

# Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam

## Canto One

With the  
Sārārtha-darśinī commentary

by

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# Canto One – Chapter Three

## List of the Avatāras

**Kṛṣṇa Is the Source of All  
Incarnations**

# Section – I

The three roles of the  
puruṣa-avatāras (1-5)

|| 1.3.4 ||

paśyanty ado rūpam adabhra-cakṣuṣā  
sahasra-pāḍoru-bhujānanādbhutam  
sahasra-mūrdha-śravaṇākṣi-nāsikam  
sahasra-mauly-ambara-kuṇḍalollasat

With spiritual eyes (adabhra-cakṣuṣā), the devotees see (paśyanty) this amazing form (ado rūpam) with thousands of legs and arms (sahasra-pāḍa-ūru-bhuja), thousands of heads (ānana adbhutam sahasra-mūrdha), ears, eyes and noses (śravaṇa akṣi-nāsikam), shining (ullasat) with thousands of crowns, earrings and clothes (sahasra-mauly-ambara-kuṇḍa).

Ga V  
Virāta puruṣa

Those who have reached perfection by bhakti see this form.

Adabhra means “not scant,” spiritual.

|| 1.3.5 ||

etan nānavatārāṇām  
nidhānam bījam avyayam  
yasyāṁśāṁśena sṛjyante  
deva-tiryag-narādayaḥ

He (etad) is the indestructible source (avyayam nidhānam bījam) of various avatāras (nānā avatārāṇām). His expansion is Brahmā and Brahmā's expansions are Marīci and others (yasya aṁśa aṁśena). Through them the Lord creates (sṛjyante) the devatās, animals and human beings (deva-tiryag-nara ādayaḥ).

Previously it was said that the Lord was complete with sixteen parts.      ↘ *ślokaśa teṣaṁ.*

This verse shows that.

Though he acts as the source (**bījam**), he is equal to many seeds.

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Therefore he is called a storeroom or treasure (**nidhānam**).

He is the amśī, the source of the avatāras who will be discussed in this chapter.

And he is eternal (**avyayam**).

His part is Brahmā and Brahmā's parts are Marīci and others.

By them, the Lord creates the devatās and others.

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The devatās are considered the Lord's vibhūtis.



# Section – II

Description of 22 incarnations that  
appear within this universe (6-27)

## || 1.3.6 ||

sa eva prathamam devah  
kaumaram sargam asritah  
cacara duscaram brahma  
brahmacaryam akhanditam

Garbhodakaśāyī (sah eva devah) first (prathamam) made his  
appearance (sargam asritah) in the Kumāras (kaumaram).  
Becoming brāhmanas (brahma), they undertook (cacara)  
continuous (akhanditam), severe (duscaram) vows of  
brahmacarya (brahmacaryam).

Now the avatāras starting with the Kumāras are described.

Padmanābha, Garbhodakaśāyī, who carries out creation of  
the devatās and others through portions of his portion,  
Brahmā, made his appearance in the Kumāras (**kaumāram**  
**sargam āśritaḥ**).

Becoming brāhmanas (**brahmā**) they undertook vows of  
abstinence (**brahmacaryam cacāra**).

This means that they preached this by their conduct to the world.

~~first second etc~~

The words first, second, etc. are only enumerating the avatāras and not indicating the exact chronology of the avatāras' appearances.

|| 1.3.7 ||

dvitīyam tu bhavāyāsyā  
rasātala-gatām mahīm  
uddharisyann upādatta  
yajñeśaḥ saukaram vapuḥ

Secondly (dvitīyam tu) the Lord of sacrifice (yajñeśaḥ), lifting  
up (uddharisyann) the earth (mahīm) from Rasātala (rasātala-  
gatām), for its welfare (asya bhavāya), took the form of the  
boar (saukaram vapuḥ upādatta).

His activity is described by the words “he lifted up the earth  
for its welfare.”

In each case the avatāra and his activity has been mentioned.

|| 1.3.8 ||

tr̥tīyam ṛṣi-sargaṁ vai  
devarṣitvam upetya saḥ  
tantram sātvatam ācaṣṭa  
naiṣkarmyam karmaṇām yataḥ

Third (tr̥tīyam), the Lord (saḥ), making his appearance (upetya) among the sages (ṛṣi-sargaṁ) as Nārada (devarṣitvam), produced (ācaṣṭa) the Pañcarātra scriptures (sātvatam tantram) from which (yataḥ) one learns how devotional activities free one from the bondage of karma (naiṣkarmyam karmaṇām).

