

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam

Canto Two

With the
Sārārtha-darśinī commentary

by

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Canto Two – Chapter Seven

Brahma-nārada-saṁvādaḥ

Scheduled Incarnations
with Specific Functions

Theme – III

Description of the Paramatma and Brahman features, and establishing the superiority of the path of Bhakti over the paths to attain Brahman and Paramatma (47-49)

s/s
Brahman
śaśvat praśāntam abhayam pratibodha-mātram
suddham samam sad-asataḥ paramātma-tattvam |
śabdo na yatra puru-kāraḥ kriyārtho
māyā paraity abhimukhe ca vilajjamānā ||
tad vai padam bhagavataḥ paramasya puṁso
brahmeti yad vidur ajasra-sukham viśokam |

Paramātmā (paramātma-tattvam) is eternally peaceful (śaśvat praśāntam) and fearless (abhayam), bestows knowledge (pratibodha-mātram), is pure (suddham), and equal to all (samam sad-asataḥ). Brahman which is known as (brahma iti yad viduh) unlimited happiness (ajasra-sukham) and freedom from grief (viśokam) is one aspect of the Supreme Lord (tad vai bhagavataḥ paramasya puṁso padam), which words with action as their object and words with many case relations cannot describe (puru-kāraḥ kriyārtho śabdah na yatra). Māyā, being ashamed (māyā vilajjamānā), cannot stand before the Lord (paraity abhimukhe).

“The Lord is revealed in three forms according to the person’s qualification as mentioned in the statement brahmeti paramātmēti bhagavān iti śabdyate (SB 1.2.11).

From SB 2.6.45 until SB 2.7.42, ending with the description of Kalki, the unlimited qualities of Bhagavān have been described.

The worshippers of Bhagavān have been described from SB 2.6 42-46. Is it necessary then to speak about Paramātmā and brahman now?”

This verse answers.

Paramātmā in all the jīvas from high to low (sad-asatah), from Brahmā to the plants, has an impartial disposition (samam).

He is always (śaśvat) extremely (pra) peaceful (śāntam).

This word (having the same meaning as sama) is used to describe his control of sattva-guṇa as in the following:

guṇāḥ sattvādayaḥ śānta-ghora-mūḍhāḥ svabhāvataḥ
viṣṇu-brahma-śivānām ca guṇa-yantr-svarūpiṇām

The modes of goodness, passion and ignorance, whose individual natures are peaceful, violent and foolish, are personally regulated by Lord Viṣṇu, Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva respectively.

The words śaśvat (always) and pra (extremely) further distinguish sama, the effect of sattva-guṇa.

He is fearless, presiding over the fearful jīva.

Though he possesses knowledge, he is described by the words
pratibodha-mātram.

This means that he reveals awareness (**bodha**), an effect of
sattva-guṇa.

[Note: In BG 14.6 sattva-guṇa is characterized by anāmayam, meaning peacefulness of the senses, and prakāśakam, knowledge.]

This is emphasized by the words prati (in regard to) and mātra (fully).

He is pure, presiding over the impure jīva.

Paramātmā has been described.

Now brahman is described.

Words indicating objects and implying relationship along with action cannot describe brahman.

[Note: Words do not stand alone. They are related to action, supplied by a verb, and then are expressed in grammatical relationships, such as “in brahman, from brahman, unto brahman, by brahman, of brahman.”]

“But you talk about brahman in this way. If you say **na yatra puru-kāarakavān**, does this not contradict your own words?”

The answer is given.

Brahman is one aspect (pada) of the Lord, behind whom stands bashful māyā.

It is the aspect without qualities, the initial phase of realization of the Lord -- who has spiritual variety, form and qualities..

The Lord says madīyam mahimānam ca param brahmeti śabditam: that which is my greatness is called brahman. (SB 8.24.38)

This means that brahman is the greatness of the Lord and is characterized by all-pervasion.

This is the meaning.

Words cannot define Bhagavān who possess non-material form and qualities, since sound is a quality of material ether.

Thus māyā cannot stand before the Lord.

However, there are descriptions such as megha-śyāmaḥ kanaka-paridhiḥ: he has a dark complexion like a cloud and yellow garments (SB 8.7.17); pañkajākṣo 'yam ātmā: he has lotus eyes.

To some degree such words can convey about the Lord to people's minds, by comparison to material objects such as clouds and gold.

And people become joyful thinking that they are meditating on the Lord though they, in fact, possess only a semblance of the Lord by their concentration.

The Lord, however, under the control of waves of unprecedented mercy, thinks "That devotee is meditating on me".

Then he brings that devotee to his feet so that the devotee can serve the Lord.

The Lord's svarūpa being inexpressible by words becomes accomplished by the Lord's mercy.

But how can the svarūpa of brahman be expressed by words, since it is devoid of material and spiritual qualities?

That is the meaning of śabdo na yatra.

Because brahman lacks quality and classification and hence
lacks meaningful use of words to correspond to the object
(brahman), words indicating actions and relationships cannot
describe it.

Thus the word **brahman** is used simply to denote that object.

Though brahman is beyond words, it is the formless aspect of
Bhagavān who can be described.

Since it can be expressed in relation to the Lord for common
understanding, even brahman becomes expressible through
words.

This will be explained in SB 10.87.

From realization of this brahman one attains unrestricted happiness and dissipation of grief (viśokam).

How much more can the form of Bhagavān give happiness and dissipation of grief!