

# Highlights of what we learned last week's class on *Maṅgalācaraṇa*, or the auspicious invocation (1-8)

- Three types of *maṅgalācaraṇa*
  - Offering obeisances, invoking Lord's blessings, and identifying the book's primary subject
- The significance of Jīva's 1<sup>st</sup> *maṅgalācaraṇa* with quotation from SB (11.5.32) rather than composing a verse of his own
  - Reverence for SB and his surrender to the instructions of Sri Caitanya Mahāprabhu
- How Jīva convincingly resolves the controversy of *Triyuga*, which denies manifestation of the Lord in *Kali-yuga*
  - Lord does appear in *Kali-yuga*, but in a hidden form (*chhanna*) as His own devotee
  - Dual interpretations of *tviṣākrṣṇam* [grammatically permissible *tviṣā-krṣṇam* (black) versus *tviṣā-akṣṇam* (not black)]
  - Internally (*antaḥ*) black as Kṛṣṇa, but externally (*bahir*) golden yellow as Gaurakṛṣṇa
  - Significance of the 28<sup>th</sup> millennium of the 7<sup>th</sup> *manvantara* of Lord's Brahma's *sveta-varāha-kalpa*, when both Kṛṣṇa & Mahāprabhu appeared as the Original Personality of Godhead at the tail-end of *Dvāpara*- and during *Kali-yuga*, respectively.

Establish *anubandha-catustaya*, or the 4 prerequisites, which must be enumerated at the outset of a book, to capture the mind of a reader (6, 8)

- I. The criteria of eligibility for study of the book (*adhikāri*)
  - The reader exclusively must desire to worship the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa (6)
- II. The relation between the book and the subject itself (*sambandha*)
  - SB is the medium by which the subject of the book (Śrī Kṛṣṇa as *Svayam Bhagavān*) is related to the book itself (8)
- III. The subject (Śrī Kṛṣṇa) to be known by practical means for realizing Him (*viṣaya & abhidheya*)
  - *tat-pāda-bhājam*, or pure devotional worship of His lotus feet (8)
- IV. The book's goal or purpose (*prayojana*)  $\Rightarrow$  *kṛṣṇa-prema-bhakti* (8)

Lesson 3) Vedic authority &  
difficulties therein studying (9-12)

Lesson 8)  
Methodology of  
the Six  
Sandarbhas  
(27-28)

Lesson 7) SB is  
self-authoritative  
(23-26)

Part 1: *Pramāṇa-khaṇḍa*,  
or Epistemological  
Validity  
(*Anucchedas* 9-28)

Lesson 6) SB is the essence of all  
Vedic literature (19-22)

Lesson 4) *Itihāsa* &  
*Purāṇas* are the 5<sup>th</sup>  
Veda (13-15)

Lesson 5)  
The distinctive  
illumination of  
Vyāsadeva in his  
*samādhi*, or trance  
(16-18)



“This verse [8] has alluded to various topics: Śrī Kṛṣṇa; and then *sambandha*, or the relations between Him and the words that describe Him; and then what we are enjoined to do, or in other words *abhidheya*, the recommended practice of worshiping Him; and finally *prayojana*, the goal, or love for Him. But before we can elucidate these topics we must first settle the question of *pramāṇa*, the reliable means of ascertaining facts. In that regard, since an ordinary person is tainted by 4 faults, beginning with incorrect judgement, and especially because his faculties such as sensory perception are inadequate for establishing contact with a reality whose nature is super-mundane and inconceivable, those faculties are faulty.” [9]

