

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam

Canto One

With the
Sārārtha-darśinī commentary

by

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Canto One – Chapter Two

Divinity and Divine Service

Section – V

**Kṛṣṇa in relation to His various
Expansions (23-29)**

|| 1.2.23 ||

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

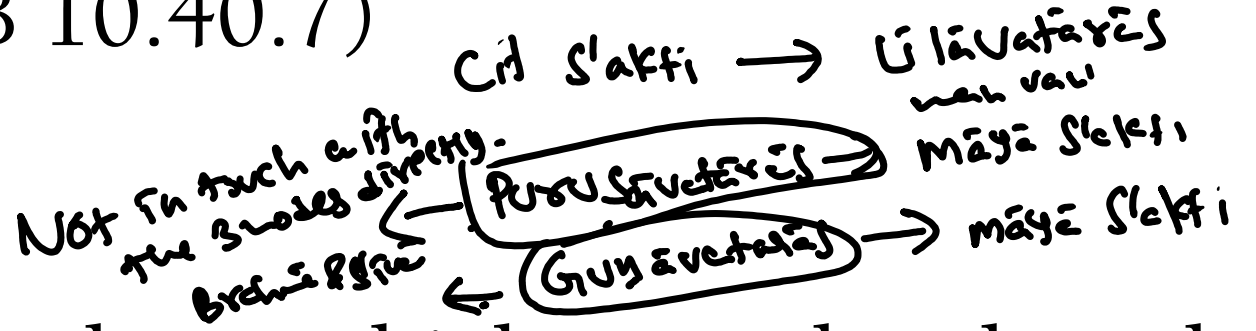
The one supreme puruṣa (paraḥ puruṣa ekaḥ), accepting (dhatte) the guṇas of prakṛti known as sattva, rajas and tamas (sattvaṃ rajas tama iti prakṛter guṇāh), for creation, maintenance and destruction (sthity-ādaye), is called (Viṣṇu) (Brahmā) and (Śiva) (hari-viriñci-hareti saṃjñāh). The best results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

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

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

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

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



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

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

Those which are related to the māyā-śakti, through sattva, rajas and tamas, are Viṣṇu, Brahmā and Śiva.

Among them, Viṣṇu is to be worshipped.

That is stated in this verse.

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

The sandhi in hareti is poetic license.

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

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

Body made of Sattva?

Viṣṇu is addressed as (sattva-tanoḥ)

