

Lesson 3 highlights: Vedic authority, but difficulties studying therein (9-12)

- Necessity of Epistemological Validity: Ten *pramāṇas*, or evidences
- The 4 defects of conditioned human beings
- *Apauruṣeya-Śabda-Pramāṇa* ⇒ the Vedas as the only infallible means for acquiring knowledge of the transcendence
- Although the Vedas are indeed the *apauruṣeya-śabda-pramāṇa*, therein are 4 difficulties studying
- 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.

- Originally one *Yajur-Veda*, but Vyasa divided into 4 *Vedas*—*R̥g*, *Yajur*, *Sāma*, and *Atharva*—constitute the means of valid knowing of the Absolute ⇒ practical difficulties in studying them in Kali-yuga
 - Technically though, *Atharva-Veda* has been attributed to Aṅgira Ṛṣi and his disciple(?) named Atharva
- Each of the 4 *Vedas* has four subdivisions, namely

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>Samhitā</i> ■ <i>Brāhmaṇa</i> ■ <i>Āraṇyaka</i> ■ <i>Upaniṣad</i> 	}	<p><i>Śruti-śāstra</i>, or the revealed infallible sound knowledge that which is heard and propagated thru' disciplic succession from the very beginning of creation</p>
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- *Itihāsa & Purāṇas* (Vedic historic narrations) ⇒ *Smṛti-śāstra*, or that which is remembered—composed by sages in tradition of explaining the meaning of the *Śruti-śāstras*. These include the six *Vedāṅgas*.

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
5th Veda (13-15)

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

Brahma manifests *Itihāsa & Purāṇas*, along with the Vedas from his 4 mouths ∴ Same source (13)

Further description of the Vedic nature of the *Itihāsa & Purāṇas* (15)

Lesson 4)
Itihāsa & Purāṇas are the 5th Veda (13-15)

Following compilation of the 4 Vedas, Śrīla Veda-Vyāsa condensed and divided the remaining one billion verses into (14)

- 400,000 verses of the 18 *Purāṇas* &
- 100,000 verses of *Mahābhārata*

“Therefore the *Prabhāsa-khaṇḍa* of the *Skanda Purāṇa* states, “In ancient times Brahmā, the grandfather of the immortal demigods, executed severe penances. As a result, the *Vedas* became manifest, along with their six supplements, their word-for-word glosses, and their reordered texts. There then appeared the entire *Purāṇa*, incorporating all scriptures. The *Purāṇa* is unchanging, consists of eternal sound, is auspicious, and includes as many as one billion verses. It emanated from Lord Brahmā’s mouth. Listen to the description of its divisions: First is the *Brahma Purāṇa*. The figure of one billion mentioned here refers to the number of verses extant on Brahmā’s planet. In a passage similar to the one quoted above from the *Skanda Purāṇa*, the Third Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* has a passage that starts “Beginning from the front face of Brahmā, gradually the four *Vedas*—*Ṛg*, *Yajur*, *Sāma*, and *Atharva*—became manifest” [*Bhāg.* 3.12.37]. In this passage we find the statement “Then Brahmā created the fifth *Veda*—the *Purāṇas* and the histories—from all his mouths, since he could see all the past, present, and future” [*Bhāg.* 3.12.39]. Here also the word *veda* refers to the *Purāṇas* and *Itihāsas*.” [13.1-2)

