

## **Tattva-Sandarbha Annuchhedas 19-26**

**19.1:** "Indeed, Lord Vyāsa was not satisfied even after compiling all the *Purāḥas* and the *Vedānta-sūtra*. He therefore wrote *Çrémad-Bhāgavatam*, which was revealed to Him in trance, as the natural commentary on His own *sūtras*. In *Çrémad-Bhāgavatam* we find the consistent reconciliation of all scriptures. That the *Bhāgavatam* gives the essence of all scriptures is shown by its opening with the *Gāyatrī mantra*, the essential text incorporating the message of all the *Vedas*."

**19.2:** "The characteristics of *Çrémad-Bhāgavatam* are further described in the *Matsya Purāḥa* (53.20-22) "In the beginning of one of the *Purāḥas* the *Gāyatrī mantra* is the focus of discourse. In it all the ramifications of true religion are delineated, and the killing of the demon *Vātrais* described. The *Purāḥa* which has these characteristics is known as *Çrémad-Bhāgavatam*. A person who transcribes a copy of the *Bhāgavatam*, places it on a gold lion-throne and gives this as a gift to someone on the full moon day of the month of *Bhādra* will achieve the supreme goal of life. This *Purāḥa* is said to have eighteen thousand verses."

**19.3:** "Here the word *gāyatrī* indicates the meaning of the *Gāyatrī mantra*, which includes the word *dhémahi*. *Dhémahi* is an indicator of *Gāyatrī*, implying its purport; it would be improper to directly utter *Gāyatrī* itself, the origin of all Vedic *mantras*. The first verse of *Çrémad-Bhāgavatam* [1.1.1] alludes to the meaning of *Gāyatrī* by the phrases *janmādy asya yataù* ("by Him this universe is created, maintained, and destroyed") and *tene brahma hādā* ("He revealed Vedic knowledge in the heart"). These phrases express the same meaning as *Gāyatrī*, describing the Lord as the basis of all the universes and as He who inspires everyone's intellect. In the phrase "all the ramifications of religion," the word "religion" (dharma) means "the supreme religion," since the *Bhāgavatam* [1.1.2] states, "In this work the supreme religion is described, to the exclusion of all kinds of cheating religion." Such activities as meditation on the Personality of Godhead are the specific features of this supreme religion, as we will make evident later on."

**20.1-2:** "In the *Skanda Purāḥa*, *Prabhāsa-khaḇḇa* [7.1.2.39-42] we find a description of *Çrémad-Bhāgavatam* similar to the one in the *Matsya Purāḥa*: "The *Purāḥa* known as *Çrémad-Bhāgavatam* recounts the deeds of humans and demigods in the *Sārasvata-kalpa*, explains the supreme religion in terms of *Gāyatrī*, and

narrates the slaying of Vâtrâsura. It has eighteen thousand verses. . . . Whoever writes out a copy of the *Bhâgavatam*, places it on a golden lion-throne, and presents it to someone on the full-moon day of the month of Bhâdra will attain the supreme destination." These verses are also found in the *Agni Purâea* [272.6, 7]. Yet another *Purâea*, cited by the *Bhâgavatam* commentator Çrédhara Svâmé, describes the characteristics of *Çrémad-Bhâgavatam* thus: "The *Purâea* known as *Çrémad-Bhâgavatam* has eighteen thousand verses divided into twelve cantos, begins with Gâyatrî, describes the Hayagrêva-brahma-vidyâ, and narrates the slaying of Vâtrâsura."

**20.3:** "Here the "meditation on the Supreme taught by Hayagrêva" means the "Armor of Nârâyaëa" prayer, since it is mentioned alongside the killing of Vâtra. The name Hayagrêva here refers to the sage Dadhêci, who had a horse's head. He initiated the meditation on the Supreme (*brahma-vidyâ*) known as the Nârâyaëa-varma. That he had a horse's head is established in the *Bhâgavatam*'s Sixth Canto [6.9.52] by the words "he who was called Horse-head (Açva-çirâ)." That section of the *Bhâgavatam* indeed presents the Nârâyaëa-varma as a *brahma-vidyâ*, and this identification is also confirmed by a verse cited by Çréla Çrédhara Svâmé in his commentary, "Hearing this and feeling honored, Dadhêci the descendent of Atharvâ, anxious not to break his promise, taught the two Açviné-kumâras the *pravargya* method and the meditation on the Supreme."

