



Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam

Canto - XII

with the Sārārtha-darśinī Commentary of
Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhakkura

Translated by
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Chapter One



The Kings Of Kali-Yuga

||12.1.1-2 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

*yo 'ntyah purañjayo nāma bhaviṣyo bārahadrathah
tasyāmātyas tu śunako hatvā svāminam ātma-jam*

*pradyota-samjñam rājānam kartā yat-pālakah sutah
viśākhayūpas tat-putro bhavitā rājakas tatah*

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: The last king mentioned of the future rulers of the Māgadha dynasty was Purañjaya, a descendant of Bṛhadratha. Purañjaya's minister Śunaka will assassinate the king and install his own son, Pradyota, on the throne. The son of Pradyota will be Pālaka, his son will be Viśākhayūpa, and his son will be Rājaka.

COMMENTARY

Offering respects to *guru* and Kṛṣṇa, the ocean of mercy, I take shelter of Śukadeva, master of the world, eye of the universe. I offer myself and everything I possess to he who is the life of the *gopīs*, the controller, for service to his dear devotees.

The Twelfth Canto, in thirteen chapters, discusses the four types of *nirodha* or destruction. Amidst this, there are also topics about

Kṛṣṇa. Three chapters discuss the destruction of *dharma* in Kali-yuga. Two chapters describe conversations between Śukadeva and Parīkṣit. One chapter discusses the Purāṇas. Three chapters describe Mārkaṇḍeya and the movements of the sun. Three chapters conclude the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*.

In two Cantos, the nectar of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes in the moon dynasty has been described for drowning all people in bliss. Now, in order to produce detachment from all other things in people, the rest of the moon dynasty is described. The Ninth Canto described that in the Puru dynasty Uparicaravasū had a son named Bṛhadratha. His son was Jarāsandha, whose son was Sahadeva. Now, in this dynasty the son of Sahadeva was named Mārjārī, and Mārjārī's son was Śrutaśravā. In this way, twenty kings up to Ripuñjaya were described.¹ The end of the dynasty when the families become mixed is also described.

Purañjaya (another name for Ripuñjaya) was the descendant of Bṛhadratha. After killing him, Śunaka will install his son Pradyota as king. Pradyota's son was called Pālaka. Because this line arose from Pradyota it is called the Pradyotana dynasty.

||12.1.3 ||

*nandivardhanas tat-putraḥ pañca pradyotanā ime
aṣṭa-trimśottara-śataṁ bhoksyanti pṛthivīm nṛpāḥ*

TRANSLATION

The son of Rājaka will be Nandivardhana, and thus in the Pradyotana dynasty there will be five kings, who will rule the earth for 138 years.

||12.1.4 ||

*śiśunāgas tato bhāvyaḥ kākavarṇas tu tat-sutaḥ
kṣemadharmā tasya sutaḥ kṣetrajñāḥ kṣemadharmajaḥ*

¹ SB 9.22.49

TRANSLATION

Nandivardhana will have a son named Śīsunāga, and his son will be known as Kākavarṇa. The son of Kākavarṇa will be Kṣemadharmā, and the son of Kṣemadharmā will be Kṣetrajña.

||12.1.5 ||

*vidhisāraḥ sutas tasyā- jātaśatruḥ bhaviṣyati
darbhakas tat-suto bhāvī darbhakasyājayaḥ smṛtaḥ*

TRANSLATION

The son of Kṣetrajña will be Vidhisāra, and his son will be Ajātaśatru. Ajātaśatru will have a son named Darbhaka, and his son will be Ajaya.

||12.1.6-8 ||

*nandivardhana ājeyo mahānandiḥ sutas tataḥ
śīsunāgā daśaivaite saṣṭy-uttara-śata-trayam*

*samā bhokṣyanti pṛthivīm kuru-śreṣṭha kalau nṛpāḥ
mahānandi-suto rājan śūdrā-garbhodbhavo balī*

*mahāpadma-patiḥ kaścin nandaḥ kṣatra-vināśa-kṛt
tato nṛpā bhaviṣyanti śūdra-prāyās tv adhārmikāḥ*

TRANSLATION

Ajaya will father a second Nandivardhana, whose son will be Mahānandi. O best of the Kurus, these ten kings of the Śīsunāga dynasty will rule the earth for a total of 360 years during the age of Kali. My dear Parīkṣit, King Mahānandi will father a very powerful son in the womb of a śūdra woman. He will be known as Nanda and will be the master of great wealth. He will destroy kṣatriyas, and from that time onward virtually all kings will be irreligious śūdras.

COMMENTARY

Ājeyah means "the son of Ajaya." The letter e is poetic license.

||12.1.9 ||

*sa eka-cchatrām pṛthivīm anullaṅghita-śāsanah
śāsiṣyati mahāpadmo dvitīya iva bhārgavaḥ*

TRANSLATION

Wealthy King Nanda, without challenge to his authority, will rule over the entire earth just like a second Paraśurāma.

COMMENTARY

He is called *mahā-padma* because he was the master of great wealth or a great number of troops. He is compared to Paraśurāma because he destroyed the *kṣatriyas*.

||12.1.10 ||

*tasya cāṣṭau bhaviṣyanti sumālya-pramukhāḥ sutāḥ
ya imām bhokṣyanti mahīm rājānaś ca śataṁ samāḥ*

TRANSLATION

He will have eight sons, headed by Sumālya, who will control the earth as kings for one hundred years.

||12.1.11 ||

*nava nandān dvijaḥ kaścit prapannān uddhariṣyati
teṣām abhāve jagatīm mauryā bhokṣyanti vai kalau*

TRANSLATION

A certain *brāhmaṇa* will overthrow King Nanda and his eight sons, though they trusted him. In their absence, the Mauryas will rule the world as the age of Kali continues.

COMMENTARY

Nava-nandān means “Nanda and his eight sons.” The *brāhmaṇa* named Cānākya will uproot them, though they trusted him (*prannanān*). The Maurya dynasty will rule after that.

||12.1.12 ||

*sa eva candraguptam vai dvijo rājye 'bhiṣekṣyati
tat-suto vārisāras tu tataś cāśokavardhanah*

TRANSLATION

This *brāhmaṇa* will enthrone Candragupta, whose son will be named Vārisāra. The son of Vārisāra will be Aśokavardhana.

COMMENTARY

How will the Mauryas rule? Candragupta was the first of the Mauryas. The word *ca* indicates Daśaratha, because he is also mentioned as a descendent in this line in *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* 4.24.30.

||12.1.13 ||

*suyaśā bhavitā tasya saṅgataḥ suyaśaḥ-sutaḥ
śālisūkas tatas tasya somaśarmā bhaviṣyati
śatadhanvā tatas tasya bhavitā tad-brhadrathaḥ*

TRANSLATION

Aśokavardhana will be followed by Suyasā, whose son will be Saṅgata. His son will be Śālisūka, Śālisūka's son will be Somaśarmā, and Somaśarmā's son will be Śatadhanvā. His son will be known as Brhadratha.

||12.1.14 ||

*mauryā hy ete daśa nṛpāḥ sapta-trimśac-chatottaram
samā bhokṣyanti pṛthivīm kalau kuru-kulodvaha*

TRANSLATION

O best of the Kurus! The ten Maurya kings will rule the earth for 137 years of the Kali-yuga.

COMMENTARY

They will rule 137 years.

||12.1.15-17 ||

*agnimitras tatas tasmāt sujeṣṭho bhavitā tataḥ
vasumitro bhadraś ca pulindo bhavitā sutāḥ*

*tato ghoṣaḥ sutas tasmād vajramitro bhaviṣyati
tato bhāgavatas tasmād devabhūtiḥ kurūdvaha*

*śuṅgā daśaite bhokṣyanti bhūmiṃ varṣa-śatādhikam
tataḥ kāṇvān iyaṃ bhūmir yāsyaty alpa-guṇān nṛpa*

TRANSLATION

My dear King Parīkṣit! Agnimitra will follow as king, and then Sujyeṣṭha. Sujyeṣṭha will be followed by Vasumitra, Bhadraka, and the son of Bhadraka, Pulinda. Then the son of Pulinda, named Ghoṣa, will rule, followed by Vajramitra, Bhāgavata and Devabhūti. In this way, O best of the Kuru heroes, ten Śuṅga kings will rule over the earth for more than one hundred years. Then the earth will come under the control of the kings of the Kāṇva dynasty, who will have few good qualities.

COMMENTARY

The commander of Bṛhadratha's army will kill Bṛhadratha and make himself king. His name will be Puṣpamitra, the first king of the Śuṅga dynasty. He will be followed by nine others starting with Agnimitra. The ten kings will last for a hundred and twelve years.

||12.1.18 ||

*śuṅgam hatvā devabhūtiṃ kāṇvo 'mātyas tu kāmīnam
svayaṃ kariṣyate rājyaṃ vasudevo mahā-matiḥ*

TRANSLATION

Vasudeva, an intelligent minister coming from the Kāṇva family, will kill the lusty Śuṅga king Devabhūti, and assume the throne.

COMMENTARY

How will the Kāṇva dynasty appear? The minister coming from the Kāṇva family killed Devabhūti, who desired other men's women.

||12.1.19 ||

*tasya putras tu bhūmitras tasya nārāyaṇaḥ sutāḥ
kāṇvāyanā ime bhūmiṃ catvāriṃśac ca pañca ca
śatāni trīṇi bhokṣyanti varṣāṇām ca kalau yuge*

TRANSLATION

The son of Vasudeva will be Bhūmitra, and his son will be Nārāyaṇa. These kings of the Kāṇva dynasty will rule the earth for 345 more years of the Kali-yuga.

COMMENTARY

Vasudeva and others were also called Kāṇva's dynasty.

||12.1.20 ||

*hatvā kāṇvaṁ suśarmāṇaṁ tad-bhṛtyo vṛṣalo balī
gām bhokṣyaty andhra-jātīyaḥ kañcit kālam asattamaḥ*

TRANSLATION

The last of the Kāṇvas, Suśarmā, will be murdered by his own servant, Balī, a śūdra of the Andhra race. This most degraded person will rule the earth for some time.

COMMENTARY

Suśarmā was the last king of the Kāṇva dynasty. Balī was the name of the person who killed him.

||12.1.21-26 ||

*kṛṣṇa-nāmātha tad-bhrātā bhavitā pṛthivī-patiḥ
śrī-sāntakarnaś tat-putraḥ paurnamāśas tu tat-sutaḥ*

*lambodaras tu tat-putras tasmāc cibilako nṛpaḥ
meghasvātīś cibilakād aṭamānas tu tasya ca*

*aniṣṭakarmā hāleyas talakas tasya cātma-jāḥ
purīṣabhīrus tat-putras tato rājā sunandanaḥ*

*cakoro bahavo yatra śivasvātīr arin-damaḥ
tasyāpi gomatī putraḥ purīmān bhavitā tataḥ*

*medaśirāḥ śivaskando yajñaśrīś tat-sutas tataḥ
vijayas tat-suto bhāvyaś candravijñāḥ sa-lomadhiḥ*

*ete trimśan nṛpatayaś catvāry abda-śatāni ca
ṣaṭ-pañcāśac ca pṛthivīm bhokṣyanti kuru-nandana*

TRANSLATION

The brother of Balī, named Kṛṣṇa, will become the next ruler of the earth. His son will be Śāntakarna, and his son will be Paurṇamāsa. The son of Paurṇamāsa will be Lambodara, who will father Mahārāja Cibilaka. From Cibilaka will come Meghasvāti, whose son will be Aṭamāna. The son of Aṭamāna will be Anīṣṭakarmā. His son will be Hāleya, and his son will be Talaka. The son of Talaka will be Purīṣabhīru, and following him Sunandana will become king. Sunandana will be followed by Cakora and then the eight Bahus, among whom Śivasvāti will be a great subduer of enemies. The son of Śivasvāti will be Gomatī. His son will be Purīmān, whose son will be Medaśirā. His son will be Śivaskanda, and his son will be Yajñaśrī. The son of Yajñaśrī will be Vijaya, who will have two sons, Candravijña and Lomadhi. These thirty kings will enjoy sovereignty over the earth for a total of 456 years, O son of the Kurus.

||12.1.27 ||

*saptābhīrā āvabhṛtyā daśa gardabhino nṛpāḥ
kaṅkāḥ ṣoḍaśa bhū-pālā bhaviṣyanty ati-lolupāḥ*

TRANSLATION

Then will follow seven kings of the Ābhīra race from the city of Avabhṛti, and then ten Gardabhīs. After them, sixteen greedy kings of the Kaṅkas will rule.

COMMENTARY

Āvabhṛtyā means “from the city of Avabhṛti.”

||12.1.28 ||

*tato 'ṣṭau yavanā bhāvyāś caturdaśa turuṣkakāḥ
bhūyo daśa guruṇḍāś ca maulā ekādaśaiva tu*

TRANSLATION

Eight Yavanas will then take power, followed by fourteen Turuṣkas, ten Guruṇḍas and eleven kings of the Maula dynasty.

||12.1.29-31 ||

*ete bhokṣyanti pṛthivīm daśa varṣa-śatāni ca
navādhikām ca navatim maulā ekādaśa kṣitim*

*bhokṣyanty abda-śatāny aṅga trīṇi taiḥ samsthite tataḥ
kilakilāyām nṛpatayo bhūtanando 'tha vaṅgiriḥ*

*śiśunandiś ca tad-bhrātā yaśonandiḥ pravīrakah
ity ete vai varṣa-śataṁ bhaviṣyanty adhikāni śat*

TRANSLATION

These Ābhīras, Gardabhīs and Kaṅkas will enjoy the earth for 1,099 years, and the eleven Maulas will rule for 300 years. When the Maulas disappear, there will appear in the city of Kilakilā a dynasty of kings consisting of Bhūtananda, Vaṅgiri, Śiśunandi, Śiśunandi's brother Yaśonandi, and Pravīraka. These kings of Kilakilā will rule for 106 years.

COMMENTARY

Other than the Maulas the other sixty-five kings starting with the Ābhīras will rule for 1099 years. The eleven Maulas will rule for three hundred years. When they die off, kings will appear in Kilakilā city. They will rule for a hundred and six years.

||12.1.32-33 ||

*teṣāṁ trayodaśa sutā bhavitāraś ca bāhlikāḥ
puṣpamitro 'tha rājanyo durmitro 'sya tathaiva ca*

*eka-kālā ime bhū-pāḥ saptāndhrāḥ sapta kauśalāḥ
vidūra-patayo bhāvyā niśadhās tata eva hi*

TRANSLATION

The Kilakilās will be followed by their thirteen sons, the Bāhlikas, and after them King Puṣpamitra and his son Durmitra. Then seven Andhras, seven Kauśalas and also kings of the Vidūra and Niśadha provinces will separately rule in different parts of the world.

COMMENTARY

Among Bhūtānanda and others, thirteen sons called Bāhlikas will rule. Then Puṣpamitra, a *kṣatriya*, of a different family, will rule, and then his son Durmitra. After that, at one time, there will be different rulers in different states.

||12.1.34 ||

*māgadhānām tu bhavitā viśvasphūrjih purañjayaḥ
kariṣyaty aparō varṇān pulinda-yadu-madrakān*

TRANSLATION

There will then appear a king of the Māgadhas named Viśvasphūrji, a second Purañjaya. He will turn all the people with *varṇas* into Pulindas, Yadus and Madrakas.

COMMENTARY

Then in the Māgadha family, a person called Viśvaphūri will appear, who will be a second Purañjaya. He will turn *brāhmaṇas* and others into Pulindas, Yadus and Madrakas—almost into *mlecchas*.

||12.1.35 ||

*prajāś cābrahma-bhūyiṣṭhāḥ sthāpayiṣyati durmatih
vīryavān kṣatram utsādyā padmavatyām sa vai puri
anu-gaṅgam ā-prayāgam guptām bhokṣyati medinīm*

TRANSLATION

Foolish King Viśvasphūrji will make the citizens devoid of the Vedas and will use his power to completely destroy the powerful *kṣatriya* order. From his capital of Padmavatī he will rule that part of the earth extending from the source of the Gaṅgā to Prayāga.

COMMENTARY

He will make the citizens reject the Vedas and destroy the remaining pious *kṣatriyas*.

||12.1.36 ||

*saurāṣṭrāvanty-ābhīrās ca śūrā arbuda-mālavāḥ
vrātyā dvijā bhaviṣyanti śūdra-prāyā janādhipāḥ*

TRANSLATION

At that time, the *brāhmaṇas* of such provinces as Śaurāṣṭra, Avantī, Ābhīra, Śūra, Arbuda and Mālava will become devoid of *saṃskāras*, and the members of the royal order in these places will become almost *śūdras*.

COMMENTARY

The *brāhmaṇas* of these states will be devoid of *saṃskāras* (*vrātyāḥ*).

||12.1.37 ||

*sindhos taṭam candrabhāgām kauntīm kāsmīra-maṇḍalam
bhokṣyanti śūdrā vrātyādyā mlecchās cābrahma-varcasah*

TRANSLATION

Śudras, fallen *brāhmaṇas* and *mlecchas*, all devoid of the Vedas, will rule the land along the Sindhu River, as well as the districts of Candrabhāgā, Kauntī and Kāsmīra.

||12.1.38 ||

*tulya-kālā ime rājan mleccha-prāyās ca bhū-bhṛtaḥ
ete 'dharmānṛta-parāḥ phalgu-dās tīvra-manyavaḥ*

TRANSLATION

There will be many such uncivilized kings ruling at the same time, O King Parīkṣit, and they will all be uncharitable, possessed of fierce tempers, greatly irreligious and duplicitous.

||12.1.39-40 ||

*strī-bāla-go-dvija-ghnās ca para-dāra-dhanādṛtāḥ
uditāsta-mita-prāyā alpa-sattvālpakāyuṣaḥ*

*asaṃskṛtāḥ kriyā-hīnā rajasā tamasāvṛtāḥ
prajāś te bhakṣayiṣyanti mlecchā rājanya-rūpiṇaḥ*

TRANSLATION

These barbarians in the guise of kings will devour the citizenry, murdering innocent women, children, cows and *brāhmaṇas*, and coveting the wives and property of other men. They will be erratic

in their moods, have little strength of character and be very short-lived. Devoid of Vedic rituals and *samśkāras*, they will be completely covered by the modes of passion and ignorance.

||12.1.41 ||

*tan-nāthās te janapadās tac-chilācāra-vādinah
anyonyato rājabhiś ca kṣayam yāsyanti pīditāh*

TRANSLATION

The citizens governed by these low-class kings will imitate the character, behavior and speech of their rulers. Harassed by their leaders and by each other, they will all be destroyed.

Thus ends the commentary on the First Chapter of the Twelfth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas*.

Chapter Two



Description Of Kali-Yuga

||12.2.1 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

*tataś cānu-dinaṃ dharmāḥ satyaṃ śaucaṃ kṣamā dayā
kālena balinā rājan naṅśyaty āyur balaṃ smṛtiḥ*

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Then, O King, religion, truthfulness, cleanliness, tolerance, mercy, duration of life, physical strength and memory will all diminish day by day because of the powerful influence of the age of Kali.

COMMENTARY

In the Second Chapter, the faults of Kali-yuga, the appearance of Kalki, the characteristics of Kali and the beginning of Satya-yuga are described.

||12.2.2 ||

*vittam eva kalau nṛṇāṃ janmācāra-guṇodayaḥ
dharma-nyāya-vyavasthāyām kāraṇaṃ balaṃ eva hi*

TRANSLATION

In Kali-yuga, wealth alone will be considered the sign of a man's good birth, proper behavior and fine qualities. And law and justice will be applied only on the basis of one's power.

COMMENTARY

He who has wealth has good birth, good conduct and good qualities. This will be explained.

||12.2.3 ||

*dāmpatyē 'bhirucir hetur māyaiva vyāvahārike
strītve puṁstve ca hi ratir vipratve sūtram eva hi*

TRANSLATION

Men and women will live together merely because of pleasure, and business will be based on deceit. Womanliness and manliness will be judged according to one's expertise in sex, and a man will be known as a *brāhmaṇa* just by his wearing a thread.

||12.2.4 ||

*liṅgam evāśrama-khyātāv anyonyāpatti-kāraṇam
avr̥tṭyā nyāya-daurbalyam pāṇḍitye cāpalam vacaḥ*

TRANSLATION

A person's superiority or inferiority in *āśrama* will be ascertained merely according to external symbols. Defeat of justice will be caused by inability to give bribes. Agitated speech will be considered learning.

COMMENTARY

Excellence or degradation in *āśrama* will be judged, not by knowledge or proper conduct, but by wearing deerskin, carrying a *daṇḍa* or shaving the head. Inability to give bribes will cause defeat of justice. Agitated speech will be considered learning.

||12.2.5 ||

*anāḍhyataivāsādhutve sādhitve dambha eva tu
svīkāra eva codvāhe snānam eva prasādhanam*

TRANSLATION

A person will be judged improper if he does not have money, and cheating will be accepted as a virtue. Marriage will be arranged simply by verbal agreement, and a person will think he is properly attired if he has merely taken a bath.

||12.2.6 ||

*dūre vāry-ayanam tīrtham lāvanyam keśa-dhāraṇam
udaram-bharatā svārthah satyatve dhārṣṭyam eva hi
dākṣyam kuṭumba-bharaṇam yaśo 'rthe dharma-sevanam*

TRANSLATION

A sacred place will be taken to consist of no more than a reservoir of water located at a distance, and beauty will be thought to depend on one's hairstyle. Filling the belly will become the goal of life, and one who is audacious will be accepted as truthful. He who can maintain a family will be regarded as an expert man, and the principles of religion will be observed only for the sake of reputation.

||12.2.7 ||

*evam prajābhir duṣṭābhir ākīrṇe kṣiti-maṇḍale
brahma-viṭ-kṣatra-śūdrānām yo balī bhavitā nṛpaḥ*

TRANSLATION

As the earth thus becomes crowded with a corrupt population, whoever among the *brāhmaṇas*, *kṣatriyas*, *vaiśyas* or *śūdras* is the strongest will become the king.

||12.2.8 ||

*prajā hi lubdhai rājanyair nirghṛṇair dasyu-dharmabhiḥ
ācchinna-dāra-draviṇā yāsyanti giri-kānanam*

TRANSLATION

Losing their wives and properties to such avaricious and merciless rulers, who will behave no better than ordinary thieves, the citizens will flee to the mountains and forests.

||12.2.9 ||

*śāka-mūlāmiṣa-kṣaudra- phala-puṣpāṣṭi-bhojanāḥ
anāvṛṣṭyā vinaṅkṣyanti durbhikṣa-kara-pīḍitāḥ*

TRANSLATION

Harassed by famine and excessive taxes, people will resort to eating leaves, roots, flesh, wild honey, fruits, flowers and seeds. Struck by drought, they will become completely ruined.

||12.2.10 ||

*śīta-vātātapa-prāvṛḍ- himair anyonyataḥ prajāḥ
kṣut-trḍbhyām vyādhībhiś caiva santapsyante ca cintayā*

TRANSLATION

The citizens will suffer greatly from cold, wind, heat, rain and snow, and by quarrels, hunger, thirst, disease and severe anxiety.

||12.2.11 ||

triṁśad vimśati varṣāṇi paramāyuhḥ kalau nṛṇām

TRANSLATION

The maximum duration of life for human beings in Kali-yuga will become fifty years.

||12.2.12-16 ||

*kṣīyamāneṣu deheṣu dehinām kali-doṣataḥ
varṇāśramavatām dharme naṣṭe veda-pathe nṛṇām*

*pāṣaṇḍa-pracure dharme dasyu-prāyeṣu rājasu
cauryānṛta-vṛthā-himsā- nānā-vṛttiṣu vai nṛṣu*

*śūdra-prāyeṣu varṇeṣu cchāga-prāyāsu dhenuṣu
grha-prāyeṣv āśrameṣu yauna-prāyeṣu bandhuṣu*

*aṇu-prāyāsv oṣadhīṣu samī-prāyeṣu sthāsnuṣu
vidyut-prāyeṣu megheṣu śūnya-prāyeṣu sadmasu*

*ittham kalau gata-prāye janeṣu khara-dharmiṣu
dharma-trāṇāya sattvena bhagavān avatarīṣyati*

TRANSLATION

By the time the age of Kali ends, the bodies of all creatures will be greatly reduced in size, and the religious principles of followers of *varṇāśrama* will be ruined. The path of the Vedas will be completely forgotten in human society, and so-called religion will be mostly atheistic. The kings will mostly be thieves, the occupations of men will be stealing, lying and needless violence, and all the social classes will be reduced to the lowest level of *śūdras*. Cows will be like

goats, spiritual hermitages will be no different from mundane houses, and family ties will extend no further than youthfulness. Most plants and herbs will be tiny, and all trees will appear like dwarf *śamī* trees. Clouds will be full of lightning, and devoid of rain. Homes will be empty, and all human beings will have become like asses. At that time, the Supreme Lord will appear on the earth for rescuing *dharma* with body of *śuddha-sattva*.

COMMENTARY

Sthāsnuṣu means “trees.”

||12.2.17 ||

*carācara-guror viṣṇor īśvarasyākhilātmanah
dharma-trāṇāya sādḥūnām janma karmāpanuttaye*

TRANSLATION

Lord Viṣṇu, the *guru* of all moving and nonmoving living beings, and the Supreme Soul of all, takes birth to protect the principles of religion and to liberate his devotees.

COMMENTARY

The birth will take place for liberating the devotees (*karmāpanuttaye*).

||12.2.18 ||

*śambhala-grāma-mukhyasya brāhmaṇasya mahātmanah
bhavane viṣṇuyaśasaḥ kalkiḥ prādurbhaviṣyati*

TRANSLATION

Kalki will appear in the home of the most eminent *brāhmaṇa* of Śambhala village, the great soul Viṣṇuyaśā.

||12.2.19-20 ||

*aśvam āśu-gam āruhya devadattam jagat-patiḥ
asināsādhu-damanam aṣṭaiśvarya-guṇānvitah*

*vicarann āsunā kṣaunṣyām hayenāpratima-dyutiḥ
nṛpa-liṅga-cchado dasyūn koṭiśo nihaniṣyati*

TRANSLATION

With unrivalled effulgence, Kalki, the Lord of the universe, endowed with the eight powers, mounting his swift horse sent by the *devatās*, will travel over the earth on his horse with a sword in his hand by which he will destroy the wicked. He will kill millions of thieves who dress as kings.

COMMENTARY

He will mount a swift horse given by the *devatās* and carry a sword in hand by which the demons are destroyed. He will kill thieves dressed as kings.

||12.2.21 ||

*atha teṣāṃ bhaviṣyanti manāṃsi viśadāni vai
vāsudevāṅga-rāgāti- puṇya-gandhānila-sprṣām
paura-jānapadānām vai hateṣv akhila-dasyuṣu*

TRANSLATION

After all the thieves have been killed, the residents of the cities and towns will develop clear minds from contacting the purifying breeze from the fragrances on the body of Vāsudeva.

||12.2.22 ||

*teṣāṃ prajā-visargaś ca sthaviṣṭhaḥ sambhaviṣyati
vāsudeve bhagavati sattva-mūrtau hr̥di sthite*

TRANSLATION

When Lord Vāsudeva, the Supreme Lord, appears in their hearts in his *śuddha-sattva* form, the creation of the population with strong sense of *dharma* will take place.

COMMENTARY

Sthaviṣṭhaḥ means “strong because of being fixed in *dharma*.”

||12.2.23 ||

*yadāvatiṛṇo bhagavān kalkir dharma-patir hariḥ
kṛtaṃ bhaviṣyati tadā prajā-sūtiś ca sāttvikī*

TRANSLATION

When the Supreme Lord has appeared on earth as Kalki, the maintainer of religion, Satya-yuga and creation of population in *sattva-guṇa* will begin.

COMMENTARY

Sūtiḥ means “production.”

||12.2.24 ||

*yadā candraś ca sūryaś ca tathā tiṣya-bṛhaspatī
eka-rāśau sameśyanti bhaviṣyati tadā kṛtam*

TRANSLATION

When the moon, the sun and *Bṛhaspati* simultaneously enter the constellation *Puṣyā* in *Karkaṭa* sign, Satya-yuga will begin.

COMMENTARY

This verse describes the beginning of Satya-yuga. *Tiṣya* means “*Puṣya* constellation.” Jupiter enters Cancer sign every twelve years (staying there for approximately a year) and during that time it is possible for two or three dark moons (conjunction of sun and moon) to conjoin with Jupiter. However, when all three planets enter *Puṣya* simultaneously, Satya-yuga begins.

||12.2.25 ||

*ye 'titā vartamānā ye bhaviṣyanti ca pārthivāḥ
te ta uddeśataḥ proktā vaṁśiyāḥ soma-sūryayoh*

TRANSLATION

Thus I have described in brief all the kings—past, present and future—who belong to the dynasties of the sun and the moon.

COMMENTARY

This concludes the description that started in Canto Nine.

||12.2.26 ||

*ārabhya bhavato janma yāvan nandābhiṣecanam
etad varṣa-sahasraṁ tu śataṁ pañcadaśottaram*

TRANSLATION

From your birth up to the coronation of King Nanda, 1,150 years will pass.

COMMENTARY

The years should be enumerated from Parīkṣit onwards. From kings like Mārjārī (grandson of Jarāsandha) contemporary to Parīkṣit to Nanda¹ will be a little less than one thousand five hundred years, a sequence not including the period when the kingdom was splintered.

||12.2.27-28 ||

*saptarṣīnām tu yau pūrvau dṛśyete uditau divi
tayos tu madhye nakṣatram dṛśyate yat samam niśi*

*tenaiva ṛṣayo yuktās tiṣṭhanty abda-śataṁ nṛṇām
te tvadiye dvijāḥ kāla adhunā cāśritā maghāḥ*

TRANSLATION

Of the seven stars forming the constellation of the seven sages, Pulaha and Kratu are the first to rise in the night sky. If a line running north and south were drawn through their midpoint, whichever of the lunar mansions this line passes through is said to be the ruling constellation for that time. The Seven Sages will remain connected with that particular constellation for one hundred human years. Currently, during your lifetime, they are situated in the constellation called Maghā.

COMMENTARY

A precise calculation of time is given in order to define the beginning of Kali-yuga and its progress. Between the first two stars (Pulaha and Kratu) of the star cluster of the seven sages, which is shaped like a cart when seen at night, the constellations starting from Aśvini appear. Each constellation will remain for a hundred years in that position. Now, during the time of Parīkṣit, the constellation was Maghā. When Kṛṣṇa was born the constellation between those two stars was Aśleṣa. When the duration of the two stars' positioning

¹ SB 12.1.9

in Aśleṣa was finished and they entered Maghā constellation, Kali-yuga began. When the seven sages reach Purvāṣāḍha constellation Kali will be flourishing. This will be understood later in the text.

||12.2.29 ||

*viṣṇor bhagavato bhānuḥ kṛṣṇākhyo 'sau divam gataḥ
tadāviśat kalir lokam pāpe yad ramate janah*

TRANSLATION

When the seven sages entered Maghā constellation, when Viṣṇu, the Lord of Vaikuṅṭha, the ray of Kṛṣṇa, went to Vaikuṅṭha, Kali entered this world, and people then began to take pleasure in sinful activities.

COMMENTARY

When the seven sages entered Maghā constellation, and the Lord of Vaikuṅṭha, the ray (*bhānuḥ*) of Kṛṣṇa, who is completely famous as Kṛṣṇa, went to Vaikuṅṭha (while Kṛṣṇa remained *aprakāṭa* in Dvārakā and Vraja), Kali entered this world, and people then began to take pleasure in sinful activities. According to Śrīdhara Svāmī, the word *bhānuḥ* means “*śuddha-sattva* form” since *bhānuḥ* means “he who shines.”

||12.2.30 ||

*yāvat sa pāda-padmābhyām spr̥ṣan āste ramā-patiḥ
tāvat kalir vai pṛthivīm parākṛantum na cāśakat*

TRANSLATION

As long as Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the husband of Lakṣmī, touched the earth with his lotus feet, Kali could not subdue this planet.

COMMENTARY

“But it is said that, when Duryodhana began the gambling match during the Lord’s advent at the junction of Dvāpara-yuga, and when at the time he attempted to take off Draupadī’s clothing, Kali, ordered by the Lord, took that auspicious moment to gain control of the earth.” True, but at that time the influence was insignificant. When Kṛṣṇa was present the four legs of *dharma* were also present

and people were completely happy. According to the statement of earth herself, the strength of *dharma* at that time was greater than that of Tretā-yuga. What then is the question of Kali conquering at that time?

||12.2.31 ||

*yadā devarṣayah sapta maghāsu vicaranti hi
tadā pravṛttas tu kalir dvādaśābda-śatātmakah*

TRANSLATION

When the seven sages pass into the constellation Maghā, the age of Kali begins. Kali-yuga comprises twelve hundred years of the *devatās*.

COMMENTARY

When the seven sages enter Maghā constellation and Kṛṣṇa disappears, the next moment after that Kali-yuga begins. Twelve hundred years of the *devatās* includes the two *sandhyās* as well.²

||12.2.32 ||

*yadā maghābhyo yāsyanti pūrvāśādhām maharṣayah
tadā nandāt prabhṛty eṣa kalir vṛddhim gamiṣyati*

TRANSLATION

When the seven sages enter Pūrvāśādhā constellation,³ Kali will have his full strength, beginning from King Nanda and his dynasty.

COMMENTARY

This verse describes the time it took for Kali to become strong.

||12.2.33 ||

*yasmin kṛṣṇo divam yātas tasminn eva tadāhani
pratipannam kali-yugam iti prāhuḥ purā-vidah*

2 There is a *sandhyā* at the beginning and end of each yuga. The proportions are .1 from the beginning portion, .8 for the middle portion and .1 for the concluding portion of the yuga.