The Lord making his appearance among the sages as Nārada,  
made the Pañcarātra texts (tantram sātvatam).

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From these one can learn that devotional activities  
(**karmanām**) will liberate one from the bondage of karma  
(**naiṣkarmyam**).



|| 1.3.9 ||

turye dharmā-kalā-sarge

nara-nārāyaṇāv ṛṣī

bhūtvātmopaśamopetam

akarod duścaram tapah

Fourth (turye), appearing in the wife of Dharma (dharmā-kalā-sarge), he became (bhūtvā) Nara-nārāyaṇa (nara-nārāyaṇāv ṛṣī), and performed (akarod) severe austerities (duścaram tapah) which give peace to the soul (ātma upaśama upetam).

Turye means fourth.

Dharma-kalā, part of Dharma, refers to the wife of Dharma, since the śruti says ardho vā eṣa ātmano yat patnī: the wife is half of oneself.

Appearing in her (sarge) he became the two sages.

They are considered one avatāra.

|| 1.3.10 ||

pañcamah kapilo nāma  
siddheśah kāla-viplutam  
provācāsuraye sāṅkhyam  
tattva-grāma-vinirṇayam

The fifth incarnation, named Lord Kapila (pañcamah kapilo nāma), is foremost among perfected beings (siddheśah). He gave an exposition (provāca) of the creative elements (tattva-grāma-vinirṇayam) and metaphysics (sāṅkhyam) to Āsuri Brāhmaṇa (āsuraeye), for in course of time this knowledge had been lost (kāla-viplutam).

Āsuri is the name of a brāhmaṇa.

|| 1.3.11 ||

ṣaṣṭham atrer apatyatvam

vṛtaḥ prāpto 'nasūyayā

ānvīkṣikīm alarkāya

prahlādādibhya ūcivān

The sixth incarnation of the puruṣa (ṣaṣṭham) was the son of the sage Atri (atrer apatyatvam). He was born from the womb of Anasūyā (prāpto anasūyayā), who prayed for an incarnation (vṛtaḥ). He spoke on the subject of transcendence (ānvīkṣikīm ūcivān) to Alarka, Prahlāda and others [Yadu, Haihaya, etc.] (alarkāya prahlādādibhya).

Being selected by Anasūyā, the wife of Atri, he became her  
son.

This is described in the Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa in the story of the  
pativrata:

anasūyābravīn natvā devān brahmeśa-keśavān |  
yūyaṁ yadi prasannā me varārhā yadi vāpy aham |  
prasādābhimukho bhūtvā mama putratvam eṣyatha ||

Offering respects (natvā), Anasūyā spoke (anasūyā abravīt) to the Brahmā, Śiva and Viṣṇu (devān brahma īśa-keśavān). If you are pleased with me (yūyaṁ yadi prasannā me), and consider me worthy of blessing (varārhā yadi vāpy aham), being merciful (prasāda abhimukho bhūtvā), you should become my son (mama putratvam eṣyatha).

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Ānvīkṣikīm means knowledge of the ātmā.

Manu kalā evetēka

① Manu

② Manu 2nd

③ Manvantaravēteris

④ Indra

⑤ Dyaus

⑥ Svayambhuva

|| 1.3.12 ||

tataḥ saptama ākūtyām  
rucer yajño 'bhyajāyata  
sa yāmādyaiḥ sura-gaṇair  
apāt svāyambhuvāntaram

The seventh incarnation was Yajña (tataḥ saptama yajñah), the son of Prajāpati Ruci and his wife Ākūti (rucer ākūtyām abhyajāyata). He protected the period during the change of the Svāyambhuva Manu (sah svāyambhuvāntaram apāt) and was assisted by demigods such as His son Yāma (yāmādyaiḥ sura-gaṇair).

The Yamas were Yajña's sons.

With the assistance of the devatās named the Yamas, he gave protection during the reign of Svāyambhuva.

At that time he became Indra.



|| 1.3.13 ||

aṣṭame merudevyām tu  
nābher jāta urukramah  
darśayan vartma dhīrāṇām  
sarvāśrama-namaskṛtam

Eighth (**aṣṭame**), the Lord was born (**jāta urukramah**) to Nābhi and his wife Merudevī as Rṣabha (**merudevyām nābheh**). He shows the path of the wise (**darśayan dhīrāṇām vartma**) worshipped by all āśramas (**sarvāśrama-namaskṛtam**).

