

TEXT 1: The Absolute Truth (AT) perceived as either Brahman, Paramātmā, or Bhagavān depending upon specific qualifications of the worshiper

TEXT 2:
Distinction
between
Brahman
and
Bhagavān

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TEXT 1: The Absolute Truth (AT) perceived as either Brahman, Paramātmā, or Bhagavān depending upon specific qualifications of the worshiper

- General understanding based on *Tattva-Sandarbha*: The AT ⇒ Nondual supreme consciousness (*vadanti tad tattva-vidas...1.2.11*) ⇒ *āsraya-tattva*, the supreme shelter of all being—the 10 subject matter of SB ⇒ Referred by 3 names—Brahman, Paramātmā, and Bhagavān
- Jīva describes more specific understanding in *Bhagavat-Sandarbha*
 - The 3 degrees of competence and completion in surrender on the part of the worshiper
 - Impersonal conception (*jñānīs*) ⇒ Undifferentiated Brahman realization
 - Personal conception ⇒ Realization of either Paramātmā (*aṣṭāṅga-yogīs*) or Bhagavān (*Bhakti-yogīs—svarūpa-śakti*) ⇒ Brahmāji's prayers (3.9.11)

TEXT 2: Distinction between Brahman and Bhagavān

- Paramātmā is automatically understood by specifying the distinction between Brahman and Bhagavān.
- Analysis of Vyāsa’s super-cognitive *samādhi* (Texts 30-49; SB 1.7.4-6)
 - Contrary to Māyāvāda notion, the AT cannot become *the Jīvas* when conditioned by Māyā because of the distinct difference between Brahman & the *Jīvātmās*
- Two kinds of *paramhamsas*, transcendentalists—*jñānī* & *bhāgavata*
 - *Jñānī* ⇒ The AT, which is indivisible and blissful in nature, is known as Brahman to those on a *jñāna* platform, who perceives it as unqualified and impersonal Brahman. (Examples: Dattātreya, the 4 Kumāras) ⇒ No material desires even up to the bliss of Satyaloka ⇒ Their hearts are unable to perceive its variegated, internal potencies.

- *Bhāgavata*- or devotional transcendentalists, on the other hand, perceive the AT as personal nondual being, Bhagavān, the reservoir of all other transcendental energies—it manifests unique characteristics by the power of its internal potency and becomes revealed to the senses (Examples: Prahlāda, Nārada, Uddhava and the gopīs of Vṛndāvana)
- Jīva substantiates his explanations by citing SB verses
 - *jñānaṁ viśuddhaṁ paramārtham ekam
anantaram tva bahir brahma satyam
pratyak praśāntam bhagavac-ca śabda-samjñam
yad vāsudevaṁ kavayo vadanti (5.12.11)*
 - Śrī Jaḍa Bharata to King Rahugaṇa: “That nondual knowledge is the ultimate truth. It is devoid of the contamination of material qualities. It gives us liberation. It is the one without a second, all-pervading and beyond imagination. The first realization of that knowledge is Brahman. Then Paramātmā, the Supersoul, is realized by the yogīs who try to see Him without grievance. This is the second stage of realization. Finally, full realization of the same supreme knowledge is realized in the Supreme Person. All learned scholars describe the Supreme Person as Vāsudeva, the cause of Brahman, Paramātmā and others.”

- *tvam̐ pratyag-ātmani tadā bhagavaty ananta ānanda-mātra upapanna-samasta-śaktau bhaktim̐ vidhāya paramām̐ śanakair avidyā-granthim̐ vibhetsyasi mamāham̐ iti prarūḍham̐* (4.11.30)
- Svāyambhuva Manu also says to Dhruva Mahārāja: “Thus regaining your natural position and rendering service unto the Supreme Lord, who is the all-powerful reservoir of all pleasure and who lives in all living entities as the Supersoul, you will very soon forget the illusory understanding of “I” and “my.”
- In these examples, two different grades of transcendentalists (*brahmavādī-* and *bhāgavata-paramhaṁsas*) realizes the AT differently and experience a different level of bliss.
 - Analogies: Performance of classical music is relished by different grades of people depending on their knowledge although performer is one. Pleasure derived by one understands subtleties of classical music is inclusive of pleasure understood by one who does not understand classical music.
- The *bhāgavata-paramhaṁsas* realize the Absolute as the complete whole and Supreme Person within their hearts, which includes Brahman.