3 From Maghā to Pūrvāśādhā constellation is a count of eleven. Thus the number of years between Kṛṣṇa's disappearance and King Nanda dynasty is 1100 years.

TRANSLATION

The ancients with knowledge have declared that on the very day that Kṛṣṇa departed for the spiritual world, the influence of the age of Kali began.

COMMENTARY

“Well, some recent speculators have said that Kṛṣṇa made his appearance in the first *sandhyā* of Kali-yuga.” This verse refutes that theory. The general rule is that next *yuga* enters during the concluding part of the closing *sandhyā* (called a *sandhyāṁśa*) of the previous *yuga*. However, because of the influence of Kṛṣṇa, Kali could not have any effect at that time.

||12.2.34 ||

*divyābdānām sahasrānte caturthe tu punaḥ kṛtam
bhaviṣyati tadā nīṇām mana ātma-prakāśakam*

TRANSLATION

After the one thousand celestial years of Kali-yuga, Satya-yuga will manifest again at the concluding *sandhyā* of Kali-yuga. At that time the minds of all men will become self-effulgent.

COMMENTARY

This verse describes the entrance time of Satya-yuga. *Caturthe* means “in Kali-yuga.” Here it actually means that Satya-yuga will begin during the *sandhyāṁśa* of Kali-yuga⁵.

||12.2.35 ||

*ity eṣa mānavo vaṁśo yathā saṅkhyāyate bhuvi
tathā viṭ-śūdra-viprāṇām tās tā jñeyā yuge yuge*

TRANSLATION

Thus I have enumerated the families descended from of Manus on this earth. One can similarly enumerate the *vaiśyas*, *śūdras* and *brāhmaṇas* living in the various ages.

4 The total number of *devatā* years for Kali-yuga is 1200 years. The first *sandhyā* is 120 *devatā* years and the *sandhyāṁśa* is 120 years. The middle portion is 960 *devatā* years (approximately 1000).

COMMENTARY

Just as the numbers in members in the families of Manu have been enumerated, the other *varṇas* can be calculated, though they have not been mentioned here.

||12.2.36 ||

*eteṣāṃ nāma-liṅgānām puruṣāṅnām mahātmanām
kathā-mātrāvaśiṣṭānām kīrtir eva sthitā bhuvi*

TRANSLATION

These great personalities are now known only by their names and their stories. Thus, only their fame remains on the earth.

COMMENTARY

Of those who are known by names (*nāma-liṅgānām*) and remaining stories, their glories alone survive.

||12.2.37 ||

*devāpiḥ śāntanor bhrātā maruś cekṣvāku-varṇṣa-jaḥ
kalāpa-grāma āsāte mahā-yoga-balānvitau*

TRANSLATION

Devāpi, the brother of Mahārāja Śāntanu, and Maru, the descendant of Ikṣvāku, both possessing great mystic strength, are living even now in the village of Kalāpa.

COMMENTARY

This describes the method of reviving the destroyed line of kings. Devāpi was in the moon dynasty.

||12.2.38 ||

*tāv ihaitya kaler ante vāsudevānuśikṣitau
varṇāśrama-yutam dharmam pūrva-vat prathayiṣyataḥ*

TRANSLATION

At the end of the age of Kali, these two kings, having received instruction directly from Vāsudeva, will return to human society and establish *varṇāśrama-dharma*, just as it was before.

||12.2.39 ||

*kṛtaṁ tretā dvāparaṁ ca kaliś ceti catur-yugam
anena krama-yogena bhuvī prāṇiṣu vartate*

TRANSLATION

The cycle of four ages—Satya, Tretā, Dvāpara and Kali—continues perpetually among living beings on this earth, in the same sequence.

COMMENTARY

This verse shows the cycle of four yugas.

||12.2.40 ||

*rājann ete mayā proktā nara-devās tathāpare
bhūmau mamatvaṁ kṛtvānte hitvemāṁ nidhanam gatāḥ*

TRANSLATION

O King Parīkṣit! All these kings that I have described, as well as all other human beings, come to this earth and develop possessiveness, and at the end give up this world and meet their destruction.

||12.2.41 ||

*kṛmi-vid-bhasma-samjñānte rāja-nāmno 'pi yasya ca
bhūta-dhruk tat-kṛte svārtham kim veda nirayo yataḥ*

TRANSLATION

Even though a person's body may now have the designation "king," in the end its name will be "worms," "stool" or "ashes." What can a person who injures other living beings for the sake of his body know about his own self-interest, since his activities simply lead him to hell?

COMMENTARY

He who is known by the name of "king" after death is known by the names "worms," "stool," and "ashes." He commits violence for the sake of his body (*tat-kṛte*).

||12.2.42 ||

*katham seyam akhaṇḍā bhūḥ pūrvair me puruṣair dhṛtā
mat-putrasya ca pautrasya mat-pūrvā vaṁśa-jasya vā*

TRANSLATION

“The whole earth was held by my predecessors and is now under my sovereignty. How can I arrange for it to remain in the hands of my sons, grandsons and other descendants?”

COMMENTARY

Possessiveness is illustrated by emotional statements like these: Since the land was held by my predecessors, how can I arrange for it to pass to my sons?

||12.2.43 ||

*tejo-'b-anna-mayaṁ kāyaṁ grhītvātmatayābudhāḥ
mahīm mamatayā cobhau hitvānte 'darśanam gatāḥ*

TRANSLATION

Although the foolish accept the body made of earth, water and fire as “me” and this earth as “mine,” in every case they must abandon both their body and the earth and die.

COMMENTARY

Having accepted body as self and earth as “mine,” they give up both body and land at the end and die (*adarśanam*).

||12.2.44 ||

*ye ye bhū-patayo rājan bhujjate bhuvam ojasā
kālena te kṛtāḥ sarve kathā-mātrāḥ kathāsu ca*

TRANSLATION

O King! All these kings who tried to enjoy the earth by their strength were reduced by the force of time to nothing more than topics in stories.

Thus ends the commentary on the Second Chapter of the Twelfth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas*.

Chapter Three



Description Of The Yugas

|| 12.3.1 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

*dr̥ṣṭvātmani jaye vyagrān nṛpān hasati bhūr iyam
aho mā vijigīṣanti mṛtyoḥ krīḍanakā nṛpāḥ*

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Seeing the kings of this earth busy trying to conquer her, the earth laughed. She said: These kings, who are playthings in the hands of death, desire to conquer me.

COMMENTARY

The Third Chapter describes the laughter of the earth, the legs of *dharmā*, the faults of Kali and remembrance of the Lord which destroys the influence of Kali. The end of the last chapter mentioned how foolish people try to control the whole earth. This topic is enlarged through the descriptions made by the earth. *Mā* means “me.”

|| 12.3.2 ||

*kāma eṣa narendrāṇām moghaḥ syād viduṣām api
yena phenopame piṇḍe ye 'ti-viśrambhītā nṛpāḥ*

TRANSLATION

The lust of even intelligent kings, by which they put trust in the body that is as transient as bubbles in water, ends in failure.

COMMENTARY

By this lust (*yena*) kings put trust in this body (*piṇḍe*).

|| 12.3.3-4 ||

*pūrvam nirjitya ṣaḍ-vargaṃ jeṣyāmo rāja-mantriṇaḥ
tataḥ saciva-paurāpta- karīndrān asya kaṅṭakān*

*evam kramena jeṣyāmaḥ pṛthvīm sāgara-mekhalām
ity āśā-baddha-hṛdayā na paśyanty antike 'ntakam*

TRANSLATION

“First I will conquer my senses and mind; then I will subdue my chief ministers and rid myself of my advisors, citizens, friends and relatives, as well as the keepers of my elephants and my enemies. In this way I will gradually conquer the entire earth girdled by the ocean.” With their hearts bound by great expectations, they fail to see death waiting nearby.

COMMENTARY

Lust is shown in two verses. Since no one can be a king while having lust for sense objects, first he must control his senses and mind. *Asya kaṅṭakān* means “enemy kings.”

|| 12.3.5 ||

*samudrāvaraṇām jivā mām viśanty abdhim ojasā
kiyad ātma-jayasyaitan muktir ātma-jaye phalam*

TRANSLATION

After conquering all the land on my surface, they forcibly enter the ocean. What is the use of a kingdom for a person with control of the mind? Liberation is the goal for a person with control of the mind.

COMMENTARY

After conquering the earth, they enter the ocean to steal the jewels. Those who want to attain a kingdom by sense control are fools.

|| 12.3.6 ||

*yām viśṛjyaiva manavas tat-sutās ca kurūdvaha
gatā yathāgatam yuddhe tām mām jeṣyanty abuddhayaḥ*

TRANSLATION

O best of the Kurus! The Manus and their sons, according to their understanding, gave up ruling the earth, and went to the forest, but fools will conquer me.

COMMENTARY

According to their knowledge (*yathāgatam*), the Manus became detached, gave up the earth and went to the forest (*gatāḥ*). Those who are foolish will conquer me.

|| 12.3.7 ||

*mat-kṛte pitṛ-putrāṇām bhrātrṇām cāpi vigrahaḥ
jāyate hy asatām rājye mamatā-baddha-cetasām*

TRANSLATION

For the sake of conquering me, materialistic persons fight with fathers, sons and brothers, because their hearts are bound to possessiveness for an impermanent kingdom.

|| 12.3.8 ||

*mamaiveyaṁ mahī kṛtsnā na te mūdheti vādinaḥ
spardhamānā mitho ghnanti mriyante mat-kṛte nṛpāḥ*

TRANSLATION

“All this land is mine! It’s not yours, you fool!” the kings say and, fighting, kill or get killed for the sake of possessing the earth.

|| 12.3.9-13 ||

*prthuh purūravā gādhir nahuṣo bharato 'rjunaḥ
māndhātā sagaro rāmaḥ khaṭvāṅgo dhundhuhā raghuḥ*

*tṛṇabindur yayātiś ca śaryātiḥ śantanur gayah
bhagīrathaḥ kuvalayāśvaḥ kakutstho naiśadho nṛgaḥ*

*hiranyakaśipur vṛtro rāvaṇo loka-rāvaṇaḥ
namuciḥ śambaro bhaumo hiranyākṣo 'tha tāraḥ*

*anye ca bahavo daityā rājāno ye mahēśvarāḥ
sarve sarva-vidaḥ śūrāḥ sarve sarva-jito 'jitāḥ*

*mamatām mayy avartanta kṛtvoccair martya-dharmināḥ
kathāvaśeṣāḥ kālena hy akṛtārthāḥ kṛtā vibho*

TRANSLATION

Such kings as Pṛthu, Purūravā, Gādhi, Nahuṣa, Bharata, Kārtavīrya Arjuna, Māndhātā, Sagara, Rāma, Khaṭvāṅga, Dhundhuhā, Raghu, Tṛṇabindu, Yayāti, Śaryāti, Śantanu, Gaya, Bhagīratha, Kuvalayāśva, Kakutstha, Naiṣadha, Nṛga, Hiraṇyakaśipu, Vṛtra, Rāvaṇa, who made the whole world lament, Namuci, Śambara, Bhauma, Hiraṇyākṣa and Tāraka, as well as many other demons and kings who were powerful controllers, were full of knowledge, heroic, all-conquering and unconquerable. Nevertheless, O almighty Lord, they lived their lives intensely trying to possess me. They were not unsuccessful, for they attained their goals fully. But still these kings in time have become only historical accounts.

COMMENTARY

Śrīdhara Svāmī says that Rāma mentioned here is not the son of Daśaratha. It is another king. Those who attained strong possessiveness for me become mere historical accounts by the influence of time. Though in this sense they were unsuccessful in attaining their desires (*kṛtāḥ*). They remain as stories because of their attainment of qualities and forms. What to speak of later persons. Later people were unsuccessful since they did not have full attainment of wealth and other things. *Kṛtāḥ* means “Satya-yuga and *paryāpti*” according to *Amara-koṣa*, and *paryāpti* means “fullness.”

||12.3.14 ||

*kathā imās te kathitā mahīyasām vitāya lokeṣu yaśaḥ pareyuṣām
vijñāna-vairāgya-vivakṣayā vibho vaco-vibhūtīr na tu pāramārthyam*

TRANSLATION

O mighty Parīkṣit! I have related to you the narrations of all these great devotees who attained the Lord, who spread their fame throughout the world, with a desire to speak about their renunciation and their realization of the Lord. I have not spoken to show the power of words, but to give you the highest spiritual knowledge.

COMMENTARY

The purpose of telling about the dynasties of kings is here explained. What was the purpose of telling about great devotees like Priyavrata who attained (īyusām) the Lord (para)? The listener should learn about the activities of these devotees, since I had a desire to speak about their realization of the Lord and their renunciation. O great one (vibho)! You will also be like them. I have spoken, not to show the power of words, but for you to gain the highest spiritual knowledge.

|| 12.3.15 ||

*yas tūttamaḥ-śloka-guṇānuvādaḥ saṅgīyate 'bhīkṣṇam amaṅgala-ghnaḥ
tam eva nityam śṛṇuyād abhīkṣṇam kṛṣṇe 'malām bhaktim abhīpsamānaḥ*

TRANSLATION

The person who desires pure *bhakti* to Kṛṣṇa should hear the narrations of the Lord's glorious qualities, the constant chanting of which destroys everything inauspicious.

COMMENTARY

Therefore one should continuously hear stories about these great devotees. But, in talks about the stories of the Lord, one should hear the remarkable excellence in the stories of Kṛṣṇa's eternal associates, which are superior even to the stories of these great devotees. One who desires pure *bhakti* should constantly hear the stories revealing the qualities of the Lord, which are found here and there in the other cantos, but are everywhere in the Tenth Canto. Thus four points should be understood: hearing about devotees, hearing about Kṛṣṇa's devotees, hearing the Bhāgavatam and hearing the Tenth Canto.

|| 12.3.16 ||

śrī-rājovāca

*kenopāyena bhagavan kaler doṣān kalau janāḥ
vidhamiṣyanty upacitāms tan me brūhi yathā mune*

TRANSLATION

King Parīkṣit said: My lord! How will persons living in the age of Kali destroy the heaps of faults of this age? O great sage! Please explain this to me exactly.

COMMENTARY

Vidhamiṣyanti means “they will destroy.” *Yathā* means “as it is.”

|| 12.3.17 ||

*yugāni yuga-dharmāmś ca mānaṁ pralaya-kalpayoh
kālasyeśvara-rūpasya gatim viṣṇor mahātmanaḥ*

TRANSLATION

Please explain the *yugas*, their specific qualities, the duration of maintenance and destruction of the universe, and the movement of time, which is the direct representation of the Supreme Lord, the soul of all, Viṣṇu.

COMMENTARY

Tell me about the *yugas*, and the duration of maintenance and destruction (*pralaya-kalpayoh*). This is not a material question, since time is a representative of the Lord.

|| 12.3.18 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

*kṛte pravartate dharmas̄ catuṣ-pāt taj-janair dhṛtaḥ
satyaṁ dayā tapo dānam iti pādā vibhor nṛpa*

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: O King! In the beginning, during Satya-yuga, the age of truth, religion is maintained by the people with all four of its legs of truthfulness, mercy, austerity and cleanliness intact.

COMMENTARY

First the characteristics of the *yugas* are described. Dharma is maintained by the people of Satya-yuga. *Dānam* means *śaucam*, since the root *dai* means to clean and *dāna* also means cleaning. That is mentioned in the First Canto.

|| 12.3.19 ||

*santuṣṭāḥ karuṇā maitrāḥ śāntā dāntās titikṣavaḥ
ātmārāmāḥ sama-dr̥śaḥ prāyaśaḥ śramaṇā janāḥ*

TRANSLATION

The people of Satya-yuga are for the most part self-satisfied, merciful, friendly to all, peaceful, sober, tolerant, and *ātmārāma*. They see all things equally and endeavor to understand *ātmā*.

COMMENTARY

Śramaṇāḥ means “the people are engaged in trying to realize *ātmā*.”

|| 12.3.20 ||

*tretāyām dharma-pādānām turyāṁśo hīyate śanaīḥ
adharmā-pādair anṛta- hiṁśāsantoṣa-vigrahaiḥ*

TRANSLATION

In Tretā-yuga each leg of religion is gradually reduced by one quarter by the influence of the four pillars of irreligion—lying, violence, dissatisfaction and quarrel.

COMMENTARY

Truth is reduced by lying. Mercy is reduced by violence. Austerity is reduced by dissatisfaction. Cleanliness is reduced by quarrel.

|| 12.3.21 ||

*tadā kriyā-tapo-niṣṭhā nāti-himsrā na lampatāḥ
trai-vargikās trayī-vṛddhā varṇā brahmottarā nṛpa*

TRANSLATION

In the Tretā age people are devoted to ritual performances and austerities. They are not excessively violent or very lusty after sensual pleasure. Their interest lies primarily in religiosity, economic development and regulated sense gratification, and they achieve prosperity by following the prescriptions of the three Vedas. Although in this age society evolves into four separate classes, O King, *brāhmaṇas* are more numerous.

COMMENTARY

Brahmottarāḥ means “the *brāhmaṇas* are more numerous.”

|| 12.3.22 ||

*tapah-satya-dayā-dāneṣv ardham hrasvati dvāpare
himsātuṣṭy-anṛta-dveṣair dharmasyādharma-lakṣaṇaiḥ*

TRANSLATION

In Dvāpara-yuga, the religious qualities of austerity, truth, mercy and cleanliness are reduced to one half by their irreligious counterparts—dissatisfaction, untruth, violence and enmity.

COMMENTARY

The list of *adharmas* starting with violence is not in the same order as the qualities of religion mentioned in the first line.

|| 12.3.23 ||

*yaśasvino mahā-śīlāḥ svādhyāyādhyayane ratāḥ
ādhyāḥ kuṭumbino hrṣṭā varṇāḥ kṣatra-dvijottarāḥ*

TRANSLATION

In the Dvāpara age, people are famous and have great qualities. They devote themselves to the study of the Vedas, possess great wealth, support large families and are joyful. Of the four classes, the *kṣatriyas* and *brāhmaṇas* are most numerous.

|| 12.3.24 ||

*kalau tu dharmā-pādānām turyāṁśo 'dharmā-hetubhiḥ
edhamānaiḥ kṣiyamāṇo hy ante so 'pi vīnaṅkṣyati*

TRANSLATION

In the age of Kali, only one fourth of the four legs of religious principles remains. That last remnant will continuously be decreased by the ever-increasing principles of irreligion and will finally be destroyed.

COMMENTARY

One quarter of the legs which cause *dharmā* remain, and these are destroyed by violence, lying, dissatisfaction and quarrel.

|| 12.3.25 ||

*tasmin lubdhā durācārā nirdayāḥ śuṣka-vairiṇaḥ
durbhagā bhūri-tarṣās ca śūdra-dāsottarāḥ prajāḥ*

TRANSLATION

In the Kali age people tend to be greedy, ill-behaved and merciless, and they fight one another without good reason. Unfortunate and obsessed with many material desires, the people of Kali-yuga are almost all *śūdras* and barbarians.

COMMENTARY

Śūdra-dāsottrāḥ means “the *śūdras* and fishermen are most numerous.”

|| 12.3.26 ||

*sattvaṁ rajas tama iti dr̥śyante puruṣe guṇāḥ
kāla-saṅcoditās te vai parivartanta ātmani*

TRANSLATION

All the material modes—goodness, passion and ignorance—are observed within a single person, though he may be prominently of one mode. They are set into motion in the *antaḥkaraṇa* by the power of time.

COMMENTARY

Just as planets like the sun have major periods (*dāśa*) and within that period there are minor periods (*antar-dāśa*) of the other planets, so in any particular *yuga*, the qualities of all four *yugas* periodically manifest. Thus, even in Kali-yuga, from time to time there is no decrease in *dharma*. This is seen in a single person as well. In the *antaḥkaraṇa* (*ātmani*) of a single person all the modes come and go periodically.

|| 12.3.27 ||

*prabhavanti yadā sattve mano-buddhīndriyāṇi ca
tadā kṛta-yugaṁ vidyāj jñāne tapasi yad ruciḥ*

TRANSLATION

When the mind, intelligence and senses are solidly fixed in *dharma* without material desires, that time should be understood as Satya-yuga. People then take pleasure in knowledge and austerity.

COMMENTARY

Now this point is explained. *Sattve* means “in *dharma* without material desires.”

|| 12.3.28 ||

*yadā karmasu kāmyeṣu bhaktir yaśasi dehinām
tadā tretā rajo-vṛttir iti jānīhi buddhiman*

TRANSLATION

O most intelligent Parīkṣit! When the conditioned souls are devoted to *dharma* with material motives and seek personal prestige, you should understand such a situation to be the age of Tretā, in which the functions of passion are prominent.

COMMENTARY

The people of Tretā-yuga have inclination for *dharma* with material desires.

|| 12.3.29 ||

*yadā lobhas tv asantoṣo māno dambho 'tha matsarah
karmaṇām cāpi kāmyānām dvāparam tad rajas-tamaḥ*

TRANSLATION

When there is fondness for *dharma* with material motives, and also for *adharma*, such a time is the age of Dvāpara, dominated by the mixed modes of passion and ignorance. At that time greed, dissatisfaction, false pride, cheating and envy become prominent.

COMMENTARY

Karmaṇām kāmyānām means “in *dharma* with material motives.” The word *ca* indicates they also have fondness for *adharma*. When there is fondness for *dharma* with material motives and also for *adharma*, then know that to be Dvāpara-yuga, with a prominence of *rajas* and *tamas*. In that age greed and other qualities appear.

|| 12.3.30 ||

yadā māyānṛtaṁ tandrā nidrā himsā viṣādanam
śoka-mohau bhayaṁ dainyaṁ sa kalis tāmasaḥ smṛtaḥ

TRANSLATION

When people favor only acts of *adharma*, then it is known as Kali, with a predominance of ignorance. At that time there are cheating, lying, laziness, sleepiness, violence, depression, lamentation, bewilderment, fear and poverty.

COMMENTARY

When people are fond of only *adharma*, then Kali with prominence of *tamas* appears, and deceit, lying, etc. appear. *Viṣādanam* means “depression.”

|| 12.3.31 ||

tasmāt kṣudra-dṛśo martyāḥ kṣudra-bhāgyā mahāsanāḥ
kāmīno vitta-hīnāś ca svairiṇyaś ca striyo 'satīḥ

TRANSLATION

Because of the bad qualities of the age of Kali, human beings will become shortsighted, unfortunate, gluttonous, lustful and poverty-stricken. The women, becoming unchaste, will freely wander from one man to the next.

COMMENTARY

Now the faults of Kali are described. *Tasmāt* means “because of Kali.”

|| 12.3.32 ||

dasyūtkṛṣṭā janapadā vedāḥ pāṣaṇḍa-dūṣitāḥ
rājānaś ca prajā-bhakṣāḥ śiśnodara-parā dvijāḥ

TRANSLATION

Cities will be dominated by thieves, the Vedas will be contaminated by speculative interpretations of atheists, political leaders will consume the citizens, and the *brāhmaṇas* will be interested in eating and sex life.

|| 12.3.33 ||

*avratā baṭavo 'śaucā bhikṣavaś ca kuṭumbinaḥ
tapasvino grāma-vāsā nyāsino 'tyartha-lolupāḥ*

TRANSLATION

The *brahmacārīs* will fail to execute their vows and become unclean, the householders will become beggars, the *vanaprasthas* will live in the villages, and the *sannyāsīs* will become greedy for wealth.

COMMENTARY

The *brahmacārīs* will not perform their vows and will be unclean. The householders will beg and not give in charity. The *vanaprasthas* will give up the forest and live in the village and will show off their austerities to the householders. The *sannyāsīs* will attempt to hoard money.

|| 12.3.34 ||

*hrasva-kāyā mahāhārā bhūry-apatyā gata-hriyaḥ
śaśvat kaṭuka-bhāṣiṇyaś caurya-māyору-sāhasāḥ*

TRANSLATION

Women will become much smaller in size, will eat too much, have many children, and will be devoid of shyness. They will always speak harshly and will exhibit qualities of thievery, deceit and unrestrained audacity.

COMMENTARY

The qualities of women in Kali-yuga are described.

|| 12.3.35 ||

*paṇayiṣyanti vai kṣudrāḥ kirātāḥ kūṭa-kāriṇaḥ
anāpady api maṁsyante vārtām sādhu jugupsitām*

TRANSLATION

Petty merchants will earn their money by cheating. Even when there is no emergency, all *varṇas* will consider any degraded occupation as good.

COMMENTARY

Merchants (*kirātāḥ*), after cheating by use of *adharmā* (*kūṭa-kāriṇāḥ*), will carry out transactions. All *varṇas* will consider a despised occupation as good, even when there is no emergency.

|| 12.3.36 ||

*patim tyakṣyanti nirdravyam bhrtyā apy akhilottamam
bhrtyam vipannam patayaḥ kaulam gās cāpayasviniḥ*

TRANSLATION

Servants will abandon a master of the best qualities who has lost his wealth. Masters will abandon an incapacitated servant, even if that servant has been in the family for generations. Cows will be abandoned when they stop giving milk.

COMMENTARY

Servants and wives will give up masters and husbands of good qualities who have lost wealth. Masters will give up a servant whose forefathers have served the family, because he is sick. They will give up cows that do not give milk because they are old.

|| 12.3.37 ||

*pitṛ-bhrāṭṛ-suhrj-jñātīn hitvā saurata-sauhrdāḥ
nanāndṛ-śyāla-saṁvādā dīnāḥ straiṇāḥ kalau narāḥ*

TRANSLATION

In Kali-yuga, men will be wretched and controlled by women, with relationships based on sex life. They will reject their fathers, brothers, other relatives and friends and will instead associate with the sisters and brothers of their wives.

COMMENTARY

Nanāndṛ means “sister of one’s wife.”

|| 12.3.38 ||

*śūdrāḥ pratigrahīṣyanti tapo-veṣopajīvināḥ
dharmam vakṣyanty adharmā-jñā adhiruhyottamāsanam*

TRANSLATION

Sūdras will accept charity and will earn their livelihood by making a show of austerity and wearing a mendicant's dress. Those who know nothing about religion will mount a high seat and presume to speak on religious principles.

|| 12.3.39-40 ||

*nityam udvigna-manaso durbhikṣa-kara-karṣitāḥ
niranne bhū-tale rājan anāvṛṣṭi-bhayāturāḥ*

*vāso-'nna-pāna-sayana- vyavāya-snāna-bhūṣaṇaiḥ
hīnāḥ piśāca-sandarśā bhaviṣyanti kalau prajāḥ*

TRANSLATION

In the age of Kali, people's minds will always be agitated. They will become emaciated by famine and taxation, my dear King, and will always be disturbed by fear of drought. They will lack adequate clothing, food and drink, will be unable to properly rest, have sex or bathe themselves, and will have no ornaments to decorate their bodies. The people of Kali-yuga will gradually appear like ghostly, haunted creatures.

|| 12.3.41 ||

*kalau kākiṇike 'py arthe vigrhya tyakta-sauhrdāḥ
tyakṣyanti ca priyān prāṇān haniṣyanti svakān api*

TRANSLATION

In Kali-yuga, men will develop hatred for each other even over a few coins. Giving up all friendly relations, they will be ready to lose their own lives and kill even their own relatives.

COMMENTARY

They will quarrel over twenty cowries.¹

|| 12.3.42 ||

*na rakṣiyanti manujāḥ sthavirau pitarāv api
putrān bhāryām ca kula-jām kṣudrāḥ śiṣnodaram-bharāḥ*

¹ Cowry is a type of shell used as currency.

TRANSLATION

Only interested in food and sex, degraded men will no longer protect their elderly parents, their children or their respectable wives.

|| 12.3.43 ||

*kalau na rājan jagatām param gurum tri-loka-nāthānata-pāda-panhajam
prāyeṇa martyā bhagavantam acyutam yakṣyanti pāṣaṇḍa-vibhinna-cetasah*

TRANSLATION

O King! In the age of Kali, people whose intelligence will be diverted by atheism, will almost never offer sacrifice to the Supreme Lord, supreme guru of the universe, at whose lotus feet the *devatās* bow.

COMMENTARY

After the first *sandhyā* of Kali has passed, the bad habits become very great. This is explained in two verses.

|| 12.3.44 ||

*yan-nāmadheyam mriyamāṇa āturaḥ patan skhalan vā vivaśo grṇan pumān
vimukta-karmārgala uttamām gatim prāpnoti yakṣyanti na tam kalau janāḥ*

TRANSLATION

Terrified, about to die, collapsing, with faltering voice, if a person utters the holy name of the Supreme Lord, he can be freed from the chains of *karma* and achieve the supreme destination. But still people in the age of Kali will not worship the Supreme Lord.

|| 12.3.45 ||

*pumśām kali-kṛtān doṣān dravya-deśātma-sambhavān
sarvān harati citta-stho bhagavān puruṣottamaḥ*

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord, situated in the heart, takes away all the faults created by Kali-yuga, by impurity of objects, places and mind.

COMMENTARY

It was asked how the faults of Kali can be removed. This verse answers. The faults are created by lack of purity of objects, places and mind.

|| 12.3.46 ||

*śrutahaṅ saṅkīrtito dhyātaḥ pūjitaś cādṛto 'pi vā
nṛṇāṃ dhunoti bhagavān hṛt-stho janmāyutāsubham*

TRANSLATION

If a person hears about, glorifies, meditates upon, worships or simply offers great respect to the Supreme Lord, who is remembered within the heart, the Lord will remove from his mind the contamination accumulated during many thousands of lifetimes.

COMMENTARY

Hṛt-sthaḥ means “the Lord who is remembered in one’s heart.” By remembrance of the Lord, not only the faults of Kali are removed, but also all reactions to sins committed far in the past and recently are destroyed.

|| 12.3.47 ||

*yathā hemni sthito vahnir durvarṇaṃ hanti dhātu-jam
evam ātma-gato viṣṇur yogināṃ aśubhāśayam*

TRANSLATION

Just as fire within gold removes any impurities caused by traces of other metals, Lord Viṣṇu within the heart purifies the minds of the yogīs.

COMMENTARY

Remembrance of the Lord is the only method for purifying the *antaḥkaraṇa*. Just as fire situated in gold removes the impurities such as copper mixed with it, whereas water or other substances do not, Viṣṇu, situated in their hearts, removes all sins in the yogīs. This does not take place by *yama*, *niyama* or other processes.

|| 12.3.48 ||

*vidyā-tapaḥ-prāṇa-nirodha-maitrī- tīrthābhiṣeka-vrata-dāna-japyaiḥ
nātyanta-śuddhim labhate 'ntarātmā yathā hṛdi-sthe bhagavatya anante*

TRANSLATION

By one’s engaging in the processes of *devatā* worship, austerities, breath control, compassion, bathing in holy places, strict vows,

charity and chanting of various *mantras*, one's mind cannot attain the same absolute purification as that achieved when one remembers the unlimited Lord in one's heart.

COMMENTARY

This is further described.

|| 12.3.49 ||

*tasmāt sarvātmanā rājan hṛdi-sthaṁ kuru keśavam
mriyamāṇo hy avahitas tato yāsi parām gatim*

TRANSLATION

Therefore, O King, endeavor with all your might to fix the Supreme Lord Keśava within your heart. You will certainly attain the supreme destination from remembering the Lord with attention.

COMMENTARY

Since persons like Ajāmila remembered the Lord without being attentive, you will certainly attain the Lord from remembering him (*tatah*) with attention.

|| 12.3.50 ||

*mriyamāṇair abhidhyeyo bhagavān parameśvaraḥ
ātma-bhāvaṁ nayaty aṅga sarvātmā sarva-saṁśrayaḥ*

TRANSLATION

O King! The Supreme Lord, the ultimate controller, the soul of all beings and the supreme shelter of all beings, when meditated upon by dying persons, gives them *prema* for himself.

COMMENTARY

If dying people can meditate on the Lord, he will make them attain *prema* for himself (*ātmā-bhāvaṁ*). How does the Lord know that they are meditating on him? The Lord is the soul of all. Others may not know, but the Lord knows that they are meditating on him. "Why does the Lord give *prema* just from meditating on him once?" He is the shelter of all beings. Thus from him arise all *sādhanas* and

all results of *sādhanas*. What is so remarkable about this for the Lord who is so magnanimous?

|| 12.3.51 ||

*kaler doṣa-nidhe rājann asti hy eko mahān guṇaḥ
kīrtanād eva kṛṣṇasya mukta-saṅgaḥ param vrajet*

TRANSLATION

O King! Although Kali-yuga is an ocean of faults, there is still one good quality about this age. Simply by chanting about Kṛṣṇa, one can become free from material bondage and attains *prema*.

COMMENTARY

Now it is said that Kali is the best of all *yugas* in two verses. Though Kali is an ocean of faults, one good quality prevails like a king. As one king alone kills many thieves, this one good quality destroys all the bad faults of Kali just mentioned. What is that quality? From chanting alone, which is not dependent on meditation or other processes, one attains the highest human goal, *prema*. Or chanting alone produce results, what to speak of combining meditation with chanting.

|| 12.3.52 ||

*kr̥te yad dhyāyato viṣṇum tretāyām yajato makhaiḥ
dvāpare paricaryāyām kalau tad dhari-kīrtanāt*

TRANSLATION

Whatever result was obtained in Satya-yuga by meditating on Viṣṇu, in Tretā-yuga by performing sacrifices, and in Dvāpara-yuga by deity worship, can be obtained in Kali-yuga simply by chanting about the Lord.

Thus ends the commentary on the Third Chapter of the Twelfth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas*.