# Necessity of Epistemological Validity: The ten *pramāṇas*, or evidences (9)

- Epistemological Validity—reliable, or infallible means of knowing or understanding the Ultimate or Absolute Reality  $\Rightarrow$  indispensable
  - How can we claim to know anything in truth if our means for knowing it to be flawed or uncertain?  $\therefore$  *pramāṇa*, or valid knowledge (evidence or authority)  $\Rightarrow$  from word *pramā*, & the knower is called *pramātā*)
- The fallibility is due to conditional state (modes of material nature) of human beings inherently subject to four defects
  - i. Delusion, or *bhrama*  $\Rightarrow$  arising from misidentification of the self as body
  - ii. Propensity to make mistakes, or *pramāda*  $\Rightarrow$  inattentiveness due to mind not fixed on a particular sense  $\Rightarrow$  unable to access the knowledge it can procure
  - iii. Cheating propensity, or *vipralipsā*  $\Rightarrow$  to compensate for their mistakes
  - iv. Imperfect senses, or *karaṇāpāṭava*  $\Rightarrow$  the 5 cognitive senses operating thru' their sense objects  $\Rightarrow$  built-in functional limitations
- The problem is further compounded because of the transcendental subject, the Ultimate Reality or Absolute Truth (Tattva)  $\Rightarrow$  Śrī Kṛṣṇa

- Ten traditional *pramāṇas*, with the first 3 important, but *śabda-pramāṇa* being most important [9, 10]
  - 1) *Pratyakṣa*, direct sense perception
  - 2) *Anumāna*, inference (sun's rising inferred by light coming from horizon)
  - 3) *Śabda*, revealed sound knowledge (scriptural)
  - 4) *Ārṣa*, the statements of an authoritative sage (but may have different opinions)
  - 5) *Upamāna*, comparison (men are similar, so what one man is like may indicate what another is like, but also may not)
  - 6) *Arthāpatti*, presumption (to indicate or suggest w/out being explicitly stated)
  - 7) *Anupalabdhi*, non-cognition of being (if something is not there it may suggest it is stolen)
  - 8) *Sambhava*, possibility
  - 9) *Aitihya*, tradition
  - 10) *Cestā*, gesture or sign



Therefore these are not reliable sources of valid knowledge. We want to understand that object which transcends everything, and whose wonderful nature no person can conceive or imagine. For this our source of knowledge can only be the Vedas. The Vedas consist of nonmaterial sound, and they alone should be our *pramāṇa* because from them have issued all department of knowledge, mundane and spiritual, among all schools of human thought since time immemorial. [10]

***Apauruṣeya-Śabda-Pramāṇa* ⇒ the Vedas as the only infallible means for acquiring knowledge of the transcendence [10]**

- ***Apauruṣeya*** ⇒ not of human origin (∴ free from the 4 defects of the conditioned human beings) ⇒ rather of divine origin ⇒ eternal ⇒ revealed by the unknowable Supreme Lord to the 1<sup>st</sup> living entity, Brahma at the very beginning of material creation
- The schools of philosophical thoughts (*śad-darśana*) accept the Vedic authority of knowledge as ***apauruṣeya*** (though contested by the modern scholars)
- The Vedas are the actual source of all knowledge, both mundane and spiritual
- BV warns about ***śabda-pramāṇa*** which is not ***apauruṣeya*** ∴ subject to human defects
- Further establishing the value of ***apauruṣeya-śabda-pramāṇa*** (*Sarva-saṁvādinī*)



This is upheld by statements like these: “Because logical conjecture is never conclusive...Things inconceivable cannot be explained by logic...Because scripture is the source of knowledge about it...No, because the revealed scriptures say otherwise and knowledge of the Supreme is derived from transcendental sound.” And this: “For the forefathers, demigods, and human race, O Lord, the Vedas are Your own perfect eyes. They are the best instrument for seeing what cannot ordinarily be perceived and for ascertaining the goals and means of progressive life.”