**20.4:** "*Çrémad-Bhâgavatam* is most perfectly in the mode of goodness because it pleases the Personality of Godhead and is very much preferred by the devotees of Godhead. As we find in the *Padma Purâea* [*Uttara-khaëða* 22.115], in the questions posed to Ambaréña by Gautama, "O ruler of the earth, do you sit in front of the Deity of Lord Hari and recite the *Bhâgavata Purâea*, including the story of Prahlâda, the king of the demons?" Also in the *Padma Purâea*, in the section glorifying Vaijulé Mahâdvâdaçé, Gautama instructs Ambaréña, "One should stay awake through the night, hearing narrations related to Lord Viñëu--the *Bhâgavad-gétâ*, the *Thousand Names of Viñëu* and the *Purâea* spoken by Çukadeva. These should be read aloud with careful attention to give satisfaction to the Supreme Lord Hari."

**20.5:** "And elsewhere in the *Padma Purâea* we find this statement: "O Ambaréña, if you wish to end your material existence, then every day you should hear the *Bhâgavatam* that

was narrated by Çukadeva, and you should also recite it yourself." Finally, we find the following statement in the *Prahlāda-saàhitā* of the *Skanda Purāēa*, in the section describing Dvārakā's glories: "A person who stays up [on the night of Ekādaçé] and recites *Çrémad-Bhāgavatam* with devotion before the Deity of Lord Hari goes to the Lord's abode along with all his family members."

**21.1-2:** "And the *Garuòa Purāēa* states: "This *Çrémad-Bhāgavatam* is the most perfect *Purāēa*. It is the natural commentary on the *Vedānta-sūtra*, it establishes the meaning of the *Mahābhārata*, it is a commentary on *Gāyatré*, it explains and expands the meaning of the *Vedas*, it is the *Sāma Veda* of the *Purāēas*, and it was spoken by the Supreme Lord Himself. It has twelve cantos, hundreds of chapters, and eighteen thousand verses." Here the words *brahma-sūtrāēam arthaù* mean that *Çrémad-Bhāgavatam* is the natural commentary on the *Vedānta-sūtra*. First the *Bhāgavatam* appeared in the heart of Çré Vyāsadeva in a subtle form. He then summarized it in the form of the *Vedānta-sūtra*, and later He expanded it into *Çrémad-Bhāgavatam* as we know it. Since the *Vedānta-sūtra* already has a natural commentary in *Çrémad-Bhāgavatam*, whatever else more recent commentators have produced from their own brains should be taken seriously only when it is faithful to the version of *Çrémad-Bhāgavatam*."

**21.3:** "Concerning the phrase *bhāratārtha-vinirēayaù* ("*Çrémad-Bhāgavatam* establishes the meaning of the *Mahābhārata*"), we find the following verses describing the *Mahābhārata's* importance in the *Mahābhārata* itself [*Ādi-parva* 1.272-74]: "The *Mahābhārata* is glorified because it contains the conclusions of all scriptures. Long ago, on the request of Çréla Vyāsa, Lord Brahmā and the other demigods came together with all the great sages and placed the *Mahābhārata* on one side of a scale and the entire *Vedas* on the other. The *Mahābhārata*, it turned out, weighed more because of its greatness (*mahattva*) and heaviness (*bhāra-vattva*). For this reason it is called *Mahā-bhārata*." The message of the *Mahābhārata*, whose importance is as described here, is made clear in the text of *Çrémad-Bhāgavatam*."

**21.4:** "Another way in which *Çrémad-Bhāgavatam* establishes the meaning of the *Mahābhārata* is that the message of both culminates in the Supreme Lord alone. That the *Mahābhārata's* message culminates in the Lord is evinced in the *Nārāyaēya* section of the *Mahābhārata's* *Mokñā-dharma* portion [170.11-14], where Janamejaya says to Çréla Vyāsadeva: "O *brāhmaēa*, abode of

austerities, just as butter can be extracted from yogurt, sandalwood from the Malaya mountains, the *Upaniñads* from the *Vedas*, and life-giving nectar from herbs, so by Your churning the ocean of the highest knowledge with the rod of Your intelligence, this *Nārāyaēya* has been extracted from the *Mahābhārata's* hundred thousand verses. The *Nārāyaēya's* narrations are related to Lord *Nārāyaēa* and are sweet like nectar."