Chapter Four



Four Types Of Destruction

|| 12.4.1 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

*kālas te paramāṅv-ādir dvi-parārdhāvadhīr nṛpa
kathito yuga-mānaṁ ca śṛṇu kalpa-layāv api*

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: O King! I have already described to you the measurements of time, beginning from the smallest unit up to the total life span of Lord Brahmā. I have also discussed the measurement of the *yugas*. Now hear about maintenance and annihilation.

COMMENTARY

In the Fourth Chapter, Śukadeva concludes the sweet topics of Kṛṣṇa by describing the four types of destruction.

|| 12.4.2 ||

*catur-yuga-sahasraṁ tu brahmaṇo dinam ucyate
sa kalpo yatra manavaś caturdaśa viśāṁ-pate*

TRANSLATION

One thousand cycles of four ages constitute a single day of Brahmā, known as a *kalpa*. In that period, O King, there are fourteen Manus.

|| 12.4.3 ||

*tad-ante pralayas tāvān brāhmī rātrir udāhṛtā
trayo lokā ime tatra kalpante pralayāya hi*

TRANSLATION

After one day of Brahmā, annihilation occurs during his night, which is of the same duration. At that time all the three planetary systems are subject to destruction.¹

COMMENTARY

Tāvāt means “one thousand cycles of four yugas.”

|| 12.4.4 ||

*eṣa naimittikaḥ proktaḥ pralayo yatra viśva-sṛk
śete 'nantāsano viśvam ātmasāt-kṛtya cātma-bhūh*

TRANSLATION

This is called the *naimittika*, or occasional, annihilation, during which the original creator, Lord Nārāyaṇa, lies down upon the bed of Ananta Śeṣa and absorbs the universe within himself while Lord Brahmā also enters.

COMMENTARY

The *naimittika* destruction is the first of the four types of destruction. Nārāyaṇa withdraws the universe into himself and sleeps. Brahmā also enters Nārāyaṇa and sleeps. Taking Brahmā's sleep as the cause (*nimitta*), the Lord destroys the three worlds. Thus this destruction is called *naimittika*. This is a daily destruction.

|| 12.4.5 ||

*dvi-parārdhe tv atikrānte brahmaṇaḥ parameṣṭhinaḥ
tadā prakṛtayaḥ sapta kalpante pralayāya vai*

TRANSLATION

When the two halves of the lifetime of Lord Brahmā, the most elevated created being, are complete, the seven basic elements of creation are annihilated.

¹ At the beginning of Brahmā's night, the planets including Svarga are flooded. Later all the planets and Brahmā enter into Viṣṇu.

COMMENTARY

The destruction into *prakṛti* is described in two verses. The first half of Brahmā's life has passed. When the second half is completed, when Brahmā's life has ended, the seven elements consisting of *mahat-tattva*, *ahankāra*, and the five *tan-mātrās* are destroyed.

|| 12.4.6 ||

*eṣa prakṛtiko rājan pralayo yatra liyate
aṇḍa-koṣas tu saṅghāto vighāta upasādite*

TRANSLATION

O King! That is called the *prakṛtika* destruction in which the universe made of all the elements merges in *prakṛti* when it is time for that destruction.

COMMENTARY

It is called the *prakṛtika* destruction because all the objects created from *prakṛti* re-enter *prakṛti*. When the time of destruction arrives, the universe made of the combination of elements like *mahat-tattva* (*saṅghātaḥ*) is destroyed.

|| 12.4.7 ||

*parjanyaḥ śata-varṣāṇi bhūmau rājan na varṣati
tadā niranne hy anyonyam bhakṣyamāṇāḥ kṣudhārditāḥ
kṣayam yāsyanti śanakaiḥ kālenopadrutāḥ prajāḥ*

TRANSLATION

O King! There will be no rain upon the earth for one hundred years. Drought will lead to famine, and the starving populace will consume one another. The inhabitants of the earth, bewildered by the force of time, will gradually be destroyed.

COMMENTARY

The way in which that destruction takes place is now described.

|| 12.4.8 ||

*sāmudram daihikam bhaumam rasam sāmivartako raviḥ
raśmibhiḥ pibate ghoraiḥ sarvaṁ naiva vimuñcati*

TRANSLATION

The sun in its annihilating form will drink up with its terrible rays all the water of the ocean, of living bodies and of the earth itself. But the devastating sun will not give back anything.

COMMENTARY

Pibati means “it draws up.”

|| 12.4.9 ||

*tataḥ samvartako vahniḥ saṅkarṣaṇa-mukhotthitaḥ
dahaty anila-vegottaḥ śūnyān bhū-vivarān atha*

TRANSLATION

Next the great fire of annihilation, rising from the mouth of Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa, and increased by the force of the wind, will burn the universe, scorching the lifeless planets.

|| 12.4.10 ||

*upary adhaḥ samantāc ca śikhābhir vahni-sūryayoḥ
dahyamānaṁ vibhāty aṇḍaṁ dagdha-gomaya-piṇḍa-vat*

TRANSLATION

Burned from all sides—from above by the blazing sun and from below by the fire of Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa—the universal sphere will glow like a burning ball of cow dung.

|| 12.4.11 ||

*tataḥ pracāṇḍa-pavano varṣānām adhikaṁ śatam
paraḥ sāmavartako vāti dhūmraṁ khaṁ rajasāvṛtam*

TRANSLATION

A great and terrible wind of destruction will begin to blow for more than one hundred years, and the sky, covered with dust, will turn gray.

COMMENTARY

A wind will blow for a little more than hundred years, and then the sky covered with dust will turn gray.

|| 12.4.12 ||

*tato megha-kulāny aṅga citra varṇāny anekāśaḥ
śataṁ varṣāni varṣanti nadanti rabhasa-svanaiḥ*

TRANSLATION

After that, O King, groups of multicolored clouds, roaring terribly with thunder, will pour down rain for one hundred years.

|| 12.4.13 ||

tata ekodakam viśvam brahmāṇḍa-vivarāntaram

TRANSLATION

At that time, the shell of the universe will fill up with water, forming a single cosmic ocean.

|| 12.4.14 ||

*tadā bhūmer gandha-guṇam grasanty āpa uda-plave
grasta-gandhā tu pṛthivī pralayatvāya kalpate*

TRANSLATION

As the entire universe is flooded, the water will rob the earth of its unique quality of fragrance, and the element earth, deprived of its distinguishing quality, will be dissolved.

COMMENTARY

Pralayatvāya comes from *prakṛṣṭo layaḥ*: a long destruction. A state of long destruction is called *pralayatvā*.

|| 12.4.15-19 ||

*apām rasam atho tejas tā liyante 'tha nīrasāḥ
grasate tejaso rūpaṁ vāyus tad-rahitaṁ tadā*

*liyate cānile tejo vāyoḥ khaṁ grasate guṇam
sa vai viśati khaṁ rājams tataś ca nabhaso guṇam*

*śabdaṁ grasati bhūtādir nabhas tam anu liyate
taijasaś cendriyāny aṅga devān vaikāriko guṇaiḥ*

*mahān grasaty ahaṅkāraṁ guṇāḥ sattvādayaś ca tam
grasate 'vyākṛtaṁ rājan guṇān kālena coditam*

*na tasya kālāvayavaiḥ pariṇāmādayo guṇāḥ
anādy anantam avyaktam nityam kāraṇam avyayam*

TRANSLATION

The element fire then swallows up the taste from the element water, which, deprived of its unique quality, taste, merges into fire. Air swallows up the form inherent in fire, and then fire, deprived of form, merges into air. The element ether swallows up the quality of air, namely touch, and that air enters into ether. Then, O King, false ego in ignorance swallows up sound, the quality of ether, after which ether also merges into false ego in ignorance. False ego in passion consumes the senses, and false ego in goodness absorbs the *devatās*. Then the total *mahat-tattva* consumes false ego along with its various functions, and that *mahat-tattva* is consumed by the three basic modes of nature—goodness, passion and ignorance. My dear King Parīkṣit, these modes are further swallowed up by *prakṛti*, impelled by time. That *prakṛti* is not subject to the six kinds of transformation caused by the influence of time. Rather, it has no birth, no death, no existence, no increase, no change, and no decrease. It is the cause of the universe.

COMMENTARY

The verb *grasati* should be added to the first line of verse 15. *Bhūtādiḥ* means *ahaṅkāra* in *tamas*. *Ahaṅkāra* in *rajas* swallows up the senses. *Mahat-tattva* swallows up *ahaṅkāra* along with its transformation of *guṇas* (*ahaṅkāra* in the modes of *tamas*, *rajas* and *sattva*). The *guṇas* swallow up *mahat-tattva* (*tam*). *Avyākṛtam* means *pradhāna* or *prakṛti*. *Prakṛti* is not subject to the transformation and other factors produced by the limbs of time, by days and nights. *Pariṇāma* or development is the fourth change (*vikāra*) among six that are not present in *prakṛti*. The first is birth. But *prakṛti* has no beginning (*anādi*). It has no end (*anantam*). *Avyaktam* means that it does not show itself as existing for some time. *Nityam* means that *prakṛti* is

always in one form. It does not increase or grow. It does not decline (*avyayam*). Thus the six transformations are absent in *prakṛti*.²

|| 12.4.20-21 ||

*na yatra vāco na mano na sattvaṁ tamo rajo vā mahad-ādayo 'mī
na prāṇa-buddhīndriya-devatā vā na sanniveśaḥ khalu loka-kalpaḥ*

*na svapna-jāgran na ca tat suṣuptaṁ
na khaṁ jalaṁ bhūr anilo 'gnir arkaḥ
saṁsupta-vac chūnya-vad apratarkyaṁ
tan mūla-bhūtaṁ padam āmananti*

TRANSLATION

In *pradhāna*, there is no expression of words, no mind and no manifestation of the subtle elements beginning from the *mahat-tattva*, nor are there the modes of goodness, passion and ignorance. There is no life air or intelligence, nor any senses or *devatās*. There is no arrangement of planetary systems, nor are there present the different stages of consciousness—sleep, wakefulness and deep sleep. There is no ether, water, earth, air, fire or sun. The situation is just like that of complete sleep, or of voidness. It is indescribable. Authorities in spiritual science explain, however, that since *pradhāna* is the original substance, it is the basis of material creation.

COMMENTARY

Two verses explain how *prakṛti* has no transformations like objects we perceive with passion and other qualities. *Loka-kalpaḥ* means that “there is no construction of planets.”

|| 12.4.22 ||

*layaḥ prākṛtiko hy eṣa puruṣāvyaktayor yadā
śaktayaḥ sampralīyante vivaśāḥ kāla-vidrutāḥ*

TRANSLATION

The annihilation is called *prākṛtika* when the energies belonging to the Supreme Person and *prakṛti*, disassembled by the force of time, merge together totally.

² The six transformations are *janma*, *astitva*, *vṛddhi*, *pariṇāma*, *apakṣaya*, and *mṛtyu*.

COMMENTARY

Energies like *sattva-guṇa* merge into *prakṛti*. However, the Lord and *prakṛti* are never affected at any time.

|| 12.4.23 ||

*buddhīndriyārtha-rūpeṇa jñānam bhāti tad-āśrayam
dṛśyatvāvvyatirekābhyām ādy-antavad avastu yat*

TRANSLATION

Brahman manifests in the forms of intelligence, the senses and the objects of sense perception, and it is their ultimate basis. Whatever has a beginning and an end is insubstantial because of being an object perceived by limited senses and because of being nondifferent from its own cause.

COMMENTARY

The state of being one with Brahman in *ātyantika-pralaya* by those desiring impersonal liberation is now described. The oneness with Brahman that they desire will be produced when there is realization of the insubstantiality of the world of duality, which is an effect of Brahman. Thinking boldly in this way, they say this world is illusory. That is explained in nine verses. That Brahman (*jñānam*) appears in the forms of intelligence, senses and objects, since they are transformations of the *śakti* of Brahman. What is this Brahman? It is the shelter of intelligence, senses and objects of this world since it is their cause. Neuter gender of *āśrayam* is poetic license. What is produced in this world as intelligence has a birth and a destruction. Though this is perceived as real, from the spiritual point of view it is not real since the world does not last forever. Two other reasons are given for the unreality of the world: it is visible and it is not different from its cause (*avyatirekha*). Because of these two reasons, the world is considered unreal.

The methodology is as follows. Because the world is visible, and because it has a beginning and an end, and because it is not different from its cause, it is like a golden earring. From the spiritual point of view it is insubstantial.

Even if one maintains that the world is illusory, following the later descriptions of things related to Brahman being similarly *cit* and non-different from *Paramātmā* (*cit-sama ātmavat*) in verse 29, there should be visible, spiritual variety. Otherwise the reasoning will be erroneous. *Śruti* says *tāsām madhye sākṣād brahma gopāla-purī*: among all these abodes, the residence of Gopāla is directly the Absolute Truth. (*Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad*) *Man-niketam tu nirguṇam*: my abode is beyond the *guṇas*. (SB 11.25.25) *Nirguṇo mad-apāśrayaḥ*: a worker who has taken shelter of me is understood to be transcendental to the modes of nature. (SB 11.25.26) By these words of the Lord it is understood that though the abode and other spiritual objects are visible, they are eternal, since they are beyond the *guṇas*.

|| 12.4.24 ||

*dīpaś cakṣuś ca rūpaṁ ca jyotiṣo na pṛthag bhavet
evam dhīḥ khāni mātrās ca na syur anyatamād ṛtāt*

TRANSLATION

A lamp, the eye that views by the light of that lamp, and the visible form that is viewed are non-different from the element light. In the same way, intelligence, the senses and sense perceptions have no existence separate from the supreme reality, although that Absolute Truth remains totally distinct from them.

COMMENTARY

An example is given. Just as a lamp, the eye and form are aspects of light element, and are not different from light, which is their cause, so intelligence, senses and sense objects are not different from Brahman. Just as the lamp, eye and form—the effects—are said to be fire or light, so intelligence, senses and sense objects—the effects of Brahman—are said to be Brahman. “But if cause and effect are one, and the effect is unreal, then the cause is unreal since the effect is simply a transformation of the cause.” Brahman is completely different from its effects, and even from *prakṛti*, the cause of those effects.

|| 12.4.25 ||

*buddher jāgaraṇaṁ svapnaḥ susuptir iti cocyate
māyā-mātram idaṁ rājan nānātvam pratyag-ātmani*

TRANSLATION

The three states of intelligence are called waking consciousness, sleep and deep sleep. But, my dear King, the variegated experiences created for the pure living entity by these different states are nothing more than illusion.

COMMENTARY

The *jīva* has various states: waking, dream and deep sleep, which are three aspects of intelligence. These states are also false. That is explained in this verse. Waking, sleeping and deep sleep are called functions of intelligence. The variety created in the *jīva* (*pratyag-ātmani*) by states of consciousness is false (*māyā-mātram*) since it is a covering on Brahman.

|| 12.4.26 ||

*yathā jala-dharā vyomni bhavanti na bhavanti ca
brahmaṇīdaṁ tathā viśvam avayavy udayāpyayāt*

TRANSLATION

Just as clouds in the sky come into being and are then destroyed, the material universe with its parts is created and destroyed within Brahman.

COMMENTARY

Non-difference of cause and effect in *pariṇāma-vāda* was shown. Now the real existence of the Supreme Lord, the cause of the universe that has beginning and end, is shown according to *ārambha-vāda* in two verses. Just as clouds are created and destroyed in the sky, the universe is created and destroyed in Brahman. The example of sky is used to show that the Paramātmā is not contaminated by the universe, just as the sky is not contaminated by formation of clouds. The universe with its parts such as a pot, with a beginning and an end, is not factual through all time since it has a beginning and an end.

|| 12.4.27 ||

*satyaṁ hy avayavaḥ proktaḥ sarvāvayavinām iha
vinārthena pratīyeraṇ paṭasyevāṅga tantavaḥ*

TRANSLATION

O King! The cause of the universe is said to be factual since the cause is perceived to have a separate existence from the universe, just as threads of a cloth are separate from the cloth.

COMMENTARY

The cause (Brahman) of the parts (universe) is shown to be factual in this world, O King, since even without the parts, the cause is perceived separately, just as the threads of a cloth are perceived separate from the cloth. This has been stated in the Seventh Canto:

*kārya-kāraṇa-vastv-aihya-darśanaṁ paṭa-tantuvat
avastutvād vikalpasya bhāvādvaitaṁ tad ucyate*

Non-difference of conception is seeing the effect and the cause as one, like threads related to a cloth, since all these are unreal, arising from misconception. SB 7.15.63

This conception allows one to realize oneness of Brahman.

|| 12.4.28 ||

*yat sāmānya-viśeṣābhyām upalabhyeta sa bhramaḥ
anyonyāpāśrayāt sarvaṁ ādy-antavad avastu yat*

TRANSLATION

What is experienced as cause and effect is an illusion since they are mutually dependent. Everything has a beginning and an end and is therefore unreal.

COMMENTARY

The effect of Brahman, the universe, is unreal according to *vivarta-vāda* (theory of illusion), Similarly, Brahman as the cause should also be unreal. What is perceived as cause and effect is perceived through error, since they are mutually dependent, and thus

impossible to determine. The meaning is this. Just as one mistakes a rope for a snake out of ignorance (the rope is the cause and the effect, snake, is false), so Brahman is mistaken to be the universe out of ignorance. How can Brahman be the cause, when it is dependent on the effect, the universe, which does not exist?

|| 12.4.29 ||

*vikāraḥ khyāyamāno 'pi pratyag-ātmānam antarā
na nirūpyo 'sty aṅur api syāc cec cit-sama ātma-vat*

TRANSLATION

This universe and even a single atom within it have no definition without reference to the Supreme Soul. If that is so, then objects related to the Lord are also spiritual and non-different from the Lord.

COMMENTARY

This universe – and even an atom in it, famous as being subject to change, cannot be defined without Paramātmā. Everything is Paramātmā. The universe is imposed on Paramātmā. The illusion of water in a mirage will not take place at all without light. It is all light. The illusion of water is imposed on light. However, some famous objects are perceived as real and spiritual, such as *bhakti* and things produced by *bhakti* or within *bhakti*, and the abodes of the Lord.

*lakṣaṇaṁ bhakti-yogasya nirguṇasya hy udāhṛtam
ahaituky avyavahitā yā bhaktiḥ puruṣottame*

It is said that the quality of *bhakti* beyond the *guṇas* is that *bhakti* which is devoid of results other than *bhakti* and which is unobstructed by other processes. SB 3.29.12

The Lord says *mat-sevāyām tu nirguṇā*: faith in my devotional service is purely transcendental. (SB 11.25.27) He has also said *man nitekaṁ tu nirguṇam*, *nirguṇo mad apaśrayaḥ*, and *man niṣṭaṁ nirguṇam smṛtam*: my abode is beyond the *guṇas*, the devotee is beyond the *guṇas*, knowledge of the Lord is beyond the *guṇas*. (SB 11.25.26,

24, 25) All objects related to *bhakti* are beyond the *guṇas*. *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* says *tāsam madhye sākṣād brahma-gopāla-purī hi*: among them, the abode of Gopāla is Brahman. *Saccidānandaikarase bhakti-yoge tiṣṭhati*: the Lord resides in *bhakti*, filled with eternity, knowledge and bliss. The planet of the Lord and *bhakti-yoga* are beyond the *guṇas* and are thus the highest truth. That is explained in this verse. If it is defined as being beyond the *guṇas*, it is *cit-samaḥ*, the same *cit*. *Paramātmā* is beyond the *guṇas*. Since all these objects are the expansions of *Paramātmā*, they are the one *Paramātmā* (*ātmavat*).

|| 12.4.30 ||

*na hi satyasya nānātvam avidvān yadi manyate
nānātvam chidrayor yadvaj jyotiṣor vātayor iva*

TRANSLATION

There is no material duality in the Absolute Truth. If a person thinks there is duality he is ignorant like one seeing the space in two pots as two different kinds of space, or the fire in two lamps as two different kinds of fire or the *prāṇa* in two bodies as two different kinds of *prāṇa*, when actually there is only one space, one fire and one *prāṇa*.

COMMENTARY

How does one conceive of oneness? There is no duality in the supreme truth. If one considers duality in the absolute, one is ignorant. An ignorant person, on seeing two pots with cavities, thinks the first pot has some space in it and the other pot has different space in it. Similarly, on seeing two lamps an ignorant person thinks that in the first lamp is one fire and in the second lamp a different fire. Or on seeing *prāṇa* in one body and in another body, he will think that they are different kinds of *prāṇa*.

|| 12.4.31 ||

*yathā hiranyam bahudhā samīyate nṛbhiḥ kriyābhir vyavahāra-vartmasu
evam vacobhir bhagavān adhokṣajo vyākhyāyate laukika-vaidikair janaiḥ*

TRANSLATION

Just gold is perceived in different forms by various types of manufacturing in the ordinary world, the Supreme Lord, inaccessible to material senses, is described in various words, both ordinary and Vedic, by different types of men.

COMMENTARY

Though at the time of creation the universe is seen to support various actions, the *jñānī* should know that there is only one Brahman. By various fabrications, gold appears as earrings or bracelets. By common words and Vedic verses, the Lord is described in many ways.

|| 12.4.32 ||

*yathā ghano 'rka-prabhavo 'rka-darśito
hy arkāṁśa-bhūtasya ca cakṣuṣas tamaḥ
evaṁ tv ahaṁ brahma-guṇas tad-īkṣito
brahmāṁśakasyātmana ātma-bandhanaḥ*

TRANSLATION

The cloud is a product of the sun and is revealed by the sun. But the cloud covers the eye, another portion of the sun. The effects of Brahman are revealed by Brahman. Similarly the *ahankāra*, the effect of Brahman, helps the *jīva*, a portion of Brahman, to bind himself up.

COMMENTARY

“If everything is Brahman because everything is the effect of Brahman, how can the *jīvas*, portions of Brahman, be covered by *ahankāra*, the effect of Brahman, which is illusory? And being covered, how do they become bewildered?” An example is given. The rays of the sun, transformed into clouds, become rain. It is said:

*agnau prāstāhūtiḥ samyag ādityam upatiṣṭhate
ādityāj jāyate vṛṣtir vṛṣter annaṁ tataḥ prajāḥ*

Oblations to fire go to the sun. From the sun they transform into rain. Rain transforms into food and then into the bodies of living entities. Manu Smṛti 3.76.3

The product of the sun is a cloud. Thus clouds are manifested by the sun. They cause a covering of the eye (blocking the sun), though the eye is a portion of the sun as well. Similarly *ahaṅkāra*, an effect of Brahman, binds up the *jīva*, a portion of Brahman. *Ātma-bandhanaḥ* means “the *jīva* binds himself.”

|| 12.4.33 ||

*ghano yadārka-prabhavo vidīryate cakṣuḥ svarūpaṁ ravim ikṣate tadā
yadā hy ahaṅkāra upādhir ātmano jijnāsayā naśyati tarhy anusmaret*

TRANSLATION

When the cloud produced from the sun is destroyed, the eye can see the actual form of the sun. Similarly, when the spirit soul destroys his material covering of false ego by inquiring into the transcendental science, he realizes Brahman.

COMMENTARY

When the *ahaṅkāra*, a covering on the *jīva*, is destroyed, one realizes Brahman. This is explained through an example. When the cloud is destroyed, the eye sees the sun in its true form. The human eye, and not the eye of the owl, sees the sun. Similarly the eye of the *jñānī* who has some *bhakti* sees Brahman, and not the person without *bhakti*. *Bhakyāham ekayā grāhyaḥ*: I am only achieved by *bhakti*. (SB 11.14.21) When *ahaṅkāra* is destroyed, one realizes Brahman.

|| 12.4.34 ||

*yadaivam etena viveka-hetinā māyā-mayāhaṅkaraṇātma-bandhanam
chittvācyutātmānubhavo vatiṣṭhate tam āhur ātyantikam aṅga samplavam*

TRANSLATION

O King! When the illusory false ego that binds the soul has been cut off with the sword of discriminating knowledge and one remains with firm meditation on Acyuta, the Supreme Soul, it is called the *ātyantika-pralaya*.

COMMENTARY

For the destruction of *ahaṅkāra* one practices *bhakti-miśra-jñāna*. That is described in this verse. After cutting the bondage of *ahaṅkāra* by *jñāna-śāstra* (*viveka-hetinā*), one remains with firm meditation of the mind upon Acyuta. Or, for the accomplished *yogī*, after destroying *ahaṅkāra*, complete realization of Brahman (*acyutāmān:ubhavaḥ*) remains steady. Being fixed in that state is called *ātyantika-pralaya* (*samplavam*).

|| 12.4.35 ||

*nityadā sarva-bhūtānām brahmādinām parantapa
utpatti-pralayāv eke sūkṣma-jñāḥ sampracakṣate*

TRANSLATION

Experts in the subtle workings of nature, O subduer of the enemy, have declared that there are continuous processes of creation and annihilation that all created beings, beginning with Brahṁā, constantly undergo.

COMMENTARY

This verse speaks of the *nitya-pralaya* (destruction at every moment).

|| 12.4.36 ||

*kāla-sroto-javenāśu hriyamāṇasya nityadā
pariṇāminām avasthās tā janma-pralaya-hetavaḥ*

TRANSLATION

The various states of the bodies of living entities, which are quickly destroyed by the force of the flow of time, are indications of continual birth and death.

COMMENTARY

The cause is explained. *Hriyamāṇasya* should be *hriyamānānām*. The various states of the bodies of living entities, such as *bālya*, *paugṇḍā* etc., which are quickly destroyed by the force of the flow of time, are indications of continual birth and death. The bodies

and other objects are at every moment born and dying. Because of these various conditions of their bodies they are compared to flames.

|| 12.4.37 ||

*anādy-antavatānena kāleneśvara-mūrtinā
avasthā naiva dṛśyante viyati jyotiṣām iva*

TRANSLATION

These stages of existence created by beginningless and endless time, which is representative of the Supreme Lord, are not visible, just as the infinitesimal changes of position of the planets in the sky cannot be directly seen.

COMMENTARY

“If these states are there at every moment, why are they not seen? The argument in question is without proof.” The states of birth and death caused by time without beginning and end are not seen, just as the movements of the planets in the sky are not seen. Just as one must infer the movement of a planet at every moment so that it attains a different visible position, one must infer subtle states of change between the stages of infancy and youth that are visible. Thus the argument is not without proof.

|| 12.4.38 ||

*nityo naimittikaś caiva tathā prākṛtiko layaḥ
ātyantikaś ca kathitaḥ kālasya gatiḥ īdrṣī*

TRANSLATION

In this way, the progress of time is described in terms of the four kinds of annihilation—continual (bodies), occasional (night of Brahmā), elemental (destruction of the universe at end of Brahmā’s life) and final (liberation).

COMMENTARY

This is a summary.

|| 12.4.39 ||

*etāḥ kuru-śreṣṭha jagad-vidhātur nārāyaṇasyākhila-sattva-dhāmnah
līlā-kathās te kathitāḥ samāsataḥ kārtsnyena nājo 'py abhidhātum īśaḥ*

TRANSLATION

O best of the Kurus! I have related to you these narrations of the pastimes of Lord Nārāyaṇa, the creator of this world and the abode of all living entities, in a brief summary. Even Lord Brahmā himself is incapable of describing them entirely.

COMMENTARY

Topics of the Lord are summarized.

|| 12.4.40 ||

*samsāra-sindhūm ati-dustaram uttīrṣor
nānyaḥ plavo bhagavataḥ puruṣottamasya
līlā-kathā-rasa-niṣevāṇam antareṇa
pumso bhaved vividha-duḥkha-davārditasya*

TRANSLATION

For a person who is suffering in the fire of countless miseries and even for persons who desires to cross the insurmountable ocean of material existence, there is no suitable boat except cultivating the nectar of the narrations of the Supreme Lord's pastimes.

COMMENTARY

The topics of the Lord are the life-sustaining medicine for all types of devotees, and even for those desiring liberation. Even those who desire liberation cannot achieve liberation without these topics. That is described in this verse. Or this is the answer to the question you asked at the beginning "What should a dying person do?" Other than food, there is nothing that can satisfy intolerable hunger. There is no other means of crossing material existence, such as *jñāna*. That would be like giving a garland and sandalwood to a person suffering from hunger. This will be explained later. You should not accept *jñāna* by which I cover the great secret of *bhakti* as the recommended process. *Rasa* in this verse means "sweetness

produced by the topics of the Lord's pastimes." One should not prescribe any other medicine except this nectar for persons suffering in the great fire of material life.

|| 12.4.41 ||

*purāṇa-saṁhitām etām ṛṣir nārāyaṇo 'vyayaḥ
nāradāya purā prāha kṛṣṇa-dvaipāyanāya saḥ*

TRANSLATION

Long ago, this anthology of all the Purāṇas was spoken by wise Viṣṇu to Brahmā. Brahmā, with undiminished *bhakti*, taught it to Nārada. Nārada spoke it to Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vedavyāsa.

COMMENTARY

One should study, teach, hear, and have others hear *Bhāgavatam* following a pure, unbroken line of *guru-parampara*. That is the intention of this verse. Wise Nārāyaṇa taught this to Brahmā. The missing word Brahmā should be supplied. Brahmā, without decrease in *bhakti* because of having no offenses (*avyayaḥ*), taught it to Nārada.

|| 12.4.42 ||

*sa vai mahyam mahā-rāja bhagavān bādarāyaṇaḥ
imām bhāgavatīm prītaḥ saṁhitām veda-sammitām*

TRANSLATION

O King! The great Vyāsadeva taught me this same scripture, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, which is equal in stature to the four Vedas.

COMMENTARY

The phrases *purāṇa-saṁhitām etām* and *imam bhāgavatīm saṁhitām* are in two separate sentences and thus there is no fault of too much repetition.

|| 12.4.43 ||

*imām vakṣyaty asau sūta ṛṣibhyo naimiṣālaye
dīrgha-satre kuru-śreṣṭha sampr̥staḥ śaunakādibhiḥ*

TRANSLATION

O best of the Kurus! That person Sūta Gosvāmī who is sitting before us will speak this *Bhāgavatam* to the sages assembled in the great sacrifice at Naimiṣāraṇya, when questioned by the members of the assembly, headed by Śaunaka.

COMMENTARY

Pointing out Sūta in the assembly with his finger, he says “That Suta (*asau sūta*).”

Thus ends the commentary on the Fourth Chapter of the Twelfth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas*.

Chapter Five



Realization Of Ātmā

|| 12.5.1 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

*atrānuvarṇyate 'bhīkṣṇam viśvātmā bhagavān hariḥ
yasya prasāda-jo brahmā rudraḥ krodha-samudbhavaḥ*

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* describes the Supreme Lord, the soul of the universe, from whose satisfaction Brahmā is born and from whose anger Rudra takes birth.

COMMENTARY

In the Fifth Chapter Śukadeva teaches Parīkṣit about Brahman in order to hide the real meaning of *Bhāgavatam*.

Having completed the *Bhāgavatam*, Śukadeva considered the matter within himself. Ah! It is improper that I have disclosed from my heart the great jewel among secrets and made it visible to all people. The Lord has said that this *bhakti* is the king of knowledge and the king of secret: *rāja-vidyā rāja-guhyam*. (BG 9.2) In this scripture I have explicitly revealed out of great mercy to Parīkṣit a subject which is the most secret: *sarva-guhyatamam*. (BG 18.64) I have shown *bhakti* to award all results both by negative and positive statements.

*akāmaḥ sarva-kāmo vā mokṣa-kāma udāra-dhīḥ |
tīvrena bhakti-yogena yajeta puruṣam param ||*

The person desiring destruction of all desires, the person with all desires, even the person with the intense desire for liberation, if he has good intelligence, will worship the Supreme Lord with pure *bhakti*. SB 2.3.10

*mukha-bāhūru-pādebhyaḥ puruṣasyāśramaiḥ saha
catvāro jajñire varṇā guṇair viprādayaḥ pṛthak*

*ya eṣāṁ puruṣam sākṣād ātma-prabhavam īśvaram
na bhajanty avajānanti sthānād bhraṣṭāḥ patanty adhaḥ*

Each of the four social orders, headed by the *brāhmaṇas*, was born through different combinations of the modes of nature, from the face, arms, thighs and feet of the Supreme Lord in his universal form, along with the *āśramas*. If any of the members of the four *varṇas* and four *āśramas* fail to worship the Lord, who is the source of their own creation, they will fall down from their *āśrama*. SB 11.5.2-3

Karma, which bestows Svarga, is definitely rejected. And famous *jñāna*, which bestows liberation, is rejected.

*naiṣkarmyam apy acyuta-bhāva-varjitam
na śobhate jñānam alaṁ nirañjanam
kutaḥ punaḥ śaśvad abhadram īśvare
na cārpitam karma yad apy akāraṇam*

Even the stage of *jñāna* without the bondage of *karma* is not glorious because it is devoid of *bhakti* to the Supreme Lord. What is the use of having destroyed ignorance? What to speak of *sakāma-karma*, which is suffering during practice and perfection, and *niṣkāma-karma*, when not offered to the Lord? SB 1.5.12

Even *jñānī sannyāsīs* are rejected in SB 11.5.3 quoted above. Practicing a tradition of *jñāna* without *bhakti* will not produce liberation.