[11]

- The Vedas have no human author. However, among the humans, Vyāsadeva, the editor of the Vedas is universally recognized as the empowered literary incarnation of Lord Nārāyaṇa
- Ample scriptural evidence from *Vedānta-sūtra*, *Mahābhārata* and statement of Uddhava (compiled by Vyāsadeva) as the renowned Vedic scholar  $\Rightarrow$  The Vedic authority is actually the authority of the Supreme Lord; thru' Vedas the Lord reveals the deliberations of His own intelligence and offer the divine vision of His personal viewpoint to those willing to accept it.
- *Śāstra-yonitvāt* (3<sup>rd</sup> of the *Vedānta-sūtra*)  $\Rightarrow$  Transcendence is beyond mundane logic
- In *Sarva-saṁvādinī*, Jīva deals with a number of technical matters about the perception of higher truth thru' language  $\Rightarrow$  Vedic teachings cannot be understood correctly by mundane speculative methods

We should consider: The authoritative sound of the Vedas is impossible for anyone in present times to study completely, its meaning is difficult to construe, and even the sages who have explained it in commentaries disagree among one another. For these reasons we would be well advised to turn our attention to the *śabda-pramāṇa* of the *Itihāsa & Purāṇas*, which are substantially nondifferent from the Vedas and which definitively explain what the Vedas mean. Since the Vedic texts whose purport is not self-evident can be deciphered by reference to the *Itihāsa & Purāṇas*, the *Itihāsa & Purāṇas* are the appropriate sources of correct knowledge for our times. [12.1]



Thus, we read in both the *Mahābhārata* and the *Manu-Saṁhitā*, “One should complete the Vedas with the *Itihāsa & Purāṇas*.” And elsewhere it is said, “The name *Purāṇa* comes from the word ‘completion’ [*Purāṇa*].” Just as one cannot properly fill in the missing part of a broken gold bangle with cheap tin, one cannot complete the Vedas with that which is not also Veda. [12.2]

“But if the sound which constitutes the Vedas includes the *Itihāsa & Purāṇas*, then we need to look [within the Vedas] for another set of *Itihāsa & Purāṇas* [a set other than those commonly read].

Otherwise the *Itihāsa & Purāṇas* will not be nondifferent from the Vedas.” The answer is that they are in fact nondifferent because the whole unified collection of words expresses one distinct message. In other words, both have *apauruṣeya* authority [having no human author]. In spite of this nondifference, the texts are assigned to separate categories in terms of differences in intonation and exact order. [12.3]



*This nondifference—on the grounds that the Itihāsa & Purāṇas are as much apauruṣeya as the Ṛg and other Vedas—is implied in the passage of the Mādhyandina-śruti beginning “Thus indeed the breath of this Supreme Being constitutes the Ṛg Veda, Yajur Veda, Sām Veda, Atharvāṅgirasa Veda, Itihāsa & Purāṇa.” [12.4]*



Although the Vedas are indeed the *apauruṣeya-śabda-pramāṇa*, therein are difficulties studying [12]

- The idea is that even though the Vedas are the best source of infallible knowledge, there are problems with the Vedas; hence, the need to accept the authority of *Itihāsa & Purāṇa*.
- Vyāsadeva divided the original one Veda into 4 for the people in Kali-yuga because of their limited intelligence and life-span
- Two main divisions of the Vedas, which don't always manifest—*śruti* (that which is heard) & *smṛti* (that which is remembered)

## ■ Difficulties in studying the Vedas

1. The unavailability of the complete text of the Vedas (<6%)
2. Concerns their language—Vedic Sanskrit is too complex to decipher without hearing and explained by a realized teacher in disciplic succession for common people.
3. Even before studying the Vedas, one must study their six limbs called *Vedāṅgas*—each of them is extensive and requires serious study.
4. The problem is further compounded by the fact that in the Age of Kali, human memory has grown weaker—formerly a student could assimilate all knowledge from his teacher simply by hearing and remembering, which is no longer possible.
5. An alternative of studying the *Vedānta-sūtra*, the definitive summary of the Vedic conclusions, is not practical because of its ambiguity
6. Jīva's alternative to solve the dilemma—Study the *Itihāsa & Purāṇa* in a commonly spoken & understood (*laukika*) Sanskrit, as opposed to the Vedic Sanskrit in which the meaning of the words can be changed if mispronounced.