**22.1-2:** "The *Bhāgavatam's* *Third Canto* also says, "Your friend, the great sage *Kāñēa-dvaipāyana Vyāsa*, has already described the transcendental qualities of the Lord in His great work the *Mahābhārata*. But the whole idea is to draw the attention of the mass of people to *kāñēa-kathā* through their strong affinity for hearing mundane topics" [*Bhāg.* 3.5.12]. That *Çrémad-Bhāgavatam* is a commentary on *Gāyatrī* is shown in the *Viñēu-dharmottara Purāēa*, which elaborately demonstrates, in its explanation of the *Gāyatrī mantra* (*Prathama-khaēōa* [165]), that the object of meditation in the *Gāyatrīs* is the Supreme Lord. We shall provide similar proofs of this when we comment on the first verse of *Çrémad-Bhāgavatam* (beginning *janmādy asya*). This Skrt can safely come out, no? Sorry, but this "this" is confusing. Is Jiva going to show later how the *Bhāgavatam* is a commentary on *Gayatri*, or how the object of meditation in *Gayatri* is the Lord?"

**22.3:** "The *Sāma Veda* among the *Purāēas*" means the best of them, just as the *Sāma* is the best of the *Vedas*. Persons who are circumstantially influenced by the material modes of passion and ignorance may not see some of the other *Purāēas* as being dedicated to the Personality of Godhead. But just as the *Sāma Veda* reconciles into a single, consistent message all the various statements of the three divisions of Vedic texts, similarly all the *Purāēas* ultimately glorify the same *Çré Bhagavān* whose glories the *Bhāgavatam* establishes. This is as said, "Throughout the *Vedas* and everywhere in the *Rāmāyaēa*, *Purāēas* and *Mahābhārata*, from the beginning to the middle to the end, the praises of Lord Hari are sung" [*Mahābhārata, Svarga-parva* 6.93]. This we will demonstrate later, in the *Paramātma-sandarbhā*."

**22.4:** "Directly spoken by the Personality of Godhead" can be understood in accordance with the summarizing verse "This [*Bhāgavatam*] was spoken by the Lord to *Brahmā*" [*Bhāg.* 12.13.19]. "Including hundreds of chapters" we will not elaborate on out of

concern for not increasing too much the length of this discussion. Thus we conclude that *Çrémad-Bhägavatam* indeed deserves the status of emperor of all scriptures, and that thus the commentator [Çrédhara Svámé] was correct to explain "together with a gold lion" [*Bhäg.* 12.13.13] as meaning "placed upon a gold lion-throne." For these reasons the *Skanda Puräëa* has determined that *Çrémad-Bhägavatam* alone needs to be studied and that it is the best of scriptures."

**22.5:** "So the *Skanda Puräëa* says, "What is the use of collecting hundreds or thousands of other scriptures? If someone living in this Kali-yuga does not have the scripture *Bhägavatam* in his home, how can he be considered a Vaiñëava? In fact, in Kali-yuga a *brähmaëa* who does not have the scripture *Bhägavatam* in his home is worse than a dog-eater. O *brähmaëa* Nārada, wherever in Kali-yuga the scripture *Bhägavatam* is present, there Lord Hari will go along with the thirteen principal demigods. Anyone human being who daily reads with devotion even one verse of the *Bhägavatam*, O sage, will obtain the benefits of studying all eighteen *Puräëas*." [*Skanda Pur.*, *Viñëu-khaëöa* 5.16.40, 42, 44, 331]. Therefore those who want nowadays to understand the supreme goal of life should study *Çrémad-Bhägavatam*."

**23.1:** Thus while there are many authoritative scriptures, only *Çrémad-Bhägavatam* has been glorified with the statement "For the blind souls of Kali-yuga, this *Puräëa* has now risen like the sun" (*Bhäg.* 1.3.43). This comparison of the *Bhägavatam* to the sun indicates that without its help other scriptures cannot illuminate the Absolute Truth. The *Hayaçérña Païcarätra*, in its chapter classifying various scriptures, describes the *Tantra-bhägavata* as essentially a commentary on *Çrémad-Bhägavatam*. Among the *Bhägavatam*'s direct commentaries are the *Hanumad-bhāñya*, *Vāsanā-bhāñya*, *Sambandhokti*, *Vidvat-kāmadhenu*, *Tattva-dépikā*, *Bhävārtha-dépikā*, *Paramahaàsa-priyā*, and *Çuka-hādaya*;<sup>1</sup> there are also many works written about *Çrémad-Bhägavatam*, such as *Muktā-phala*, *Hari-lélä*, and *Bhakti-ratnāvalé*. All these works have been produced by the most eminent thinkers of their respective philosophical schools.

