

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam

Canto One

With the
Sārārtha-darśinī commentary

by

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Canto One – Chapter One

The Questions of the Sages at Naimiśāraṇya

Questions by the Sages

Section – II

Setting the scene for the sages
inquiries (4-8)

|| 1.1.4 ||

naimiṣe 'nimiṣa-kṣetre
ṛṣayah śaunakādayah
satraṁ svargāya lokāya
sahasra-samam āsata

At the place called Naimiśāraṇya (naimiṣe), the place of Viṣṇu (animiṣa-kṣetre), the sages headed by Śaunaka (ṛṣayah śaunaka ādayah) applied themselves to a sacrifice (satraṁ āsata) lasting a thousand years (sahasra-samam) for attaining the planet of the Supreme Lord (or for going to the heavenly planets) (svargāya lokāya).

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 (purā) the words om̐ and atha (om̐kāraś cātha-śabdaś
ca dvāv etau) were uttered by Brahmā (brahmaṇaḥ kaṇṭham bhittvā
vinirjātau). Thus, both words produce auspiciousness (tena
māṅgalikāv ubhau).

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 (śiryate) is called nemiśa or naimiśa.

Vāyu Purāṇa describes this:

etan manomayaṁ cakram mayā sṛṣṭaṁ visriyate
yatrāsya śīryate nemiḥ sa desas tapasaḥ śubhaḥ
ity utkvā sūrya-saṅkāśaṁ cakram sṛṣṭvā manomayaṁ
pranipatya mahādeva visasarja pitāmahaḥ
te 'pi hrṣṭatarā viprāḥ praṇamya jagatāṁ prabhum
prayayus tasya cakrasya yatra nemir vyaśīryata
tadvat tena vikhyātaṁ naimiśaṁ muni-pūjitaṁ

“This mental wheel (etan manomayaṁ cakram) created by me (mayā sṛṣṭaṁ) will be released (visriyate). The place (yatra) where the rim comes off (asya nemiḥ śīryate) will be favorable for performing austerities (sa desas tapasaḥ śubhaḥ.” Having said this (ity utkvā), and having created (sṛṣṭvā) the wheel brilliant like the sun (sūrya-saṅkāśaṁ cakram) in his mind (manomayaṁ) and offering his respects to it (pranipatya), Brahmā (pitāmahaḥ) released (visasarja) that great deity, the wheel (mahādeva). The rejoicing brāhmaṇas (te 'pi hrṣṭatarā viprāḥ), offering respects to the lord of the universe (praṇamya jagatāṁ prabhum), then journeyed (prayayuh) to the place (tasya) where the rim of wheel fell off (yatra cakrasya nemir vyaśīryata). That forest became known as Naimiśa (tadvat tena naimiśaṁ vikhyātaṁ) and is worshipped by the sages (muni-pūjitaṁ).

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.

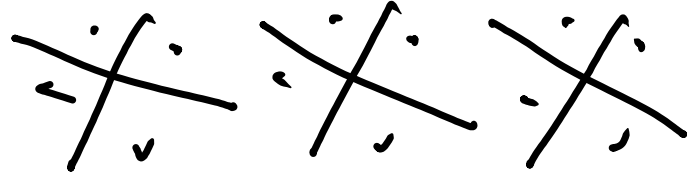
The meaning of Naimiṣa with a cerebral s is found in the Varāha Purāṇa.

The Lord spoke to the sage Gauramukha:

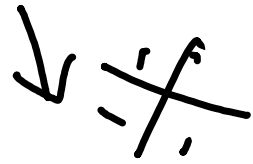
evam kṛtvā tato devo muniṁ gaurmukhaṁ tadā
uvāca nimiṣeṇedaṁ nihataṁ dānavam balam
aranye 'smiṁs tatas tv etan naimiṣāranya-samjñitam
bhaviṣyati yathārtham vai brāhmaṇānām viśeṣakam

Having done that (evam kṛtvā), the Lord then spoke to Gauramukha (tato tadā devah muniṁ gaurmukhaṁ uvāca). The powerful demon (idaṁ balam dānavam) was killed (nihataṁ) in that forest (asmin aranye) quickly in a moment (nimiṣeṇa nimiṣa). Thus (tatah tu) this place is called the Naimiṣāranya (etad naimiṣāranya-samjñitam). It will be very suitable for brāhmaṇas in the future (yathārtham vai brāhmaṇānām viśeṣakam bhaviṣyati).

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. ↘ śraddhā (vuci)

(Showing their inquisitiveness) it is said:

karmany asminn anāśvāse
dhūma-dhūmrātmanām bhavān
āpāyayati govinda-
pāda-padmāsavaṁ madhu ..

You (bhavān) let us, blackened by the smoke (dhūma-
dhūmrātmanām) at this uncertain sacrifice (asminn anāśvāse
karmany), drink (āpāyayati) the intoxicating nectar of the lotus feet of
Govinda (govinda- pāda-padmāsavaṁ madhu). (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 (kalim
āgatam ājñāya), we (vayam) are assembled (āsīnā) here in this
holy place (asmin vaiṣṇave kṣetre) to hear at great length the
transcendental message of the Lord (kathāyām sakṣaṇā hareḥ)
and in this way perform sacrifice for the Lord (dīrgha-
satreṇa). (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
gr̥hīta-cetā rājarṣe
ākhyānam yad adhītavān

O King (**rājarṣe**)! Though I was fixed in brahman (**pariniṣṭhitah api**) and beyond the guṇas (**nairguṇya**), my mind became attracted (**gr̥hīta-cetā**) to the pastimes of the Lord (**uttama-śloka-līlayā**). I thus learned about his pastimes (**ākhyānam yad adhītavān**). (SB 2.1.9)

There is another meaning to Svarga however.

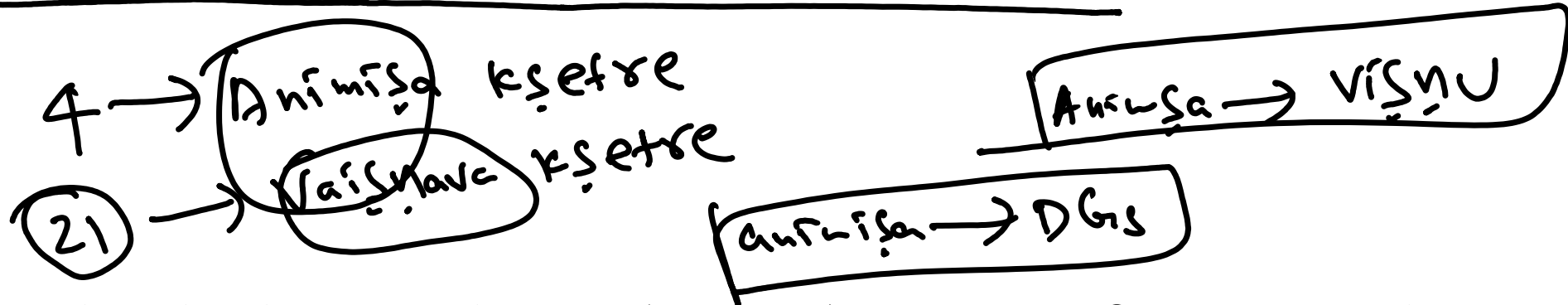
Svarga means “glorified (gīyate=ga) in Svarga (svar).”

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.”

Animisa (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 (āsata) to performing karma, pious prescribed actions (satram) which were to last for a thousand years (samāh).

Or the sentence can mean “They performed (āsata) 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 Pitrs on the dark moon or “they perform (upayānti- they approach) the marriage of a eight-year-old girl.”

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

|| 1.1.5 ||

ta ekadā tu munayah
prātar huta-hutāgnayah
sat-kṛtam sūtam āsinam
papracchur idam ādarāt

Once (ekadā tu), the sages (te munayah), having offered oblations into
the sacrificial fire (huta-hutāgnayah) in the morning (prātar), with great
respect (ādarāt) inquired from Sūta (sūtam idam papracchuh) who had
been received properly (sat-kṛtam) and was seated (āsinam).

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

Qualification of Suta Goswami

(6-8)

|| 1.1.6 ||

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

① ākhyātāni apy adhītāny

The sages said: O sinless Sūta (anagha)! Certainly (khalu) you have not only studied but also explained (tvayā ākhyātāny apy adhītāni) the Purāṇas (purāṇāni) and the dharma-śāstras (dharma-śāstrāṇi) along with histories such as Mahābhārata (sa itihāsāni).

Itihāsāni refers to works such as Mahābhārata.

|| 1.1.7-8||

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

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

O Sūta Gosvāmī (sūta)! Because you are ²submissive (tvam saumya), by the mercy of the gurus (tad-anugrahāt), you know ⁴(tvam vettha) all matters in truth (tat sarvaṁ tattvataḥ) which the Supreme Lord Vyāsa (yāni bhagavān bādarāyaṇaḥ), best among knowers (veda-vidām śreṣṭhaḥ), and other sages (anye ca munayaḥ) who know brahman with and without qualities (parāvara-vidah) have understood (viduḥ). The gurus should speak (guravaḥ brūyuh) the secret (guhyam apy) to the disciple who has affection for the gurus (snigdhasya śiṣyasya).

Vidām 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.

conjecture → guess

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.