Śukadeva Gosvāmī, and Śukadeva mercifully spoke it to Mahārāja Parīkṣit. (SB 12.13.19)

Having then been revealed in full by Vyāsa, what is to be understood in this work through hearing it?

That object which is substantial, which is fixed in the beginning middle and end of time (**vāstavam**) can be understood (**vedyam**) by those without selfishness.

And even those who are selfish, by hearing this work, lose their selfishness.

Even the selfish will have enthusiasm for hearing it, for even such persons can understand the work.

This permanent object (**vāstavam vastu**) includes the name, form, qualities of the Lord, his abodes such as Vaikuṅṭha, his devotees and bhakti.

Because other real objects (**vastu**), the things of this world, are not permanent, it should be understood that though both Vaikuṅṭha and the material world are real, Vaikuṅṭha is really substantial (**vāstavam**) and the material world is not.

Unreal objects such as a flower in the sky are called avastu.

What will happen with gaining this knowledge of the permanently real?

It gives auspiciousness (**śivadam**) in the form of becoming an associate of the Lord with prema as the desired result.

It gives release from the three miseries or liberation (**tāpa-trayonmūlanam**) as the unsought result.

In this work what is recommended action to be undertaken?

It vehemently rejects (**projjhita**) that path which cheats, which deceives a person from the real goal.

In other words sakāma-karma is rejected.

The prefix pra (completely) indicates that path promising liberation is also rejected.

Niṣkāma-karma-yoga, jñāna-yoga with its limbs of sense and mind control, and aṣṭāṅga-yoga are also rejected.

But parama-dharma, pure bhakti-yoga, is to be performed.

It is called **parama** or supreme, because bhakti is the best process, because it gives all types of happiness (material happiness, liberation and prema) and because even though it bestows the lesser benedictions, it remains uncontaminated.

Thus, this verse shows the action to be performed (abhidheya-tattva).

It will be shown later that anyone who is a human being can perform bhakti:

**sa vai puṁsāṁ paro dharmo yato bhaktir adhokṣaje
ahaituky apratihataḥ yayātmā suprasīdati**

The supreme occupation for all humanity is that by which men can attain to loving devotional service unto the transcendent Lord. Such devotional service must be unmotivated and uninterrupted to completely satisfy the self. (SB 1.2.6)

Repetition of **atra** (in this work) is employed for emphasis.

In this scripture and not in any other work, the Lord becomes controlled by the devotees.

In this scripture and not in any other work, the substantial object is presented.

In this work and no other work, the highest dharma which rejects all cheating is presented.

All other yogas are excluded in this work alone.

And it should be understood that in describing what is presented only in the Bhāgavatam, all things which are not yoga at all are also rejected.

|| 1.1.3 ||

nigama-kalpa-taror galitam phalam
śuka-mukhād amṛta-drava-samyutam
pibata bhāgavatam rasam ā-layam
muhur aho rasikā bhuvi bhāvukāḥ

O knowers of rasa! O fortunate souls! Constantly drink from the mouth of Śukadeva the Bhāgavatam, the fruit of the tree of the Vedas, which has dropped from the tree to this earth, which is immortal, liquid, which is the essence of sweetness and which includes all types of liberation.

In the previous verse (1.1.2) of the Bhāgavatam, the powers of Bhāgavatam to capture the Lord in the heart were described.

In this verse, the sweetness of Bhāgavatam is described.

Nigama refers to the Veda.

The Veda is a desire tree because it naturally gives fruit in the form of various puruṣārthas (human goals — artha, dharma, kāma and mokṣa) which are desired by those who resort to it.

However, because of its nature as a tree (being magnanimous, fulfilling everyone's desires), it also gives the fruit known as the Bhāgavatam (since some people desire that).

Bhāgavatam also means that which belongs to Bhagavān as the proprietor.

This implies that he alone gives the scripture to his devotees, and thus persons other than them do not have rights to it.

Galitam means that it falls down of its own accord when ripened on the tree, not by force.

Thus, it is completely full of sweetness.

Even after falling from a high position in the tree, it does not break, nor does it lose its sweetness.

That is because it comes down from the highest position, from Nārāyaṇa, to the branch of Brahmā, then to the lower branch of Nārada, then to Vyāsa, and finally to the mouth of Śuka.

Thus, without being damaged, it is endowed with liquid sweetness like honey.

The parrot, Śuka, has even made an opening in the fruit with his beak for bringing out the sweetness.

Moreover, having been tasted by him, that fruit becomes even sweeter.

Moreover, it remains unbroken, coming down step-by-step from the branch of Sūta and others.

What is implied here is that without the guru-paramparā, one cannot drink Bhāgavatam in its unbroken form--just by trying to taste it through use of one's limited intelligence.

How should the fruit be consumed?

That is explained.

One should drink it, for this fruit is the essence of taste (**rasam**), devoid of skin, seed and other objectionable parts.

Laya means liberation (sāyujya) or attaining the conditions of sālokya, sārṣṭi, sāmīpya and sārūpya.

The word **ālayam** then means that the fruit extends beyond these types of liberation, because Bhāgavatam is famous for glorifying the Lord's pastimes.

Or **laya** can refer to the eighth sāttvika-bhāva called pralaya, fainting.

One should drink until one develops the eight symptoms up to the final one, fainting.

Though one will not be able to drink the nectar when one has fainted, when the fainting wears off, one again awakens to consciousness and begins drinking until one faints again.

One cannot give up drinking.

Thus the word **muhur** (continuously) is used.

Or **muhur** can have another meaning.

Though one has drunk it, by again drinking it, one develops more relish for it.

This is surprising (**aho**).

O knowers of rasa (**rasikāḥ**)! This refers only to the devotees, for they develop rati (bhāva) which becomes the sthāyi-bhāva.

In that position they can taste the rasa of Bhāgavatam.

Jñāna-yogīs and karma-yogīs cannot claim this position.

O auspicious persons (**bhāvukāḥ**)! You are most auspicious and all others are inauspicious!

There is another reading of **bhāvukāḥ**.

This would mean “persons who perform actions for tasting the beautiful.”

Bhaṭṭanāyaka says that a permanent emotion is established by actions relating to tasting the beautiful.

Taking this meaning, **bhāvukāḥ** indicates persons who appreciate the Lord — who is rasa personified.

Starting with brahmavid āpnoti param, the Taittirīya Upaniṣad describes the creation of the annamaya-puruṣa after listing elements starting with ākāśa coming from brahman.

Different forms internal to the previous one are then successively described: the annamaya-puruṣa, prāṇamaya-puruṣa, manomaya-puruṣa, vijñānamaya-puruṣa and finally the ānandamaya-puruṣa which is considered to be brahman.

Brahma-sūtra (1.1.13) describes this.

ānandamayo 'bhyāsāt: from the repetition of the words, ānandamaya refers to the Supreme Lord.

But it also says **ānanda ātmā brahma-puccham pratiṣṭhā**: impersonal brahman is only the tail of that ānandamaya-puruṣa. (Taittirīya Upaniṣad 2.5)

The Lord is the basis of that brahman.

After that, the Upaniṣad says **raso vai saḥ rasam hy evāyam labdhānandī bhavati**: the Lord is rasa; realizing the Lord one attains bliss. (Taittirīya Upaniṣad 2.7)

But does saḥ refer to the ānandamaya-puruṣa (the Lord) under discussion or to the brahma-puccham (impersonal brahman)?

This doubt cannot be considered, for after discussion of the different puruṣas to have saḥ refer to the brahma-puccha would break the structure of the progression expressed in the text.

The Lord of course is well known to be rasa, since he is filled with bliss.

The Lord is superior to the brahman, being its support.

Gītā says **brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhā 'ham**: I am the basis of the brahman. (BG 14.27)

This statement as well shows that Kṛṣṇa is superior to the brahman.

mallānām aśanir nr̥ṇām nara-varaḥ strīṇām smaro mūrtimān
gopānām sva-jano 'satām kṣiti-bhujām śāstā sva-pitroḥ śiśuḥ
mr̥tyur bhoja-pater virāḍ aviduṣām tattvaṁ param yuginām
vṛṣṇīnām para-devateti vidito raṅgam gataḥ sāgrajaḥ

The various groups of people in the arena regarded Kṛṣṇa in different ways when he entered it with his elder brother. The wrestlers saw Kṛṣṇa as a lightning bolt, the men of Mathurā as the best of males, the women as Cupid in person, the cowherd men as their relative, the impious rulers as a chastiser, his parents as their child, the King of the Bhojas as death, the unintelligent as the Supreme Lord's universal form, the yogīs as the Absolute Truth and the Vṛṣṇis as their supreme worshipable deity. (SB 10.43.17)

Śrīdhara Svāmī explains that this verse illustrates that Kṛṣṇa, Bhagavān, is the form of all rasas combined, starting with madhura-rasa, because the verse describes that different types of persons realized different rasas in Kṛṣṇa just on seeing him.

In other words, Kṛṣṇa is the form of all rasas.

Thus, both Gītā and Bhāgavatam proclaim Kṛṣṇa to be rasa.

The jīva, attaining the Lord who is rasa, attains the highest level of bliss, for, after this, the discussion of bliss is concluded with the words **ānandasya mīmāṃsā bhavati**: this concludes the examination of bliss. (Taittirīya Upaniṣad 8.2)

Or the meaning can be that other forms of the Lord, on seeing Kṛṣṇa, become filled with bliss.

This is evident in the following verses.

**dvijātmajā me yuvayor didṛkṣuṇā
mayopanītā bhuvi dharmā-guṇtaye
kalāvātīrṇāv avaner bharāsurān
Hatveha bhūyas tvarayetam anti me**

[Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu said:] I brought the brāhmaṇa's sons here because I wanted to see the two of you, my expansions, who have descended to the earth to save the principles of religion. As soon as you finish killing the demons, who burden the earth, quickly come back here to me. (SB 10.89.58)

yan martya-līlaupayikaṁ sva-yoga-
māyā-balaṁ darśayatā gr̥hītam
vismāpanaṁ svasya ca saubhagarddheḥ
paraṁ padaṁ bhūṣaṇa-bhūṣaṇāṅgam

Kṛṣṇa possesses that form suitable for human pastimes to show the full capacity of his yoga-māyā. That form astonishes even the Lord of Vaikuṅṭha. It is the pinnacle of auspicious qualities and enhances the beauty of his ornaments.(SB 3.2.12)

In any case Kṛṣṇa is rasa, the fruit, but this fruit is not directly situated on the tree of the Vedas.

It has fallen down (**galitam**) nearby.

This object, rasa, is not on the tree itself.

It is not to be searched out in the Vedas, but rather it is found in the mouth of Śukadeva.

One can say that Vyāsa, knowing that this fruit was very tasty, took it and put it in the mouth of his son out of affection.

Śukha-mukhāt can also indicate a cause: the rasa is sweeter because of coming from the mouth of Śukadeva.

This sweetness of rasa is shown in Śukadeva's statements such as the following:

yeṣām ahaṁ priya ātmā sutaś ca
sakhā guruḥ suhrdo daivam iṣṭam

Because the devotees accept Me as their friend, their relative, their son, preceptor, benefactor and Supreme Deity, they cannot be deprived of their possessions at any time.

(SB 3.25.38)

Bhuvi then indicates Vraja-bhumi.

Bhāvukāḥ and **rasikāḥ** indicate the dear gopīs.

O dear relishers of Kṛṣṇa's rasa, drink the sweetness of the rasa arising from his form (bhāgavatam).

Or **pibata bhāgavatam rasam ālayam** can mean “relish rasa up to the point of embracing (ālayam) Kṛṣṇa.

Kṛṣṇa's rasa is indestructible (**amṛta**) and flows away quickly from the mind and eye (**drava**).

Therefore drink that indestructible nectar in the form of his lips.

In that case, **nigama-kalpa-taror galitam phalam** means “rāgānuga-bhakti which is the fully ripened fruit (galitam) on the tree of the Vedas.”

This fully ripened fruit is rāgānuga-bhakti following after the sentiments of the gopīs (which is the highest type of love).

This is an acceptable meaning because, as mentioned in the Bṛhad-vāmana Purāṇa, the Vedas, taking up that type of bhakti, accepted the forms of hundreds of thousands of gopīs, and drank the sweet rasa of his lips.

This very secret meaning can be seen in the the prayers of the Personified Vedas (SB 10.87).

Some persons explain the phrase **brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham** in another way.

Certainly they do, but such explanations should be regarded as incorrect since they are out of context and fanciful.

The explanation given here is correct.

mām ca yo 'vyabhicāreṇa bhakti-yogena sevate
sa guṇān samatītyaitān brahma-bhūyāya kalpate

brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham amṛtasyāvyayasya ca
śāśvatasya ca dharmasya sukhasyaikāntikasya ca

The meaning of these verses is as follows.

Though a person may question how one can attain brahman by bhakti and how one can attain realization of the one brahman without qualities by worship of the Lord, you can attain realization of brahman by worshipping me, because (hi) I am the shelter (pratiṣṭhā) of even the brahman, famous in the śrutis as the shelter of everything.

Pratiṣṭhā means “that in which something is standing.”

Pratiṣṭhā means shelter as well, in many śruti texts, such as Taittirīya Upaniṣad.

I am the shelter of liberation (amṛtasya).

This meaning is made clear by the word avyaya (indestructible), since this will exclude the amṛta of the heavenly planets.

I am also the shelter of bhakti (dharmasya) which is continuous (śāśvatasya), being present as sādhana and as the result of sādhana (prema).

I am the shelter of prema (aikāntikasya sukhasya), the goal of sādhana-bhakti.

Because everything is dependent on me, by worshipping me with a desire for merging into impersonal brahman, one can merge into the brahman and attain the quality of brahman.

In support of this, Viṣṇu Purāṇa (6.7.76) says

śubhāśrayasya cittasya sarvagasyācalātmanah

Viṣṇu is the shelter of all auspiciousness and the brahman.

According to Śrīdhara Svāmī sarvagasyātmanah means that Viṣṇu is the shelter of even the impersonal brahman (sarvagasya).

This confirms what the Lord himself says: **brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham.**

Viṣṇu-dharma in describing Naraka-dvādaśī says:

**prakṛtau puruṣe caiva brahmaṇy api ca sa prabhuḥ
yathaika eva sarvātmā vāsudevo vyavasthitaḥ**

Vāsudeva is situated as the soul of all things, in prakṛti, the puruṣa, and the brahman.

Also Viṣṇu-dharma in describing māsarkṣa worship says:

**yathācyutas tvam parataḥ parasmāt
sa brahmabhūtāt parataḥ parātmā
tathācyuta tvam̐ kuru vāñchitam̐
tam mamāpadam̐ cāpaharāprameya**

Just as Acyuta, Paramātmā, is superior to all others, he is superior to brahman. Therefore unlimited Acyuta, you should fulfill my wish and remove me from all dangers. (Viṣṇu Dharma 26.13)

In Hari-vamśa, the Lord says to Arjuna in the story where Mahaviṣṇu steals the sons of the brāhmaṇa:

**tat param paramam brahma sarvam vibhajate jagat
mamaiva tad ghanam tejo jñātum arhasi bhārata**

This supreme brahman spreads throughout the whole universe. O Bhārata, understand that brahman is my condensed effulgence.

