

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam

Canto One

With the
Sārārtha-darśinī commentary

by

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Canto One – Chapter One

Questions by the Sages

Section – I

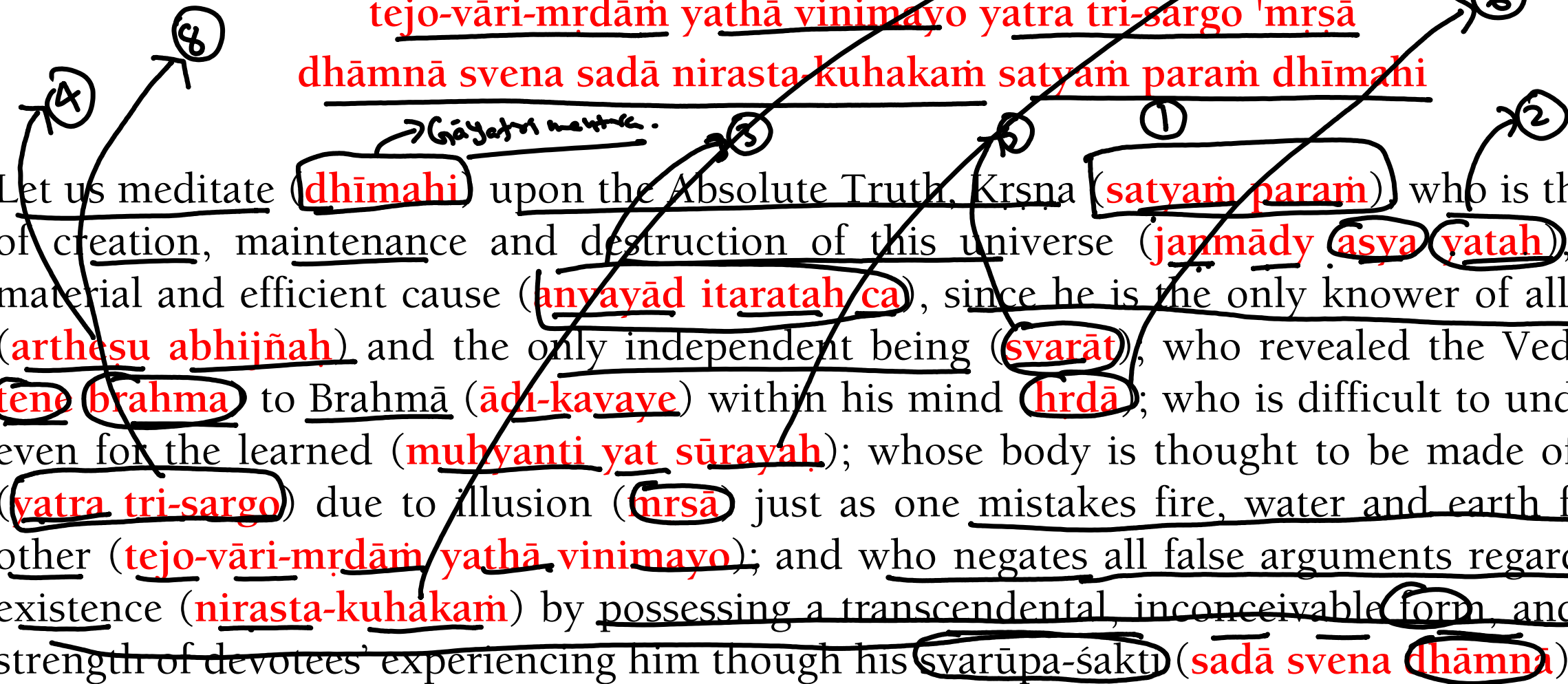
Vaśīṣṭh nirdeśya vage
ascertaining the subject
matter of a book.

|| 1.1.1 ||

om namo bhagavate vāsudevāya
janmādy asya yato 'nvayād itarataś cārthesv abhijñāḥ svarāt
tene brahma hṛdā 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 **(anvayād itarataś 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 **(hṛdā)**; 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)**.

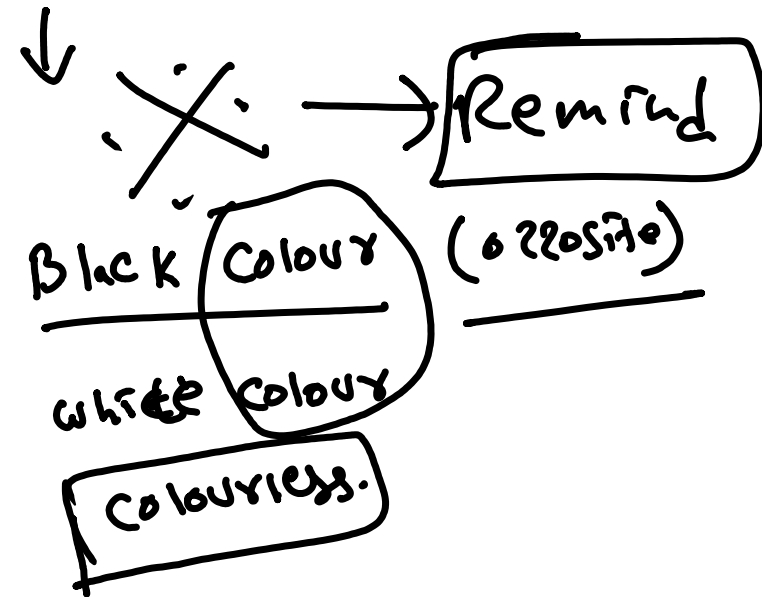
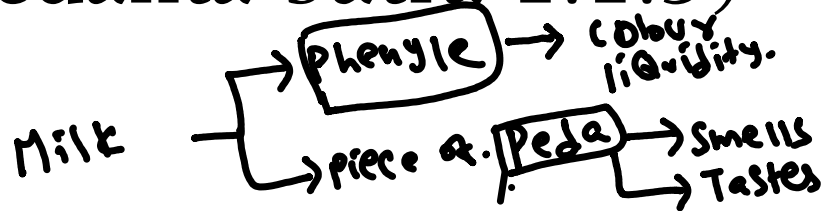
→ Gāyatrī mantra.



Explanation-I

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

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 saumyedaṁ 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 |
yasmiṁś 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 (**yasmiṁś 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
svābhāviki jnāna-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 (svābhāviki jnāna-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 (ādī-kavaye).

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 (hrdaye)

This is stated in the Bhāgavatam.

pracoditā yena purā sarasvatī
vitānvatājasya satīm smṛtim (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 kilā ajasya āsyataḥ) and revealed (vitānvatā) proper memory (satīm smṛtim) 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 |
vṛtrāsura-vadhopetaṁ tad bhāgavatam isyate ||

He spoke the Bhāgavatam (tad bhāgavatam isyate) where (yatra) the killing of Vṛtrāsura is described (vṛtrāsura-vadha-upetaṁ) and where (yatra), after starting with gāyatrī (adhikṛtya gāyatrīm), dharmavistarahaḥ 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).