*ye 'nye 'ravindākṣa vimukta-māninas
tvayy asta-bhāvād aviśuddha-buddhayaḥ
āruhya kṛcchreṇa param padam tataḥ
patanty adho 'nādr̥ta-yuṣmad-aṅghrayaḥ*

O lotus-eyed Lord, although nondevotees who accept severe austerities and penances to achieve the highest position may think themselves liberated, their intelligence is impure. They fall down from their position of imagined superiority because they have no regard for your lotus feet. SB 10.2.32

Since one attains liberation by *bhakti* without performance of *jñāna*, *jñāna* is not the exclusive process for attaining liberation:

*yat karmabhir yat tapasā jñāna-vairāgyataś ca yat
yogena dāna-dharmaṇa śreyobhir itarair api*

*sarvaṁ mad-bhakti-yogena mad-bhakto labhate 'ñjasā
svargāpavargaṁ mad-dhāma kathañcid yadi vāñchati*

Everything that can be achieved by fruitive activities, penance, knowledge, detachment, mystic yoga, charity, religious duties and all other means of perfecting life is easily achieved by my devotee through loving service unto me. If somehow or other my devotee desires promotion to heaven, liberation, or residence in my abode, he easily achieves such benedictions. SB 11.20.32-33

One may protest that *jñāna* is well-known for producing liberation. One should understand that *bhakti* within *jñāna*, though acting as minor element, produces liberation. *Jñāna* is a producer of liberation in name only. Even performing *jñāna* along with *bhakti* for liberation is not recommended. *Bhaktyāham ekayā grāhyaḥ*: I am only achieved by *bhakti*.

*nāsām dvijāti-saṁskāro na nivāso gurāv api
na tapo nātma-mīmāṁsā na śaucam na kriyāḥ śubhāḥ*

These women have never undergone the purificatory rites of the twice-born classes, nor have they lived as *brahmacārīs* in the *āśrama*

of a spiritual master, nor have they executed austerities, speculated on the nature of the self, followed the formalities of cleanliness or engaged in pious rituals. SB 10.23.43

*kiṁ vā yogena sāṅkhyena nyāsa-svādhyāyayor api
kiṁ vā śreyobhir anyaiś ca na yatrātma-prado hariḥ*

What is the use of *yoga*, *sāṅkhya*, *sannyāsa*, study of the Vedas, other auspicious acts, in which the Lord does not give realization of himself? SB 4.31.12

The practice of *bhakti* is recommended through *upakrama* (proposal), *upasamhāra* (conclusion) and *abhyāsa* (repetition). Including *jñāna* and *yoga* here and there in the text is only to teach the devotees about these philosophies and to show the superiority of *bhakti*. By performing even a small amount of *bhakti* one gains liberation:

*yan-nāmadheya-śravaṇānukīrtanād
yat-prahvaṇād yat-smaraṇād api kvacit
śvādo 'pi sadyaḥ savanāya kalpate
kutaḥ punas te bhagavan nu darśanāt*

By hearing or chanting your name, by offering respects to you, by occasional remembrance of you, even the dog-eater immediately becomes qualified for performing the soma sacrifice. O Lord! What then to speak of the person who sees you? SB 3.33.6

*aho bata śva-paco 'to garīyān
yaj-jihvāgre vartate nāma tubhyam
tepus tapas te juhuvuḥ sasnur āryā
brahmānūcur nāma gṛṇanti ye te*

How astonishing! The outcaste on the tip of whose tongue is your name is the *guru*! All those who chant your name, and are thus most respectable, have completed all austerities, all sacrifices, all bathing and all study of the Vedas. SB 3.33.7

*na hi bhagavann aghaṭitam idaṁ
tvad-darśanān nṛṇām akhila-pāpa-kṣayaḥ*

*yan-nāma sakṛc chravaṇāt
pukkaśo 'pi vimucyate saṁsārāt*

O Lord! Nothing is impossible for you. Just from seeing you all my sins have been destroyed. By hearing one of your names once, even the outcaste is delivered from the material world. SB 6.16.44

It has been concluded by Uddhava and me that there is no other process of liberation from *saṁsāra* except *bhakti*:

*tāpa-trayenābhīhitasya ghore
santapyamānasya bhavādhvanīsa
paśyāmi nānyac charaṇam tavāṅghri-
dvandvātapatrād amṛtābhivarsāt*

My dear Lord, for one who is being cruelly burned in the blazing fire of material miseries, having fallen into the network of material existence, I do not see any other possible shelter besides your two lotus feet, which are a shower of nectar extinguishing the fire of suffering. SB 11.19.9

*saṁsāra-sindhūm ati-dustaram uttīrṣor
nānyaḥ plavo bhagavataḥ puruṣottamasya
līlā-kathā-rasa-niṣevānam antareṇa
pumso bhaved vividha-duḥkha-davārditasya*

For a person who is suffering in the fire of countless miseries and who desires to cross the insurmountable ocean of material existence, there is no suitable boat except cultivating the nectar of the narrations of the Supreme Lord's pastimes. SB 12.4.40

And in the following verses, liberation is derided as the goal of life, and *bhakti* is established by me as the crown jewel of human goals.

*yasyām eva kavaya ātmānam avirataṁ vividha-vrjina-saṁsāra-
paritāpopatapyamānam anusavanaṁ snāpayantas tayaiiva parayā
nirvṛtyā hy apavargam ātyantikam parama-puruṣārtham api svayam
āsāditam no evādriyante bhagavadīyatvenaiva parisamāpta-sarvārthāḥ.*

The wise, suffering from various calamities of material life, continually bathe themselves in the lake of *bhakti*, and because of its intense bliss, they do not strive for liberation, the highest goal, which comes of its own accord since they have attained everything by being the servants of the Lord. SB 5.6.17

*evam dharmair manuṣyāṇām uddhavātma-nivedinām
mayi sañjāyate bhaktiḥ ko 'nyo 'rtho 'syāvaśiṣyate*

By those processes of *bhakti*, those human beings who have actually surrendered themselves to me automatically develop love for me. What other purpose or goal could remain for my devotee? SB 11.19.24

*duravagamātma-tattva-nigamāya tavātta-tanoś
carita-mahāmṛtābdhi-parivarta-pariśramaṇāḥ
na pariḷaṣanti kecid apavargam apīśvara te
caraṇa-saroja-hamsa-kula-saṅga-visṛṣṭa-grhāḥ*

My Lord, some fortunate souls have gotten relief from the fatigue of material life by diving into the vast nectar ocean of your pastimes, which you enact when you manifest your personal forms to propagate the unfathomable science of the self. These rare souls, indifferent even to liberation, renounce the happiness of home and family because of their association with devotees who are like flocks of swans enjoying at the lotus of your feet. SB 10.87.21

*yā nirvṛtis tanu-bhṛtām tava pāda-padma-
dhyānād bhavaj-jana-kathā-śravaṇena vā syāt
sā brahmaṇi sva-mahimany api nātha mā bhūt
kiṁ tv antakāsi-lulitāt patatām vimānāt*

The bliss available for your servant from meditating on your lotus feet or from hearing about your pastimes from the devotees is not available in your form of greatness, Brahman. What then to speak of the happiness of those who fall from the pleasures of Svarga? SB 4.9.10

*nārāyaṇa-parāḥ sarve na kutaścana bibhyati
svargāpavarga-narakeṣv api tulyārtha-darśinaḥ*

Devotees solely engaged in the devotional service of Nārāyaṇa never fear any condition of life. For them the heavenly planets, liberation and the hellish planets are all the same. SB 6.17.28

The authority of the words of other sages is relative, but the authority of my words is absolute. Let those words be famous everywhere, even in Vaikuṅṭha.

However, the Lord prefers some matters to be secret.

*vedā brahmātma-viṣayās tri-kāṇḍa-viṣayā ime
parokṣa-vādā ṛṣayaḥ parokṣam mama ca priyam*

The Vedas, divided into three divisions, ultimately reveal the living entity as pure spirit soul. The Vedic seers and *mantras*, however, express their meaning secretly, and I also am pleased by hiding those descriptions. SB 11.21.35

Since I have revealed the greatest secret, I have become not so dear to the Lord. What shall I do now? I have completed writing the Purāṇa. Let that be. Now I will try to hide the great secret of *bhakti*. Someone may impetuously show off a great, secret jewel to all people, and then, considering the matter, hide it in a box and place it in his treasure vault. He then shows off another jewel, praising it as the ultimate jewel. Thus now I will teach *jñāna* to King Parīkṣit, so that people will think, “Śukadeva is teaching Parīkṣit *jñāna*. By the influence of the Lord’s *māyā* they will think that *jñāna* is ultimate and *bhakti* is only a means to attain *jñāna*.”

The Lord sometimes appears before the perfected devotees and tests them by offering them liberation. I will test the development of *bhakti* in my disciple Parīkṣit by teaching him *jñāna*. The wise should know that this test is for the purpose of announcing to the world the steadiness of Parīkṣit’s *bhakti*. The ignorant people will explain that the result of *bhakti* and *jñāna* is only liberation, but one should understand that this is not my intention, because I have said that compared to liberation *bhakti* is much greater:

*rājan patir gurur alam bhavatām yadūnām
daivam priyaḥ kula-patiḥ kva ca kiṅkaro vaḥ
astv evam aṅga bhagavān bhajatām mukundo
muktim dadāti karhicit sma na bhakti-yogam*

O King Parīkṣit! Kṛṣṇa was the protector, instructor, object of worship, giver of affection, and the leader of both clans. But he was sometimes your servant. The Lord gives liberation but not *bhāva-bhakti* to those who worship him. SB 5.6.18

One should not fear that Parīkṣit will attain impersonal liberation by the *jñāna* that I will teach. Sūta, my disciple, has understood my intentions, and will later express them:

*sa vai mahā-bhāgavataḥ parīkṣid
yenāpavargākhyam adabhra-buddhiḥ
jñānena vaiyāsaki-śabditena
bheje khagendra-dhvaja-pāda-mūlam*

Parīkṣit, the great devotee, with pure intelligence, attained liberation in the form of the feet of the Lord who possesses a flag marked with Garuḍa, through knowledge spoken by Śukadeva. SB 1.18.16

And I have also indicated as quoted above that Parīkṣit will attain *prema-bhakti*:

Realization of Brahman cannot be achieved by these teachings of *ātmā* separate from body. The Lord has said that *bhakti* conquers *jñāna*:

*dravyam deśaḥ phalam kālo jñānam karma ca kārakaḥ
śraddhāvasthākṛtir niṣṭhā trai-guṇyaḥ sarva eva hi*

*sarve guṇa-mayā bhāvāḥ puruṣavyakta-dhiṣṭhitāḥ
dṛṣṭam śrutam anudhyātam buddhyā vā puruṣarṣabha*

*etāḥ saṁsṛtayaḥ puṁso guṇa-karma-nibandhanāḥ
yeneme nirjitāḥ saumya guṇā jīvena citta-jāḥ
bhakti-yogena man-niṣṭho mad-bhāvāya prapadyate*

Therefore material substance, place, result of activity, time, knowledge, work, the performer of work, faith, state of consciousness, species of life and destination after death are all based on the three modes of material nature.

O best of human beings, all states of material being are related to the interaction of the enjoying soul and material nature. Whether seen, heard of or only conceived within the mind, they are without exception constituted of the modes of nature.

O gentle Uddhava, all these items related to the *guṇas* and *karma* are causes of *samsāra*. The living entity conquers these *guṇas*, manifested from the mind, by *bhakti-yoga*. Dedicated only to me, he surrenders and attains a loving relation to me. SB 11.25.30-32

The devotee does not have any desire for liberation, the goal of *jñāna*. The Lord himself says this:

*jñāne karmaṇi yoge ca vārtāyām daṇḍa-dhāraṇe
yāvān artho nṛṇām tāta tāvāms te 'ham catur-vidhaḥ*

Through analytic knowledge (*jñāna*), ritualistic work, mystic *yoga*, mundane business and political rule, people seek to advance in religiosity, economic development, sense gratification and liberation. But because you are my devotee, whatever men can accomplish in these multifarious ways you will very easily find within me. SB 11.29.33

Finally I will produce a work including teachings of *jñāna*, which will be like Mohinī *avatāra*, with different faces for different people, so that the demons will be cheated from drinking the nectar of *bhakti*. In teaching about *jñāna*, I will utter words first with one meaning and then indicate another meaning smeared with *bhakti-rasa* to please the devotees. And then, by doing that, I will make all the elements of *jñāna* that are unfavorable for *bhakti* favorable for *bhakti* by including them in *bhakti*.

In this way Śukadeva thought.

Atra means “in concluding this work.” Brahmā was born from the Lord’s pleasure. This means that Brahmā was born from the Lord’s *sattva-guṇa*. However, Brahmā is not born from *sattva-guṇa* but *rajo-guṇa*. Śiva arose from anger. Since the Lord is beyond the *guṇas*, it is impossible that he can have anger or *tamas* as part of his *svarūpa*. Therefore these statements are exaggerations, with another meaning.

The Lord, who is beyond the *guṇas*, is pleased with his devotee who serves him. He is angry at those who harm the devotees. The pleasure and anger of the Lord are *śuddha-sattva*. Brahmā is an example of one who attained good fortune from the Lord’s pleasure. He is the cause of the *sādhana* and the *sādhya* (*bhakti* and *prema*). The devotees should strive for this. The cause of destruction of *sādhana* and *sādhya* is the Lord’s anger. One should strive to avoid this. This is the conclusion of the Purāṇa.

“If Śukadeva has already completed the Purāṇa, why do we consider that First Canto and the remainder of the Twelfth Canto part of the *Bhāgavatam*?” Just as the preliminary and concluding portions of a sacrifice are also called the sacrifice, or the introduction to a drama and blessings at the end of a drama are part of the drama, so the beginning and concluding parts of the *Bhāgavatam* are considered part of the *Bhāgavatam*. Consider the following statement:

*gītā su-gītā kartavyā kim anyaiḥ śāstra-vistaraiḥ
yā svayaṁ padmanābhasya mukha-padmād viniḥśṛtā*

One should recite the *Gītā*. What is the necessity of any other scripture, when the *Gītā* emanates from the lotus mouth of the Supreme Lord?
Gītā-māhātmya 4

Though all eighteen chapters of the *Gītā* were not completely spoken by the Lord, they are said to be spoken by him in this statement. Similarly, though the last part of the Twelfth Canto was not spoken by Śukadeva, it is also said to be spoken by him. This is the conclusion.

|| 12.5.2 ||

*tvam tu rājan mariṣyeti paśu-buddhim imām jahi
na jātaḥ prāg abhūto 'dya deha-vat tvam na nañkṣyasi*

TRANSLATION

O King! Give up the animal mentality, thinking, "I will die." You have never been born, you were previously not non-existent, and you will not be destroyed in the future like your body.

COMMENTARY

The teachings on *jñāna* begin. The word *tu* indicates a different subject. *Mariṣye* should be *mariṣyāmi*. Give up the intelligence of animals. Destroy that with discrimination.

*taṁ mopayātaṁ pratiyantu viprā
gaṅgā ca devī dhṛta-cittam īṣe
dviḥopasṛṣṭaḥ kuhakas takṣako vā
daśatv alam gāyata viṣṇu-gāthāḥ*

The *brāhmaṇas* and *Gaṅgā-devī* should know that I am surrendered, and have dedicated my heart to the Lord. Let the snake released by the *brāhmaṇa*, even if it is an imposter, bite me. Please sing topics concerning the Lord. SB 1.19.15

Since *Parīkṣit* had promised to dedicate himself to hearing *Bhāgavatam*, he cannot be accused of having animal intelligence. Thus these teachings on *jñāna* are not meant for *Parīkṣit* but for others who have animal intelligence. Since *Parīkṣit* is his disciple, he addresses him thus, though the address is meant for others. Similarly, *Kṛṣṇa* addresses *Arjuna* in the *Gītā*, though the teachings are meant for all people. The discrimination is described. Your body did not exist previously, now it exists and in the future it will be destroyed. But you are not born, and you were not previously non-existent. Nor will you die. You are a *jīvātmā*, different from the material covering. This *jñāna* is not unfavorable for *bhakti*.

|| 12.5.3 ||

*na bhaviṣyasi bhūtvā tvam putra-pauṭrādi-rūpavān
bījānkura-vad dehāder vyatirikto yathānalaḥ*

TRANSLATION

You will not take birth again in the form of your sons and grandsons, like a sprout taking birth from a seed and then generating a new seed. Rather, you are entirely distinct from the material body and its paraphernalia, in the same way that fire is distinct from its fuel.

COMMENTARY

Though bodies are continually born, the *ātmā* is not born repeatedly. You will not be born as your sons and grandsons. *Śruti* says *aṅgād aṅgāt sambhavasi hṛdayāt abhijāyase ātmā vai putranāmāsi samjīva śaradah śatam*: you are born from the limbs, you are born from the heart; you are born as your son's name— live for a hundred years. Like a sprout from a seed, a body takes the form of a child. From the sprout comes another seed, which produces a grandson. But you are not like this, since the *ātmā* is different from the material covering, just as a flame is different from the wood it burns. A body is born from another body, but the *ātmā* is not like this.

|| 12.5.4 ||

*svapne yathā śiraś-chedaṁ pañcatvādy ātmanaḥ svayam
yasmāt paśyati dehasya tata ātmā hy ajo 'marah*

TRANSLATION

In a dream, one can see his own head being cut off and thus understand that his actual self is standing apart from the dream experience. Similarly, while awake, the *ātmā* sees his body, a product of the five material elements. Therefore the *ātmā* is unborn and without death.

COMMENTARY

The difference of the *ātmā* from the body that undergoes birth and death is shown by an example. One cannot actually witness one's head being cut off. Thus the separate *ātmā* is the seer in this case. In the waking state a separate being sees the body made of five elements. Therefore (*tataḥ*) the *ātmā* is without birth and without death.

|| 12.5.5 ||

*ghaṭe bhinne ghaṭākāśa ākāśaḥ syād yathā purā
evaṁ dehe mṛte jīvo brahma sampadyate punaḥ*

TRANSLATION

When a pot is broken, the portion of sky within the pot becomes the sky element as before. In the same way, when the gross and subtle bodies die, the living entity becomes Brahman as before.

COMMENTARY

When one attains *jñāna*, the covering of the subtle body that is difficult to destroy is dissolved. An example used by the *ekātma-vādīs* is given. When a pot is broken the ether in the pot becomes part of the great ether as previously, before the pot was made.

“When the body dies, being dissolved by *jñāna*” has another, esoteric meaning. “The *jīva* and *Paramātmā* are both seen functioning in the body. When the subtle body is dissolved, both *jīva* and *Paramātmā* become liberated. Can we not say this?” No. *Paramātmā* is free of covering in the three aspects of time. An example is given. As the ether exists even at present in the pot, when the pot is broken, it exists uncovered. Since the ether is present inside and outside the pot, how can the pot cover it? That is the meaning. Though the body is present, and not dead, *Paramātmā* (*brahma*), who is different from the *jīva* (*ajīvaḥ*)¹, who pervades everywhere, remains as before.

|| 12.5.6 ||

*manaḥ sṛjati vai dehān guṇān karmāṇi cātmanaḥ
tan manaḥ sṛjate māyā tato jīvasya saṁsṛtiḥ*

TRANSLATION

The material bodies, qualities and activities of the *ātmā* are created by the material mind. That mind is itself created by *māyā*. Because of the *upādhis*, the *ātmā* assumes material existence.

¹ *Jīvaḥ* is taken as *ajīvaḥ* by sandhi rule.

COMMENTARY

The method of how the covering consisting of the body, made of *māyā*, is produced is described, in order that it can be destroyed by knowledge. The mind creates the body of the *ātmā*.

*yato yato dhāvati daiva-coditam
mano vikārātmakam āpa pañcasu
guṇeṣu māyā-raciteṣu dehy asau
prapadyamānaḥ saha tena jāyate*

At the time of death, according to the thinking, feeling and willing of the mind, which is involved in fruitive activities, one receives a particular body. In other words, the body develops according to the activities of the mind. Changes of body are due to the flickering of the mind, for otherwise the soul could remain in its original, spiritual body. SB 10.1.42

And *māyā* creates the mind. From all of these *upādhis* or limitations starting with *māyā* (*tataḥ*), the *samsāra* of the *jīva* takes place.

|| 12.5.7 ||

*snehādhiṣṭhāna-varty-agni- saṁyogo yāvad īyate
tāvad dīpasya dīpatvam evaṁ deha-kṛto bhavaḥ
rajaḥ-sattva-tamo-vṛttyā jāyate 'tha vinaśyati*

TRANSLATION

A flame functions as such only by the combination of its fuel, vessel, wick and fire. Similarly, *samsāra* is composed of *karma*, the mind, the body and consciousness. *Samsāra* related to accepting the body appears and disappears by the actions of *rajas*, *sattva* and *tamas*.

COMMENTARY

An example is given. The transformation of light energy into a flame takes place by oil, a vessel, a wick and application of fire. Oil represents *karma*. The vessel represents the mind (which is the basis of *karma*). The wick represents the body (fuelled by *karma*). Fire represents the imposition of consciousness. The lamp represents *samsāra*. *Samsāra* (*bhavaḥ*) related to accepting a body (*deha-kṛtaḥ*) arises and disappears by the actions of the *guṇas*.

|| 12.5.8 ||

*na tatrātmā svayam-jyotir yo vyaktāvvyaktayoḥ parah
ākāśa iva cādharma dhruvo 'nantopamas tataḥ*

TRANSLATION

The *ātmā* is not subject to creation and destruction. It is different from the gross and subtle bodies since it is self-luminous. Like the ether, it is the support for everything. It is without change, without end, and beyond comparison.

COMMENTARY

Samsāra, like the lamp, should be destroyed but the *ātmā*, like the light, should not be destroyed. "Where does the *ātmā* appear in *samsāra*?" The *ātmā* is not involved in creation and destruction like the bodies. *Ātmā* is different from the gross and subtle bodies of the *jīva* since it is self-luminous, self-revealing. Thus the basis of the body which is made of matter is without change (*dhruvaḥ*). It has no end (*ananta*) and nothing can compare to it (*upamaḥ*). The hidden meaning is as follows. What is superior to cause and effect is the final cause, *Paramātmā* (instead of *ātmā* or Brahman). Like the ether it is the basis of everything.

|| 12.5.9 ||

*evam ātmānam ātma-stham ātmanaivāmṛśa prabho
buddhyānumāna-garbhinyā vāsudevānucintayā*

TRANSLATION

O King! By constantly meditating upon *Vāsudeva*, by using the mind and intelligence for inferring the soul's existence, you should carefully consider your true self situated within the material coverings.

COMMENTARY

Carefully consider by the mind (*ātmanā*) the soul situated in the *upādhis* such as the body, using inferences for the *ātmā*'s existence through intelligence, as well as meditation on *Vāsudeva*.

|| 12.5.10 ||

*codito vipra-vākyena na tvām dhakṣyati takṣakaḥ
mṛtyavo nopadhakṣyanti mṛtyūnām mṛtyum īśvaram*

TRANSLATION

The snake-bird Takṣaka, sent by the curse of the *brāhmaṇa*, will not burn your true self. The agents of death will never burn you who are capable of killing the servants of death.

COMMENTARY

Takṣaka will not burn you, the *ātmā*, different from your body. What to speak of Takṣaka, even death personified will not burn you. The esoteric meaning is as follows. You are independent of the body (*īśvaram*) since you are liberated from *upādhis* and you are the destroyer (*mṛtyum*) of obstacles to *bhakti* (*mṛtyūnām*). Coming to you, the curse of the *brāhmaṇa* and other obstacles to *bhakti* will be destroyed.

|| 12.5.11-12 ||

*ahaṁ brahma paraṁ dhāma brahmāhaṁ paramaṁ padam
evaṁ samikṣya cātmānam ātmany ādhāya niṣkale*

*daśantaṁ takṣakaṁ pāde lelihānaṁ viṣānanaiḥ
na drakṣyasi śarīraṁ ca viśvaṁ ca pṛthag ātmanaḥ*

TRANSLATION

“I am that Brahman, the supreme state of being. Brahman is I, the supreme position.” Considering this, place yourself in the Brahman devoid of *upādhis*. You will not see Takṣaka biting your foot with fire and poison, and licking it with his tongue. You will not see your body or the universe to be separate from Brahman.²

² The esoteric meaning is: I am the worshiper of the Lord. I am a conscious particle of the Lord. I belong to the Lord.” Considering this and considering the lotus feet of the Lord, surrender to the Lord. You will not see Taksaka, your body or the universe separate from the Lord, because of fainting with bliss on seeing Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY

In two verses the method of deliberation and the bite of Takṣaka are described. By thinking “I am that Brahman, not a person in *saṁsāra*” one can eliminate lamentation. By thinking, “Brahman is I, I am Brahman” one can eliminate the invisibility of Brahman (one can attain realization of Brahman). You should place yourself in the Brahman (*ātmani*) free of *upādhis* (*niṣkale*).

The esoteric meaning is “I am the spiritual particle (*dhāma*) of the Supreme Lord who is like the sun.” *Amara-koṣa* says *dhāma* means body, house, splendor and beauty. I am the worshiper of Brahman (*brahma-param*). An example of *para* with this meaning is *nārāyaṇa-paro viprah*: the *brāhmaṇa* is a worshiper of Nārāyaṇa. *Brahma aham* means “I belong to the Supreme Lord.” This is *tat-puruṣa* compound with a possessive meaning. Seeing the lotus feet of the Lord or his *svarūpa* (*paramam padam*), you should surrender yourself to Paramātmā, Kṛṣṇa, who has a *niṣka* ornament³ on his chest (*niṣkale*).

You will not see Takṣaka, biting while pressing his two lips and relishing with his tongue, with fire combined with poison. You will not see your body bitten by the snake or the universe different from yourself. The other meaning is “You will not see all this because you will be fainting with bliss from directly seeing the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa.”

|| 12.5.13 ||

*etat te kathitam tāta yad ātmā prṣṭavān nrpa
harer viśvātmanaś ceṣṭām kim bhūyaḥ śrotum icchasi*

TRANSLATION

Beloved King Parīkṣit, I have narrated to you the topics you originally inquired about—the pastimes of the Hari, the soul of the universe. Now, what more do you wish to hear?

³ *Niṣka* is a gold ornament worn on the chest.

COMMENTARY

I have spoken to you about *jñāna*, about which you did not inquire. I have previously given the answers to what you (*ātmā*) asked me concerning the pastimes of the Lord. He again asks Parīkṣit, in order to proclaim the perfection of his disciple.

Thus ends the commentary on the Fifth Chapter of the Twelfth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas*.

Chapter Six



Passing Of Parīkṣit

|| 12.6.1 ||

sūta uvāca

*etan niśamya muninābhihitam parīkṣid
vyāsātmajena nikhilātma-dṛṣā samena
tat-pāda-mūlam upasṛtya natena mūrdhnā
baddhāñjalis tam idam āha sa viṣṇurātaḥ*

TRANSLATION

Sūta Gosvāmī said: After hearing all that was narrated to him by the equiposed Śukadeva, who was the son of Vyāsadeva and the seer of Kṛṣṇa, Mahārāja Parīkṣit humbly approached his lotus feet. Bowing his head down upon the sage's feet, the King, who had lived his entire life under the protection of Viṣṇu, folded his hands in supplication and spoke as follows.

COMMENTARY

The Sixth Chapter describes Mahārāja Parīkṣit attaining Kṛṣṇa, the seven sacrifices performed by Janmejaya and the branches of three Vedas. *Nikhilātma-dṛṣā* means “by the seer of Kṛṣṇa” or “by one who sees the minds of all beings.” Understanding the mind of the *jñānīs* present, Śukadeva made them happy by presenting teachings on *jñāna*. Therefore he was seen as equiposed (*samena*).

|| 12.6.2 ||

rājovāca

*siddho 'smy anugṛhīto 'smi bhavatā karuṇātmanā
śrāvito yac ca me sāksād anādi-nidhano hariḥ*

TRANSLATION

Mahārāja Parīkṣit said: I have now achieved the purpose of my life, because a great and merciful soul like you has shown such kindness to me since you have spoken to me this narration of the Supreme Lord who has no beginning or end, whom I directly saw.

COMMENTARY

I have been successful (*siddhaḥ*), because the Lord, whom I directly saw in the womb and after birth, has been heard about from you, and I have heard him speak also.¹

|| 12.6.3 ||

*nāty-adbhutam ahaṁ manye mahatām acyutātmanām
ajñeṣu tāpa-tapteṣu bhūteṣu yad anugrahaḥ*

TRANSLATION

I do not find it amazing that great souls such as you, whose minds are always absorbed in the Lord, show mercy to the foolish conditioned souls suffering in this world.

COMMENTARY

Acyutātmanām means “whose minds are absorbed in Acyuta.”

|| 12.6.4 ||

*purāṇa-saṁhitām etām aśrauṣma bhavato vayam
yasyām khalūttamaḥ-śloko bhagavān anuvarṇyate*

TRANSLATION

I have heard from you this *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, which is the summary of all the Purāṇas and which describes the Supreme Lord along with other themes.

¹ After the Kurukṣetra war Kṛṣṇa was with the Pāṇḍavas when Parīkṣit was born.

COMMENTARY

“What did you understand from me by hearing scripture?” The Lord was described along with other subjects that supported the main theme as limbs (*anuvārṇyate*).

|| 12.6.5 ||

*bhagavaṁs takṣakādibhyo mṛtyubhyo na bibhemy aham
praviṣṭo brahma nirvāṇam abhayaṁ darśitaṁ tvayā*

TRANSLATION

My lord, I now have no fear of Takṣaka or any other living being, or even of repeated deaths, but I fear entering the impersonal Brahman that destroys fear, about which you have just taught me.

COMMENTARY

“You who understand my mind have not spoken one word to me. If there was something doubtful, I could not tolerate that.”

O Lord, who knows everything (*bhagavān*)! Knowing that my heart was fixed in *bhakti*, why did you teach me *jñāna*? I do not fear Takṣaka and other deaths in other births. But entering into the impersonal Brahman that destroys fear, about which you have just taught me—that I fear (the last phrase should be understood). This is similar to making a statement such as “I am not afraid of misfortunes while situated in household life. But entering the forest—that I fear (this phrase is understood and not spoken), and therefore I will not enter the forest.” I have much greater fear of the impersonal Brahman that you have explained to me than many deaths by Takṣaka. This impersonal liberation is intolerable for devotees like me, who have renounced everything and given it to the Lord, and whose real desires were revealed by the great devotee Śiva in this statement:

*nārāyaṇa-parāḥ sarve na kutaścana bibhyati
svargāpavarga-narakeṣv api tulyārtha-darśinaḥ*

Devotees solely engaged in the devotional service of Nārāyaṇa never fear any condition of life. For them the heavenly planets, liberation and the hellish planets are all the same. SB 6.17.28

I have made my vow at the point of death:

*punaś ca bhūyād bhagavaty anante
ratiḥ prasaṅgaś ca tad-āśrayeṣu
mahatsu yām yām upayāmi sṛṣṭim
maitry astu sarvatra namo dvijebhyaḥ*

On the other hand, in whatever birth I receive, may I have *rati* for the unlimited Lord, excellent association with his devotees who take shelter of him and friendship with all living beings! I offer respects to the *brāhmaṇas*. SB 1.19.16

But now you teach me about Brahman. There is a hint of anger in his words. By that, Śukadeva, who was testing the firmness of his *bhakti*, became happy. Similarly, at the beginning of the *rasa* dance, the *gopīs*, having disobeyed the orders of their elders, became angry with Kṛṣṇa and rebuked him by this indirect expression. The commentator on *Kāvya-prakāśa* gives that meaning.² To take another meaning of the present verse (I have entered the Brahman that destroys all fear) is not accepted by the devotees since *Bhāgavatam* presents two meanings to persons of different qualifications, like Mohinī.³

|| 12.6.6 ||

*anujānīhi mām brahman vācam yacchāmy adhokṣaje
mukta-kāmāśayam cetaḥ praveśya visṛjāmy asūn*

² Viśvanātha quotes the phrase:

*tvām asmi vacmi viduṣām samavāyo'tra tiṣṭhati | ātmīyām matim āsthāya
sthitim atra vidhehi tat ||*

This is an example of suggestive means of expression. It however is found originally in the *Sāhitya-darpaṇa* 4.12 as well as *Kāvya-prakāśa*. It is difficult to say which commentary on *Kāvya-prakāśa* this is from. The literal meaning of the sentence is: I tell you that there is an assembly of learned people here. Therefore after gathering your intelligence, stay here. The suggested meaning is: Since I am your friend, you must stay here.

³ Just as Mohinī gave nectar to the *devatās* and cheated the demons, *Bhāgavatam* presents the sweetness of Kṛṣṇa to the devotees and gives *jñāna* and *karma* to the faithless.

TRANSLATION

O *brāhmaṇa*, please give me permission to resign my speech to Adhokṣaja. Absorbing my mind, purified of desires and impressions, in the Lord, permit me to give up my life.

COMMENTARY

O *brāhmaṇa*! Give me the order to do this by your mercy, and nothing contrary to it. Give me permission to leave my body, having concentrated my mind, free of desires and impressions.

|| 12.6.7 ||

*ajñānaṁ ca nirastaṁ me jñāna-vijñāna-niṣṭhaya
bhavatā darśitaṁ kṣemaṁ paraṁ bhagavataḥ padam*

TRANSLATION

You have revealed to me the supreme form of the Lord. By being fixed in knowledge of the Lord and in realization of his sweetness and powers, my ignorance has been eradicated.

COMMENTARY

By knowledge about the Lord and realization of his sweetness and powers, my ignorance has been destroyed. How did this happen? The supreme form, abode or lotus feet of the Lord have been shown by you.

|| 12.6.8 ||

sūta uvāca

*ity uktas tam anujñāpya bhagavān bādarāyaṇiḥ
jagāma bhikṣubhiḥ sākam nara-devena pūjitaḥ*

TRANSLATION

Sūta Gosvāmī said: Thus requested, the son of Vyāsadeva gave his permission to King Parīkṣit. Then, after being worshiped by the King and all the great sages, Śukadeva departed from that place.