Brahma-saṁhitā says:

yasya prabhā prabhavato jagad-aṇḍa-koṭi-
koṭiṣv aśeṣa-vasudhādi vibhūti-bhinnam |
tad brahma niṣkalam anantam aśeṣa-bhūtam
govindam ādi-puruṣam tam aham bhajāmi ||

I worship the Supreme Lord Govinda, whose powerful form radiates effulgence known as the undifferentiated, unlimited, all-encompassing brahman, which is completely distinct from its powers displayed in unlimited planets throughout billions of universes. (Brahma-saṁhitā 5.40)

The śruti text Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad says:

**yo 'sau jāgrata svapna-suṣuptim atītya
tūryātīto gopālas tasmai vai namo namaḥ**

I offer repeated respects to Kṛṣṇa who is beyond the states of waking, dreaming, deep sleep and the brahman.

|| 1.1.4 ||

naimiṣe 'nimiṣa-kṣetre
ṛṣayaḥ śaunakādayaḥ
satraṁ svargāya lokāya
sahasra-samam āsata

At the place called Naimiśāraṇya, the place of Viṣṇu, the sages headed by Śaunaka applied themselves to a sacrifice lasting a thousand years for attaining the planet of the Supreme Lord (or for going to the heavenly planets).

Offering my respects to my guru and to the ocean of mercy, Kṛṣṇa, I take shelter of Śrī Śuka, the eye of the universe and master of the world.

My eyes are covered by ignorance, but Śrīdhara Svāmī, who wrote Bhāvārtha-dīpikā, being very merciful to me in producing this commentary, is my means to success.

This commentary belonging to the Lord, called “Giving bliss to the hearts of the devotees” has arisen by the mercy of the ācāryas and my guru.

Facing the listeners, the speaker invokes auspiciousness at the beginning of the recital of Bhāgavatam by uttering om̐.

It is said:

**om̐kāraś cātha-śabdaś ca dvāv etau brahmaṇaḥ purā
kaṇṭham bhittvā vinirjātau tena māṅgalikāv ubhau**

In ancient times the words om̐ and atha were uttered by Brahmā. Thus, both words produce auspiciousness.

By om̐ the speaker indicates that Bhāgavatam is an expansion of the meaning of om̐.

Brahmā created a wheel in his mind.

The rim of a wheel is called a nemi.

That place where the rim (nemi) fell off (śīryate) is called nemiśa or naimiśa.

Vāyu Purāṇa describes this:

etan manomayam cakram mayā sṛṣṭam visṛjyate
yatrāsya śīryate nemiḥ sa desas tapasaḥ śubhaḥ
ity utkvā sūrya-saṅkāśam cakram sṛṣṭvā manomayam
praṇipatya mahādeva visasarja pitāmahaḥ
te 'pi hrṣṭatarā viprāḥ praṇamya jagatām prabhum
prayayus tasya cakrasya yatra nemiḥ vyaśīryata
tadvam tena vikhyātam naimiśam muni-pūjitam

“This mental wheel created by me will be released. The place where the rim comes off will be favorable for performing austerities.” Having said this, and having created the wheel brilliant like the sun in his mind and offering his respects to it, Brahmā released that great deity, the wheel. The rejoicing brāhmaṇas, offering respects to the lord of the universe, then journeyed to the place where the rim of wheel fell off. That forest became known as Naimiśa and is worshipped by the sages.

Various devotees have personal desires to fulfill through various types of bhakti.

All the desires of all these persons upon which their minds, free of distraction, have become fixed, can be fulfilled by immersion in the topics of Bhāgavatam.

The Bhāgavatam has been arranged to bring out this point clearly at the very beginning, with the description of the sages at Naimiśāranya.

Naimiśa can also be spelled Naimiṣa.

The meaning of Naimiṣa with a cerebral ṣ is found in the Varāha Purāṇa.

The Lord spoke to the sage Gauramukha:

evam kṛtvā tato devo munim gaurmukham tadā
uvāca niṁṣeṇedaṁ niḥataṁ dānavam balam
araṇye 'smims tatas tv etan naimiṣāraṇya-samjñitam
bhaviṣyati yathārtham vai brāhmaṇānām viśeṣakam

Having done that, the Lord then spoke to Gauramukha. The powerful demon was killed in that forest (araṇya) quickly in a moment (niṁṣa). Thus this place is called the Naimiṣāraṇya. It will be very suitable for brāhmaṇas in the future.

By using this word with this meaning, it is suggested that one should reside in this place for quickly killing the enemies such as material desire.

In the beginning Śaunaka and the other sages were attached to sakāma-karma.

Thus the verse indicates they performed sacrifice for attaining Svarga.

It is well known however that by hearing and contemplating various Purāṇas and other scriptures from Romaharṣaṇa, they became inquisitive about spiritual life.

By association with Sūta Gosvāmī (Ugraśravas) they developed a small taste for bhakti.

(Showing their inquisitiveness) it is said:

**karmaṇy asminn anāśvāse
dhūma-dhūmrātmanām bhavān
āpāyayati govinda-pāda-padmāsavaṁ madhu**

You let us, blackened by the smoke at this uncertain sacrifice,
drink the intoxicating nectar of the lotus feet of Govinda.

(SB 1.18.12)

When they took up bhakti, then their inquisitiveness became
weakened, and performance of sacrifice for attaining Svarga
became false.

That is indicated in the following:

**kalim āgatam ājñāya kṣetre 'smin vaiṣṇave vayam
āsīnā dīrgha-satreṇa kathāyām sakṣaṇā hareḥ**

Knowing well that the age of Kali has already begun, we are assembled here in this holy place to hear at great length the transcendental message of the Lord and in this way perform sacrifice for the Lord. (SB 1.1.21)

The power of bhakti is indicated by the cessation of attachment to prescribed duties which arose in them from hearing Bhāgavatam.

The power of bhakti is also indicated by the appearance of complete disinterest in impersonal liberation within Śukadeva.

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

O saintly King, I was certainly situated perfectly in transcendence, yet I was still attracted by the delineation of the pastimes of the Lord, who is described by enlightened verses. (SB 2.1.9)

There is another meaning to Svarga however.

Svarga means “glorified (gīyate=ga) in Svarga (svar).”

Svargāya (who is praised in Svarga), like the name Urugāya (who is greatly praised), indicates the Lord.

His loka is Vaikuṅṭha.

Therefore **svargāya lokāya** means for “going to Vaikuṅṭha of the Lord.”

Animiṣa (not blinking) in this verse refers to Viṣṇu, because in SB 1.1.21 quoted above, the sages themselves identify the place as kṣetre 'smin vaiṣṇave, a place of Viṣṇu.

They applied themselves (āṣata) to performing karma, pious prescribed actions (satram) which were to last for a thousand years (samāḥ).

Or the sentence can mean “They performed (āṣata) a sacrifice of killing animals such as the agniṣṭoma (generally performed for going to Svarga).”

This use of the verb is similar to expressions such as “He performs (nirvapati, he sprinkles) śrāddha rites to the Pitṛs on the dark moon or “they perform (upayānti- they approach) the marriage of a eight-year-old girl.”

Thus the meaning of āṣ (to sit) can here mean “perform” with suppression of the meaning of the original root.

|| 1.1.5 ||

ta ekadā tu munayaḥ
prātar huta-hutāgnayaḥ
sat-kṛtaṁ sūtaṁ āsīnam
papracchur idam ādarāt

Once, the sages, having offered oblations into the sacrificial fire in the morning, with great respect inquired from Sūta who had been received properly and was seated.

Huta-hutāgnayaḥ munayaḥ means “the sages who had offered oblations (huta) into the sacrificial fires (hutāgnayaḥ).”

|| 1.1.6||

tvayā khalu purāṇāni
setihāsāni cānagha
ākhyātāny apy adhītāni
dharma-śāstrāṇi yāny uta

The sages said: O sinless Sūta! Certainly you have not only studied but also explained the Purāṇas and the dharma-śāstras along with histories such as Mahābhārata.

Itihāsāni refers to works such as Mahābhārata.

|| 1.1.7-8||

yāni veda-vidāṁ śreṣṭho
bhagavān bādarāyaṇaḥ
anye ca munayaḥ sūta
parāvara-vido viduḥ

vettha tvam saumya tat sarvaṁ
tattvatas tad-anugrahāt
brūyuḥ snigdhasya śiṣyasya
guravo guhyam apy uta

O Sūta Gosvāmī! Because you are submissive, by the mercy of the gurus, you know all matters in truth which the Supreme Lord Vyāsa, best among knowers, and other sages who know brahman with and without qualities have understood. The gurus should speak the secret to the disciple who has affection for the gurus.

Vidāṃ refers to persons who know.

Parāvara-vidah means persons who know both the brahman with qualities and without qualities.

Gurus should speak the secret to the disciple who has affection (snigdhasya) for the gurus.

This is in the potential, and thus expresses the following idea.

Since you were a disciple having affection for your gurus, they must certainly have revealed the secret to you and you must have understood all those confidential subjects.

While rejecting sages who extract their own ideas from all these confidential topics and then speak, we are asking you, the speaker of all authorized doctrines, about these subjects.

|| 1.1.9||

tatra tatrāñjasāyuṣman
bhavatā yad viniścitam
puṁsām ekāntataḥ śreyas
tan naḥ śaṁsitum arhasi

O long-lived sage! You should tell us at once in easy terms, and thoroughly, the highest object for mankind that you have discerned in all the scriptures.

“Then I will speak all things.”

They reply with this verse, saying which conclusions they want to hear among all the conclusions of scripture.

O long-living sage! This indicates that he studied and deliberated on the scriptures for a long time.

Tell us completely (ekāntataḥ), or from the beginning (ablative sense “from one end”), concerning the highest goal of mankind, that you discerned from looking at all the scriptures (tatra tatra), in statements that can be understood at once (añjasā).

Śreya means that to which there is nothing greater, that which has no equal, and that which is not included in something else when comparing degrees of excellence.

Later in the work it will be revealed that this highest goal is prema, not Svarga or liberation, because prema brings even Bhagavān under control.

Among the forms brahman, Paramātmā and Bhagavān, Bhagavān is the chief form.

|| 1.1.10 ||

prāyeṇālpāyusaḥ sabhya
kalāv asmin yuge janāḥ
mandāḥ sumanda-matayo
manda-bhāgyā hy upadrutāḥ

O worthy sage, capable of knowing what is beneficial at this time! In Kali-yuga people are generally short-lived, lazy, unintelligent, devoid of the good fortune of devotee association, and afflicted by various problems.

“You should hear everything from my mouth. Then you can decide what the best is.”

The sages reply with this verse.

O honorable sage, you who know what is suitable for time and place!

In Kali-yuga people are generally short-lived.

If they have long life by chance, then they are lazy to investigate spiritual topics.

Even if someone is not lazy then he is unintelligent.

Even if someone is intelligent, he is unfortunate, for he is devoid of association with devotees to teach the highest actions.

Even if someone has that association of devotees, he is afflicted.

Under the control of affliction from sickness and other problems, he does not get the time to hear from the mouth of the devotee, or even if he does hear, he cannot discern the highest goal for the human being and then carry out actions to attain it.

Or the sequence of qualities can mean that all people have all the bad qualities.

|| 1.1.11 ||

**bhūrīṇi bhūri-karmāṇi
śrotavyāni vibhāgaśaḥ
ataḥ sādho 'tra yat sāraṁ
samuddhṛtya manīṣayā
brūhi bhadrāya bhūtānām
yenātmā suprasīdati**

O learned sage! For the welfare of all living beings, please, after extracting the essence of scriptures using your wisdom, describe the practices worthy of hearing which include many actions, by which our intelligence will be satisfied.

Or tell us the scriptures worthy of hearing because they explain the many practices for attaining the highest goal, which themselves contain many actions, by which our intelligence (ātmā) becomes satisfied.

Later it will be explained that these actions are hearing, chanting and other devotional acts.

The sages request, “Please tell us the principal means among all the processes for attaining the highest goal, which is easily executed by people living in Kali-yuga.”

Tell us the many practices worthy of hearing about (**bhūrīṇi srotavyāni**), those which should be practiced, which include many actions (**bhūri-karmāni**).

|| 1.1.12 ||

sūta jānāsi bhadraṁ te
bhagavān sātvatām patiḥ
devakyām vasudevasya
jāto yasya cikīrṣayā

O Sūta! Blessings to you! You know for what purpose the Lord, master of the Yadus, appeared in Devakī, the wife of Vasudeva.

Again the sages request Sūta to speak about the practice of hearing and chanting about Kṛṣṇa and Yaśodā.

“All auspiciousness to you (**bhadram te**)” is a blessing pronounced out of enthusiasm.

Viṣṇu is called satvān (possessor of sat) because he possesses all the devotees (sat) as his expansions.

The followers of Viṣṇu are then called sātvas.

Use of sātvatām as the possessive plural instead of sātvatānām is poetic license.

Or the word sātvatām may be derived from the sautra root sāt, which takes a causative meaning “giving pleasure” according to anupasargālimpa. (Pāṇini 3.1.138)

The noun sāt, “he who gives pleasure” is Paramātmā, the Supreme Lord.

Those who possess the Lord by service are then called sātvataḥ or devotees.

The possessive plural form is sātvatām.

Sātvatām patih then means “Lord of the devotees.”

You know for what purpose the Lord, master of the Yadus was born in Devakī, wife of Vasudeva (**vasudevasya**).

He appeared to broadcast his wonderful qualities, not to relieve the burden of the earth.

This is proved by Kuntī's conclusive statement:

**bhave 'smin kliśyamānānām avidyā-kāma-karmabhiḥ
śravaṇa-smaraṇārhaṇi kariṣyann iti kecana**

Some say that you appeared to engage those suffering in the material world due to their actions covered by ignorance and desire in hearing and remembering about you to attain prema.
(SB 1.8.35)

|| 1.1.13||

*tan naḥ śuśrūṣamāṇānām
arhasy aṅgānuvarṇitum
yasyāvatāro bhūtānām
kṣemāya ca bhavāya ca*

O Sūta (aṅga)! You should describe that Lord to us, who are eager to hear. The Lord made his appearance for the liberation and material prosperity of all beings.

What is the result of curiosity about Kṛṣṇa?

We will feel ourselves successful by hearing about him.

The sentence in the second line actually continues until verse 16, connected by the word *yasya* in this verse with the correlative is *tasya* in verse 16.

The Lord appeared for the liberation (**kṣemāya**) and prosperity (**bhavāya**) of the living beings.

What else remains for him to do?

What person, desiring satisfaction of his intelligence, will not hear the glories of the Lord, whose actions are praised by reputed persons; whose name, which fear personified fears, immediately liberates helpless persons afflicted by the terrors of material existence; and whose devotees, having taking shelter of his lotus feet and having fixed their mind in the Lord, immediately purify others of all sins just by their thinking of the devotees, whereas the waters of the Gaṅgā purify only by contact and direct service.

|| 1.1.14-16||

āpannaḥ saṁsṛtiṁ ghorāṁ
yan-nāma vivaśo gṛṇan
tataḥ sadyo vimucyeta
yad bibheti svayaṁ bhayaṁ

yat-pāda-saṁśrayāḥ sūta
munayaḥ praśamāyanāḥ
sadyaḥ punanty upasprṣṭāḥ
svardhuny-āpo 'nusevayā

ko vā bhagavatas tasya
puṇya-ślokeḍya-karmaṇaḥ
śuddhi-kāmo na śṛṇuyād
yaśaḥ kali-malāpahaṁ

The phrases **samṣṛtim ghorām** (terrifying material life), **vivaśaḥ** (helpless) and **sadyaḥ** (immediately) indicate persons like Ajāmila.

By the utterance of even one name of the Lord, fear at its very root (svayam bhayam, like svayam bhagavān), the form of Mahākāla, causing destruction of the universe, becomes afraid.

What then to speak of death and Yama in charge of death?

And what to speak of having fear of lesser beings such as servants of Yama?

Those who take shelter of the Lord's two feet — the devotees — purify people of the contamination of ignorance immediately, just by people remembering those devotees.

How much more purification will take place by seeing, touching or serving those devotees!

This is understood because of a similar statement later:

**yeṣāṃ saṁsmaraṇāt puṁsāṃ sadyaḥ śuddhyanti vai grhāḥ |
kim punar darśana-sparśa- pāda-śaucāsanādibhiḥ ||**

Simply by our remembering you, our houses become instantly sanctified. And what to speak of seeing you, touching you, washing your holy feet and offering you a seat in our home?
(SB 1.19.33)

It should be understood that the waters of the Gaṅgā purify by their direct presence, having been brought from a distance place.

Otherwise, there would be a contradiction to the statement **muktis tvad-darśanād eva na jāne snāna-jam phalam:** liberation comes from seeing you; I do not know the result of taking bath.

Also it is said **svardhunyā darśanād eva sādḥūnām ca smaraṇād api muktir**: one can attain liberation by seeing the Gaṅgā and by remembering the devotees.

Thus the superiority of the devotee is indicated.

The water of the Gaṅgā, flowing from the Lord's feet, by having a relation with the Lord, actually does purify, but being touched (upaśpr̥ṣṭāḥ, touched upon).

Sevayā means by actions such as worship, obeisances, etc. or it can mean by respect in general.

The particle nu (certainly) indicates a difference from the previous statement (ie. “on the other hand”).

Lack of grammatical ending on the compound svardhunī-āpas is poetic license.

Śuddhi-kāmaḥ means “one who desires satisfaction of the intellect” because it was previously said **yenātmā suprasīdati:** by which the intelligence is satisfied.

Yaśaḥ or fame of the Lord means his extraordinary actions such his victory over Śiva, Indra, Brahmā and others and his pastimes such as the rāsa-līlā.

|| 1.1.17 ||

tasya karmāṇy udārāṇi
parigītāni sūribhiḥ
brūhi naḥ śraddadhānānām
līlayā dadhataḥ kalāḥ

Please tell us, full of faith, about the activities of the Lord who supports the forms of all avatāras by his will—activities of killing the demons and bestowing the highest bliss to his devotees, which are glorified by the sages.

Karmāṇi refers to the activities of killing demons in common with other avatāras.

Udārāṇi (generous) means fulfilling the desires of the devotees.

Kalāḥ dadhataḥ means “of he who supports the forms of the avatāras.”

The constant presence of these avatāras during the time when Kṛṣṇa appears indicates the completeness of Kṛṣṇa as avatārī.

|| 1.1.18||

athākhyāhi harer dhīmann
avatāra-kathāḥ śubhāḥ
līlā vidadhataḥ svairam
īśvarasyātma-māyayā

O intelligent sage! Narrate the non-material stories of avatāras of the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa, who performs his eternal pastimes independently by his yoga-māyā potency.

Śubha means non-material.

The Lord performs pastimes in the present which are actually eternal in nature by his yoga-māyā potency (**ātmā-māyayā**).

|| 1.1.19 ||

vayaṁ tu na vitṛpyāma
uttama-śloka-vikrame
yac-chṛṇvatām rasa-jñānām
svādu svādu pade pade

We are not fully satisfied with the exploits of the Lord whose fame is the highest, because at every moment those exploits become more relishable for the hearers who have knowledge of rasa.

Uttama-śloka means “he whose fame or good qualities are the best.”

Or it can mean “he who is praised by the best persons.”

We are not completely satisfied in hearing about the exploits of Uttama-śloka.

We do not consider that it is sufficient.

In other words, we are completely satisfied with whatever we have done in performing sacrifices and yoga.

Let us continue to hear about the activities of the Lord.

Or the sentence can mean “Let others be satisfied, but we are not.”

