

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam

Canto One

With the
Sārārtha-darśinī commentary

by

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Canto One – Chapter One

Questions by the Sages

Section – I

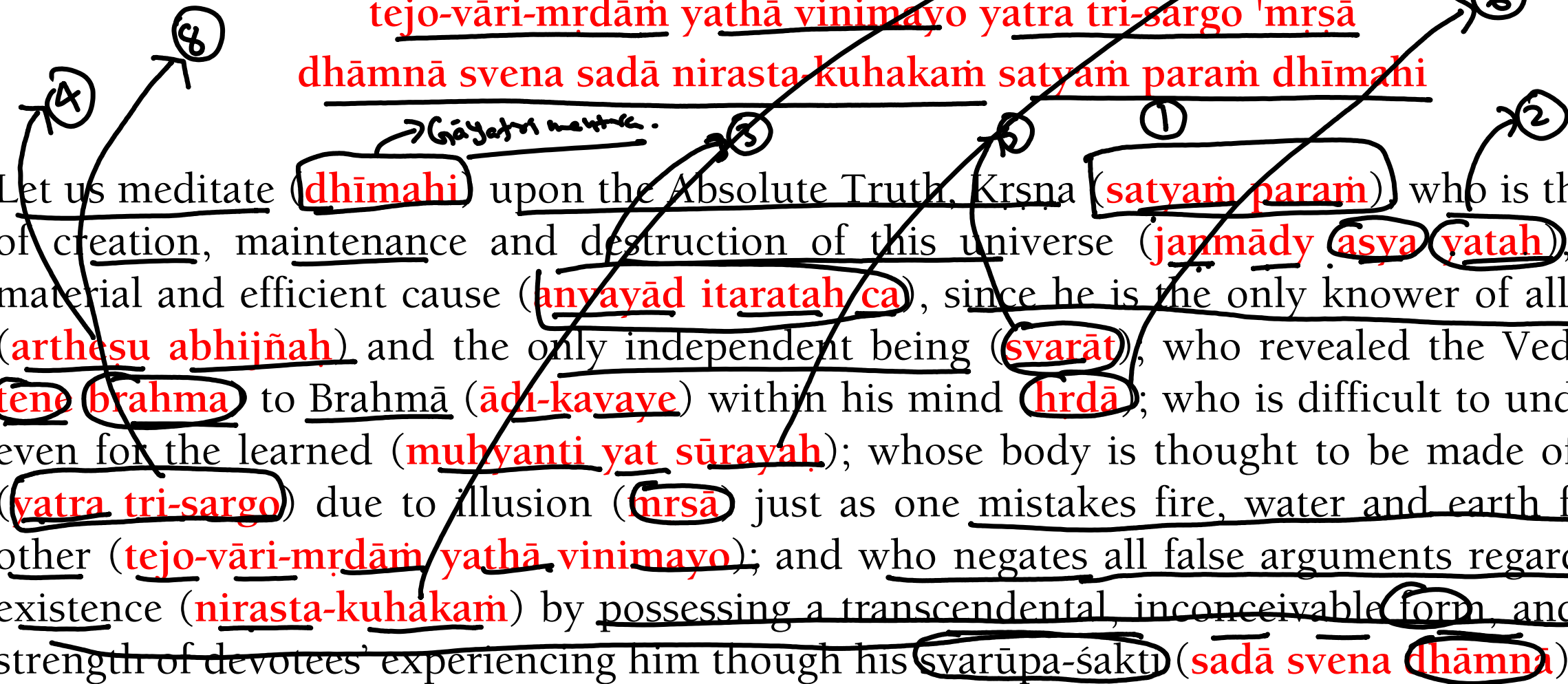
Vaśīṣṭh nirdeśya vage
ascertaining the subject
matter of a book.

|| 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 (anyayād itarataḥ ca), since he is the only knower of all objects (arthesu abhijñāḥ) and the only independent being (svarāt), who revealed the Vedas (yaḥ 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-V

Establishing Bhakti as the Vastu of
the Book

Let us meditate (dhīmahī) on the most beneficial spiritual process
(satyam) which is beyond the guṇas (param),

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 hrdā) to Vyāsa (ādī-kavaye),

1.5
1.6

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

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.

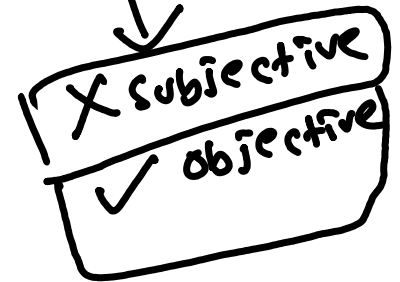
- ① ~~Sadhana~~ → means to attain the goal
- ② ~~Sadhya~~ → goal

It brings about the highest realization and attracts even Kṛṣṇa.

- ~~Sat~~ abhidheya → bhakti → ~~śeṣhā~~ bhakti
- prayojana → bhakti → preme

- ① ~~abhidheya~~ → means to attain the highest goal
- ② prayojana → ultimate goal

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 adhokṣajah
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 adhokṣajah) 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.