COMMENTARY

Bhikṣubhiḥ means “by all the great sages.”

|| 12.6.9-10 ||

*parīkṣid api rājarṣir ātmany ātmānam ātmanā
samādhāya param dadhyāv aspandāsur yathā taruḥ*

*prāk-kūle barhiṣy āsīno gaṅgā-kūla udañ-mukhaḥ
brahma-bhūto mahā-yogī niḥsaṅgaś chinna-saṁsayah*

TRANSLATION

The saintly King Parīkṣit then sat down on the bank of the Ganges, upon a seat made of *darbha* grass with the tips of its stalks facing east, and turned himself toward the north. Having attained the perfection of *yoga*, having freed himself of all material association, have cast off all doubts, merging his life airs within, concentrating intently, situated in the spiritual realm, he placed Kṛṣṇa in his mind by his intelligence.

COMMENTARY

By his intelligence (*ātmanā*) he concentrated acutely (*param*) on Kṛṣṇa (*ātmānam*) in his mind (*ātmani*) and merged his life airs within (*aspandāsuḥ*) while sitting on *kuśa* with tips facing east and surpassing the three *guṇas* (*brahma-bhūtaḥ*). Brahma here means “spiritual substance.” Parīkṣit became situated in the spiritual sky. It is said *tāsam madhye sākṣad brahma goplala-purī*: among the places, the abode of Kṛṣṇa is directly Brahman. (*Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad*)

|| 12.6.11 ||

*takṣakaḥ prahito viprāḥ kruddhena dvija-sūnunā
hantu-kāmo nṛpaṁ gacchan dadarśa pathi kaśyapam*

TRANSLATION

O learned *brāhmaṇas*! When the snake-bird Takṣaka, who had been sent by the angry son of a *brāhmaṇa*, was going toward the King to kill him, he saw Kaśyapa Muni on the path.

COMMENTARY

Since Parīkṣit was situated in the spiritual world, the attack of Takṣaka was a useless action. This is expressed in three verses.

|| 12.6.12 ||

*taṁ tarpayitvā draviṇair nivartya viṣa-hāriṇam
dvija-rūpa-praticchannaḥ kāma-rūpo 'daśan nṛpam*

TRANSLATION

Takṣaka flattered Kaśyapa by presenting him with valuable offerings and thereby stopped the sage, who was expert in counteracting poison, from protecting Mahārāja Parīkṣit. Then the snakebird, who could assume any form he wished, disguised himself as a *brāhmaṇa*, and bit the King.

COMMENTARY

Kaśyapa had come to gather materials for a remedy to protect Parīkṣit from the poison. His ability to counteract poisons had been demonstrated earlier by his growing a banyan tree step-by-step from a spout when it was turned to ashes by the poison of Takṣaka. Takṣaka satisfied him by giving him objects he liked and stopped him from going to Parīkṣit. Takṣaka disguised himself as a *brāhmaṇa* and bit Parīkṣit.

|| 12.6.13 ||

*brahma-bhūtasya rājarṣer deho 'hi-garalāgninā
babhūva bhasmasāt sadyaḥ paśyatām sarva-dehinām*

TRANSLATION

While living beings all over the universe looked on, the body of the saint among kings, who was situated with the Lord, was immediately burned to ashes by the fire of the snake's poison.

COMMENTARY

The burning of his body was like the last rites performed by his son.

|| 12.6.14 ||

*hāhā-kāro mahān āsīd bhuvi khe dikṣu sarvataḥ
vismitā hy abhavan sarve devāsura-narādayaḥ*

TRANSLATION

There arose a great lamentation in all directions on the earth and in the heavens, and all the *devatās*, demons, human beings and other creatures were dismayed.

|| 12.6.15 ||

*deva- Dundubhayo nedur gandharvāpsaraso jaguḥ
vavṛṣuḥ puṣpa-varṣāṇi vibudhāḥ sādhu-vādināḥ*

TRANSLATION

Heavenly kettledrums sounded, and the Gandharvas and Apsarās sang. The *devatās* showered flowers and spoke words of praise.

|| 12.6.16 ||

*janmejayaḥ sva-pitaram śrutvā takṣaka-bhakṣitam
yathājuhāva sankruddho nāgān satre saha dvijaiḥ*

TRANSLATION

Hearing that his father had been fatally bitten by the snakebird, Mahārāja Janmejaya became extremely angry and along with *brāhmaṇas* offered snakes in sacrifice in order to rid the world of snakes.

COMMENTARY

“I will make the world devoid of all snakes!” Saying this (*yathā*) in anger, he, along with *brāhmaṇas*, performed a sacrifice.

|| 12.6.17 ||

*sarpa-satre samiddhāgnau dahyamānān mahoragān
dṛṣṭvendram bhaya-samvignas takṣakaḥ śaraṇam yayau*

TRANSLATION

When Takṣaka saw even the most powerful serpents being burned in the blazing fire of that snake sacrifice, he was overwhelmed with fear and approached Indra for shelter.

|| 12.6.18 ||

*apaśyams takṣakam tatra rājā pārīkṣito dvijān
uvāca takṣakaḥ kasmān na dahyetoragādhamah*

TRANSLATION

Not seeing Takṣaka entering his sacrificial fire, Janmejaya said to the *brāhmaṇas*: Why is Takṣaka, the lowest of all serpents, not burning in this fire?

|| 12.6.19 ||

*taṁ gopāyati rājendra śakraḥ śaraṇam āgatam
tena saṁstambhitaḥ sarpaḥ tasmān nāgnau pataty asau*

TRANSLATION

The *brāhmaṇas* replied: O best of kings, the snake Takṣaka, being stopped by Indra, has not fallen into the fire, because he is being protected by Indra, whom he has approached for shelter.

|| 12.6.20 ||

*pārīkṣita iti śrutvā prāhartvija udāra-dhīḥ
sahendras takṣako viprā nāgnau kim iti pātyate*

TRANSLATION

The intelligent King Janmejaya, hearing these words, replied to the priests: O *brāhmaṇas*! Why not make Takṣaka fall into the fire, along with Indra?

|| 12.6.21 ||

*tac chrutvājuhuvur viprāḥ sahendram takṣakam makhe
takṣakāśu patasveha sahendreṇa marutvatā*

TRANSLATION

Hearing this, the priests then chanted this *mantra* for offering Takṣaka together with Indra as an oblation into the sacrificial fire: O Takṣaka, fall immediately into this fire, together with Indra and the *devatās*!

COMMENTARY

O Indra! You are proud, thinking, “I am the king of the *devatās*.” I will make you fall along with the *devatās*. *Amara-koṣa* says *marut* means “wind” and “*devatā*.”

|| 12.6.22 ||

*iti brahmoditākṣepaiḥ sthānād indraḥ pracālitah
babhūva sambhrānta-matiḥ sa-vimānaḥ sa-takṣakah*

TRANSLATION

When Indra, along with his airplane and Takṣaka, was suddenly thrown from his position by these insulting words of the *brāhmaṇas*, he became very disturbed.

COMMENTARY

His mind became disturbed thinking, “Today my life had ended.”

|| 12.6.23 ||

*taṁ patantaṁ vimānena saha-takṣakam ambarāt
vilokyāṅgirasah prāha rājānaṁ taṁ bṛhaspatiḥ*

TRANSLATION

Bṛhaspati, the son of Aṅgirā, seeing Indra falling from the sky in his airplane along with Takṣaka, approached King Janmejaya and spoke to him as follows.

COMMENTARY

Āṅgirasah means “the son of Aṅgirā.”

|| 12.6.24 ||

*naiṣa tvayā manuṣyendra vadham arhati sarpa-rāt
anena pītam amṛtam atha vā ajarāmarah*

TRANSLATION

O King among men! It is not fitting that this Indra who remains with Takṣaka should be killed by you, for he has drunk nectar. Consequently, he is not subject to the ordinary symptoms of old age and death.

COMMENTARY

You are king of the humans. You should not kill Indra, the king of the *devatās* who remains with the snake (*sarpa-rāt*). Having drunk nectar, he is certainly immortal and ageless.

|| 12.6.25 ||

*jīvitam maraṇam jantor gatiḥ svenaiva karmaṇā
rājams tato 'nyo nāsty asya pradātā sukha-duḥkhaḥ*

TRANSLATION

The life and death of an embodied soul and his destination in the next life are all caused by himself through his own activity. Therefore, O King, no other agent is responsible for creating one's happiness and distress.

COMMENTARY

Hear the philosophy of what you are doing out of grief for your father. The actions of the living entity cause his destination such as Svarga on dying. This is the normal arrangement for low living entities (*jantoh*). But your father's living, dying and attaining the Supreme Lord's abode were by the Lord's arrangement. The Lord protected him by his own hand from the weapon of Aśvatthāmā and also arranged for him to die by the curse of the sage. The Lord arranged for your father to attain his spiritual abode by the teachings given by his beloved Śukadeva. All these events were arranged by the Lord. Takṣaka is a cause of this death in name only.

|| 12.6.26 ||

*sarpa-caurāgni-vidyudbhyaḥ kṣut-trīd-vyādhy-ādibhir nrpa
pañcatvam ṛcchate jantur bhūṅkta ārabdha-karma tat*

TRANSLATION

When a low conditioned soul is killed by snakes, thieves, fire, lightning, hunger, disease or anything else, he is experiencing the reaction to his *karma*.

COMMENTARY

Persons of this world obtain death under the control of *karma* through a snakebite etc. but not your father, who was the king of devotees. *Jantuḥ* means “a low living entity.”

|| 12.6.27 ||

*tasmāt satram idaṁ rājan samsthīyetābhicārikam
sarpā anāgaso dagdhā janair diṣṭam hi bhujyate*

TRANSLATION

Therefore, O King, please stop this sacrificial performance, which was initiated with the intent of doing harm to others. Many innocent snakes have already been burned to death, but all creatures must suffer their fate.

COMMENTARY

This sacrifice should be stopped because it is black magic, which is condemned and useless (*ābhicārikam*). The killing of snakes done already is not a sin for you, since all creatures suffer their fate. Even the snakes are experiencing the results of their ancient *karmas*.

|| 12.6.28 ||

*sūta uvāca
ity uktaḥ sa tathety āha maharṣer mānayan vacaḥ
sarpa-satrād uparataḥ pūjayām āsa vāk-patim*

TRANSLATION

Sūta Gosvāmī said: Advised in this manner, Mahārāja Janmejaya replied, “So be it.” Honoring the words of the great sage, he stopped the snake sacrifice and worshiped Br̥haspati, the most eloquent of sages.

|| 12.6.29 ||

*saiṣā viṣṇor mahā-māyā- bādhyayālakṣaṇā yayā
muhyanty asyaivātma-bhūtā bhūteṣu guṇa-vṛttibhiḥ*

TRANSLATION

This is the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu's illusory energy, which is unstoppable and difficult to perceive. By this illusory energy the souls, portions of the Lord, are bewildered concerning other living beings by the functions of the *guṇas*.

COMMENTARY

How can even learned persons be so bewildered? Because of the anger of Janmejaya, the *brāhmaṇas*, who were learned, were engaged in a sacrifice to kill the snakes. The power of *māyā* is shown. *Māyā* is invisible. By *māyā*, who cannot be stopped even by learned people, everyone is bewildered. Who is bewildered? The living entities, who are *aṁśas* of Viṣṇu, are bewildered concerning living beings and objects by the functions of the *guṇas* such as anger and hatred.

|| 12.6.30-31 ||

*na yatra dambhīty abhayā virājitā
māyātma-vāde 'sakṛd ātma-vādibhiḥ
na yad vivādo vividhas tad-āśrayo
manaś ca saṅkalpa-vikalpa-vṛtti yat*

*na yatra sṛjyaṁ sṛjatobhayoḥ paraṁ
śreyaś ca jīvas tribhir anvitas tv aham
tad etad utsādita-bādhyā-bādhakam
niṣidhya cormīn vīrameta tan munih*

TRANSLATION

Wherever the form of Viṣṇu resides, *māyā*, fearless with deceitful persons, does not exist. Where Viṣṇu, who gives shelter to *māyā*, exists, there can be no constant discussions among *ātmavādīs* or various quarrels. Where Viṣṇu exists, there can be no mind subjected to accepting and rejecting. Where Viṣṇu exists there can be no created objects or creators, since he is beyond created and creator. Where Viṣṇu exists, there can be no results of pious actions and no *jīvas* with *ahaṅkāra* affected by the three *guṇas*. Therefore, where the form of Viṣṇu resides there are no suffering *jīvas* and no causes of suffering in the form of *māyā*. The devotee who has destroyed lust and anger in his heart experiences the highest bliss with that form of the Lord.

COMMENTARY

If all *jīvas* are subject to anger and hatred because of the illusions of *māyā*, who is exempt?

*vilajjamānayā yasya sthātum ikṣā-pathe 'muyā
vimohitā vikatthante mamāham iti durdhiyaḥ*

The ignorant *jīvas*, bewildered by *māyā* who is ashamed to stand in sight of the Lord, boast about “I” and “mine.” SB 2.5.13

According to the words of Brahmā, *māyā* has no jurisdiction over Viṣṇu and the great devotees. Then, what is the *svarūpa* of Viṣṇu? Three verses answer. *Māyā* has no influence on the *svarūpa* of Viṣṇu (*yatra*). What is *māyā*? She remains fearless towards the deceitful person (*dambhi iti*). Because the Lord and the devotee have no deceit, she is fearful of them, and does not remain there. When *ātmavādīs* discuss about the *ātmā*, *māyā* is present. Where Viṣṇu’s form appears (*yat*), there is no quarrelling. Viṣṇu gives shelter to *māyā*.

*yac-chaktayo vadatām vādinām vai
vivāda-samvāda-bhuvo bhavanti
kurvanti caiṣām muhur ātma-mohaṁ
tasmai namo 'nanta-guṇāya bhūmne*

I offer respects to the great Lord of eternal qualities, whose material energy is the cause of agreement and disagreement among those who make philosophies and then argue with others, whose material energy continually bewilders them as to the real nature of *ātmā*. SB 6.4.31

Thus, in Viṣṇu there is no mind which has functions of accepting and rejecting. Where Viṣṇu appears, there are no created objects with a cause of their creation (he is eternal), since he is distinct from both the created objects and the creator. In Viṣṇu there are no pious results such as Svarga. There is no *jīva* with *ahaṅkāra*, influenced by the three *guṇas* or the three conditions of consciousness. Therefore where Viṣṇu resides there is no suffering *jīva* and no cause of suffering from the *guṇas*. Who causes the Lord to appear? The devotee devoid of lust and anger in his heart experiences exceptional bliss (*virameta*) with the Lord.

|| 12.6.32 ||

*param padam vaiṣṇavam āmananti tad yan neti netīty atad-utsisr̥kṣavaḥ
visr̥jya daurātmyam ananya-sauhr̥dā hr̥dopaguhyāvasitam samāhitaiḥ*

TRANSLATION

Giving up evil tendencies of “I” and “mine,” understanding what is not favorable for *bhakti*, eager to reject all things not related to Viṣṇu because of affection for the unalloyed devotees, the devotees fix themselves on the supreme form of Viṣṇu who is embraced and understood by devotees having deep concentration.

COMMENTARY

The devotees concentrate by continual remembrance on the *svarūpa* of Viṣṇu (*padam*). They give up the evil tendency to think in terms of “I” and “mine.” They understand “this is not favorable, that is not favorable.” They desire to give up everything unrelated to the Lord such as body, house, sons, and wife which are objects of possessiveness, because they have friendship with the fully dedicated devotees. This form is understood (*avasitam*) by the devotees having full concentration, and not by others.

|| 12.6.33 ||

*ta etad adhigacchanti viṣṇor yat paramam padam
aham mameti daurjanyam na yeṣām deha-geha-jam*

TRANSLATION

Such devotees understand the supreme position of Viṣṇu, because they are no longer polluted by the concepts of “I” and “my,” which are based on body and home.

COMMENTARY

This clarifies the meaning of the previous verse. *Adhigacchanti* refers to *avasitam*. And *daurjanyam* refers to *daurātmyam*.

|| 12.6.34 ||

*ativādāms titikṣeta nāvamanyeta kañcana
na cemaṁ deham āsṛitya vairam kurvīta kenacit*

TRANSLATION

One should tolerate all insults and never disrespect a person who shows disrespect. Taking shelter of one's devotional body, one should not create enmity with anyone.

COMMENTARY

If a person commits offense, the form of Viṣṇu will disappear. The method of avoiding offenses is now taught. One should tolerate sharp words. One should not answer with equally harsh words. Taking shelter of a *sādhaka* body—taking shelter of one's *siddha* body which is remembered even at the stage of *sādhana*—one should not have enmity towards even group of *gopīs* in an opposing faction by remembering them. The followers of *rāgānuga-bhakti* give this meaning. *Kañcana* means “a person who disrespects.”

|| 12.6.35 ||

*namo bhagavate tasmai kṛṣṇāyākuṅṭha-medhase
yat-pādāmburuha-dhyānāt saṁhitām adhyagām imam*

TRANSLATION

I offer my obeisances to the Supreme Lord, the invincible Kṛṣṇa by remembrance of whose lotus feet I have understood this Purāṇa from Śukadeva.

COMMENTARY

Concluding the scripture, Sūta offers respects to his deity. I have understood (*adhyagām*) from the mouth of Śukadeva.

|| 12.6.36 ||

*śrī-śaunaka uvāca
pailādibhir vyāsa-śiṣyair vedācāryair mahātmabhiḥ
vedās ca kathitā vyastā etat saumyābhidhehi naḥ*

TRANSLATION

Śaunaka Ṛṣi said: O gentle Sūta! Please narrate to us how Paila and the other greatly intelligent disciples of Śrīla Vyāsadeva, who are known as the authorities of Vedic wisdom, spoke and edited the Vedas.

COMMENTARY

Having heard about the *saṁhitā*, the sages want to know about the divisions of the Veda *saṁhitās*.

|| 12.6.37 ||

sūta uvāca

*saṁāhitātmano brahman brahmaṇaḥ parameṣṭhinaḥ
hr̥dy ākāśād abhūn nādo vṛtti-rodhād vibhāvyaṭe*

TRANSLATION

Sūta Gosvāmī said: O *brāhmaṇa*! First, the *nāda* appeared from the ether in the heart of Lord Brahmā, whose mind was perfectly fixed in spiritual realization. One can perceive this subtle vibration when one blocks the ears.

COMMENTARY

In order to correctly define the fruit of the tree of the Vedas, he briefly describes the branches of the Vedas. First he describes how the Vedas appeared. *Nāda* appeared from the ether in the heart of Brahmā. This sound can be conjectured by a person if he blocks the ears.

|| 12.6.38 ||

*yad-upāsanayā brahman yogino malam ātmanaḥ
dravya-kriyā-kāraḱākhyam̐ dhūtvā yānty apunar-bhavam*

TRANSLATION

By worship of this subtle form of the Vedas, O *brāhmaṇa*, mystic sages cleanse their hearts of all contamination of object, activity and doer, and thus they attain freedom from repeated birth and death.

COMMENTARY

By worshiping this sound the sages destroy the contamination known as objects (*adhibhūta*), actions (*adhyātma*) and doers (*adhidaiva*).

|| 12.6.39 ||

*tato 'bhūt tri-vṛd omkāro yo 'vyakta-prabhavaḥ sva-rāt
yat tal liṅgam bhagavato brahmaṇaḥ paramātmanaḥ*

TRANSLATION

From *nāda* arose the *omkāra*, which is composed of three sounds and whose origin is unclear. *Om* is directly the Supreme Lord and causes realization of Bhagavān, Paramātmā and Brahman.

COMMENTARY

From *nāda* (*tataḥ*) appeared *om* composed of three letters *a*, *u* and *m*, whose birth is indistinct. *Om* is directly the Supreme Lord (*svarāt*) and is the cause of understanding (*liṅgam*) Brahman, Paramātmā and Bhagavān. *Tat* is in the neuter since it is the object of worship for devotees, *jñānīs* and *yogīs* and because it modifies *liṅgam*.

|| 12.6.40-41 ||

*śṛṇoti ya imaṁ sphoṭam sūpta-śrotre ca sūnya-dṛk
yena vāg vyajyate yasya vyaktir ākāśa ātmanaḥ*

*sva-dhāmno brāhmaṇaḥ sāksād vācakaḥ paramātmanaḥ
sa sarva-mantropaniṣad veda-bījam sanātanam*

TRANSLATION

The Lord is the person who hears *om* which arises from unmanifest *nāda* when the senses do not function, since his knowledge does not depend on senses. By that *om*, which manifests from the *jīva*, in the ether of the heart, the Vedas appear. *Om* indicates Brahman, which is its own shelter, and as well indicates Paramātmā and Bhagavān. *Om* contains all *mantras* and Upaniṣads and it is the eternal cause of the Vedas.

COMMENTARY

Who is the Supreme Lord known by words like Bhagavān? He is the person who hears *om* (*sphoṭam*) generated from the unmanifest *nāda*. “But does the *jīva* not hear this sound?” No. The Lord is the person who hears this sound when the ears are covered, when all senses do not function. The *jīva* is not the hearer, since his knowledge

is dependent on his senses. Paramātmā is the hearer. This means that whatever the *jīva* realizes as hearing is dependent on Paramātmā, because the Lord has knowledge without having material senses (*śūnya-dṛk*). When a sleeping person, on hearing a sound, wakes up, the *jīva* is not the hearer, since his senses were not functioning during sleep. He who hears the sound and wakes up the *jīva* is Paramātmā. The nature of *om* is described in a verse and a half. By *om*, speech, represented by the Vedas, becomes manifested from the *ātmā* in the ether of his heart. *Om* indicates Brahman which is its own shelter, and is called Paramātmā and Bhagavān. *Śruti* says *om iti etad brahmano nediṣṭham nāma: om* is the name nearest to Brahman. All *mantras* and *Upaniṣads* are uttered along with *om* which is the eternal cause of the Vedas. It has one form eternally, since it is Brahman.

|| 12.6.42 ||

*tasya hy āsaṁs trayo varṇā a-kārādyā bhṛgūdvaḥ
dhāryante yais trayo bhāvā guṇa-nāmārtha-vṛttayah*

TRANSLATION

O eminent descendant of Bhṛgu! *Om* has the three syllables by which the three Vedas are sustained. The three Vedas sustain the qualities, words, gender and meaning of words.

COMMENTARY

This verse shows how *om* is the cause. *Om* has three syllables *a*, *u* and *m* by which the three Vedas are sustained. By the three Vedas, qualities, names, gender and meaning are manifested. *Guṇa* refers to things like the power or clarity of sound. *Nāma* refers to words. *Artha* refers to indications of gender of words. *Vṛtti* refers to the meaning of words. *Om* is like a seed, which produces the Vedas, just as the banyan tree comes from the seed, and the trunk, branches, flowers and fruit come from the banyan tree.

|| 12.6.43 ||

*tato 'kṣara-samāmnāyam asṛjad bhagavān ajaḥ
antasthoṣma-svara-sparśa- hrasva-dīrghādi-lakṣaṇam*

TRANSLATION

From that *omkāra* Lord Brahmā created all the sounds of the alphabet—the vowels, consonants, semivowels, sibilants and others—distinguished by such features as long and short measure.

COMMENTARY

The appearance of the Vedas from *om* is described. From *om* (*tataḥ*) Brahmā created the group of sounds—the semivowels: *ya*, *ra*, *la* and *va*; the sibilants: *śa*, *ṣa* and *sa*; the vowels: *a*, *i*, *u*, *e*, *o*, *ai*, and *au*; the consonants from *ka* to *ma*; and short and long sounds of different intonations. *Ādi* indicates things like the *visarga*. He created the basic form (*lakṣaṇam*) of sounds.

|| 12.6.44 ||

*tenāsau caturo vedāms caturbhir vadanair vibhuḥ
sa-vyāhṛtikān somkārāms catur-hotra-vivakṣayā*

TRANSLATION

By these sounds, all-powerful Brahmā produced from his four faces the four Vedas, which appeared together with the sacred *omkāra* and the seven *vyāhṛti* invocations, with a desire for creating the four sacrificial activities.

COMMENTARY

By this group of sounds (*tena*) Brahmā created the four Vedas.

|| 12.6.45 ||

*putrān adhyāpayat tāms tu brahmarṣin brahma-kovidān
te tu dharmopadeṣṭāraḥ sva-putrebhyaḥ samādiśan*

TRANSLATION

Brahmā taught these Vedas to his sons, who were great sages among the *brāhmaṇas* and experts in Vedic recitation. These instructors of *dharma* instructed the Vedas to their sons.

COMMENTARY

They taught sons like Marīci.

|| 12.6.46 ||

*te paramparayā prāptās tat-tac-chiṣyair dhr̥ta-vratāiḥ
catur-yugeṣv atha vyastā dvāparādaḥ maharṣibhiḥ*

TRANSLATION

In this way, throughout the cycles of four ages, generation after generation of disciples fixed in their vows received the Vedas. At the end of each Dvāpara-yuga the Vedas were edited into separate divisions by eminent sages.

COMMENTARY

Te refers to the Vedas.

|| 12.6.47 ||

*kṣīṇāyuṣaḥ kṣīṇa-sattvān durmedhān vikṣya kālataḥ
vedān brahmarṣayo vyasyan hr̥di-sthācyuta-coditāḥ*

TRANSLATION

Observing that people in general were diminished in their life span, strength and intelligence by the influence of time, great sages, inspired by the Lord situated within their hearts, divided the Vedas.

|| 12.6.48-49 ||

*asminn apy antare brahman bhagavān loka-bhāvanāḥ
brahmeśādyair loka-pālair yācito dharma-guptaye*

*parāsarāt satyavatyām aṁśāṁśa-kalayā vibhuḥ
avatīrṇo mahā-bhāga vedam cakre catur-vidham*

TRANSLATION

O *brāhmaṇa*! In the present age of Vaivasvata Manu, the leaders of the universe, led by Brahmā and Śiva, requested the Supreme Lord, the protector of all the worlds, to protect *dharma*. O most fortunate Śaunaka! The powerful Lord, as a portion of a portion of a portion of the Lord, then appeared in the womb of Satyavatī as the son of Parāśara, and divided the one Veda into four.

COMMENTARY

Antare means “in Vaivasvata Manvantara.”

|| 12.6.50 ||

*ṛg-atharva-yajuḥ-sāmnām rāśīr uddhṛtya vargaśaḥ
catasraḥ saṁhitās cakre mantrair maṇi-gaṇā iva*

TRANSLATION

Vyāsadeva, separating the Ṛg, Atharva, Yajur and Sāma *mantras* into different groups according to categories, made four *saṁhitās* out of the *mantras*, just as one divides collection of gems into different types.

COMMENTARY

“The four Vedas were made by Brahmā from his four mouths. How can one say that Vyāsa made the four Vedas?” He made the four Vedas into separate piles according to different subjects, just as from a mine one gathers rubies and diamonds, and then separates them into different piles by type. He made four *Samhitās*: Ṛg, Yajur, Sāma and Atharva.

|| 12.6.51 ||

*tāsām sa caturaḥ śiṣyān upāhūya mahā-matiḥ
ekaikām saṁhitām brahmann ekaikasmai dadau vibhuḥ*

TRANSLATION

The most powerful and intelligent Vyāsadeva called four of his disciples, O *brāhmaṇa*, and entrusted to each of them one of these four *saṁhitās*.

|| 12.6.52-53 ||

*pailāya saṁhitām ādyām bahvṛcākhyām uvāca ha
vaiśampāyana-saṁjñāya nigadākhyam yajur-gaṇam*

*sāmnām jaiminaye prāha tathā chandoga-saṁhitām
atharvāṅgirasīm nāma sva-śiṣyāya sumantave*

TRANSLATION

Vyāsadeva taught the first *saṁhitā*, the Ṛg Veda, to Paila and gave this collection the name Bahvṛca. To the sage Vaiśampāyana he spoke the collection of Yajur *mantras* named Nigada. He taught

the Sāma Veda *mantras*, designated as the Chandoga-saṁhitā, to Jaimini, and he spoke the Atharva Veda to his dear disciple Sumantu.

COMMENTARY

Bahvr̥ca (having many verses) was the name of the Ṛg Saṁhitā. Yajur Veda was called *Nigada* because it is constantly (*nitarām*) recited (*gada*).

|| 12.6.54-56 ||

*pailaḥ sva-saṁhitām ūce indrapramitaye muniḥ
bāṣkalāya ca so 'py āha śiṣyebhyaḥ saṁhitām svakām*

*caturdhā vyasya bodhyāya yājñavalkyāya bhārgava
parāśarāyāgnimitra indrapramitir ātmavān*

*adhyāpayat saṁhitām svām māṇḍūkeyam ṛṣim kavim
tasya śiṣyo devamitraḥ saubhary-ādibhya ūcivān*

TRANSLATION

After dividing his *saṁhitā* into two parts, the wise Paila spoke it to Indrapramiti and Bāṣkala. Bāṣkala further divided his collection into four parts, O Bhārgava, and instructed them to his disciples Bodhya, Yājñavalkya, Parāśara and Agnimitra. Indrapramiti, the self-controlled sage, taught his *saṁhitā* to the learned mystic Māṇḍūkeya, whose disciple Devamitra later passed down this division of the Ṛg Veda to Saubhari and others.

COMMENTARY

These verses describe the branches of the Ṛg Veda. Paila divided the Ṛg Veda into two and spoke it to Indrapramiti and Bāṣkala. Bāṣkala divided his portion into four and taught it to four of his disciples starting with Bodhya. O Śaunaka (*bhārgava*)! Indrapramiti taught his *saṁhitā* to his son Māṇḍūkeya, whose disciple was Devamitra.

|| 12.6.57 ||

*śākalyas tat-sutaḥ svām tu pañcadhā vyasya saṁhitām
vātsya-mudgala-śāliya- gokhalya-śiṣireṣv adhāt*

TRANSLATION

The son of Māṇḍūkeya, named Śākalya, divided his own collection into five, entrusting one subdivision each to Vātsya, Mudgala, Śālīya, Gokhalya and Śīsira.

COMMENTARY

Māṇḍūkeya's son was Śākalya. He taught it to five persons.

|| 12.6.58 ||

*jātūkarnyaś ca tac-chiṣyaḥ sa-niruktām sva-saṁhitām
balāka-paila-jābāla- virajebhyo dadau munih*

TRANSLATION

The sage Jātūkarnya was also a disciple of Śākalya, and after dividing the *saṁhitā* he received from Śākalya into three parts, he added a fourth section, a Vedic glossary. He taught one of these parts to each of four disciples—Balāka, the second Paila, Jābāla and Viraja.

COMMENTARY

Śākalya's disciple Jātūkarnya divided his portion into three, and made a fourth part explaining the meanings of Vedic words. He gave these to four disciples.

|| 12.6.59 ||

*bāṣkaliḥ prati-śākhābhyo vālakhilyākhyā-saṁhitām
cakre vālāyanir bhajyaḥ kāsāraś caiva tām dadhuḥ*

TRANSLATION

Bāṣkali, son of Bāṣkala, assembled the Vālakhilya-saṁhitā, a collection from all the branches of the Ṛg Veda. This collection was received by Vālāyani, Bhajya and Kāsāra.

COMMENTARY

Bāṣkali was the son of Bāṣkala. He collected the verses from different branches.

|| 12.6.60 ||

*bahvrcāḥ saṁhitā hy etā ebhir brahmaṛṣibhir dhṛtāḥ
śrutvaitac-chandasām vyāsam sarva-pāpaiḥ pramucyate*

TRANSLATION

Thus these various *saṁhitās* of the Ṛg Veda were maintained through disciplic succession by these saintly *brāhmaṇas*. Simply by hearing of the division of the Vedic hymns, one will be freed from all sins.

|| 12.6.61 ||

*vaiśampāyana-śiṣyā vai carakādhvaryavo 'bhavan
yac cerur brahma-hatyāmhaḥ kṣapaṇam sva-guror vratam*

TRANSLATION

The disciples of Vaiśampāyana became authorities in the Yajur Veda. They were known as the Carakas because they executed strict vows to free their *guru* from his sin of killing a *brāhmaṇa*.

COMMENTARY

Now appearance of the Taittirīya branch of the Yajur Veda is described. The derivation of the name Caraka is given. On behalf of their *guru*, they performed (*cara*) vows to destroy the effects of the sin of killing a *brāhmaṇa*, vows that should have been undertaken by their *guru*.⁴ They were *adhvaryu* priests, expert in Yajur Veda.

|| 12.6.62 ||

*yājñavalkyaś ca tac-chiṣya āhāho bhagavan kiyat
caritenālpa-sārāṇām cariṣye 'ham su-duścaram*

⁴ Once all the sages decided to meet near Meru mountain and made a rule that any sage who absented himself at the appointed hour should incur the sin of killing a *brāhmaṇa* for seven days. On that appointed day fell the śraddha ceremony of Vaiśampāyana's father. Vaiśampāyana thought, "Somehow I have to perform my father's ceremony. If the sin of *brahmahatya* comes to me, my disciples will observe the expiatory penance for it". So Vaiśampāyana did not attend the meeting of the sages. And accordingly he incurred the sin of *brahmahatya*. Then Vaiśampāyana said to his disciples, "Now I have to expiate this great sin of *brahmahatya*. Therefore, all of you should observe, for my sake, an expiatory penance for seven days".

TRANSLATION

Once Yājñavalkya, one of the disciples of Vaiśampāyana, said: O master, how much benefit will be derived from the feeble endeavors of these weak disciples of yours? I will perform some difficult penance.

COMMENTARY

Yājñavalkya was Vaiśampāyana's disciple. What is the use of atonements by these weak disciples? Let them be happy. I alone will perform proper austerity.

|| 12.6.63 ||

*ity ukto gurur apy āha kupito yāhy alam tvayā
vivrāvantrā śiṣyeṇa mad-adhītam tyajāśv iti*

TRANSLATION

Addressed thus, the *guru* Vaiśampāyana became angry and said: Go away from here! What is the use of a disciple like you, who insults *brāhmaṇas*! Furthermore, you must give back everything I have taught you.