“Elsewhere we find similar statements to the effect that “the *Purāṇa* is the fifth *Veda*”:
“The *Itihāsas* and *Purāṇas* are called the fifth *Veda*” [Bhāg. 1.4.20]. “He taught the *Vedas* along with the fifth of their number, the *Mahābhārata*” [Mahābhārata, Mokṣa-dharma 340.21]. If the *Itihāsas* and *Purāṇas* were not Vedic, they would not be specified as “the fifth” in such statements as these, since counting necessarily involves things that belong to a same category. Moreover, the *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa* states, “The *Veda* written by Kṛṣṇa [Dvaipāyana Vyāsa] is the fifth *Veda* and is known as the *Mahābhārata*.” And the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* of the *Kauthumīya* branch of the *Sāma Veda* states, “Sir, I have studied the *Ṛg Veda*, the *Yajur Veda*, the *Sāma Veda*, the fourth or *Atharva Veda*, and the *Itihāsa-Purāṇa*, which is the fifth *Veda*.” And so on. Thus is disproved the objection that denies the authenticity of the *Itihāsas* and *Purāṇas* as we know them by presuming that the *Itihāsa* and *Purāṇa* mentioned in the *Bṛhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad*’s statement about “the breath of this Supreme Being” are nothing more than certain parts of the four *Vedas*. The same is said by the words beginning “First is the *Brahma Purāṇa*.” [13.3-5]

- Jīva cites both *Śruti-* and *Śruti-śāstras* to substantiate (primarily *Chāndogya-Upaniṣad*) *Itihāsa & Purāṇas*' status as the same source as the 4 *Vedas*, and in fact they are the 5th *Veda*.
- The opinions of certain *mimāṃsā* scholars \Rightarrow over an immense period of time, many of the original *Purāṇaic* portion of the *Vedas* got lost.
- The author refutes these arguments on the grounds that they emanated separately from the mouths of Lord Brahmā.
- The *apauruseya*, or divine nature of the *Itihāsa & Purāṇas* is substantiated in the *Vedas*; some of these are then quoted.
- Vyāsadeva, hence he is referred to as Veda-Vyāsa, condensed and divided (thus edited but not composed) from the original one billion verses in the Brahmāloka into 400,000 and 100,000 verses of the 18 *Purāṇas* and *Itihāsa* (*Mahābhārata* originally written in 60 million verses!), respectively, on this planet for the people in the Age of *Kali*.

“These words spoken by Sūta Gosvāmī in the *Vāyu Purāṇa* [60.16–18, 21–22] describe why the *Itihāsa* and *Purāṇa* are considered the fifth *Veda*: "The Personality of Godhead [Śrīla Vyāsadeva] then chose me as an authorized speaker of the *Itihāsas* and *Purāṇas*. At first there was only one *Veda*, the *Yajur Veda*. Vyāsadeva divided it into four parts. Within these were manifested the ritual activities of the four kinds of priests, on which basis he arranged for the performance of sacrifice. With the *yajur-mantras* he arranged the activities of the Adhvaryu priests, with the *ṛg-mantras* those of the Hotā priests, with the *sāma-mantras* those of the Udgātā priests, and with the *atharva-mantras* those of the Brahma priests. O best of *brāhmaṇas*, out of the *ākhyānas*, *upākhyānas* and *gāthas* Vyāsadeva fashioned his summary of the *Purāṇas*, being thoroughly conversant with the purport of the *Purāṇas*. Whatever was left over [from the division of the *Veda* into four] is considered *Yajur Veda*. Such is the definitive word on understanding the revealed scriptures.” [14.1]

“We also see that the *Itihāsas* and *Purāṇas* are employed in the recitation of the *Brahma-yajña*, as is enjoined, "[The texts to be recited include] *Brāhmaṇas*, *Itihāsas* and *Purāṇas*" [*Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* 2.9]. This could not be the case if the *Itihāsas* and *Purāṇas* were not Vedic. The Supreme Lord says in the *Matsya Purāṇa* [53.8], "O best of *brāhmaṇas*, foreseeing that in the course of time the *Purāṇas* will be neglected, I appear as Vyāsa in each age and make an abridgement of them." According to what we have seen here, what the Lord means in saying this is "I edit the already existing *Purāṇa* for easier assimilation." Immediately after this the following is said: "In every *Dvāpara-yuga* I divide the *Purāṇa* into eighteen books totaling four hundred thousand verses, in which form they are disseminated on this earth. But even today on the planets of the demigods the *Purāṇa* contains one billion verses. The purport of that original *Purāṇa* is concisely incorporated in the four hundred thousand verse edition" [*Matsya Pur.* 53.9–11]. Since it has been stated that "Whatever was left over is considered *Yajur Veda*," these four hundred thousand verses were not new compositions but the most useful portions of the original collected into an essential abridgement in this world of mortals." [14.1-4]