**23.2:** *Çrémad-Bhāgavatam* is also glorified in the *Dāna-khaëòà* section of Hemādri's *Catur-varga-cintāmaëi*. His chapter entitled "Giving *Purāëas* in Charity" praises *Çrémad-Bhāgavatam* by noting that it possesses the defining characteristics specified in the *Matsya Purāëa* (53.20-22). In the *Pariçeña-khaëòà* of the same book, in the *Kāla-nirēaya* section, where Hemādri defines the appropriate religion for Kali-yuga, he quotes the *Bhāgavatam* verse beginning *kalià sabhājayanty āryäù* (11.5.36). In this way he recognizes as appropriate for this age only the religious principles established in *Çrémad-Bhāgavatam*.

**23.3:** It is widely acknowledged that Çré Çaikarācārya is an incarnation of Lord Çiva. Çaikarācārya understood the importance of *Çrémad-Bhāgavatam*, which, with its statements about the bliss of pure devotional service surpassing even the joy of impersonal liberation, proves superior to his doctrine of impersonalism. He dared not interpret the *Bhāgavatam*, for he recognized it as an exposition of *Vedānta* philosophy that is without human author. As we shall explain later, on the Supreme Lord's order Çaikarācārya taught his doctrine of monism to conceal the Lord's identity. But still, to make his own words successful by saying something about *Çrémad-Bhāgavatam*, he touched on it indirectly, describing in his *Govindāññōaka* and other hymns certain pastimes of Lord Kāñëa's that are related only in the *Bhāgavatam*. These include Mother Yaçodā's amazement at seeing Kāñëa's universal form, and His stealing the clothes of the young damsels of Vraja.

**24.1:** Devotees of Lord Viñëu recount that although Çré Madhvācārya-caraëa belonged to the direct disciplic line of Çaikarācārya, upon reading the *Bhāgavatam* Madhvācārya changed his allegiance to the Vaiñëava school. Then, concerned that other Vaiñëavas might be influenced by the commentaries of other disciplic descendants of Çaikara, such as the commentary by showed the proper method of interpretation.

Comment [DDB1]: \*\*\*\*\*New (period)

**24.2:** For all these reasons, therefore, the following statements in the *Bhāgavatam* are appropriate. In the First Canto [1.3.41]: "After extracting the cream of all the *Vedas* and *Itihāsas*, Çré Vyāsadeva imparted this *Çrémad-Bhāgavatam* to his son Çukadeva, the best of the self-realized souls." In the Twelfth Canto [12.13.15]: "*Çrémad-Bhāgavatam* is declared to be the essence of all Vedānta philosophy. One who has felt satisfaction from its nectarean mellow will never be attracted to any other literature."

**24.3:** And in the First Canto [1.1.3]: "O expert and thoughtful men on the earth, relish *Çrémad-Bhāgavatam*, the mature fruit of the desire tree of Vedic literature, up to liberation and beyond. It emanated from the lips of Çré Çukadeva Gosvāmé. Therefore, this fruit has become even more tasteful, although its nectarean juice was already relishable for all, including liberated souls." Thus in the same canto [1.2.3]: "Let me offer my respectful obeisances unto him [Çukadeva], the spiritual master of all sages, the son of Vyāsadeva, who, out of his great compassion for those gross materialists who struggle to cross over the darkest regions of material existence, spoke this most confidential supplement to the cream of all Vedic knowledge, the transcendental torchlight of *Çrémad-Bhāgavatam*, after having personally assimilated it by experience." These verses imply that the teachings of *Çrémad-Bhāgavatam* rule over all other philosophies. (They also clearly indicate that Çré Çukadeva, by taking the speaker's seat amidst the assembled sages as the *Bhāgavatam's* preceptor, became the *guru* of everyone present.