COMMENTARY

He became angry because Yajñavalkya had spoken out of pride. You criticize *brāhmaṇas* who are humble as being weak. Go away. What is the use of a disciple like you? "Yes, I will go." When he was leaving the *guru* said, "Give back the knowledge I have taught you."

|| 12.6.64-65 ||

*devarāta-sutaḥ so 'pi charditvā yajuṣām gaṇam
tato gato 'tha munayo dadṛśus tām yajur-gaṇān*

*yajūmṣi tittirā bhūtvā tal-lolupatayādaduḥ
tāittirīyā iti yajuḥ- śākhā āsan su-peśalāḥ*

TRANSLATION

Yājñavalkya, the son of Devarāta, then vomited the *mantras* of the Yajur Veda and went away from there. The assembled disciples, looking greedily upon these hymns, assumed the form of partridges

and picked them all up. These divisions of the Yajur Veda therefore became known as the most beautiful Taittirīya-saṁhitā, the hymns collected by partridges (tittirāḥ).

COMMENTARY

Yājñavalkya was the son of Devarāta. Since it was improper for brāhmaṇas to take something which was vomited, they became partridges and received those verses. Therefore the saṁhitā is called Taittirīya, “coming from partridges.”

|| 12.6.66 ||

*yājñavalkyas tato brahmanś chandāmsy adhi gaveṣayan
guroṛ avidyamānāni sūpatasthe ’rkam īśvaram*

TRANSLATION

My dear brāhmaṇa Śaunaka! Yājñavalkya, seeking mantras unknown to even his guru, began worshiping the powerful sun-god.

COMMENTARY

Adhigaveṣayan means “seeking.” He sought mantras which his guru Vaiśampāyana had not studied.

|| 12.6.67 ||

*śrī-yājñavalkya uvāca
om namo bhagavate ādityāyākhila-jagatām ātma-svarūpeṇa kāla-
svarūpeṇa catur-vidha-bhūta-nikāyānām brahmādi-stamba-paryantānām
antar-hṛdayeṣu bahir api cākāśa ivopādhināvyavadhīyamāno bhavān eka
eva kṣaṇa-lava-nimeṣāvayavopacita-saṁvatsara-gaṇenāpām ādāna-
visargābhyām imām loka-yātrām anuvahati.*

TRANSLATION

Yājñavalkya said: I offer my respectful obeisances to you, the sun, most wealthy lord of whole universe, who alone are present in all being of four types from Brahmā to the trees, who are present internally as the ātmā and externally as time, but remain uncovered by upādhis as ether is untouched, and who maintain worldly existence by drawing up and expelling water by the year, which is a combination of kṣanas, lavas and nimeṣas.

COMMENTARY

I offer respects to you, the sun, the lord of the whole universe, who alone supports worldly existence. The word *bhagavate* here means “unto you who are most wealthy.” *Amara-koṣa* says *bhaga* means “wealth, greatness and love.” You exist inside and outside of the four types of living bodies⁵ respectively as *ātmā* and time. Though you are situated in the heart, you, like ether, are not covered by *upādhis* like the *jīva*. You support the world by drying up and pouring water annually, in years composed of divisions of *kṣanas*, *lavas* and *nimeṣas*.

|| 12.6.68 ||

*yad u ha vāva vibudharṣabha savitar adas tapaty anusavanam ahar
ahar āmnāya-vidhinopatiṣṭhamānānām akhila-durita-vṛjina-
bījāvabharjana bhagavataḥ samabhidhīmaḥi tapana maṇḍalam.*

TRANSLATION

O best of the *devatās*! O Savitā! O shining sun! O destroyer of ignorance, suffering and sin for men who offer prayers daily at all times by the path of the Vedas! I mediate on you who light up your globe.

COMMENTARY

O best of the *devatās*! O Savitā! I mediate on he who lights up the sun globe. O destroyer of ignorance (*bija*), suffering, and sinful acts for men who praise you through Vedic *mantras*, at all times, every day!

|| 12.6.69 ||

*ya iha vāva sthira-cara-nikarāṇām nija-niketanānām mana-indriyāsu-
gaṇān anātmanaḥ svayam ātmāntar-yāmī pracodayati.*

TRANSLATION

You, as the *antaryāmī*, put into motion the unconscious mind, senses and life airs of all the moving and non-moving beings under your shelter.

⁵ Bodies are produced from perspiration, eggs, embryos and seeds.

COMMENTARY

You put into motion the unconscious (*anātmanah*) mind and senses.

|| 12.6.70 ||

ya evemaṁ lokam ati-karāla-vadanāndhakāra-samjñājagara-grahagilitaṁ mṛtakam iva vicetanam avalokyānukampayā parama-kāruṇika ikṣayaivotthāpyāhar ahar anusavanam śreyasi sva-dharmākhyātmāvasthane pravartayati.

TRANSLATION

Looking at the almost dead, unconscious people seized and swallowed by darkness in the form of a python with a fearful mouth, being most merciful, by your compassionate glance, you wake them up, and engage them daily in the most auspicious activity, worship of *ātmā*, their real duty.

COMMENTARY

Rising over the Eastern Mountain, you glance upon the world. You engage people in worship of *ātmā* (*ātmāvasthāne*), which is their duty.

|| 12.6.71 ||

avani-patir ivāsādhūnām bhayam udīrayann aṭati parita āśā-pālais tatra tatra kamala-kośāñjalibhir upahr̥tārhaṇaḥ.

TRANSLATION

Just like an earthly king, you travel about everywhere, creating fear among the evil, while *devatās* of the directions offer you lotus flowers and *arghya* in their folded palms.

COMMENTARY

You are given *arghya* (*arhaṇaḥ*) along with handfuls of lotus buds or similar items by the *devatās* of the directions such as Indra.

|| 12.6.72 ||

atha ha bhagavaṁs tava caraṇa-nalina-yugalaṁ tri-bhuvana-gurubhir abhivanditam aham ayāta-yāma-yajuṣ-kāma upasarāmīti.

TRANSLATION

Therefore, my Lord, I am approaching your lotus feet, which are honored by the *gurus* of the three worlds, because I hope to receive from you *mantras* of the Yajur Veda unknown to anyone else.

COMMENTARY

Ayāta-yāma means powerful *mantras* which cannot be known by others. With a desire for such Yajur *mantras* I worship you.

|| 12.6.73 ||

sūta uvāca

*evam stutaḥ sa bhagavān vāji-rūpa-dharo raviḥ
yajūṁśy ayāta-yāmāni munaye 'dāt prasāditāḥ*

TRANSLATION

Sūta Gosvāmī said: Praised in this way and satisfied, the powerful sun-god assumed the form of a horse and presented to the sage *Yājñavalkya* *mantras* of the Yajur Veda previously unknown.

|| 12.6.74 ||

*yajurbhir akaroc chākhā daśa pañca śatair vibhuḥ
jagrhur vājasanyas tāḥ kṛṣṇa-mādhyandinādayaḥ*

TRANSLATION

From these countless hundreds of *mantras* of the Yajur Veda, the powerful sage made fifteen branches. *Kṛṣṇa*, *Mādhyandina* and other sages accepted these *mantras* known as the *Vājasaneyi-saṁhitā* because they were produced from the hairs of the horse's mane.

COMMENTARY

He made fifteen branches from the hundreds of Yajur *mantras* he received. *Vājasanyaḥ* means “taken from hairs of the mane of the horse form of the sun god.”

|| 12.6.75 ||

*jaimineḥ sama-gasyāsīt sumantus tanayo muniḥ
sutvāṁś tu tat-sutas tābhyām ekaikām prāha saṁhitām*

TRANSLATION

Jaimini Ṛṣi, the authority of the Sāma Veda, had a son named Sumantu, and the son of Sumantu was Sutvān. The sage Jaimini spoke to each of them a different part of the Sāma-veda-saṁhitā.

COMMENTARY

The branches of the Sāma Veda are now described. The son of Sumantu was Sutvān. Jaimini gave one portion to his son and one portion to his grandson.

|| 12.6.76-77 ||

*sukarmā cāpi tac-chiṣyaḥ sāma-veda-taror mahān
sahasra-saṁhitā-bhedam cakre sāmnam tato dvija*

*hiraṇyanābhaḥ kauśalyaḥ pauṣyañjiś ca sukarmaṇaḥ
śiṣyau jagrhatuś cānya āvantyo brahma-vittamaḥ*

TRANSLATION

Sukarmā, another disciple of Jaimini, was a great scholar of the tree of the Sāma Veda. He divided the Sāma Veda into one thousand *saṁhitās*. Then, O *brāhmaṇa*, three disciples of Sukarmā—Hiraṇyanābha, the son of Kuśala; Pauṣyañji; and Āvantya, who was very advanced in spiritual realization—took charge of those *mantras*.

COMMENTARY

Sukarmā, disciple of Jaimini, became very greatly learned in the tree of the Sāma Veda. He divided this Veda into one thousand parts. His two disciples Hiraṇyanābha, the son of Kuśala, and Pauṣyañji, and another disciple Āvantya, received the *mantras*.

|| 12.6.78 ||

*udīcyāḥ sāma-gāḥ śiṣyā āsan pañca-śatāni vai
pauṣyañjy-āvantyaayoś cāpi tāmś ca prācyān pracakṣate*

TRANSLATION

The five hundred disciples of Hiraṇyanābha became known as the northern singers of the Sāma Veda, and the five hundred disciples of Pauṣyañji and Āvantya became known as the eastern singers.

COMMENTARY

Hiraṇyanābha's five hundred disciples became northern reciters. Five hundred disciples of Pauṣyañji and Āvantya became eastern reciters. They produced a thousand branches.

|| 12.6.79 ||

*laugākṣir māṅgaliḥ kulyaḥ kuśīdah kuṣṣir eva ca
pauṣyañji-siṣyā jagṛhuḥ saṁhitās te śataṁ śataṁ*

TRANSLATION

Five other disciples of Pauṣyañji, namely Laugākṣi, Māṅgali, Kulya, Kuśīda and Kuṣṣi, each received one hundred *saṁhitās*.

COMMENTARY

Pauṣyañji had five other disciples.

|| 12.6.80 ||

*kṛto hiraṇyanābhasya catur-vimśati saṁhitāḥ
śiṣya ūce sva-śiṣyebhyaḥ śeṣā āvantya ātmavān*

TRANSLATION

Kṛta, the disciple of Hiraṇyanābha, spoke twenty four *saṁhitās* to his own disciples, and the remaining collections were passed down by the self-realized sage Āvantya.

COMMENTARY

Another disciple of Hiraṇyanābha was Kṛta. Āvantya taught other famous branches of the Sāma Veda to his disciples.

Thus ends the commentary on the Sixth Chapter of the Twelfth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas*.

Chapter Seven



Characteristics Of Purāṇas

|| 12.7.1 ||

sūta uvāca

*atharva-vit sumantuś ca śiṣyam adhyāpayat svakām
samhitāṁ so 'pi pathyāya vedadarśāya caktavān*

TRANSLATION

Sūta Gosvāmī said: Sumantu Ṛṣi, the authority on the Atharva Veda, taught his *samhitā* to his disciple Kabandha, who in turn spoke it to Pathya and Vedadarśa.

COMMENTARY

The Seventh Chapter describes the branches of the Atharva Veda, and the ten characteristics of a Purāṇa, as well as an enumeration of the Purāṇas.

The name of the disciple of Sumantu is Kabandha according to *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*.

|| 12.7.2 ||

*śauklāyanir brahmabalir modoṣaḥ pippalāyaniḥ
vedadarśasya śiṣyās te pathya-śiṣyān atho śṛṇu
kumudaḥ śunako brahman jājaliś cāpy atharva-vit*

TRANSLATION

Śauklāyani, Brahmabali, Modoṣa and Pippalāyani were disciples of Vedadarśa. Hear from me also the names of the disciples of

Pathya. My dear *brāhmaṇa*, they are Kumuda, Śunaka and Jājali, all of whom knew the Atharva Veda very well.

|| 12.7.3 ||

*babhruḥ śiṣyo 'thāngirasah saindhavāyana eva ca
adhīyetām saṁhite dve sāvarṇādyās tathāpare*

TRANSLATION

Babhru and Saindhavāyana, disciples of Śunaka, studied the two divisions of their spiritual master's compilation of the Atharva Veda. Saindhavāyana's disciples Sāvarṇa and others also studied this compilation of the Atharva Veda.

COMMENTARY

Babhru was the disciple of Śunaka (*āṅgirasah*). Saindhavāyana's disciples Sāvarṇa and others studied this.

|| 12.7.4 ||

*nakṣatrakalpaḥ śāntiś ca kaśyapāṅgirasādayaḥ
ete ātharvaṅcāryāḥ śṛṇu paurāṇikān mune*

TRANSLATION

Nakṣatrakalpa, Śāntikalpa, Kaśyapa, Āṅgirasa and others were also among the *ācāryas* of the Atharva Veda. Now, O sage, listen as I name the authorities on Purāṇic literature.

|| 12.7.5 ||

*trayyāruṇiḥ kaśyapaś ca sāvarṇir akṛtavranaḥ
vaiśampāyana-hārītau ṣaḍ vai paurāṇikā ime*

TRANSLATION

Trayyāruṇi, Kaśyapa, Sāvarṇi, Akṛtavrana, Vaiśampāyana and Hārīta are the six masters of the Purāṇas.

|| 12.7.6 ||

*adhīyanta vyāsa-śiṣyāt saṁhitām mat-pitur mukhāt
ekaikām aham eteṣām śiṣyaḥ sarvāḥ samadhyagām*

TRANSLATION

Each of them studied one of the Purāṇas from my father, Romahārṣaṇa, who was a disciple of Vyāsadeva. I became the disciple of these six authorities and thoroughly learned each of their versions.

COMMENTARY

Sūta's father was Romahārṣaṇa. I was the student of these six authorities.

|| 12.7.7 ||

*kaśyapo 'ham ca sāvarṇī rāma-śiṣyo 'kṛtavraṇaḥ
adhīmahī vyāsa-śiṣyāc catvāro mūla-samhitāḥ*

TRANSLATION

The sage Kaśyapa and I, along with Sāvarṇī and Akṛtavraṇa, a disciple of Rāma, learned the four basic collections of the Purāṇas from Romahārṣaṇa.

COMMENTARY

Vyāsa-śiṣyāt means “from Romahārṣaṇa.”

|| 12.7.8 ||

*purāṇa-lakṣaṇam brahman brahmaṛṣibhir nirūpitam
śṛṇuṣva buddhim āśritya veda-śāstrānusārataḥ*

TRANSLATION

O Śaunaka! Please hear with attention the characteristics of a Purāṇa, which have been defined by learned *brāhmaṇas* using their intelligence, in accordance with Vedic literature.

COMMENTARY

This is more or less a summary of what Śukadeva has already said at the beginning.

|| 12.7.9-10 ||

*sargo 'syātha visargaś ca vṛtti-rakṣāntarāṇi ca
vaṁśo vaṁśānucaritam samsthā hetur apāśrayaḥ*

*daśabhir lakṣaṇair yuktaṁ purāṇaṁ tad-vido viduḥ
kecit pañca-vidhaṁ brahman mahad-alpa-vyavasthayā*

TRANSLATION

O *brāhmaṇa*! Authorities on the matter understand a Purāṇa to contain ten characteristic topics: the creation of this universe, the subsequent creation of worlds and beings, the maintenance of all living beings, their sustenance, the rule of various Manus, the dynasties of great kings, the activities of such kings, annihilation, liberation and the supreme shelter. Other scholars state that the great Purāṇas deal with these ten topics, while lesser Purāṇas may deal with five.

COMMENTARY

The characteristics of a minor Purāṇa are as follows:

*sargaś ca pratisargaś ca vaṁśo manvantarāṇi ca
vaṁśānucaritaṁ ceti purāṇaṁ pañca-lakṣaṇam*

Creation, secondary creation, the dynasties of kings, the reigns of Manus and the activities of various dynasties are the five characteristics of a Purāṇa.

When a Purāṇa has the ten characteristics it is called a major Purāṇa and when it has only five characteristics it is called a minor Purāṇa.

|| 12.7.11 ||

*avyākṛta-guṇa-kṣobhān mahatas tri-vṛto 'hamaḥ
bhūta-sūkṣmendriyārthānām sambhavaḥ sarga ucyate*

TRANSLATION

From the agitation of the original modes within the unmanifest material nature, the *mahat-tattva* arises. From the *mahat-tattva* comes the element false ego, which divides into three aspects. This threefold false ego further manifests as the elements, the senses and sense *devatās*. The generation of all these is called primary creation.

COMMENTARY

Sarga is defined. From a disturbance of the *guṇas* of *pradhāna* or *prakṛti* comes *mahat-tattva*. From *mahat-tattva* comes *ahaṅkāra*. From threefold *ahaṅkāra* come sense objects (*bhūta-sūkṣma*), the senses and the *devatās* (*artha*). This primary creation is called *sarga*. The same verb is understood in the following definitions.

|| 12.7.12 ||

*puruṣānugṛhītānām eteṣām vāsanā-mayaḥ
visargo 'yam samāhāro bijād bijam carācaram*

TRANSLATION

The aggregate, the total and individual *jīvas*, which is the effect of the all previously mentioned elements that have been favored by the Lord, is called *visarga*. It consists of all moving and non-moving beings, who are predominated by impressions of sin and piety and who continue like a seed producing a seed.

COMMENTARY

Visarga is explained. The aggregate or effect of the all elements which have been favored by the Lord—the total and individual *jīvas*, which are predominated by impressions of sin and piety—is called *visarga*. This universe of moving and non-moving beings is a continuous current like seeds producing seeds that produce more seeds. The previous definition of *ūti*, “impressions of *karma*”, is included in the present definition.¹

|| 12.7.13 ||

*vṛttir bhūtāni bhūtānām carāṇām acarāṇi ca
kṛtā svena nṛṇām tatra kāmāc codanayāpi vā*

TRANSLATION

Vṛtti means “the process of sustenance, by which the moving beings live upon the nonmoving beings.” For a human, *vṛtti* specifically means “acting for one’s livelihood in a manner suited to his personal nature, either by desire or according to regulation.”

¹ SB 2.10.4

COMMENTARY

The previously mentioned *sthāna* or sustenance is here called *vṛtti*. That is explained in this verse. Because of desire, in general, the sustenance of the moving beings is the non-moving beings, and sometimes even other moving beings, indicated by the word *ca*. Among men, sustenance of the body according to one's nature out of desire or by regulation is called *vṛtti*. The whole of the earth is the shelter for the moving and non-moving beings. In relation to this the earth globe is described in the Fifth Canto.

|| 12.7.14 ||

*rakṣācyutāvatārehā viśvasyānu yuge yuge
tiryañ-martyarṣi-deveṣu hanyante yais trayī-dviṣaḥ*

TRANSLATION

In each age, the infallible Lord's appearance in this world among the animals, human beings, sages and *devatās* is called protection of the universe. By these incarnations he kills the enemies of Vedic culture.

COMMENTARY

Poṣaṇam was called mercy of the Lord previously. Now *poṣaṇam* is called *rakṣā*. *Rakṣā* is explained. The activities of the Lord's *avatāras* among animals, humans and *devatās*, which are the cause of his appearing, are called *rakṣā*. Why does he appear? The demons are killed by the *avatāras*. Thus *rakṣā* means "protecting his devotees from the afflictions of the wicked." Also, sometimes *rakṣā* simply means "protecting his devotee from great fear (without a demon being involved)." Thus the protection of Ajāmila and others in the Sixth Canto is called *rakṣā*.

|| 12.7.15 ||

*manvantaram manur devā manu-putrāḥ sureśvarāḥ
rṣayo 'mśāvatārās ca hareḥ ṣaḍ-vidham ucyate*

TRANSLATION

Manvantaram means "the reign of Manu," during which six types of persons carry out specific duties: the ruling Manu, the *devatās*,

the sons of Manu, Indra, the great sages and the incarnations of the Supreme Lord.

COMMENTARY

Previously *manvantarāṇi* was defined as *sad-dharma*. Here *manvantaram* is described. The word *vidhā* means “the persons like Manu who perform their duties.” This takes six forms. *Manvantara* means “the period in which these six types of persons carry out their designated jobs.”

|| 12.7.16 ||

*rājñām brahma-prasūtānām vaṁśas trai-kāliko 'nvayaḥ
vaṁśānucaritam teṣām vṛttam vaṁśa-dharās ca ye*

TRANSLATION

Dynasties are lines of kings originating with Lord Brahmā and extending continuously through past, present and future. The activities of the prominent members constitute the subject of dynastic history.

COMMENTARY

Vaṁśa is defined. The continuous line of kings arising from Brahma is called *vaṁśa*. *Vaṁśānucaritam* is then described. The activities of those among the kings who are famous such as Priyavrata, Dhruva and Prthu is called *vaṁśānucaritam*.²

|| 12.7.17 ||

*naimittikaḥ prākṛtiko nitya ātyantiko layaḥ
saṁstheti kavibhiḥ proktaś caturdhāsya svabhāvataḥ*

TRANSLATION

The learned define *saṁsthā* as destruction of the causes of the universe on four levels: occasional, elemental, continuous and ultimate.

² These two items, *vaṁśa* and *vaṁśānucaritam*, take the place of *iśānukathā* of the list from the Second Canto. *Ūti* from the first list is included in *visarga* of the present list.

COMMENTARY

The previous term *nirodha*, here called *saṁsthā*, is explained. The destruction of the causes (*bhāva*) of the universe (*asya*), such as earth, water, and fire, is called *saṁsthā*.

|| 12.7.18 ||

*hetur jīvo 'sya sargāder avidyā-karma-kārah
yam cānuśāyinaṁ prāhur avyākṛtam utāpare*

TRANSLATION

The cause of *sarga*, *visarga* etc of the universe is the *jīva* who performs actions out of ignorance and is said to possess a material body, or, alternately, possess a spiritual body.

COMMENTARY

This verse defines *hetu*. The cause of *sarga*, *visarga* etc of the universe (*asya*) is the *jīva*, who performs actions out of ignorance. Because the Lord creates the universe for the *jīva*, the *jīva* is called the cause. Some call the *jīva* the possessor of a body made of *māyā*. *Anuśāyinaṁ* means “a covering of *māyā*.” Others, the devotees, say that the *jīva* who performs actions out of ignorance, when he is situated on the path of *bhakti* by the association of devotees, is the possessor of a spiritual body (*avyākṛtam*). The word *uta* means “on the other hand.” Nārada has said:

*prayujyamāne mayi tām śuddhām bhāgavatīm tanum
ārabdha-karma-nirvāṇo nyapatat pāñca-bhautikah*

Having been awarded a transcendental body befitting an associate of the Lord, I quit the body made of five material elements, in which *karma* had stopped. SB 1.6.28

At the beginning of the prayers of the personified Vedas Śukadeva said:

*buddhīndriya-manah-prāṇān janānām asṛjat prabhuh
mātrārtham ca bhavārtham ca ātmane 'kalpanāya ca*

The Supreme Lord manifested the material intelligence, senses, mind and vital air of the living entities so that they could indulge their desires for sense gratification, take repeated births to engage in fruitive activities, become elevated in future lives and ultimately use their senses and intelligence for the Lord. SB 10.87.2

Ātmane kalpanāya means “so *jivas* would make an offering of their intelligence, mind, senses and *prana* to the Lord.” Thus the ninth characteristic, previously mentioned as *mukti*, is the same as *hetu*. *Muktir hitvānyathā-rūpaṁ svarūpeṇa vyavasthitiḥ* (SB 2.10.6) means “to attain a spiritual form,” and that is explained also in the present verse.

|| 12.7.19 ||

*vyatirekānvayo yasya jāgrat-svapna-susuptiṣu
māyā-mayeṣu tad brahma jīva-vṛttiṣv apāśrayaḥ*

TRANSLATION

That Brahman which is present in all objects as its cause, in states of waking, dreaming and deep sleep, but which is separate from them, is called *apāśraya*.

COMMENTARY

This verse explains *apāśraya*. That Brahman which as a cause is present in all objects (*māyāmayeṣu*), in states of waking, dreaming and deep sleep, but which is separate from them (*vyatireka*), is called *apāśraya*.

|| 12.7.20 ||

*padārtheṣu yathā dravyaṁ san-mātraṁ rūpa-nāmasu
bījādi-pañcatāntāsu hy avasthāsu yutāyutam*

TRANSLATION

Just as earth is present in a pot and also exists outside the pot, just as sense objects exist in objects with name and form and also exist beyond them, that entity who exists in all states of the body from conception to death is called *apāśraya*.

COMMENTARY

This is explained with an example. A material like earth is present in an object like a pot and is separate as well, since it exists beyond the pot. In objects with name and form, sense objects like fragrance as well as their cause, *ahankāra* in *tamas*, are present in the objects, and also beyond the objects. In all states of the body from impregnation to death, that which is present as the controller and the witness, and is also separate, is called *apāśraya*.

|| 12.7.21 ||

*virameta yadā cittam hitvā vṛtti-trayam svayam
yogena vā tadātmānam vedehāyā nivartate*

TRANSLATION

When the mind, giving up the three states of waking, dreaming and deep sleep by *bhakti-yoga*, spontaneously enjoys the lotus feet of the Lord, at that time the conditioned soul realizes the Lord and gives up all material desires.

COMMENTARY

Having explained the ten characteristics of a Purāṇa, a verse is given to understand the topic. Similarly, it has already been stated:

*daśamasya viśuddhy-artham navānām iha lakṣaṇam
varṇayanti mahātmānaḥ śrutenārthena cāñjasā*

The great devotees such as Vidura and Maitreya describe properly the nine topics in order to impart the highest knowledge of the tenth topic, through the words of the scripture and through stories to illustrate their meaning. SB 2.10.2

The power of *bhakti* has already been stated.

jarayatyaśu yā koṣam nigīṛṇam analo yathā

That *bhakti* quickly destroys the subtle body, just as the digestive fire consumes food. SB 3.25.33

Giving up the three states of material consciousness by pure *bhakti* (*yogena*) consisting of hearing and chanting, the mind spontaneously becomes detached (*virameta*) from the *guṇas*, or the mind take great joy (*viśeṣeṇa rameta*) spontaneously in the lotus feet of the Lord. Or, by *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* the mind becomes detached and reaches *nirvāna*. At that time the mind realizes *Paramātmā* (*ātmānam*) and becomes detached from material desires (*īhāyāḥ*).

|| 12.7.22 ||

*evam lakṣaṇa-lakṣyāṇi purāṇāni purā-vidah
munayo 'ṣṭādaśa prāhuḥ kṣullakāni mahānti ca*

TRANSLATION

Sages expert in ancient histories have declared that the Purāṇas, according to their various characteristics, can be divided into eighteen major Purāṇas and eighteen secondary Purāṇas.

|| 12.7.23-24 ||

*brāhmaṇam pādmanam vaiṣṇavam ca śaivam laiṅgam sa-gāruḍam
nāradyam bhāgavatam āgneyam skānda-samjñitam*

*bhaviṣyam brahma-vaivartam mārkaṇḍeyam sa-vāmanam
vārāham mātṣyam kaurmam ca brahmāṇḍākyam iti tri-ṣaṭ*

TRANSLATION

The eighteen major Purāṇas are the Brahmā, Padma, Viṣṇu, Śiva, Liṅga, Garuḍa, Nārada, Bhāgavata, Agni, Skanda, Bhaviṣya, Brahma-vaivarta, Mārkaṇḍeya, Vāmana, Varāha, Matsya, Kūrma and Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇas.

COMMENTARY

Triṣaṭ means “eighteen.”

|| 12.7.25 ||

*brahmann idam samākhyātam śākhā-praṇayanam muneḥ
śiṣya-śiṣya-praśiṣyāṇām brahma-tejo-vivardhanam*

TRANSLATION

O *brāhmaṇa*! I have thoroughly described to you the expansion of the branches of the Vedas by the great sage Vyāsadeva, his disciples and the disciples of his disciples. One who listens to this narration will increase in spiritual strength.

COMMENTARY

Muneḥ means “of Vyāsa.” I have explained the expansion of the branches made by Vyāsa, his disciples and their disciples, which will increase the spiritual power of those who hear about it.

Thus ends the commentary on Seventh Chapter of the Twelfth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas*.

Chapter Eight



Mārkaṇḍeya Meets The Lord

|| 12.8.1 ||

śrī-śaunaka uvāca

*sūta jīva ciraṃ sādho vada no vadatām vara
tamasy apāre bhramatām nṛṇām tvam pāra-darśanaḥ*

TRANSLATION

Śaunaka said: O Sūta, may you live a long life! O saintly one, best of speakers! Please continue speaking to us. Only you can show men wandering within insurmountable *saṃsāra* the way to cross beyond it.

COMMENTARY

In the Eighth Chapter Mārkaṇḍeya performs austerity and the Apasarās attempt to disturb his vows. Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa was mentioned in verse 24 of the last chapter. That brought to Śaunaka's mind the story of Mārkaṇḍeya. Thus he asks about this now. *Tamasi* means "in *saṃsāra*."

|| 12.8.2-5 ||

*āhuś cirāyuṣam ṛṣiṃ mṛkaṇḍu-tanayaṃ janāḥ
yaḥ kalpānte hy urvarito yena grastam idaṃ jagat*

*sa vā asmat-kulotpannaḥ kalpe 'smin bhārgavarṣabhaḥ
naivādhunāpi bhūtānām samplavaḥ ko 'pi jāyate*

*eka evārṇave bhrāmyan dadarśa puruṣam kila
vata-patra-puṭe tokam śayānam tv ekam adbhutam*

*eṣa naḥ saṁśayo bhūyān sūta kautūhalaṁ yataḥ
taṁ naś chindhi mahā-yogin purāṇeṣv api sammataḥ*

TRANSLATION

Authorities say that Mārkaṇḍeya, the son of Mṛkaṇḍu, was an exceptionally long-lived sage who was the only survivor at the end of Brahmā's day, when the entire universe was merged in the flood of annihilation. But this same Mārkaṇḍeya, the foremost descendant of Bṛḡu, took birth in my own family during the current day of Brahmā, and we have not yet seen any total annihilation in this day of Brahmā. Also, it is well known that Mārkaṇḍeya, while wandering helplessly in the great ocean of annihilation, saw a wonderful personality—an infant boy lying alone within the fold of a banyan leaf. O Sūta, I am most bewildered and curious about this great sage, Mārkaṇḍeya. O great yogī, you are accepted as the authority on all the Purāṇas. Therefore kindly dispel my confusion.

COMMENTARY

Urvaritaḥ means “remaining.” During the devastation by which (*yena*) the universe was swallowed up, he remained. That is well known. But there is no devastation now. That is my doubt. Otherwise how could it happen that he saw a small boy on a banyan leaf during devastation? Because of this doubt, I have curiosity. Cut this doubt and curiosity. You are not only a great yogī, but are also acknowledged as an authority on the Purāṇas.

|| 12.8.6 ||

sūta uvāca

*praśnas tvayā maharṣe 'yam kṛto loka-bhramāpahaḥ
nārāyaṇa-kathā yatra gītā kali-malāpahā*

TRANSLATION

Suta said: Your question, which will remove everyone's illusion, has within it topics of Lord Nārāyaṇa, which destroy the contamination of Kal-yuga.

|| 12.8.7-11 ||

*prāpta-dvijāti-saṁskāro mārkaṇḍeyaḥ pituḥ kramāt
chandāmsy adhītya dharmeṇa tapaḥ-svādhyāya-samyutaḥ*

*br̥had-vrata-dharaḥ śānto jaṭilo valkalāmbaraḥ
bibhrat kamaṇḍalum daṇḍam upavītam sa-mekhalam*

*kṛṣṇājinaṁ sākṣa-sūtram kuśāms ca niyamarddhaye
agnya-arka-guru-viprātmasv arcayan sandhyayor harim*

*sāyam prātaḥ sa gurave bhaiḥṣyam āhṛtya vāg-yataḥ
bubhuje gurv-anujñātaḥ sakṛm no ced upoṣitaḥ*

*evam tapaḥ-svādhyāya-paro varṣānām ayutāyutam
ārādhayan hr̥ṣīkeśam jigye mṛtyum su-durjayam*

TRANSLATION

Mārkaṇḍeya, after being purified by the second birth *saṁskāra* performed for him by his father, studied the Vedic hymns and strictly observed the regulative principles. A lifelong celibate, he was peaceful and endowed with austerity and Vedic knowledge. With his matted hair, clothing made of bark, a waterpot, staff, sacred thread, *brahmacārī* belt, black deerskin, lotus-seed prayer beads and bundles of *kuśa* grass, he regularly worshiped the Supreme Lord in five forms—the sacrificial fire, the sun, *guru*, the *brāhmaṇas* and *Paramātmā* within his heart—at the sacred junctures of the day. Morning and evening he would go out begging, and upon returning he would present all the food he had collected to his *guru*. Only when his *guru* invited him would he silently take his one meal of the day; otherwise he would fast. Thus devoted to austerity and Vedic study, Mārkaṇḍeya worshiped the supreme master of the senses for a hundred million years, and in this way he conquered unconquerable death.

|| 12.8.12 ||

*brahmā bhṛgur bhavo dakṣo brahma-putrās ca ye 'pare
nṛ-deva-pitr-bhūtāni tenāsann ati-vismitāḥ*

TRANSLATION

Brahmā, Bhṛgu, Śiva, Prajāpati Dakṣa, the great sons of Brahmā, and many others among the human beings, *devatās*, Pitṛs and ghostly spirits were astonished by Mārkaṇḍeya.

|| 12.8.13 ||

*ittham bṛhad-vrata-dharas tapaḥ-svādhyāya-sāmyamaiḥ
dadhyāv adhokṣajam yogī dhvasta-kleśāntarātmanā*

TRANSLATION

In this way, maintaining rigid celibacy through penance, study of the Vedas and self-discipline, the *yogī* meditated on the Lord with his mind free of all material attractions.

COMMENTARY

He meditated with a mind (*antarātmanā*) freed of all *kleśas* such as attachment.¹

|| 12.8.14 ||

*tasyaivam yuñjataś cittam mahā-yogena yoginaḥ
vyatīyāya mahān kālo manvantara-ṣaḍ-ātmakāḥ*

TRANSLATION

While the *yogī* concentrated his mind by powerful *yoga* practice, the great expanse of six Manvantaras passed.

|| 12.8.15 ||

*etat purandaro jñātvā saptame 'smin kilāntare
tapo-viśaṅkito brahmann ārebhe tad-vighātanam*

TRANSLATION

O *brāhmaṇa*, during the reign of the seventh Manu, the current age, Indra came to know of Mārkaṇḍeya's austerities, and being fearful, he began to obstruct the sage's penance.

¹ There are five *kleśas*: ignorance, ego, attachment, hatred and absorption in material existence.

COMMENTARY

Indra became fearful that by his austerity he would take Indra's post.

|| 12.8.16 ||

*gandharvāpsarasah kāmam vasanta-malayānilau
munaye preṣayām āsa rajas-toka-madau tathā*

TRANSLATION

Indra sent Cupid, Gandharvas, Apsarās, the season of spring and the sandalwood-scented breeze from the Malaya Hills, along with greed and intoxication personified.

COMMENTARY

He sent the son of passion, greed (*rajas-toka*) and intoxication.

|| 12.8.17 ||

*te vai tad-āśramam jagmur himādreh pārsva uttare
puṣpabhadrā nadi yatra citrākhyā ca śilā vibho*

TRANSLATION

O most powerful Śaunaka! They went to Mārkaṇḍeya's hermitage, on the northern side of the Himālaya Mountains near the Puṣpabhadrā River and Mount Citrā.

|| 12.8.18-20 ||

*tad-āśrama-padam puṇyam puṇya-druma-latāñcitam
puṇya-dvija-kulākīrnam puṇyāmala-jalāśayam*

*matta-bhramara-saṅgītam matta-kokila-kūjitam
matta-barhi-natātopam matta-dvija-kulākulam*

*vāyuḥ praviṣṭa ādāya hima-nirjhara-śīkarān
sumanobhiḥ pariṣvako vavāv uttambhayan smaram*

TRANSLATION

It was a pure hermitage, filled with pure trees and creepers, pure groups of *brāhmaṇas*, and pure, clear lakes. Intoxicated bees were

humming, intoxicated cuckoos were cooing, intoxicated peacocks were dancing, and intoxicated birds were flying everywhere. The breeze, embraced by flowers, holding drops of cool water from waterfalls, entering that place, agitating Cupid, began to blow.

|| 12.8.21 ||

*udyac-candra-niśā-vaktraḥ pravāla-stabakālibhiḥ
gopa-druma-latā-jālais tatrāsīt kusumākaraḥ*

TRANSLATION

Springtime, with a network of trees and creepers covered by clumps of flowers and sprouts, whose face was the rising moon at night, appeared in the hermitage.

COMMENTARY

Spring had night as its face with a rising moon. The spring was endowed with a network of creepers and trees which protected the rays of the moon (*gopa*) and lines of flower clumps.

|| 12.8.22 ||

*anvīyamāno gandharvair gīta-vāditra-yūthakaiḥ
adrśyatātta-cāpeṣuḥ svaḥ-strī-yūtha-patiḥ smaraḥ*

TRANSLATION

Cupid, the master of many heavenly women, followed by groups of Gandharvas playing musical instruments and singing, appeared, holding his bow and arrow.

COMMENTARY

He came with persons who had groups of instrument players and singers. The suffix *kaiḥ* has the sense of “possessing.” The sage realized their presence somewhat in his mind, and began to tremble. This can be understood from later verses. Verse 29 mentions he was a like suddenly awakened snake, and the word *dharṣitaḥ* (violated) in verse 30 indicates awareness of their attack.

|| 12.8.23 ||

*hutvāgnim samupāsīnam dadṛśuḥ śakra-kiṅkarāḥ
mīlitākṣam durādharṣam mūrtimantam ivānalam*

TRANSLATION

These servants of Indra saw the sage sitting in meditation, with closed eyes, having just offered his prescribed oblations into the sacrificial fire. He seemed invincible, like fire personified.

COMMENTARY

They saw the sage sitting (*samupāsīnam*).

|| 12.8.24 ||

*nanṛtus tasya purataḥ striyo 'tho gāyakā jaguḥ
mṛdaṅga-vīṇā-panavair vādyam cakrur mano-ramam*

TRANSLATION

The women danced before the sage, the celestial singers sang, and attractive instruments played with drums, strings and cymbals.

|| 12.8.25 ||

*sandadhe 'stram sva-dhanuṣi kāmāḥ pañca-mukham tadā
madhur mano rajas-toka indra-bhṛtyā vyakampayan*

TRANSLATION

While greed personified, spring and the other servants of Indra all tried to agitate Mārkaṇḍeya's mind, Cupid fixed his five-headed arrow on his bow.

COMMENTARY

The five heads of the arrow are drying up, bewilderment, agitation, suffering, and exhilaration.

|| 12.8.26-27 ||

*krīḍantyāḥ puñjikasthalyāḥ kandukaiḥ stana-gauravāt
bhṛṣam udvigna-madhyāyāḥ keśa-visramsita-srajāḥ*

*itas tato bhramad-drṣṭeś calantya anu kandukam
vāyur jahāra tad-vāsaḥ sūkṣmaṁ truṭita-mekhalam*

TRANSLATION

While Puñjikasthalī, with waist bent over by the weight of her breasts, garlands falling from her hair, was playing with some balls, glancing here and there, and was chasing a ball, the wind blew at her fine dress with its loose belt.

|| 12.8.28 ||

*visasarja tadā bāṇaṁ matvā taṁ sva-jitaṁ smaraḥ
sarvaṁ tatrābhavaṁ mogham anīśasya yathodyamaḥ*

TRANSLATION

Cupid, thinking he had conquered the sage, then shot his arrow. But all these attempts proved futile, just like the useless endeavors of a person with bad luck.

COMMENTARY

Anīśasya means “of a person with bad fortune.”

|| 12.8.29 ||

*ta ittham apakurvanto munes tat-tejasā mune
dahyamānā nivavṛtuḥ prabodhyāhim ivārbhakāḥ*

TRANSLATION

O learned Śaunaka! While Cupid and his followers tried to harm the sage, they became burned by his potency. Thus they desisted, just like children who have aroused a sleeping snake.

COMMENTARY

They became frightened, thinking, “We do not know what will happen now.” From the example of the snake, it is understood that the sage first became angry on the arousal of lust and then he controlled both lust and anger.

|| 12.8.30 ||

*itīndrānucarair brahman dharsīto 'pi mahā-muniḥ
yan nāgād ahamo bhāvaṁ na tac citraṁ mahatsu hi*

TRANSLATION

O *brāhmaṇa*! Though the followers of Indra had impudently attacked the saintly Mārkaṇḍeya, he did not succumb to false ego. For great souls such tolerance is not surprising.

COMMENTARY

Ahamah means “of *ahaṅkāra*.”

|| 12.8.31 ||

*dr̥ṣṭvā nistejaśaṁ kāmaṁ sa-gaṇaṁ bhagavān svarāṭ
śrutvānubhāvaṁ brahmaṁṣer vismayaṁ samagāt param*

TRANSLATION

The mighty King Indra, seeing the impotence of Cupid and his followers, and hearing of the power of the great sage, became very astonished.

COMMENTARY

Svarāṭ means Indra.

|| 12.8.32 ||

*tasyaivam yuñjatas cittaṁ tapaḥ-svādhyāya-samyamaiḥ
anugrahāyāvīrasīn nara-nārāyaṇo hariḥ*

TRANSLATION

While Mārkaṇḍeya was fixing his mind through penance, Vedic study and observance of regulative principles, the Supreme Lord Nara-Nārāyaṇa appeared before the sage by his mercy.

|| 12.8.33-34 ||

*tau śukla-kṛṣṇau nava-kañja-locanau catur-bhujau raurava-valkalāmbarau
pavitra-pāṇī upavītakam tri-vṛt kamaṇḍalum daṇḍam ṛjum ca vainavam*

*padmākṣa-mālām uta jantu-mārjanam vedam ca sākṣāt tapa eva rūpiṇau
tapat-taḍid-varṇa-piśaṅga-rociṣā prāmsū dadhānau vibudharṣabhārcitau*

TRANSLATION

One form was white and the other black. They had four arms and eyes resembling the lotus petals. They wore garments of black deerskin and bark, along with the three-stranded sacred thread, and had *pavitrās* of *kuśa* on their hands. They carried the mendicant's waterpot, straight bamboo staff and lotus-seed prayer beads, as well as the all-purifying Vedas in the symbolic form of bundles of *darbha* grass. The tall figures, austerity personified, flashing with yellow rays like lightning, were being worshiped by the foremost *devatās*.

COMMENTARY

They wore skin of the black deer and bark for clothing and a sacred thread of newly woven thread in three strands. They held water pots in their hands. They held the Vedas which purify men. Some say this means they held *darbha*, representing the Vedas. They were the personification of austerity. They were tall. Their yellow effulgence looked like flashing lightning.

|| 12.8.35 ||

*te vai bhagavato rūpe nara-nārāyaṇāv ṛṣi
drṣṭvotthāyādareṇocair nanāmāṅgena daṇḍa-vat*

TRANSLATION

Seeing these two sages, Nara and Nārāyaṇa, forms of the Supreme Lord, Mārkaṇḍeya stood up and with great respect offered them obeisances by falling down flat on the ground.

|| 12.8.36 ||

*sa tat-sandarśanānanda- nirvṛtātmendriyāśayaḥ
hrṣṭa-romāśru-pūrṇākṣo na sehe tāv udikṣitum*

TRANSLATION

Mārkaṇḍeya's body, mind and senses became blissful on seeing them. His eyes filled with tears and his hairs stood on end. He could not gaze upon them.

COMMENTARY

Na sehe means “he could not.”

|| 12.8.37 ||

*utthāya prāñjaliḥ prahva utsukyād āśliṣann iva
namo nama itīśānau babhāṣe gadgadākṣaram*

TRANSLATION

Standing with his hands folded in supplication and his head bowed in humility, Mārkaṇḍeya out of eagerness imagined he was embracing the two Lords. In a voice choked with ecstasy, he repeatedly said, “I offer my humble obeisances.”

COMMENTARY

Pravhaḥ means “with humility.”

|| 12.8.38 ||

*tayor āsanam ādāya pādayor avaniḥya ca
arhaṇenānulepena dhūpa-mālyair apūjayat*

TRANSLATION

He gave them sitting places and washed their feet, and then he worshiped them with presentations of *arghya*, sandalwood pulp, fragrant oils, incense and flower garlands.

|| 12.8.39 ||

*sukham āsanam āsīnau prasādābhimukhau muni
punar ānamya pādābhyām gariṣṭhāv idam abravīt*

TRANSLATION

Mārkaṇḍeya, once again bowing down at the lotus feet of those two most worshipable sages, who were sitting at ease, ready to bestow all mercy upon him, he addressed them as follows.

|| 12.8.40 ||

*śrī-mārkaṇḍeya uvāca
kim varṇaye tava vibho yad-udīrito 'suh
saṁspandate tam anu vān-mana-indriyāṇi*

*spandanti vai tanu-bhṛtām aja-śarvayoś ca
svasyāpy athāpi bhajatām asi bhāva-bandhuḥ*

TRANSLATION

Mārkaṇḍeya said: O Almighty Lord, how can I possibly describe you? You awaken the vital air, which then impels the mind, senses and power of speech to act. This is true for all ordinary conditioned souls and even Brahmā and Śiva. So it is certainly true for me. Nevertheless, you become the intimate friend of those who worship you.

COMMENTARY

By you, the life air is made to move, and the voice, mind and senses. Śruti says *śrotrasya śrotram*: the lord is the ear of the ear. (*Kena Upaniṣad* 1.2) *Vai* means certainly. You enliven the senses not only of ordinary beings, but of Brahmā and Śiva as well, what to speak of me. Like a friend, you are controlled by the love of those who worship you. You alone enable them to worship you by enlivening their minds and senses, yet you feel unable to repay the debt of their worship and become indebted and controlled by their love. That is most astonishing. That is the greatness of your mercy.

|| 12.8.41 ||

*mūrti ime bhagavato bhagavaṁs tri-lokyāḥ
kṣemāya tāpa-viramāya ca mṛtyu-jityai
nānā bibharsy avitum anya-tanūr yathedaṁ
sṛṣṭvā punar grasasi sarvam ivorṇanābhiḥ*

TRANSLATION

Just as you appear in various other forms, you assume these two forms for the benefit of the three worlds, for removing suffering and for giving liberation. Having manifested these forms, you make them disappear, like a spider that produces thread and then consumes it.

COMMENTARY

Therefore you appear in this world to allow us to worship you and to let yourself be controlled by the *prema* of your devotees with

matured *bhakti*. But not only for this purpose do you appear. You come to protect the universe. That is explained in this verse. *Mr̥tyujityai* means “for giving liberation.” Just as you assume various other forms like *Matsya* and *Kūrma*, you now appear in these two forms. However, having accepted these forms (*sr̥stvā*) you then make them disappear, just as a spider produced and devours his web. This verse praises the greatness of the Lord’s pastimes.

|| 12.8.42 ||

*tasyāvituh̥ sthira-careṣitur aṅghri-mūlaṁ
yat-sthaṁ na karma-guṇa-kāla-rajah̥ spr̥ṣanti
yad vai stuvanti ninamanti yajanty abhikṣṇam
dhyāyanti veda-hṛdayā munayas tad-āptyai*

TRANSLATION

I worship the lotus feet of you, who are the protector and controller of all beings moving and non-moving, whose fixed devotees are not touched by *karma*, *guṇas* or time, and whom the sages, with continuous silence, knowing the conclusion of the Vedas, praise, respect, worship and meditate upon, in order to attain you.

COMMENTARY

I worship your lotus feet. The verb occurs in verse 44. The contamination of bad conduct, arising from *karma*, *guṇas* and time do not touch the devotees situated at your feet. This expresses the greatness of *bhakti* dedicated to the Lord. Actions, either pious or sinful, recent or ancient, do not touch the devotee, just as water does not touch the lotus leaf. The plural verb is poetic license. The devotees, always silent (*munayah̥*), who know the conclusion of the Vedas, meditate on the Lord to attain him.

|| 12.8.43 ||

*nānyam̐ tavāṅghry-upanayād apavarga-mūrteḥ
kṣemaṁ janasya parito-bhiya īśa vidmaḥ
brahmā bibhety alam̐ ato dvi-parārdha-dhiṣṇyah̥
kālasya te kim uta tat-kṛta-bhautikānām*

TRANSLATION

O Lord! For people fearing *saṁsāra* I do not know any auspiciousness other than the lotus feet of you, the form of liberation, since even Brahmā who lives for two *parārdhas* also fears time. What to speak of the creatures created by him!

COMMENTARY

I do not know any auspiciousness other than your lotus feet for persons fearing *saṁsāra* (*parito bhīyaḥ*), since even Brahmā fears time, what to speak of others created by Brahmā fearing time.

|| 12.8.44 ||

*tad vai bhajāmy ṛta-dhīyas tava pāda-mūlam
hitvedam ātma-cchadi cātma-guroḥ parasya
dehādy apārtham asat antyam abhijñā-mātram
vindeta te tarhi sarva-manīṣitārtham*

TRANSLATION

I worship the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord, the *guru* of the *jīva*, who has true knowledge, after I have given up the covering on the *ātmā* such as possessiveness of body and house, which are all useless, insignificant, and temporary. A person should attain you alone, who know the devotee's service, and he will attain all his desires.

COMMENTARY

Ṛta-dhīyaḥ means “the Lord who has true knowledge.” Giving up the covering on the *ātmā*—possessiveness of body and house, which is useless (*apārtham*), insignificant (*asat*) and temporary (*antyam*), I worship the lotus feet of you, who have true knowledge. One who worships you also attains you, who know the service of the devotee. “Then let those without material desire worship me. Let those with desires worship some one else.” No, if someone attains you, he attains all desirable objects.

|| 12.8.45 ||

*sattvaṁ rajas tama itīśa tavātma-bandho
māyā-mayāḥ sthiti-layodaya-hetavo 'sya
līlā dhṛtā yad api sattva-mayī praśāntyai
nānye nṛṇāṁ vyasana-moha-bhīyāś ca yābhyām*

TRANSLATION

O master of life forms! O friend of the *jīva*! The causes of creation, maintenance and destruction, of the universe of all beings, including the *devatās*, are the three *guṇas*, made of *māyā*. Though you accept pastimes of *sattva-guṇa* for auspiciousness, you do not accept *rajas* and *tamas* at all, since they produce pain, illusion and fear for mankind.

COMMENTARY

“If a person has material desires, let him worship *devatās*. Worshiping them is worshiping me, since the *devatās* are my representatives.” O friend of the *jīva*! O master of life forms! The causes of this universe made of men, animals and *devatās* like Indra and Candra are the three *guṇas* which are made of *māyā*. How will I attain you, beyond *māyā*, by worshiping the effects of *māyā*, the *devatās*, who are all temporary? Though you accept *sattva-guṇa* pastimes among all pastimes for auspiciousness, you do not accept the others, *rajas* and *tamas* actions, by which suffering, illusion and fear arise. However, all three pastimes are made of *māyā*.

|| 12.8.46 ||

*tasmāt taveha bhagavann atha tāvakānām
śuklām tanuṁ sva-dayitām kuśalā bhajanti
yat sātvatāḥ puruṣa-rūpam uśanti sattvaṁ
loko yato 'bhayam utātma-sukhaṁ na cānyat*

TRANSLATION

O Lord! Therefore in this world, the wise worship your pure form and the pure form of your devotee, and not the forms made of material *guṇas*, since the devotees like Nārada recognize your form as *śuddha-sattva*, from which arises Vaikuṇṭha, a place which has no fear of falling and is endowed with spiritual bliss.

COMMENTARY

Therefore the wise give up the impure forms of Indra and others made of *māyā* and worship the *śuddha-sattva* forms of the Lord and his devotees. Devotees like Nārada (*sātvatāḥ*) recognize the form of Viṣṇu which is *sattva*. “What type of *sattva* is this?” From this Lord arises Vaikuṅṭha, with no fear of falling. There is fear of falling from Svarga. Because there is no fear of falling, there is spiritual happiness, not happiness from results of *karma*. Therefore, it is *śuddha-sattva*, not material *sattva*.

|| 12.8.47 ||

tasmai namo bhagavate puruṣāya bhūmne
viśvāya viśva-gurave para-daivatāya
nārāyaṇāya ṛṣaye ca narottamāya
haṁsāya saṁyata-gire nigameśvarāya

TRANSLATION

I offer respects to the Supreme Lord, the supreme, the all-pervading person, who assumes all forms in the universe, who teaches the universe, who is most worthy of worship, who is the sage Nārāyaṇa and Nara, who is completely detached from worldly life, who is controlled in speech and who teaches the Vedas.

COMMENTARY

Though you have a form of a human (*puruṣāya*), you are all pervading (*bhūmne*), and you take the forms of animals, men and *devatās* (*viśvāya*). The purpose of the Lord’s appearance is described. You teach *bhakti*, *jñāna* and *vairāgya* (*viśva-gurave*). Not only are you a teacher, but you are worthy of worship. You are most worthy of worship (*para-daivatāya*). You appear in two forms. You are the sage Nārāyaṇa and the best of humans as a sage. You have given up all possessiveness (*haṁsāya*). You remain with a vow of silence (*saṁyata-gire*). However, you preach the Vedas (*nigameśvarāya*).

|| 12.8.48 ||

*yam vai na veda vitathākṣa-pathair bhramad-dhīḥ
santam svakeṣv asuṣu hr̥dy api dr̥k-pathesu
tan-māyayāvṛta-matiḥ sa u eva sākṣād
ādyas tavākhila-guror upasādyā vedam*

TRANSLATION

Persons with intelligence bewildered by deceptive sense perception cannot know you who are situated in their senses, life airs and hearts. Persons whose intelligence is covered by *māyā* cannot even know you when you appear as *avatāra* within their vision. Even Brahmā who obtained the Vedas from you, the *guru* of all beings, cannot know you.

COMMENTARY

This verse explains that the Lord is difficult to realize. A person with bewildered intelligence caused by deceptive sense perception (*vitathākṣa-pathaiḥ*) does not know the Lord situated as the controller in the heart, in the life air and the senses. The person whose intelligence is covered by *māyā* does not know you, who are present visibly (*dr̥k-pathesu*) now as *avatāra*. What to speak of others, even Brahmā (*ādyah*), though he obtained the Vedas from you, who are the *guru* of all beings, does not know you.

|| 12.8.49 ||

*yad-darśanam nigama ātma-rahah-prakāśam
muhyanti yatra kavayo 'ja-parā yatantaḥ
tam sarva-vāda-viṣaya-pratirūpa-śīlam
vande mahā-puruṣam ātma-nigūḍha-bodham*

TRANSLATION

Knowledge of the Lord is revealed in the Vedas, but indirectly. Even the great sages headed by Brahmā, though endeavoring to understand the Lord, are bewildered about the Lord by studying the Vedas. I offer respects to the great Lord, who is conceived differently by various philosophies presented in the Vedas, whose real nature is hidden, who is understood only by himself.

COMMENTARY

Though you are known by the Vedic scriptures, you are still difficult to understand. Knowledge of you is in the Vedas. That knowledge reveals you, who are secret (*ātma-rahāḥ*). “Then those who study the Vedas can know me.” The sages, the best of whom is Brahmā (*aja-parāḥ*), though they endeavor, are bewildered concerning the nature of the Lord. Because the Vedas speak indirectly, they are bewildered about you as the only object of knowledge. The reason is explained. The Lord has a form which is not the form (*prati-rūpam*) which becomes the subject of various philosophies like *vivarta-vāda* described in the Vedas. Therefore I offer respects to he whose real nature is hidden from understanding, hidden within himself.

Thus ends the commentary on Eighth Chapter of the Twelfth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas*.

Chapter Nine



Mārkaṇḍeya Sees Pralaya

|| 12.9.1 ||

sūta uvāca

*saṁstuto bhagavān itthaṁ mārkaṇḍeyena dhīmatā
nārāyaṇo nara-sakhaḥ prīta āha bhṛgūdvaham*

TRANSLATION

Sūta Gosvāmī said: The Supreme Lord Nārāyaṇa, the friend of Nara, was satisfied by the glorification offered by the intelligent sage Mārkaṇḍeya, the excellent descendant of Bhṛgu.

COMMENTARY

The Ninth Chapter describes how Mārkaṇḍeya, saddened by seeing *māyā*, enters within the abdomen of a child lying on a banyan leaf, comes out again and then falls into the ocean of devastation.

|| 12.9.2 ||

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

*bho bho brahmaṛṣi-varyo 'si siddha ātma-samādhinā
mayi bhaktyānapāyinyā tapaḥ-svādhyāya-samyamaih*

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord said: My dear Mārkaṇḍeya, you are the best of all learned *brāhmaṇas*. You have perfected your life by practicing fixed meditation, by undeviating *bhakti* to me, along with austerities, study of the Vedas and adherence to regulative principles.

|| 12.9.3 ||

*vayaṁ te parituṣṭāḥ sma tvad-br̥had-vrata-caryayā
varam̐ praticcha bhadram̐ te vara-do 'smi tvad-īpsitam*

TRANSLATION

We are completely satisfied with your practice of lifelong celibacy. Please choose whatever benediction you desire, since I can grant your wish. May you enjoy all good fortune.

COMMENTARY

The plural “we” is used because later it will be seen that Śiva and Umā were also pleased.

|| 12.9.4 ||

śrī-r̥ṣir uvāca

*jitaṁ te deva-deveśa prapannārti-harācyuta
vareṇaitāvataḥ no yad bhavān samadr̥śyata*

TRANSLATION

The sage said: O Lord of lords! You have all excellent qualities! O Lord Acyuta, remover all distress for the surrendered! That I have seen you is enough of a benediction.

COMMENTARY

Jitam te means “you have all excellent qualities.”

|| 12.9.5 ||

*gr̥hītvājādayo yasya śrīmat-pādābja-darśanam
manasā yoga-pakvena sa bhavān me 'kṣi-gocaraḥ*

TRANSLATION

Such *devatās* as Lord Brahmā achieved success by seeing your lotus feet in their minds by mature *yoga* practice. And now, my Lord, you have appeared before my eyes.

COMMENTARY

Having seen your lotus feet, Brahmā and others became successful. The verb “*bhavati*” should be supplied.

|| 12.9.6 ||

*athāpy ambuja-patrākṣa puṇya-śloka-śikhāmaṇe
drakṣye māyām yayā lokah sa-pālo veda sad-bhidām*

TRANSLATION

O lotus-eyed Lord! O crest jewel of renowned persons! I wish to see your illusory potency, by whose influence the entire world, together with the *devatās*, know the various effects arising from *prakṛti*.

COMMENTARY

I desire to see (*drakṣye*). *Sad-bhidām* means “the various effects arising from the cause (*sat*).” Or it can mean “the destruction of the existing world.”

|| 12.9.7 ||

sūta uvāca

*itīḍito ’rcitaḥ kāmam ṛṣiṇā bhagavān mune
tatheti sa smayan prāgād badary-āśramam īśvaraḥ*

TRANSLATION

Sūta Gosvāmī said: O wise Śaunaka! Thus satisfied by Mārkaṇḍeya’s praise and worship, the Supreme Lord, smiling, replied, “So be it,” and then departed for his hermitage at Badarikāśrama.

COMMENTARY

The Lord smiled. Seeing *māyā* is only a cause of experiencing grief. If you want that, then I will give it, since I must give you a boon. You must realize, “I do not like this experience of seeing *māyā*.” Otherwise your desire to experience it will not go away. Therefore by experiencing its suffering you will give it up. It is like a father who orders his son to give up some action which the stubborn son does, even though the act will cause the son suffering. But for his devotee the Lord would not only make the devotee give up the desire, but would also give the devotee bliss by showing his baby form within the experience of suffering. Thus the Lord smiled.

|| 12.9.8-9 ||

*tam eva cintayann artham ṛṣiḥ svāśrama eva saḥ
vasann agny-arka-somāmbu- bhū-vāyu-viyad-ātmasu*

*dhyāyan sarvatra ca hariṁ bhāva-dravyair apūjayat
kvacit pūjāṁ visasmāra prema-prasara-samplutaḥ*

TRANSLATION

Thinking always of his desire to see the Lord's illusory energy, the sage remained in his *āśrama*, meditating constantly upon the Lord within fire, the sun, the moon, water, the earth, air, lightning and his own heart, and worshiping him with paraphernalia conceived in his mind. But sometimes, overwhelmed by waves of love for the Lord, Mārkaṇḍeya would forget to perform his regular worship.

COMMENTARY

He thought of seeing *māyā* (*tam artham*). *Bhāva-dravyaiḥ* means "with articles produced in the mind."

|| 12.9.10 ||

*tasyaikadā bhṛgu-śreṣṭha puṣpabhadrā-tate muneh
upāsīnasya sandhyāyām brahman vāyur abhūn mahān*

TRANSLATION

O *brāhmaṇa* Śaunaka, best of the Bhṛgus! One day while Mārkaṇḍeya was performing his evening worship on the bank of the Puṣpabhadrā, a great wind suddenly began to blow.

COMMENTARY

The display of *māyā* begins.

|| 12.9.11 ||

*taṁ caṇḍa-śabdāṁ samudīrayantāṁ balāhakā anv abhavan karālāḥ
akṣa-sthaviṣṭhā mumucus tadīdbhiḥ svananta uccair abhi varṣa-dhārāḥ*

TRANSLATION

That wind created a terrible sound. After that, fearsome, thick clouds appeared, accompanied by lightning and roaring thunder, and torrents of rain as heavy as chariot wheels poured down on all sides.

COMMENTARY

The torrents were as heavy as wheels of a chariot.

|| 12.9.12 ||

*tato vyadrśyanta catuḥ samudrāḥ samantataḥ kṣmā-talam āgrasantaḥ
samīra-vegormibhir ugra-nakra- mahā-bhayāvarta-gabhīra-ghoṣāḥ*

TRANSLATION

Then the four great oceans, filled with crocodiles, fearful whirlpools and ominous rumblings, appeared on all sides, swallowing up the surface of the earth with their wind-tossed waves.

|| 12.9.13 ||

*antar bahiś cādbhir ati-dyubhiḥ kharaiḥ śatahradābhir upatāpitaṁ jagat
catur-vidhaṁ vīkṣya sahātmanā munir jalāplutām kṣmām vimanāḥ
samatrasat*

TRANSLATION

The sage saw all the inhabitants of the universe, including himself, tormented within and without by the harsh rays of the sun, bolts of lightning, and great waves rising beyond the sky. As the whole earth flooded, he grew perplexed and fearful.

COMMENTARY

Ati-dyubhiḥ adbhiḥ means “by water reaching to the sky.” *Kharaiḥ* means “by the harsh sun’s rays.” *Śatahradābhiḥ* means “by lightning.” The long *ā* in *śatahradābhiḥ* is poetic license.

|| 12.9.14 ||

*tasyaivam udvīkṣata ūrmi-bhīṣanaḥ
prabhañjanāghūrṇita-vār mahārṇavaḥ
āpūryamāṇo varaṣadbhir ambudaiḥ
kṣmām apyadhād dvīpa-varṣādribhiḥ samam*

TRANSLATION

While Mārkaṇḍeya watched, the rain pouring down from the clouds filled the ocean more and more until that great sea, its waters violently whipped into terrifying waves by hurricanes, covered up all the earth's islands, mountains and continents.

|| 12.9.15 ||

*sa-kṣmāntarikṣam sa-divam sa-bhā-gaṇam
trai-lokyam āsīt saha digbhir āplutam
sa eka evorvarito mahā-munir
babhrāma vikṣipyā jatā jadāndha-vat*

TRANSLATION

The water inundated the earth, outer space, heaven, all the planets and the three worlds, in all directions. Only Mārkaṇḍeya remained. His matted hair scattered, the great sage wandered about alone in the water as if dumb and blind.

COMMENTARY

Sa-bhā-gaṇam means “with the planets.”

|| 12.9.16 ||

*kṣut-tr̥ṣṇ-parīto makarais timiṅgilair upadruto vīci-nabhasvatāhataḥ
tamasy apāre patito bhraman diśo na veda kham gām ca pariśrameṣitaḥ*

TRANSLATION

Having fallen into insurmountable darkness, tormented by hunger and thirst, attacked by monstrous *makaras* and *timiṅgila* fish. and battered by the wind and waves, he moved aimlessly. As he grew increasingly exhausted, he lost all sense of direction and could not tell the sky from the earth.

COMMENTARY

He was beaten by the wind with waves. *Īṣitaḥ* means “attained.” It comes from the root *īṣ*, meaning “to go.”

|| 12.9.17-18 ||

*kracin magno mahāvarte taralais tāḍitaḥ kvacit
yādobhir bhakṣyate kvāpi svayam anyonya-ghātibhiḥ*

*kvacic chokaṁ kvacin moham kvacid duḥkham sukham bhayam
kvacin mṛtyum avāpnoti vyādhy-ādibhir utārditaḥ*

TRANSLATION

At times he was engulfed by the great whirlpools, sometimes he was beaten by the mighty waves, and at other times the aquatic monsters threatened to devour him as they attacked one another. Sometimes he felt lamentation, bewilderment, misery, happiness or fear, and at other times he experienced such terrible pains that he felt himself dying.

|| 12.9.19 ||

*ayutāyata-varṣānām sahasrāṇi śatāni ca
vyatīyur bhramatas tasmin viṣṇu-māyāvṛtātmanah*

TRANSLATION

Countless millions of years passed as Mārkaṇḍeya wandered about in that deluge, his mind bewildered by the illusory energy of Lord Viṣṇu.

|| 12.9.20 ||

*sa kadācid bhramaṁs tasmin pṛthivyāḥ kakudi dvijaḥ
nyāgrodha-potaṁ dadṛṣe phala-pallava-śobhitam*

TRANSLATION

Once, while wandering in the water, the *brāhmaṇa* Mārkaṇḍeya saw a small island, upon which stood a young banyan tree, radiant with leaves and fruits.

COMMENTARY

Kakudi means “on a raised area.”

|| 12.9.21 ||

*prāg-uttarasyaṁ śākhāyāṁ tasyāpi dadrṣe śiṣum
śayānaṁ paṇa-putake grasantaṁ prabhayā tamaḥ*

TRANSLATION

Upon a branch of the northeast portion of that tree he saw, lying on a leaf, an infant boy whose effulgence swallowed up the darkness.

|| 12.9.22-25 ||

*mahā-marakata-śyāmaṁ śrīmad-vadana-pankajam
kambu-grīvaṁ mahoraskaṁ su-nasaṁ sundara-bhruvam*

*śvāsaijad-alakābhātaṁ kambu-śrī-karṇa-dāḍimam
vidrumādhara-bhāṣeṣac- choṇāyita-sudhā-smitam*

*padma-garbhāruṇāpāṅgam ḥṛdya-hāsāvalokanam
śvāsaijad-vali-sarṁvigna- nimna-nābhi-dalodaram*

*cārv-aṅgulibhyāṁ pāṇibhyāṁ unnīya caraṇāmbujam
mukhe nidhāya viprendro dhayantaṁ vīkṣya vismitaḥ*

TRANSLATION

The infant's dark-blue complexion was the color of a flawless emerald, his lotus face shone with a wealth of beauty, and his throat bore marks like the lines on a conchshell. He had a broad chest, a finely shaped nose, beautiful eyebrows, and lovely ears that had inner folds like a conchshell's spirals and decorations of pomegranate flowers. The corners of his eyes were reddish like the whorl of a lotus, and the effulgence of his coral-like lips slightly reddened the sweet, enchanting smile on his face. As he breathed, his splendid hair trembled and his deep navel moved about along with the deep folds of skin on his abdomen which was shaped like a banyan leaf. The exalted *brāhmaṇa* watched with amazement as the infant took hold of one of his lotus feet with his graceful fingers, placed a toe within his mouth, and began to suck.