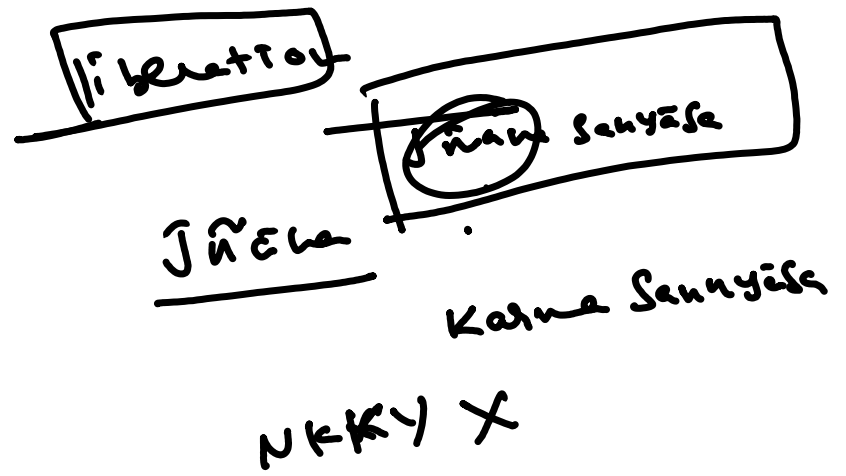
purva-pakṣe argument

“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)

Next pūjya preṣa argument

“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**.”

(B)

$K, J, Y \rightarrow$ Base of tablet
Heir

No.

$KY \rightarrow K+B=2$ (svaya)
 $+B=2$
 $K=0$

$AY \rightarrow A+B=3$
 $B=3$
 $Y=0$

The king being independent is not dependent on anyone.

$JY \rightarrow J+B=1$
 $B=1$
 $J=0$

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

J
K
A
na-kāma-kaṁḍī anāvṛta bhakti

really intelligent

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)

Tivrena bhakti-yogena means "by pure bhakti."

↓
jñāna karmī anēvṛte 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-dharmena śreyobhir itarair api
sarvaṁ mad-bhakti-yogena mad-bhaktō 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 dharmena**) 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.

• Jiva + Bhakti → devotee

Bhakti → Jiva X

→ Devotee ✓
Bhakti → Jiva + Dev

This is next stated in the verse.

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

“But how ^{pūrṇa-parśa} 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-guhyā prayers:

JY → J+B
JMB → J+B

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)

Next 23rd-24th argument

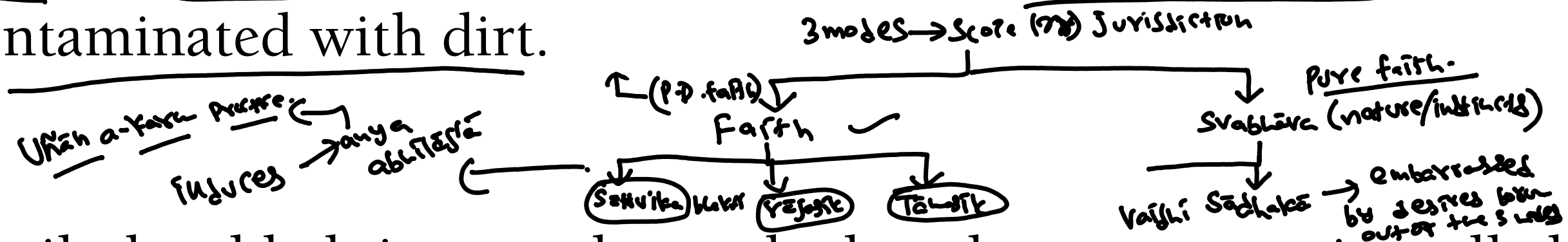
“But bhakti is not completely beyond the guṇas.”

↑ 3-29 → Kāṭya deva
↳

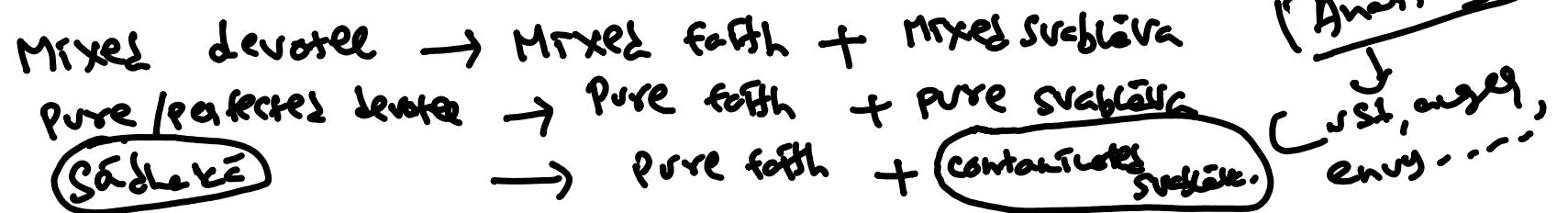
This is shown in the Third Canto where bhakti is described as
sāttvika, rājasika and tāmasika.”

In this bhakti (yatra) the idea that it is made of the three
guṇas (tri-sargah) is unfounded (mr̥ṣā).

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 sātṭvika, rājasika or tāmasika only because of the sattva, rajas and tamas possessed by persons practicing bhakti.



Next argument

“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: