

I) SB is the  
essence of  
all Vedic  
literature  
[19-22;  
Lesson 6]

Characteristics  
of SB that  
establish its  
epistemological  
validity [19-26]

II) SB is self-  
authoritative  
[23-26;  
Lesson 7]

Identifying and Glorifying *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*

SB is the natural commentary on *Vedānta-Sūtra*  
& essence of *Gāyatrī mantra* [19]

Further  
explanation  
of the  
*Gāyatrī*  
*mantra*  
through SB  
[22]

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Other  
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[20]

SB establishes the meaning of *Mahābhārata* [21]

# SB is the natural commentary on *Vedānta-Sūtra* & essence of *Gāyatrī mantra* [19]

- SB contains the story of its own appearance as the crowning achievement of Vyāsadeva’s literary efforts
- Various *Purāṇas* mention their relationship between SB and *Gāyatrī mantra*
- Śrīdhara Svāmī comments in his *Bhāvārtha-dīpikā* that SB begins with *Gāyatrī mantra*
- Reasons why Vyasa did not directly write *Gāyatri* in SB— Rather expressed the form & idea of *Gāyatrī* in the SB without using the actual *mantra*—except the word “*dhimahi*, or let us meditate on.”

- The *Matsya-Purāṇa* identifies SB as follows:
  - Based on *Gāyatrī mantra*
  - Full description of *dharmā*
  - Narrates slaying of *Vṛtrāsura*
  - Contains 18,000 verses
- Glories of SB: “If you copy it and give it away, mounted on a golden throne on the full moon of *Bhadra* you will attain the supreme goal. It is the only book which is described as being worthy of being put on a throne of gold.”
- A small beginning of the discussion on the connection between SB 1.1.1 and *Gāyatrī*, which is continued in more detail in *annuchheda 22*

# Other *Purāṇas* glorify SB [20]

- Without directly embroiling himself in the controversy of whether the SB is the real *Bhāgavatam* and not the *Devī-Bhāgavatam* (DB), Jīva cites several statements from other *Purāṇas*, which include convincing evidence of SB being one of the 18 *Purāṇas*.
- While there are certain similarities between SB and DB (the 5 characteristics), SB has 4 distinguishing characteristics that firmly establish its identity in the *Purāṇic* statements (thus denying DB proponents' claim)
- The narrative of *Hayagrīva-brahma-vidyā* and its proper understanding.
- SB's place of honor even among the *sāttvic Purāṇas*

# Similarities & differences between SB & DB

## Similarities

- Twelve Cantos, 18,000 verses
- Narration of the Vṛtrāsura pastime, although subtle variations in the details
- Same glorification, but the golden lion is interpreted to mean Durgādevī's carrier

## Differences

- SB begins with *Gāyatrī mantra*
- SB contains *Hayagrīva-brahma-vidyā*, and the events occurred in *Sārasvata kalpa*
- SB was first spoken by Śukadeva Gosvāmī to Parikṣit Mahārāja
- Later on spoken by Sūta to the sages of *Naimiṣāraṇya*

- Further identification, this time from *Skanda-Purāṇa*: More or less identical to the *Matsya-Purāṇa* verse in verse 19
  - Based on *Gāyatrī mantra*
  - Describes *dharma* in its fullest extent
  - Narrates slaying of *Vṛtrāsura*
  - *Sārasvata-kalpa* (mode of truth)—same as *sveta-varāha-kalpa*
- The same verse is also found in the *Agni-Purāṇa*
- Another *Purāṇa* (unknown, but accepted as authentic because of being quoted by Śrīdhara Svāmī)
  - It is Dadhīci Ṛṣi as Hayagrīva, or Aśva-śira, who imparts transcendental knowledge (*Hayagrīva-brahma-vidyā*, or *Nārāyaṇa-kavaca* prayers) to the Aśvinī twin brothers (the celestial physicians)
  - 12 cantos, 18000 verses

# SB establishes the meaning of *Mahābhārata* [21]

- Discussion based on the *Garuḍa-Purāṇa*
  - a) SB is the natural commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra*.
  - b) It establishes the message of the *Mahābhārata*
- Is SB the 19<sup>th</sup> *Purāṇa*? Jīva explains that it is not so.
- Generally different *Purāṇas* glorify themselves, and so does SB. But it is also glorified by some of them, such as *Skanda-*, *Padma-*, *Garuḍa-Purāṇa*, etc., expected to be the rivals of SB.
- *Garuḍa-Purāṇa* establishes the meaning of *Mahābhārata*.
  - How does it determine the meaning of Mahabharata? First it says that the Mahabharata determines the significance of the scriptures. It is “heavier” than all the Vedas.
- The confidential essence of *Mahābhārata* is its glorification of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and that happens to be the entire subject matter of SB
  - Its revelation of the Personality of Godhead, which is found in few of its sections, including the *BG*, *Viṣṇu-sahaśra-nāma*, and *Nārāyaṇa*. In SB, the same essence of the Vedas is amplified and explained into a complete programed course on the science of God consciousness.



- Are there two versions of SB? The great sage Vyāsadeva revised the earlier version following revelations in his trance after Nārada Muni’s recommendation.
- The *Mahābhārata* is literally heavier than the Vedas
  - This heaviness came about because the *Mahābhārata*, using simple narrations, elaborated upon and lucidly explained the cryptic subject matter of the Vedas.
- Originally, the *Mahābhārata* had 6 million verses, but presently on the earth only 100,000 verses exist.
- The *Mahābhārata* is more versatile than the Vedas because therein the absence of the Vedic restrictions. However, it speaks of mundane subject matter as well, which is totally absent in the SB.
- The superiority of SB, on the basis of the position of Śuka, and the elevated nature of his realization.

## Further explanation of the *Gāyatrī mantra* through SB [22]

- A deeper understanding of the *Gāyatrī mantra* in SB 1.1.1, which he is going to further elaborate in the *Paramatmā-sandarbhā, annuchheda* 124.
- Within the *Gāyatrī mantra*, it is actually the glorification of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, rather than the sun-god or the impersonal Brahman.
- SB is the *Sāma-Veda* among the *Purāṇas*
  - It reconciles with the other *Purāṇas* just as the *Sāma-Veda* does the *Vedas' kāṇḍas*
- The “golden lion throne”
  - Śrīdhara Svāmī explains the “*simha*, or the lion)” indicates *simha-āsana*, or the throne of the Deity’s throne

## *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.1.1*

*om namo bhagavate vāsudevāya*

*janmādy asya yato'nvayād itarataś cārtheṣv abhijñah svarāt*

*tene brahma hṛdāya ādi-kavaye muhyanti yat sūrayah*

*tejo-vāri-mṛdām yathā vinimayo yatra tri-sargo'mṛṣā*

*dhāmnā svena sadā nirasta-kuhakaṁ satyaṁ param dhīmahī*

“O my Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, son of Vasudeva, O all-pervading Personality of Godhead, I offer my respectful obeisances unto You. I meditate upon Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa because He is the Absolute Truth and the primeval cause of all causes of the creation, sustenance and destruction of the manifested universes. He is directly and indirectly conscious of all manifestations, and He is independent because there is no other cause beyond Him. It is He only who first imparted the Vedic knowledge unto the heart of Brahmājī, the original living being. By Him even the great sages and demigods are placed into illusion, as one is bewildered by the illusory representations of water seen in fire, or land seen on water. Only because of Him do the material universes, temporarily manifested by the reactions of the three modes of nature, appear factual, although they are unreal. I therefore meditate upon Him, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is eternally existent in the transcendental abode, which is forever free from the illusory representations of the material world. I meditate upon Him, for He is the Absolute Truth.”

- “*dhimahi*, or let us meditate on.”
- “*Janmādy asya yataḥ...*” is paralleled in Gāyatrī by the word “*savituḥ*”
- Normally, “*savitur*” refers to the sun, but it also has a sense of being the root of everything, as the sun is the root of life in this universe. It is actually the Supersoul within the sun-god that is referred to.
- *Tene brahma hrdā* (who revealed the Vedas to Brahmā through the heart) is paralleled in Gāyatrī by the word “*pracodayāta*,” which means to inspire the consciousness from within
- “*tri-sargo ’mṛṣā*” ⇒ *bhur, bhuvah, svaḥ*
- “*svarāṭā*” (self-effulgent, not taking its power from anywhere else) ⇒ *devasya*, from root *deu* (to shine or be effulgent)
- *param varenyam* (supreme) effulgence of the Lord’s *brahma-jyoti*

Various commentaries establish the position of  
SB [23-24.1]

Concluding  
confirmation  
of the unique  
importance of  
SB  
[26.2-26.3]

II) SB is self-  
authoritative [23-  
26; Lesson 7]

SB  
explains  
its own  
position  
[24.2-  
24.3]

Pre-eminent position of Śukadeva Gosvāmī [25-26.1]

# Various commentaries establish the position of SB [23-24.1]

- SB is particularly important in the Age of Kali
  - When Śānūnaka Ṛṣi questioned Sūta Gosvāmī where religion would take shelter now that Kṛṣṇa had returned to His own abode, Sūta compared SB to the sun because it shines the light of the Absolute Truth so brightly that it can dissipate the dense darkness of Kali-yuga (SB 1.3.43)
- How SB became manifest from Kṛṣṇa to Brahmā to Nārada to Vyāsa  
⇒ *Catuh-Ślokī-Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (2.9.33-36)
- Jīva cites numerous commentaries by the *ācāryas* of various *sampradāyas*, which were known to him in the 16<sup>th</sup> century
- Hemādri's writings mention SB 1.3.43 prominently about the process of religion in Kali-yuga

- Śaṅkarācārya respected SB both by not commenting on it and by composing prayers (*Govindāṣṭaka*) based on its narrations
- The importance of the appearance of Śaṅkarācārya
  - The Personality of Godhead Govinda ordered Lord Śiva to take birth as Śaṅkara to propagate impersonalism.
  - From the Māyāvāda viewpoint, Śaṅkarācārya wrote commentaries on the Vedānta-sūtra, eleven of the principle Upaniṣads, the Bg, and Śrī Viṣṇu Sahasranāma
- Still later, the SPG appeared as His own devotee in the form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu
  - Jīva subsequent *annuchhedas* will show inconsistencies between Śaṅkarācārya's monism philosophy and actual conclusions of the Vedas
- Madhvācārya revived the Brahma-sampradāya, which had become virtually indistinguishable from the Māyāvāda school of Śaṅkarācārya



# SB explains its own position [24.2-24.3]

- Madhvācārya's commentary on Śrīmad Bhāgavatam
  - Jīva explains Madhvācārya's reason for commenting on SB
  - Śaṅkarācārya wrote poems glorifying Kṛṣṇa's pastimes as depicted in SB, but some of his followers, not understanding his true intension, took this as a license to try to interpret SB from their Māyāvāda viewpoint.
- SB as the topmost scripture and Śukadeva Gosvāmī's unique position as the speaker of the SB
  - SB is the highly condensed essence of all the Śrutīes and Smṛtīes
  - The teachings of SB rule over all other scriptures.

# Pre-eminent position of Śukadeva Gosvāmī [25-26.1]

- Upon his arrival, despite he had no material credentials, Śuka was honored as Guru even by Vyāsa, Nārada Muni, Parāsara Muni, and all the greatest sages of the universe gathered over there to hear his recitation of SB to Parikṣit
- Jīva cites various references to support his claim
- Śuka's presentation of SB amazed even Vyāsa and Nārada as if they never heard SB before
- Because SB was spoken by Śuka, SB is even more glorious than any other scriptures
- SB is the very representation of Lord Kṛṣṇa

# Concluding confirmation of the unique importance of SB [26.2-26.3]

- Three voices of Vedic tradition—like a ruler, like a friend, and like a lover
- Interesting situation with Śuka speaking in the presence of his guru and guru's guru
  - The customary etiquette is that a disciple should never sit higher than his teachers nor speak as an authority in their presence
  - Śuka speaking SB from an elevated seat in their positions is one of the rare exceptions
- Three reasons why SB is so great—its unparalleled author (Vyāsa), its eminent speaker (Śuka), and its elevated audience (Parikṣit, Vyasa, Nārada and all the greatest sages of the universe never gathered as before)
- The supreme position of SB