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Rṣabha was born from the son of Āgnīdhra named Nābhi.

|| 1.3.14 ||

ṛṣibhir yācito bheje  
navamaṁ pārthivaṁ vapuḥ  
dugdhemām oṣadhīr viprās  
tenāyaṁ sa uśattamaḥ

Ninth (navamaṁ), requested by the sages (ṛṣibhir yācītaḥ)  
the Lord took the form of King Pṛthu (bheje pārthivaṁ  
vapuḥ). Because he milked herbs from the earth (dugdhā  
imām oṣadhīr), he is considered the most desirable of the  
avatāras (tenāyaṁ sa uśattamaḥ).

Pārthivam vapuḥ means the body of a king, Pṛthu.

Pārthavam is another version, which means relating to Pṛthu.

“Herbs” is representative of other things also.

He milked all things from the earth.

Dugdha should actually be adugdha.

This form is poetic license.

Because of that he is considered the most desirable of the  
avatāras (**uśattamaḥ**).

Uśa means desired or dear.

|| 1.3.15 ||

rūpaṁ sa jagṛhe mātsyaṁ  
cākṣuṣodadhi-samplave  
nāvy āropya mahī-mayyām  
apād vaivasvataṁ manum

When there was a complete inundation (udadhi-samplave) after the period of the Cākṣusa Manu (cākṣuṣe) and the whole world was deep within water (mahī-mayyām), the Lord accepted (sah jagṛhe) the form of a fish (mātsyaṁ rūpaṁ) and protected Vaivasvata Manu (apād vaivasvataṁ manum), keeping him up on a boat (nāvy āropya).

During Cākṣuṣa manvantara there was a flood of water.

Another version has **cākṣuṣāntara-samplave**.

The earth acted as a boat (**nāvi mahī-mayyām**).

Matsya protected (**apād**) the person who would be  
Vaivasvata-manu.

Śrīdhara Svāmī says though there is not a flood at the end of this manvantara, an illusory flood was shown to Satyavrata for fun.

However in Viṣṇu-dharmottara, Vajra asks Mārkaṇḍeya, “What happens at the end of the manvantara?”

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Mārkaṇḍeya says:

ūrmi-mālī mahā-vegah sarvam āvr̥tya tiṣṭhati |  
bhūrlokaṃ āśritaṃ sarvaṃ tadā naśyati yādava ||  
na vinaśyanti rājendra viśrutāḥ kula-parvatāḥ |  
naur bhūtvā tu mahā-devī yadu-kulodvaha |  
dhārayaty atha bījāni sarvaṇy evāviśeṣataḥ ||

O Vajra, the great Lord, in the form of water, greatly agitated with countless waves (ūrmi-mālī mahā-vegah), covers the earth and the lower planets with water (sarvam āvr̥tya tiṣṭhati). O Yādava (yādava)! All things on the earth planet (bhūrlokaṃ āśritaṃ sarvaṃ) are destroyed at that time (tadā naśyati). Only the famous mountains (viśrutāḥ kula-parvatāḥ) are not destroyed (na vinaśyanti), O best of kings (rājendra)! At that time (tadā), the earth personified (mahā-devī), taking the form of a boat (naur bhūtvā), protects all the seeds (atha sarvaṇy bījāni dhārayaty) without discrimination (aviśeṣataḥ), O offspring of the Yadu family (yadu-kulodvaha)! [1.75.5-6, 9 ]



This explains that there is destruction at the end of the manvantara.

In Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta, Rūpa Gosvāmī also states that there is a devastation by water after (every manvantara)

In his comments on some verses of Hari-vaṁśa as well he says the same.

The verse mentions the Cākṣuṣa-manvantara.

Because Satyavrata was a great devotee of Matsya, and Matsya was attracted to his devotee, Matsya appeared at this time.

The following verse illustrates how the Lord is controlled by his devotee.

svacchandopāṭṭa-dehāya viśuddha-jñāna-mūrtaye  
sarvasmai sarva-bījāya sarva-bhūtātmane namaḥ

Unto Him who assumes transcendental bodies according to the  
desires of His devotees (svacchanda upāṭṭa-dehāya), unto Him whose  
form is itself pure consciousness (viśuddha-jñāna-mūrtaye), unto  
Him who is everything (sarvasmai), who is the seed of everything  
(sarva-bījāya) and who is the Soul of all creatures (sarva-  
bhūtātmane), I offer my obeisances (namaḥ). (SB 10.27.11)

Therefore this particular narration is representative of events that take  
place after every manvantara.