That is indicated by the word **tu**.

The meaning is this.

In three ways one knows that one has had enough of something and is satisfied: by sufficiency of quantity (as with food in the belly), by lack of awareness of the taste, and by lack of relishing the object.

In this verse, there is insufficiency for the hearers (**śṛṇvatām**) because the exploits are not directly present, being present only as sound in the ether contacting the ear.

Satisfaction is negated for a person who is not capable of appreciating the taste or rasa, for a person who is just like an animal.

However the sages have appreciation of rasa (**rasa-jñānām**).

But still they are not satisfied.

Unlike chewed sugarcane which loses its taste and becomes detestable, the topics of the Lord are most excellent because of the increase in taste at every moment (**pade pade**) after tasting.

The sages have not lost taste, but are still dissatisfied.

The locative termination on pada pada (**pade pade**) indicates “at every moment.”

|| 1.1.20 ||

kṛtavān kila karmāṇi
saha rāmeṇa keśavaḥ
atimartyāni bhagavān
gūḍhaḥ kapaṭa-mānuṣaḥ

The Supreme Lord Keśava, whose intentions remain concealed because he is deceptive to mankind, performed pastimes with Balarāma.

This verse clarifies the activities of the Lord.

Though Kṛṣṇa's actions are human because he is brahman in human form, his actions like lifting Govardhana surpass the actions of humans.

Those actions are impossible for others living at that time.

Thus his actions are describes as “beyond human”
(**atimartyāni**).

But the Lord is hidden (**gūḍhaḥ**).

The reason is given.

He is deceptive to the human beings (**kapaṭa-mānuṣaḥ**).

He is deceptive to materialistic persons such as Jarāsandha by disguising himself as a brāhmaṇa to make a request, in order to help his devotees.

He is deceptive with the spiritual devotees — the gopīs who were attracted to the sound of his flute, by giving them instructions on proper conduct in order to increase the manifestation of prema.

Since the bewilderment of the demons is because of their material ignorance and the bewilderment of the devotees like the gopīs is because of their prema, the Lord does not actually cheat anyone.

He conceals himself in order to give instruction only.

The formation of *kapāṭa-mānuṣaḥ* follows the Varttika on Pāṇini 22.35 listing words starting with *gaḍu*.

In a *bahu-vrīhi* compound the locative case word is placed first in the compound, but in words starting with *gaḍu*, the word in the locative case is placed at the end.

(The compound would normally be *mānuṣa-kapāṭa*, deceptive to men, but by the exception it becomes *kapāṭa-mānuṣa*.)

|| 1.1.21 ||

kalim āgatam ājñāya
kṣetre 'smin vaiṣṇave vayam
āsīnā dīrgha-satreṇa
kathāyām sakṣaṇā hareḥ

Knowing that the age of Kali has arrived, taking the opportunity, we have seated ourselves at this place sacred to Viṣṇu on the pretext of a prolonged sacrifice in order to hear about the Lord.

“Well it is indeed surprising that persons such as you, absorbed in ritualistic sacrifices, have enthusiasm for hearing about the glories of Kṛṣṇa.”

“Please understand that our interest in sacrifice has now become a show only.”

Sakṣaṇā means “having obtained the opportunity,” or it can mean “with joy.”

|| 1.1.22||

tvam̐ naḥ sandarśito dhātrā
dustaram̐ nistitīrṣatām
kalim̐ sattva-haram̐ puṁsām̐
karṇa-dhāra ivārṇavam̐

We desire to cross the insurmountable ocean of Kali, the destroyer of all good qualities. Like the pilot of a ship, you have appeared before us by the grace of the Lord to guide us over that ocean.

Karṇadhārah means a pilot of ship.

|| 1.1.23||

brūhi yogeśvare kṛṣṇe
brahmaṇye dharma-varmaṇi
svām kāṣṭhām adhunopete
dharmah kaṁ śaraṇam gatah

Please tell us where dharma has taken shelter, now that Kṛṣṇa, master of all yogas, devoted to the righteous, and the protector of dharma, has entered his abode.

Kṛṣṇa is the protector of dharma (**dharma-vartmaṇi**), acting like armor for dharma.

The cause is then mentioned.

Yogeśvare (master of all yogas) indicates Kṛṣṇa's powers.

Brahmaṇye (devoted to the righteous) indicates his merciful nature.

Svām kāṣṭhām means his own sthiti or maryādā.

According to Amara-koṣa, kāṣṭhā means excellence, continuous condition or direction and maryādā means righteousness and continuous condition.

That abode became invisible to worldly people after a hundred and twenty-years after its appearance.

The six questions of the sages were:

1. You should explain what is most beneficial for humanity.
2. Tell us who have faith the essence of all the scriptures by which the intellect is pleased.
3. You should tell us, who desire to hear, the purpose of Kṛṣṇa's appearance from Devakī.

4. Describe the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa who has all the avatāras within him.

5. Describe the stories of the avatāras.

6. Tell us the shelter of dharma now that Kṛṣṇa has departed.

It should be understood that the answers to these six questions along with some related matters constitutes the Bhāgavatam.