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

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

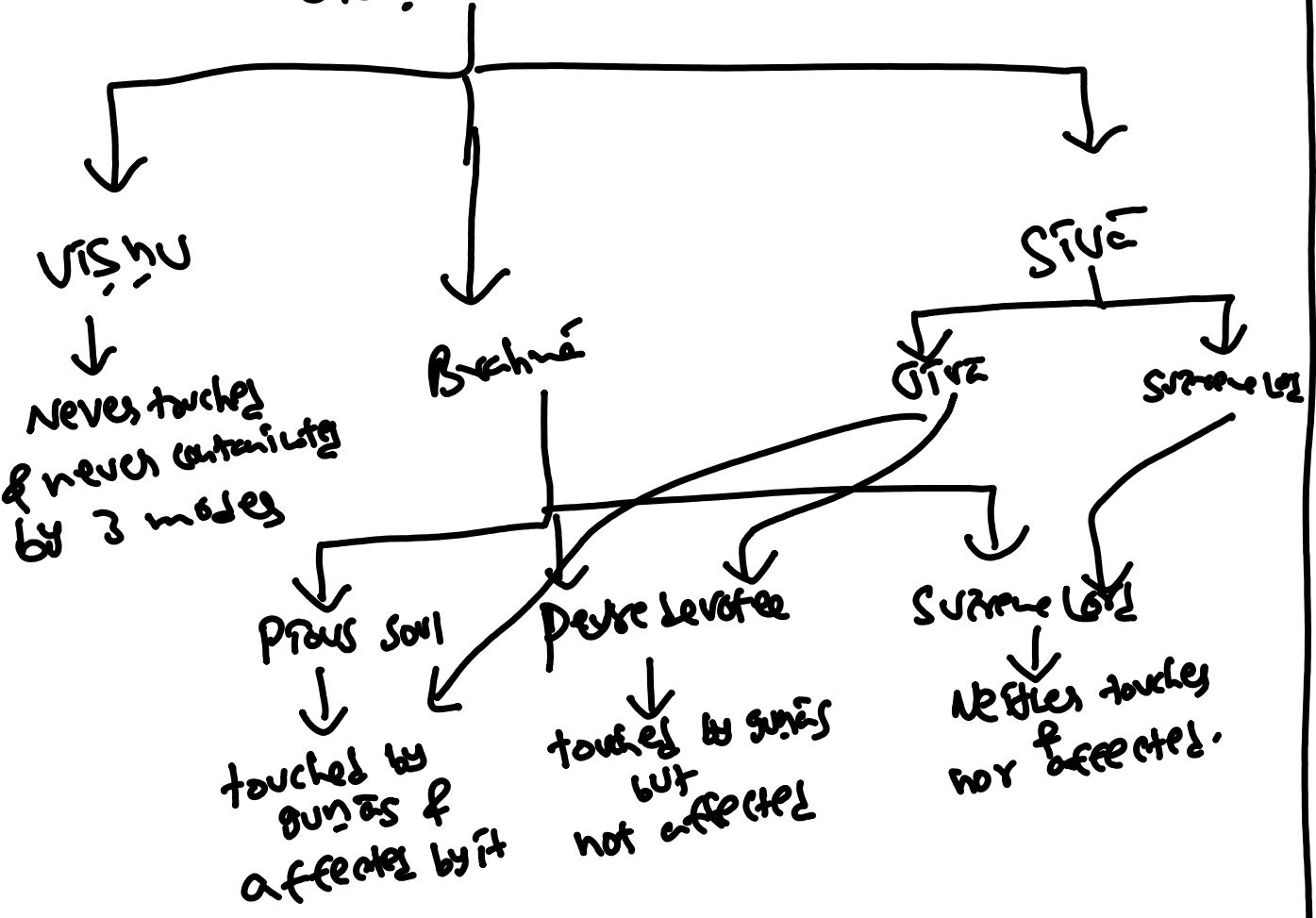
sākṣī cetā kevalo nirguṇaś ca

Viṣṇu is the one conscious witness (kevalah sākṣī cetā), beyond the guṇas (nirguṇaś ca). (Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 6.11)

sattvādayo na santiśe yatra ca prākṛtā gunā

In Viṣṇu (yatra) there are no (na santi) material guṇas (sattvādayo prākṛtā gunā). (Viṣṇu Purāna 1.9.44)

GUMĀSTĀRĪG



harir hi nirguṇaḥ sākṣāt puruṣaḥ prakṛteḥ paraḥ

Viṣṇu is devoid of the guṇas (harir hi nirguṇaḥ); he is the person beyond matter (sākṣāt puruṣaḥ prakṛteḥ paraḥ). (SB 10.88.5)

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

~~Prakṛteḥ~~ →

	Jīva	Sṛṣṭi-lobh
Brahmā	touched B	
śiṅgā		

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

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

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

Thus rajas and tamas will disturb and cover bliss.

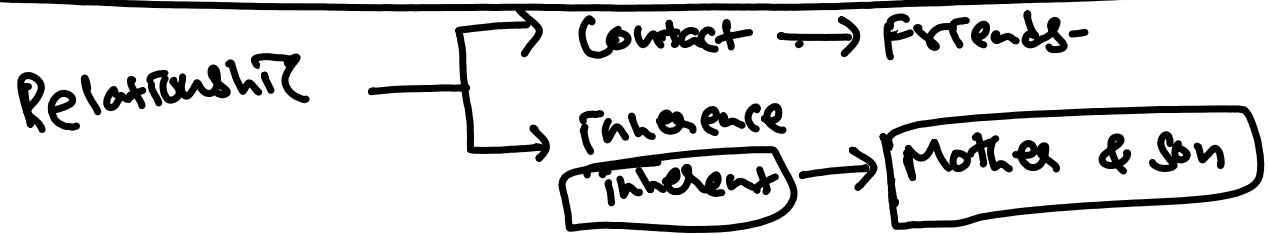
Thus Brahma and Śiva accept bodies of rajas and tamas because those guṇas eclipse bliss.

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

This is the logical explanation.

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

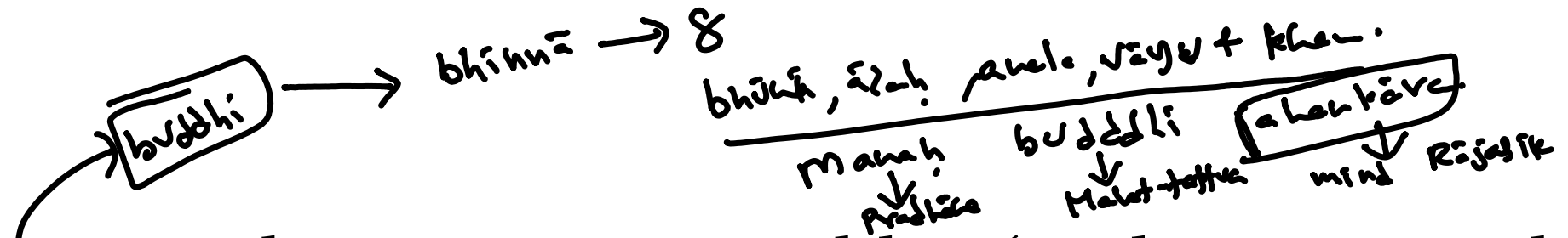
Thus he carries the function of protecting the universe but does this with no contamination of the qualities of material sattva.



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

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

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



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

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

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

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

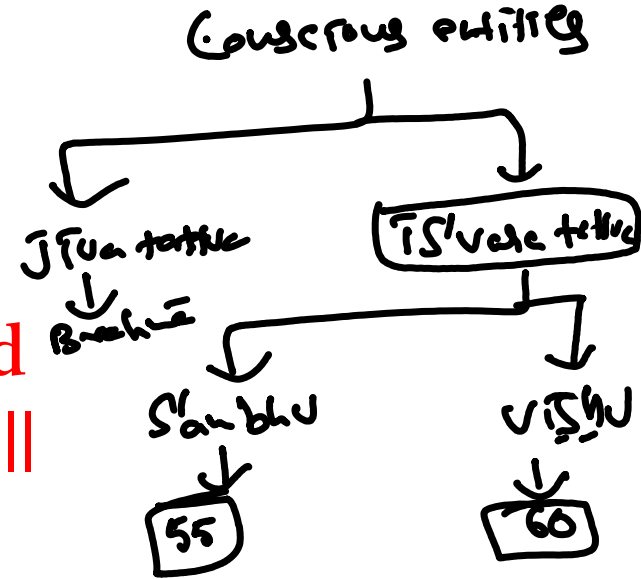
bhāsvān yathāśma-śakaleṣu nijeṣu tejah
svīyam kiyat prakāṣayaty api tadvad atra |
brahmā ya esa jagad-aṇḍa-vidhāna-kartā
govindam ādi-puruṣam tam aham bhajāmi ||

I worship the supreme lord Govinda (govindam ādi puruṣam tam aham bhajāmi) who becomes Brahmā, the creator of the universe (by bestowing his powers to that jīva) (brahmā ya esa jagad aṇḍa vidhāna kartā), just as the sun displays (yathā bhāsvān prakāṣayaty) a small portion of its powers of heat and light (svīyam kiyat tejah) in all the sun stones which represent it (aśma sakaleṣu nijeṣu).
(Brahma-saṁhitā 5.49)

Sūrya leṣṭā

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

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

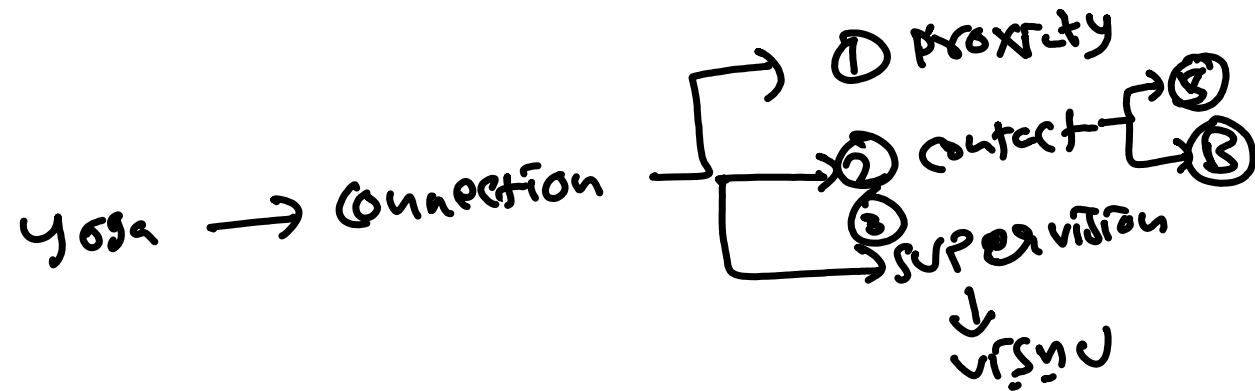


Just as milk (kṣīraṃ yathā) is transformed into curd (dadhi sañjāyate) by the action of acids (vikāra viśeṣa yogāt), but yet the effect curd is neither same as, nor different from, its cause, viz., milk (na hi tataḥ pṛthag asti hetoḥ), so I adore the primeval Lord Govinda (govindam ādi puruṣam tam aham bhajāmi) of whom the state of Śambhu is a transformation (yaḥ śambhutām api tathā samupaiti) for the performance of the work of destruction (kāryād). (Brahma-saṁhitā 5.45)

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

Others say that he is connected with the guṇas.

They explain as follows.



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

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



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

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

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

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

The relationship of the puruṣa with the guṇas (guṇaiḥ yogah)^{connection} is that of being their controller (niyāmakatayā sambandha ucyate). Among the three (tatra), he who is the svāmśa of svayaṁ-rūpa Kṛṣṇa (parasya svāmśaḥ yaḥ), is not bound by the guṇas (saḥ tair na yujyate). (Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta 1.2.18)

Wood → Tamas
Smoke → Rajas
Fire → Sattva

|| 1.2.24 ||

pārthivād dāruno dhūmah
tasmād agnis trayīmayah
tamasas tu rajas tasmāt
sattvam yad brahma-darśanam

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

Tāmas, rajas and sāttva have the respective qualities of obscuring, agitating and revealing knowledge.

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

This is shown through an example.

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

Smoke has an active nature.

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

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

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

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

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

Knowledge arises from sattva (**sattvāt sañjāyate jñānam**).
Greed arises from rajas (**rajaso lobha eva ca**). Inattention,
confusion and ignorance (**pramāda-mohau ajñānam eva ca**)
arise from tamas (**tamaso bhavatah**). BG 14.17

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

It does not interfere with seeing brahman.

It is thus an assistant in spiritual life.

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

This is confirmed later in the Bhāgavatam.

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

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

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

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

↓
rasa

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

sattva
↑
↓
Tamas

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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