**25.1:** Thus it is said [in *Çrémad-Bhāgavatam* 1.19.8-12]: "At that time all the great-minded thinkers, accompanied by their disciples, arrived there. On the plea of making a pilgrim's journey, such sages verily sanctify a place of pilgrimage just by their presence. From different parts of the universe there arrived great sages like Atri, Cyavana, Çaradvān, Ariññanemi, Bhāgu, Vasiññoha, Parāçara, Viçvāmitra, Aigirā, Paraçurāma,

Utathya, Indrapramada, Idhmabāhu, Medhātithi, Devala, Ārñōiñēēa, Bhāradvāja, Gautama, Pippalāda, Maitreya, Aurva, Kavaña, Kumbhayoni, Dvaipāyana, and the great personality Nārada. There were also many other saintly demigods, kings, and special royal orders called *aruēādayas* [a special rank of *rājārñis*] from different dynasties of sages. When they all assembled to meet the emperor [Parékñit], he received them properly and bowed his head to the ground. After all the *āñis* and others had seated themselves comfortably, the king, humbly standing before them with folded hands, told them of his decision to fast until death." Then the king said: "O trustworthy *brāhmaēas*, I now ask you about my immediate duty. Please, after proper deliberation, tell me of the unalloyed duty of everyone in all circumstances, and specifically of those who are just about to die" [*Bhāg.* 1.19.24]. Then, after the king's query: "At that moment there appeared the powerful son of Vyāsadeva, who traveled over the earth indifferent and satisfied within himself. He did not manifest any symptoms of belonging to any social order or status of life. He was surrounded by women and children, and he dressed as if others had neglected him" [*Bhāg.* 1.19.25].

**25.2:** Then the sages all rose from their seats to honor him. And finally: "Çukadeva Gosvāmē was then surrounded by saintly sages and demigods just as the moon is surrounded by stars, planets, and other heavenly bodies. His presence was gorgeous, and he was respected by all" [*Bhāg.* 1.19.30].

**26.1:** Çré Vyāsadeva and Nārada Muni were present in that assembly. Although these two sages were Çré Çuka's *guru* and grand-*guru*, respectively, when they heard *Çrémad-Bhāgavatam* issuing from his lips, they felt as if they had never heard it before. For this reason it is said here that he taught this most significant wisdom even to them. As mentioned earlier, *çuka-mukhād amāta-drava-saāyutam*: "The *Bhāgavatam* is enriched with nectarean juice from the mouth of Çuka" [*Bhāg.* 1.1.3]. Thus in this sense also *Çrémad-Bhāgavatam* is more glorious than any

other scripture. Statements about the superiority of other *Purāēas*, such as the *Matsya Purāēa*, are only relatively true. What more needs to be said! Indeed, *Çrémad-Bhāgavatam* is the very representation of Lord Kāñēa.

Comment [DDB2]: \*\*\*\*\*New

**26.2:** As the First Canto states: "This *Çrémad-Bhāgavatam* is as brilliant as the sun, and it has arisen just after the departure of Lord Kāñēa to His own abode, accompanied by religion, knowledge, etc. Persons who have lost their vision due to the dense darkness of ignorance in the Age of Kalishall get light from this *Purāēa*" [*Bhāg.* 1.3.43]. In this way we can see that only *Çrémad-Bhāgavatam* is full with all virtues, as stated in the second verse of the First Canto: "Here the supreme religion is explained and all cheating propensities are rejected." The supremacy of the *Bhāgavatam* is also confirmed by the words of both Vopadeva (in his *Muktā-phala*) and Hemādri: "The *Vedas*, *Purāēas*, and poetic works instruct one like a master, friend, or beloved, respectively, but *Çrémad-Bhāgavatam* instructs like all three."

**26.3:** Consequently, while some may think that other *Purāēas* need the support of the *Vedas'* authority, *Çrémad-Bhāgavatam* itself explicitly refutes the possibility that it may be dependent in this way; we thus receive the *Bhāgavatam* on its own authority alone. For this reason it is in fact the highest manifestation of *çrutí* [the original *Vedas*]. As it is said: "How did it so happen that King Parékñit met this great sage, making it possible for this Vedic text for the pure Vaiñēavas (*sātvaté çrutíu*) to be sung to him?" [*Bhāg.* 1.4.7]. That *Çrémad-Bhāgavatam* was compiled after the other *Purāēas*, as mentioned earlier, is known from the dialogue between Çré Vyāsa and Nārada Muni in the First Canto.