TEXT 3: Bhagavān as the qualified absolute

- Jīva begins this section by first defining the word “Bhagavān” so that its detailed description could be properly understood.
- A definition serves two purposes:
 - a) It helps us to draw a distinction between the object defined and others.
 - b) It allows us to then use the term appropriately, either in speech or in experience
- Every substance (the AT)—*dravya*—has 3 aspects
 - i. Its state as an unqualified object—*viśeṣya* (Brahman)
 - ii. Its qualifying attributes—*viśeṣaṇa* (variegated energies)
 - iii. The same object now qualified with its attributes—*viśiṣṭa* (The energetic person, either Paramātmā or Bhagavān)

- It should be noted that Jīva uses the words *viśeṣya*, *viśeṣaṇa*, and *viśiṣṭa* only to convey the idea that the energies belong to the energetic Bhagavān, and that Brahman is not an independent manifestation.
- He argues that the real relationship between Bhagavān and His potencies is that of inconceivable simultaneous oneness and difference, or *acintya-bheda-abheda* doctrine of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.
- Now he cites scriptural evidence to substantiate his discussion

- Parāśara Muni’s definition of Bhagavān in *Viṣṇu-purāṇa* (6.5.74):

*aiśvaryaśya samagrasya vīryasya yaśasaḥ śriyaḥ
Jñāna-vairāgyayoś caiva śaṅṅam bhaga itīṅganā*

“The possessor (*vān*) of 6 kinds of opulences—*aiśvarya*—(*bhaga*) in full and unlimited—power, influence, excellent qualities of body, mind and words, wealth, knowledge and detachment—is known as Bhagavān.”

Bhagavān is the most complete manifestation of the Absolute. When He expands Himself as 3 *Puruṣas* (*Kāraṇadakaśāyī*-, *Garbhodakaśāyī*-, and *Kṣirodakaśāyī-Viṣṇu*) to regulate the affairs of material nature and the *Jīvas*, He is called Paramātmā.

TEXTS 4&5: Bhagavān as Nārāyaṇa

- In the previous sections, Jīva defined Brahman, Paramātmā, and Bhagavān. Now he substantiates these definitions by citing SB.
- When Vasudevaji (Kṛṣṇa's father) inquired about *bhāgavata-dharma* (*bhakti* consisting of hearing and chanting of the Lord's names, form, attributes, pastimes and abode), Nārada Muni in his response relates the discussion between King Nimi and the *nava-yogendras* when they appeared in his sacrificial arena. King Nimi's specific question in 11.3.34 was about the nature of Bhagavān Nārāyaṇa and His relationship to Brahman and Paramātmā.
- Jīva also cites 3 additional SB verses—11.4.3 (Nārāyaṇa as the original God, or Bhagavān's expansion as Paramātmā), 11.14.14 (Brahmā's prayers to Kṛṣṇa), and 11.15.16 (Kṛṣṇa to Uddhava)

- Next Pippalāyana answers King Nimi’s question about the nature of Nārāyaṇa, Brahman and Paramātmā in this particular order in terms of functions of all three features of the Absolute by giving their extrinsic characteristics
 - Through His *Puruṣa* expansions, Bhagavān is the source of creation, maintenance and dissolution, but He Himself is w/out the cause
 - 11.14.14 (Brahmā’s prayers to Kṛṣṇa) ⇒ Brhmā establishes that Kṛṣṇa is also Nārāyaṇa, which means that Bhagavān is Nārāyaṇa, who expands as Paramātmā and enters into the manifested cosmos.
 - 11.15.16 (Kṛṣṇa to Uddhava) ⇒ Nārāyaṇa is also Bhagavān
- Queen Kuntī’s referral of Bhagavān as *turīya*, or the 4th dimension—the Supreme Transcendence—because He is free from all limiting adjuncts, or *upādhis*, which are of 3 types—*virāṭ* (gross), *hiraṇyagarbha* (subtle) and *kāraṇa* (Māyā, the causal *upādhi*)—the 3 *puruṣa* expansions, respectively.