- Vyāsadeva authorized Sūta Gosvāmī as the speaker of the *Itihāsa* and *Purāṇa*.
- Four different categories of Vedic *mantras* exist eternally.
- Different Vyāsa for each cycles of the ages; all of them empowered incarnations of Lord Nārāyaṇa.
- *Brhma-yajñāḥ* ⇒ The “five great sacrifices, or the *pañca-mahā-yajñāḥ*” recommended for every Vedic householder *brāhmaṇa*.

“The same picture is drawn, describing the *Purāṇas* in conjunction with the *Vedas*, in the *Vāyavīya-saṁhitā* [1.1.37–38] of the *Śiva Purāṇa*: "The great master condensed the four *Vedas* and divided them into four parts. Because he separated the *Vedas* into parts, he is called Veda-vyāsa. He also condensed the *Purāṇa* into four hundred thousand verses, although even today it contains one billion verses on the planets of the demigods." "Was condensed" (*saṅkṣiptam*) here implies "by him" to complete the idea. The names of *Purāṇas* like *Skanda* and *Agni*, however, pertain to the *Purāṇas'* speakers, in the same way as the names *Kāṭhaka* and so on. Or else, they pertain to the conventional order in which they were composed. Therefore when we sometimes hear that the *Purāṇas* are not eternal, this is only in reference to their visible manifestation and disappearance. Thus we have proven [in Texts 13–15.2] that the *Itihāsas* and *Purāṇas* are Vedic.” [15.1-2]

“That persons like Sūta Gosvāmī had the privilege to speak the *Itihāsas* and *Purāṇas* follows the pattern of the qualification for chanting the name Śrī Kṛṣṇa, which is the perfect fruit of the creeper of the entire Vedic śruti. As the *Prabhāsa-khaṇḍa* states, "This name Kṛṣṇa is the sweetest of the sweet, the most auspicious of all auspicious things. It is the perfect fruit of the creeper of the entire Vedic śruti. In essence it is pure, living spirit. O best of the Bhṛgus, any human being who just chants this name even once, whether with faith or neglectfully, will become liberated." And as the *Viṣṇu-dharma* also states, "One is considered to have studied the *R̥g Veda*, *Yajur Veda*, *Sāma Veda* and *Atharva Veda* who has uttered the two syllables Ha-ri." The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, furthermore, states that the *Itihāsas* and *Purāṇas* explain definitively the meaning of the *Vedas*, in such verses as "On the pretext of writing the *Mahābhārata*, Śrīla Vyāsa has revealed the *Vedas*' meaning. Without doubt all the *Vedas* are given a firm foundation in the *Purāṇas*." Even though we understand that the *Itihāsas* and *Purāṇas* are just two types of śāstra among many which elucidate the meaning of the *Vedas*, still these two are special on account of the special status of their promulgator. As stated in the *Padma Purāṇa*, "Even Brahmā and other demigods do not know everything Dvaipāyana Vyāsa knows. He understands everything known to anyone else, but some things he knows no one else can comprehend." [15.3-5]

- The 18 *Purāṇas* are not written for their namesakes ⇒ Only some of them are named after their speakers, while others are named after the deities they glorify.
- That only properly purified and trained brāhmaṇas are allowed to teach the Vedas is not merely a prejudice of the caste conscious ritualistics—*Vaiṣṇava* authorities also acknowledge this standard.
- The *Purāṇas* are eternal, but they sometimes manifest and unmanifest in the human society.
- Then why is it a low class person called upon to recite *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*? This is just as everyone is authorized to chant the holy names Kṛṣṇa ⇒ Strictly speaking though, this is recommended only when properly initiated by a bona fide guru and after following the 4 regulated principles for realizing its full potency and to avoid offenses ⇒ However, it is the mercy of Lord Caitanya that it is recommended for everyone in the Age of Kali.