- While Paramātmā has *prakṛti*, or material nature as *upādhi*, it does not make the 3 *Puruṣas* as conditioned beings like the living beings in the material world. It means, however, that He does not manifest all the features of Bhagavān, which is *nirupādhi*, or w/out any such limiting adjuncts.
- Alternative meaning of *turīya*, or the 4th dimension—the Supreme Transcendence ⇒ Beyond the states of wakefulness, dreaming and deep sleep
 - Because Brahman is the Absolute w/out its attributes, it is very difficult to understand ∴ the knowledge of the self (the *Jīvas*) is essential to the understanding of Brahman (*vyastī-nirdeśa* in Texts 52-53 of *Tattva-Sandarbha*)
 - Thus, to describe Brahman, Jīva quotes 11.13.27 that describes the self—Kṛṣṇa spoke this verse to Uddhava ⇒ The *Jīvas* experience the 3 states of consciousness—wakefulness, dreaming and deep sleep—but these states are due to intelligence combined with the 3 modes of material nature
 - Wakefulness = *sattva*; dream state = *rajas*; and deep sleep = *tamas*

- The *Jīvas*, however, are merely their witness, and they remain unchanged in all 3 states by the dint of the *Jīvas*' pure consciousness \Rightarrow the 4th dimension
- Possible objection: How could there be a witness in a deep sleep because there is no awareness of anything. However, this is not true. In deep sleep, the self is aware of not being aware of anything empirical and that is why on awakening one remembers the pleasurable or even distressful experience in deep sleep.
- In further development of this idea, Jīva points out our understanding of the AT as nondual, supreme consciousness, which exists always throughout the 3 different states of existence as well as in the state of trance \Rightarrow *tat tvam asi*, or you are that = oneness of the self with Brahman. However, this does not mean that one becomes Brahman in its original sense, which is all-pervading and unlimited, in its entirety.
- Next, Jīva quotes 3 verses spoken by Krsna to exemplify the 3 aspects of the Absolute Reality or Truth.

- 11.15.15-17
 - One who places his consciousness on Viṣṇu, the Supersoul, the prime mover and Supreme Lord of the external energy consisting of three modes, obtains the mystic perfection of controlling other conditioned souls, their material bodies and their bodily designations. (*īśitva*)
 - The yogī who places his mind in My form of Nārāyaṇa, known as the fourth factor, full of all opulences, becomes endowed with My nature and thus obtains the mystic perfection called *vaśitā*.
 - One who fixes his pure mind on Me in My manifestation as the impersonal Brahman obtains the greatest happiness, wherein all his desires are completely fulfilled. (*kāmāvasayitā*)
- The 3 yogic *siddhīs* are: *īśitva*, *vaśitā*, and *kāmāvasayitā*
- These verses also explain the 3 aspects of the AT

- Īśitva ⇒ By meditating on Paramātmā, attains the power to control the function of the material nature and the beings under her control
- Vaśitā ⇒ By meditation on Bhagavān, attains the power to remain free from the influence of the modes of nature, even while in their midst
- kāmāvasayitā ⇒ The psycho-spiritual perfection by meditation on the undifferentiated Brahman ⇒ attains supreme bliss (*brahmānanda*) whereby one becomes free from all desires ⇒ oneness with Brahman
- Significance of these 3 verses
 - All 3 aspects—Brahman, Paramātmā, and Bhagavān (Nārāyaṇa)—are manifestation of one Absolute Reality in accordance with 3 types of worshipers ⇒ These manifestations, however, are not equal in all aspects
 - Meditation on Bhagavān is supreme because it yields all perfections