COMMENTARY

He looked splendid with locks of hair that were trembling because of his breathing. He had pomegranate flowers decorating his ears

and his ear-folds had the beauty of conches. His abdomen was shaped like a banyan leaf with a deep navel which quivered, and with deep horizontal skin folds which trembled when he breathed. He held his toe and sucked it, thinking, "What is the sweetness of my lotus foot? Since many of my devotees attempt to taste that sweetness, I should also try to taste it."

|| 12.9.26 ||

*tad-darśanād vīta-parīśramo mudā protphulla-hṛt-padma-vilocanāmbujāḥ
prahr̥ṣṭa-romādbhuta-bhāva-śaṅkitaḥ praṣṭum puras taṁ prasasāra bālakaṁ*

TRANSLATION

From seeing the child, all his weariness vanished. Because of joy the lotus of his heart, along with his lotus eyes, fully blossomed, and the hairs on his body stood on end. Confused as to the identity of the wonderful infant, the sage approached him to ask.

COMMENTARY

He had doubt about that astonishing form (*bhāva*). It could not be an ordinary child. He approached to ask.

|| 12.9.27 ||

*tāvaca chiśor vai śvasitena bhārgavaḥ so 'ntaḥ śarīraṁ maśako yathāviśat
tatrāpya do nyastam acaṣṭa kṛtsnaśo yathā purāmuhyad atīva vismitaḥ*

TRANSLATION

At that moment, the child, by inhaling, drew Mārkaṇḍeya within his body like a mosquito. There the sage found the entire universe arrayed as it had been before its dissolution. Seeing this, Mārkaṇḍeya was most astonished and perplexed.

COMMENTARY

Adaḥ means "the universe." He saw everything as it was before the devastation (*yathā purā*).

|| 12.9.28-29 ||

*khaṁ rodasī bhā-gaṇān adri-sāgarān dvīpān sa-varṣān kakubhaḥ surāsurān
vanāni deśān saritaḥ purākarān khetān vrajān āśrama-varṇa-vṛttayaḥ*

*mahānti bhūtāny atha bhautikāny asau kālaṁ ca nānā-yuga-kalpa-kalpanam
yat kiñcid anyad vyavahāra-kāraṇaṁ dadarśa viśvaṁ sad ivāvabhāsitam*

TRANSLATION

The sage saw the entire universe: the sky, the heavens, the earth, the stars, the mountains, the oceans, the great islands, the continents, the directions, the saintly and demoniac living beings, the forests, the countries, the rivers, the cities, the mines, the agricultural villages, the cow pastures, and the occupational and spiritual activities of the various social divisions. He also saw the basic elements of creation along with all their by-products, as well as time itself, which regulates the progression of countless ages within the days of Brahmā. In addition, he saw everything else created for use in material life. He saw in daylight a bright world.

COMMENTARY

He (*sah*) saw a bright world (*avabhāsitam*) in daylight (*divā* for *divasaḥ*).

|| 12.9.30 ||

*himālayaṁ puṣpavahāṁ ca tāṁ nadīm nijāśramaṁ yatra ṛṣi apaśyata
viśvaṁ vipaśyañ chvasitāc chiśor vai bahir nirasto nyapatal layābdhau*

TRANSLATION

He saw before him the Himālaya Mountains, the Puṣpabhadra River, and his own hermitage, where he had had the audience of the sages Nara-Nārāyaṇa. Then, as Mārkaṇḍeya beheld the entire universe, the infant exhaled, expelling the sage and casting him back into the ocean of dissolution.

COMMENTARY

Puṣpavahāṁ means “the Puṣpabhadra River.”

|| 12.9.31-32 ||

*tasmin pṛthivyāḥ kakudi prarūḍhaṁ vaṭaṁ ca tat-parṇa-puṭe śayānam
tokaṁ ca tat-prema-sudhā-smitena nirīkṣito 'pāṅga-nirīkṣaṇena*

*atha taṁ bālakam vīkṣya netrābhyāṁ dhiṣṭhitam hr̥di
abhyayād ati-sankliṣṭaḥ pariṣvaktum adhokṣajam*

TRANSLATION

In that vast sea he again saw the banyan tree growing on the tiny island and the infant boy lying within the leaf. The child glanced at him from the corner of his eyes with a smile imbued with the nectar of *prema*, and Mārkaṇḍeya took him into his heart through his eyes. Greatly agitated, the sage ran to embrace the transcendental Lord.

|| 12.9.33 ||

*tāvat sa bhagavān sākṣād yogādhiṣo guhā-śayaḥ
antardadha ṛṣeḥ sadyo yathehānīṣa-nirmītā*

TRANSLATION

At that moment the Supreme Lord, who is the original master of all powers of *yoga* and who is hidden within everyone's heart, became invisible to the sage, just as the poor man's desire for wealth and other things comes and goes.

COMMENTARY

Again thrown into the ocean, he wandered about for millions of years, experiencing hardship, and then saw the child on the banyan leaf on the upraised portion of earth. The Lord bestowed upon him a glance endowed with a smile of *prema* which was like nectar. Again he entered the body of the Lord when the Lord inhaled. It should be understood from later statements that he went in and came out seven times.¹ The Lord then became invisible just as desire for wealth and other things of a poor man comes and goes (according to the circumstances).

|| 12.9.34 ||

*tam anv atha vaṭo brahman salilam loka-samplavaḥ
tirodhāyi kṣaṇād asya svāśrame pūrva-vat sthitaḥ*

¹ There does not seem to be a direct statement to that effect in the later text.

TRANSLATION

O *brāhmaṇa*! After the Lord disappeared, the banyan tree, the water and the dissolution of the universe all vanished as well, and in an instant Mārkaṇḍeya found himself back in his own hermitage, just as before.

COMMENTARY

Within one instant of time, seven *kalpas* of time (seven dissolutions) had been contracted, by the inconceivable energy of the Lord. *Tirodhāyi* is a reflexive verb, in aorist tense.

Thus ends the commentary on Ninth Chapter of the Twelfth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas*.

Chapter Ten



Mārkaṇḍeya Meets Śiva

|| 12.10.1 ||

sūta uvāca

*sa evam anubhūyedaṁ nārāyaṇa-vinirmitam
vaibhavaṁ yoga-māyāyās tam eva śaraṇaṁ yayau*

TRANSLATION

Sūta Gosvāmī said: Mārkaṇḍeya, having experienced a powerful display of *yoga-māyā* arranged by the Lord, took shelter of him.

COMMENTARY

The Tenth Chapter describes Mārkaṇḍeya meeting with Śiva and Umā, his prayers to them, their pleasure at his prayers and their bestowal of boons to him.

|| 12.10.2 ||

śrī-mārkaṇḍeya uvāca

*prapanno 'smy aṅghri-mūlaṁ te prapannābhaya-dam hare
yan-māyayāpi vibudhā muhyanti jñāna-kāśayā*

TRANSLATION

Mārkaṇḍeya said: O Lord, I take shelter of your lotus feet, which bestow fearlessness upon all who surrender to them. Even the *devatās* are bewildered by your illusory energy, which appears to them to be real knowledge.

COMMENTARY

Jñāna-kāśayā means “with an appearance of knowledge where no knowledge exists.” I am the proof of this.

|| 12.10.3 ||

sūta uvāca

*tam evaṁ nibhṛtātmānaṁ vr̥ṣeṇa divi paryatan
rudrānyā bhagavān rudro dadarśa sva-gaṇair vṛtaḥ*

TRANSLATION

Sūta Gosvāmī said: Śiva, traveling in the sky on his bull and accompanied by his consort, as well as his personal associates, observed Mārkaṇḍeya in trance.

|| 12.10.4 ||

*athomā tam ṛṣiṁ vīkṣya giriśaṁ samabhāṣata
paśyemaṁ bhagavan vipraṁ nibhṛtātmendriyāśayam*

TRANSLATION

Goddess Umā, seeing the sage, addressed Śiva: My lord! See this learned *brāhmaṇa*, whose body, mind and senses are undisturbed.

|| 12.10.5 ||

*nibhṛtoda-jhaṣa-vrāto vātāpāye yathārṇavaḥ
kurv asya tapasaḥ sākṣāt saṁsiddhiṁ siddhi-do bhavān*

TRANSLATION

He is as calm as the waters of the ocean when the wind has ceased and the fish and water remain still. Therefore, my lord, since you bestow perfections, please award this sage the result of his austerities.

COMMENTARY

Nibhṛtoda-jhaṣa-vrātaḥ means “the ocean where the water and the schools of fish are completely still.”

|| 12.10.6 ||

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

*naivecchaty āśiṣaḥ kvāpi brahmarsir mokṣam apy uta
bhaktiṁ parām bhagavati labdhavān puruṣe 'vyaye*

TRANSLATION

Lord Śiva replied: Surely this saintly *brāhmaṇa* does not desire any benediction, not even liberation, for he has attained pure devotional service unto the inexhaustible Lord.

COMMENTARY

He does not want *siddhis* like *aṇimā*. “Then give him liberation.” He does not want that either. “Then give him *bhakti*.” He has already attained that also.

|| 12.10.7 ||

*athāpi samvadiṣyāmo bhavāny etena sādhunā
ayaṁ hi paramo lābho nṛṇām sādhu-samāgamaḥ*

TRANSLATION

Still, *Bhavānī*, let us talk with this saintly person. After all, association with saintly devotees is man’s highest achievement.

|| 12.10.8 ||

sūta uvāca

*ity uktvā tam upeyāya bhagavān sa satām gatiḥ
īśānaḥ sarva-vidyānām īśvaraḥ sarva-dehinām*

TRANSLATION

Sūta Gosvāmī said: Having spoken thus, Lord Śiva—the shelter of the devotees, master of all types of knowledge and controller of all embodied living beings—approached the sage.

COMMENTARY

Śiva is called the shelter of the devotees because he gives *bhakti* which they desire. He is not only the shelter of the devotees, but also of those with material desires. He is the Lord of all types of knowledge. This is not at all astonishing since he is the Lord of all beings (*īśvaraḥ*).

|| 12.10.9 ||

*tayor āgamanam sākṣād īsayor jagad-ātmanoh
na veda ruddha-dhī-vṛttir ātmānam viśvam eva ca*

TRANSLATION

Because Mārkaṇḍeya's material mind had stopped functioning, the sage failed to notice that Lord Śiva and his wife, the controllers of the universe, had personally come to see him. Mārkaṇḍeya was unaware of either himself or the external world.

COMMENTARY

Not only was Mārkaṇḍeya unaware of Śiva, but he was unaware of himself, in the sense of his identity as "I" and was unaware of the universe, identified as "mine."

|| 12.10.10 ||

*bhagavāms tad abhijñāya giriśo yoga-māyayā
āviśat tad-guhākāśam vāyuś chidram iveśvarah*

TRANSLATION

Understanding the situation, the powerful and capable Lord Śiva employed his mystic power to enter within the space within Mārkaṇḍeya's heart, just as the wind passes through an opening.

|| 12.10.11-13 ||

*ātmany api śivam prāptam taḍit-piṅga-jaṭā-dharam
try-akṣam daśa-bhujam prāṁsum udyantam iva bhāskaram*

*vyāghra-carmābaram śūla- dhanur-iṣv-asi-carmabhiḥ
akṣa-mālā-ḍamaruka- kapālam paraśum saha*

*bibhrānam sahasā bhātam vicakṣya hr̥di vismitaḥ
kim idaṁ kuta eveti samādher virato muniḥ*

TRANSLATION

Mārkaṇḍeya saw Lord Śiva suddenly appear within his heart. Lord Śiva had golden hair resembled lightning. He had three eyes, ten arms and a tall body that shone like the rising sun. He wore a tiger

skin, and carried a trident, a bow, arrows, a sword and a shield, along with prayer beads, a ḍamaru drum, a skull and an ax. Astonished, the sage came out of his trance and thought, “Who is this, and where has he come from?”

|| 12.10.14 ||

*netre unmīlya dadṛṣe sa-gaṇam somayāgatam
rudram tri-lokaika-gurum nanāma śirasā munih*

TRANSLATION

Opening his eyes, the sage saw Śiva, the guru of the three worlds, together with Umā and Śiva’s followers. Mārkaṇḍeya then offered his respectful obeisances by bowing his head.

|| 12.10.15 ||

*tasmai saparyām vyadadhāt sa-gaṇāya sahomayā
svāgatāsana-pādyārghya- gandha-srag-dhūpa-ḍīpakaiḥ*

TRANSLATION

Mārkaṇḍeya worshiped Lord Śiva, along with Umā and Śiva’s associates, by offering them words of welcome, sitting places, water for washing their feet, *arghya*, sandalwood pulp, flower garlands and lamps.

|| 12.10.16 ||

*āha tv ātmānubhāvena pūrṇa-kāmasya te vibho
karavāma kim īśāna yenedam nirvṛtam jagat*

TRANSLATION

Mārkaṇḍeya said: O mighty lord, what can I possibly do for you, who are fully satisfied by your own ecstasy and by whose influence this entire world becomes joyful?

|| 12.10.17 ||

*namah śivāya śāntāya sattvāya pramṛḍāya ca
rajo-juṣe ’tha ghorāya namas tubhyam tamo-juṣe*

TRANSLATION

Again and again I offer my obeisances unto you, most auspicious, peaceful, the Lord of goodness, giver of pleasure, shelter of the mode of passion, most fearful, and the shelter of the mode of ignorance.

|| 12.10.18 ||

sūta uvāca

*evam stutaḥ sa bhagavān ādi-devaḥ satām gatiḥ
parituṣṭaḥ prasannātmā prahasams tam abhāṣata*

TRANSLATION

Sūta Gosvāmī said: Lord Śiva, the foremost *devatās* and the shelter of the devotees, was satisfied by Mārkaṇḍeya's praise. Pleased, he smiled and addressed the sage.

|| 12.10.19 ||

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

*varam vṛṇīṣva naḥ kāmam vara-deśā vyaṁ trayāḥ
amogham darśanam yeṣām martyo yad vindate 'mṛtam*

TRANSLATION

Lord Śiva said: Please ask from us whatever benediction you desire. Among all givers of benedictions, we three—Brahmā, Viṣṇu and I—are the best. Seeing us never goes in vain, and from us a mortal achieves immortality.

COMMENTARY

Yat means "from us."

|| 12.10.20-21 ||

*brāhmaṇāḥ sādavaḥ śāntā niḥsaṅgā bhūta-vatsalāḥ
ekānta-bhaktā asmāsu nirvairāḥ sama-darśinaḥ*

*sa-lokā loka-pālās tām vandanty arcanty upāsate
aham ca bhagavān brahmā svayaṁ ca harir īśvaraḥ*

TRANSLATION

The inhabitants, the ruling *devatās* of all planets, Lord Brahmā, the Supreme Lord and I, glorify, worship and assist the saintly *brāhmaṇas*, who are peaceful, free of material attachment, compassionate to all living beings, purely devoted to us, devoid of hatred and endowed with equal vision.

COMMENTARY

The *devatās* worship those *brāhmaṇas* who worship us with purity. Not only the *devatās*, but I also worship them.

|| 12.10.22 ||

*na te mayy acyute 'je ca bhidām aṅv api cakṣate
nātmanaś ca janasyāpi tad yuṣmān vayam īmahi*

TRANSLATION

These devotees do not differentiate between Lord Viṣṇu, Lord Brahmā and me, nor do they differentiate between themselves and other living beings. Therefore, because you are this kind of saintly devotee, we worship you.

COMMENTARY

The devotees do not see any particle of difference between us, and similarly do not see any difference between themselves and other beings in terms of their happiness and distress. Therefore we worship you, who are this type of person.

|| 12.10.23 ||

*na hy am-mayāni tīrthāni na devās cetanojjhitāḥ
te punanty uru-kālena yūyam darśana-mātrataḥ*

TRANSLATION

Mere bodies of water do not constitute holy places, nor are lifeless statues actual deities. These things purify a person only after a considerable time. But devotees like you purify immediately, just by being seen.

|| 12.10.24 ||

*brāhmaṇebhyo namasyāmo ye 'smad-rūpaṁ trayī-mayam
bibhraty ātma-samādhāna- tapaḥ-svādhyāya-saṁyamaiḥ*

TRANSLATION

Therefore I offer my obeisances unto the *brāhmaṇas*, who, by meditating upon Viṣṇu, performing austerities, engaging in Vedic study and following regulative principles, sustain within themselves the three Vedas, which are nondifferent from Lord Viṣṇu, Lord Brahmā and me.

COMMENTARY

Ātma-samādhāna means “by meditation on Viṣṇu.”

|| 12.10.25 ||

*śravaṇād darśanād vāpi mahā-pātakino 'pi vaḥ
śudhyerann antya-jāś cāpi kim u sambhāṣaṇādibhiḥ*

TRANSLATION

Even the worst sinners and social outcastes are purified just by hearing about or seeing personalities like you. Imagine, then, how purified they become by directly speaking to you.

|| 12.10.26 ||

*sūta uvāca
iti candra-lalāmasya dharma-gaḥyopabṛñhitam
vaco 'mṛtāyanam ṛṣir nātrpyat karṇayoḥ piban*

TRANSLATION

Sūta Gosvāmī said: Drinking with his ears Lord Śiva's words, full of *bhakti* and intimate teachings, Mārkaṇḍeya could not be satiated.

COMMENTARY

Dharma mentioned here is pure *bhakti* mentioned in verse 20 and not seeing difference between self and others mentioned in verse 22. *Guhya* was “we worship you” in verse 22. Words full of *bhakti* and the intimate relation of the Lord with his devotee could not

satisfy him completely. He was not experiencing bliss not due to being praised but due to, in the guise of being praised, getting instructions telling him what type of person he should be.

|| 12.10.27 ||

*sa ciram māyayā viṣṇor bhrāmitaḥ karṣito bhṛṣam
śiva-vāg-amṛta-dhvasta- kleśa-puñjas tam abravīt*

TRANSLATION

Mārkaṇḍeya, having been forced by Lord Viṣṇu's illusory energy to wander about for a long time in the water of dissolution, had become extremely exhausted. But Lord Śiva's words of nectar vanquished his accumulated suffering. Thus he addressed Lord Śiva.

|| 12.10.28 ||

*śrī-mārkaṇḍeya uvāca
aho īśvara-līleyaṁ durvibhāvya śarīriṇām
yan namantīśitavyāni stuvanti jagad-īśvarāḥ*

TRANSLATION

Mārkaṇḍeya said: It is indeed most difficult for embodied souls to understand the pastimes of the universal controllers, for such lords bow down to and offer praise to the very living beings they rule.

COMMENTARY

Durvibhāvya means "inconceivable." *Īśitavyāni* means "the living entities who are subject to the Lord's control."

|| 12.10.29 ||

*dharmam grāhayitum prāyaḥ pravaktāraś ca dehinām
ācaranty anumodante kriyamāṇam stuvanti ca*

TRANSLATION

Generally it is to induce embodied souls to accept religious principles that the authorized teachers exhibit ideal behavior, encouraging and praising *dharma* which is being performed.

COMMENTARY

They have acted like this to teach others. They praise *dharma* which is undertaken. They say, "This act which was performed by great persons is most auspicious." This implies praise for the present performer of that act.

|| 12.10.30 ||

*naitāvatā bhagavataḥ sva-māyā-maya-vṛttibhiḥ
na duṣyetānubhāvas tair māyinaḥ kuhakam yathā*

TRANSLATION

Such behavior of the Supreme Lord, which the Lord produces by his own bewildering potency, does not spoil his power any more than a magician's powers are diminished by his exhibition of tricks.

COMMENTARY

The power of the Lord is not spoiled by his offering respects etc. to devotees which are actions of his *māyā*, in order to teach the world. His actions are like those of a magician desiring money who performs tricks. The Lord's powers are not spoiled by praising or offering obeisances. Another version has *duṣyati*. Though Śiva's praises were not done by *māyā*, the sage was embarrassed by being praised. Thus the example is not unsuitable.

|| 12.10.31-32 ||

*sṛṣṭvedaṁ manasā viśvam ātmanānupraviśya yaḥ
guṇaiḥ kurvadbhir ābhāti karteva svapna-dṛg yathā*

*tasmai namo bhagavate tri-guṇāya guṇātmane
kevalāyādvitīyāya gurave brahma-mūrtaye*

TRANSLATION

I offer my obeisances to that Supreme Lord, who has created this entire universe simply by his desire and has then entered into it as *antaryāmī*. By making the modes of nature act, he seems to be the direct creator of this world, just as a dreamer seems to be acting

within his dream. I offer respects to the Lord, who manifests the three *guṇas*, who controls the *guṇas*, who is pure, without equal, who is the *guru*, the Brahman.

COMMENTARY

The Lord creates the universe by his desire (*manasā*). Though he is not the doer, since he acts through the *guṇas*, he appears to be the doer. This means he is not affected by the *guṇas*. Though the *jīva* creates dreams by ignorance he has no actual relationship with them. What then to speak of the Lord in relation to *māyā*. *Guṇātmane* means “unto the controller of the *guṇas*.”

|| 12.10.33 ||

*kaṁ vṛṇe nu param bhūman varam tvad vara-darśanāt
yad-darśanāt pūrṇa-kāmaḥ satya-kāmaḥ pumān bhavet*

TRANSLATION

O all-pervading lord! Since I have received the benediction of seeing you, what other benediction can I ask for? Simply by seeing you, a person fulfills all his desires and can achieve anything imaginable.

COMMENTARY

Śiva told him to ask for a boon. This is his reply. From receiving the blessing of seeing you, whatever is desired is obtained (*satya-kāmaḥ*).

|| 12.10.34 ||

*varam ekam vṛṇe 'thāpi pūrṇāt kāmābhivarṣanāt
bhagavaty acyutām bhaktim tat-pareṣu tathā tvayi*

TRANSLATION

But I do request one benediction from you, who are full of all perfection and able to shower down the fulfillment of all desires. I ask to have unfailing devotion for the Supreme Lord and for his devotees, especially you.

COMMENTARY

I request devotion to the Lord's devotees, and similarly to the best devotee, you, the instructor of *bhakti*, the *guru*. This means "May I have devotion to you, as a devotee, not as the Supreme Lord."

|| 12.10.35 ||

sūta uvāca

*ity arcito 'bhiṣtutaś ca muninā sūktayā girā
tam āha bhagavān charvaḥ śarvayā cābhinanditaḥ*

TRANSLATION

Sūta Gosvāmī said: Thus worshiped and glorified by the eloquent statements of the sage Mārkaṇḍeya, Lord Śiva, encouraged by his consort, replied to him as follows.

|| 12.10.36 ||

*kāmo maharṣe sarvo 'yam bhaktimāms tvam adhokṣaje
ā-kalpāntād yaśaḥ puṇyam ajarāmaratā tathā*

TRANSLATION

O great sage! Because you are devoted to Lord Viṣṇu, all your desires will be fulfilled. Until the very end of this creation cycle, you will enjoy pure fame and freedom from old age and death.

COMMENTARY

May all these desires come true, since you are devotee of Viṣṇu.

|| 12.10.37 ||

*jñānaṁ trai-kālikaṁ brahman vijñānaṁ ca viraktimat
brahma-varcasvino bhūyāt purāṇācāryatāstu te*

TRANSLATION

O *brāhmaṇa*! May you have perfect knowledge of past, present and future, along with realization of the Lord, enriched by renunciation. Having power of a *brāhmaṇa*, may you become the *ācārya* for the Purāṇas.

|| 12.10.38 ||

sūta uvāca

*evam varān sa munaye dattvāgāt try-akṣa īśvaraḥ
devyai tat-karma kathayann anubhūtaṁ purāmunā*

TRANSLATION

Sūta Gosvāmī said: Having thus granted Mārkaṇḍeya benedictions, Śiva went on his way, while describing to Devī the sage's actions and what the sage had previously experienced.

|| 12.10.39 ||

*so 'py avāpta-mahā-yoga- mahimā bhārgavottamaḥ
vicaraty adhunāpy addhā harāv ekāntatām gataḥ*

TRANSLATION

Mārkaṇḍeya, the best of the descendants of Bhṛgu, glorious because of his achievement of perfect yoga, even today travels about this world, fully absorbed in unalloyed devotion for the Supreme Lord.

|| 12.10.40 ||

*anuvanṛitam etat te mārkaṇḍeyasya dhīmataḥ
anubhūtaṁ bhagavato māyā-vaibhavam adbhutam*

TRANSLATION

I have thus narrated to you how intelligent sage Mārkaṇḍeya experienced the amazing power of the Supreme Lord's illusory energy.

|| 12.10.41 ||

*etat kecid avidvāṁso māyā-saṁsṛtir ātmanaḥ
anādy-āvartitaṁ nṛṇāṁ kādācitkaṁ pracakṣate*

TRANSLATION

Some unintelligent persons explain Mārkaṇḍeya's unique experience as symbolic of human beings in beginningless ignorance undergoing repeated cycles.

COMMENTARY

What Mārkaṇḍeya saw was the power of the Lord's *māyā*. Seven times entering and coming out of the baby form of the Lord who had inconceivable powers when the Lord inhaled and exhaled was a unique pastime. Some foolish persons explain seven *kalpas* to mean that humans under ignorance for a long time rotate repeatedly in bodies for thousands of celestial *yugas* (*āvartitam*).

|| 12.10.42 ||

*ya evam etad bhṛgu-varya varṇitam rathāṅga-pāner anubhāva-bhāvitam
saṁśrāvayet saṁśṛṇuyād u tāv ubhau tayor na karmāśaya-saṁsṛtir bhavet*

TRANSLATION

O best of the Bhṛgus, this account concerning Mārkaṇḍeya is infused with the potency of the Supreme Lord. Anyone who properly narrates or hears it will never again undergo material existence, composed of impressions of *karma*.

COMMENTARY

O best of the Bhṛgus! This story is infused with the power of the Lord. Both the person who narrates and the person who hears equally end material existence composed of impressions of *karma*.

Thus ends the commentary on Tenth Chapter of the Twelfth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas*.

Chapter Eleven



Vibhūtiṣ Of The Lord

॥ 12.11.1 ॥

śrī-śaunaka uvāca

*athemam artham prcchāmo bhavantam bahu-vittamam
samasta-tantra-rāddhānte bhavān bhāgavata tattva-vit*

TRANSLATION

Śaunaka said: O Sūta! You are a great devotee of the Supreme Lord and know the conclusions concerning *tantra*! We now inquire from you about that.

COMMENTARY

In the Eleventh Chapter the *aṅgas* and *upāṅgas* and *vibhūtiṣ* for worship are described as well as the twelve expansions of the sun. Mārkaṇḍeya, our previous master, was expert in *tantrika* worship of the Lord. We ask you about this now. We ask about the method of worship by which he made the Lord visible. *Rāddhānte* means “in the conclusion.”

॥ 12.11.2-3 ॥

*tāntrikāḥ paricaryāyām kevalasya śriyaḥ pateḥ
aṅgopāṅgāyudhākālpaṁ kalpayanti yathā ca yaiḥ*

*tan no varṇaya bhadraṁ te kriyā-yogaṁ bubhutsatām
yena kriyā-naipuṇena martyo yāyād amartyatām*

TRANSLATION

All good fortune to you! Please explain to us, who are very eager to learn, the process of *kriyā-yoga*, worship of Viṣṇu and Lakṣmī, by which method the followers of *tantra* conceive of the limbs, associates, weapons and ornaments of the Lord in terms of certain *vibhūtis*, and by which expertise one attains immortality.

COMMENTARY

Aṅgāni refers to the hands, feet and other limbs of the Lord. *Upāṅgāni* refers to associates like Garuḍa. *Āyudhāni* refers to weapons like Sudarśana. *Ākalpa* means ornaments like the Kaustubha. They are listed as *dvandva* compound. And describe how they conceive of the limbs for the purpose of worship by means of the *vibhūtis* of the Lord seen in the material world.

|| 12.11.4 ||

sūta uvāca

*namaskṛtya gurūn vaksye vibhūtīr vaiṣṇavīr api
yāḥ proktā veda-tantrābhyām ācāryaiḥ padmajādibhiḥ*

TRANSLATION

Sūta Gosvāmī said: Offering obeisances to my *gurus*, I shall repeat to you the description of the *vibhūtis* of Lord Viṣṇu given in the Vedas and *tantras* by great authorities, beginning from lotus-born Brahmā.

COMMENTARY

He offers respects to *guru* in order to understand the meaning of what *guru* has instructed.

|| 12.11.5 ||

*māyādyair navabhis tattvaiḥ sa vikāra-mayo virāt
nirmīto drśyate yatra sa-citke bhuvana-trayam*

TRANSLATION

That form of the Lord is the universal form, composed of the nine basic elements of creation, starting with the unmanifest nature,

and their subsequent transformations. When it is instilled with consciousness, the three planetary systems become visible within it.

COMMENTARY

The form of the Lord conceived by the *vibhūtiś* of the Lord is actually the universal form. That is explained in this verse. The form is composed of nine elements: *prakṛti*, *sūtra*, *mahat-tattva*, *ahankāra*, and the five *tan-mātras* as well as the sixteen transformations: the eleven senses and the five gross elements. With this form the three worlds are seen when it is instilled with consciousness (*sa-citke*).

|| 12.11.6-8 ||

*etad vai pauruṣam rūpam bhūḥ pādaḥ dyauḥ śiro nabhaḥ
nābhiḥ sūryo 'kṣiṇī nāse vāyuḥ kaṇṇau diśaḥ prabhoh*

*prajāpatiḥ prajānanam apāno mṛtyur īsituh
tad-bāhavo loka-pālā manaś candro bhruvau yamaḥ*

*lajjottaro 'dharo lobho dantā jyotsnā smayo bhramaḥ
romāṇi bhūruhā bhūmno meghāḥ puruṣa-mūrdhajāḥ*

TRANSLATION

This is the representation of the Supreme Lord as the universal person, in which the earth is his feet, the *antarikṣa* his navel, the heavenly planets his head, the sun his eyes, the air his nostrils, the directions his ears, the Prajāpati his genitals, death his anus and the moon his mind. The *devatā* protecting the various planets is his many arms. The god of death is his eyebrows, shame his lower lip, greed his upper lip, delusion his smile, and moon-light his teeth. The trees are the Lord's bodily hairs, and the clouds are the hair on his head.

COMMENTARY

This is a material form of the Lord (*pauruṣam rūpam*), not his *svarūpa*. By what *vibhūtiś* are his limbs conceived? This question is answered here. The *vibhūti* for the feet of the Lord is earth. By earth one imagines his feet. Since they are considered non-different

they are equated in the text: the earth is his feet. All statements following are similar. Then by thinking of the feet and other limbs of the universal form one should remember the spiritual limbs of the Lord composed of eternity, knowledge and bliss. My lord supports the earth, his *vibhūti*, by his two feet. He supports the heaven, his *vibhūti*, by his head. All things visible to the eye and conceived by the mind are also the Lord's limbs, since they are all his *vibhūtis*. All conceptions are only conceptions of the Lord. This is what the person discerns. *Prajananam* means the genital. *Apānam* is the anus. The upper lip is shame. The lower lip is greed. Delusion (*bhramah*) is his smile.

|| 12.11.9 ||

*yāvān ayam vai puruṣo yāvatyā saṁsthayā mitaḥ
tāvān asāv api mahā- puruṣo loka-saṁsthayā*

TRANSLATION

Just as one can determine the dimensions of an ordinary person of this world by measuring his various limbs, one can determine the dimensions of the universal form by measuring the arrangement of the planetary systems.

COMMENTARY

Since the universal form and the individual person are considered one, by seeing the individual person, faulty because of material qualities, one can understand something of the faultless spiritual person of eternity knowledge and bliss. *Mitaḥ* means "measured."

|| 12.11.10 ||

*kaustubha-vyapadeśena svātma-jyotir bibharti ajaḥ
tat-prabhā vyāpinī sākṣāt śrīvatsam urasā vibhuḥ*

TRANSLATION

Upon his chest the almighty, unborn Lord bears the Kaustubha gem, which represents the pure spirit soul, along with the Śrīvatsa mark, which is the direct manifestation of this gem's expansive effulgence.

COMMENTARY

Having spoken of the limbs, now the ornaments are described. The effulgence from the *svarūpa* of the Kaustubha (*vyapadeśena*) supports the pure *jīva*, the Lord's *vibhūti*. It is said:

*a-kāreṇocyate viṣṇuḥ śrīr u-kāreṇa kathyate
ma-kāreṇas tu tayor dāsaḥ pañca-vimśaḥ prakīrtitaḥ*

The letter *a* is Viṣṇu, *u* is Lakṣmī, and *m* is their servant (*jīva*) glorified as the twenty-fifth element. *Padma Purāṇa* 6.226.22-23

The Lord holds his servant on his heart.

*sādhavo hṛdayam mahyam sādḥūnām hṛdayam tv aham
mad-anyat te na jānanti nāham tebhyo manāg api*

The pure devotee is always within the core of my heart, and I am always in the heart of the pure devotee. My devotees do not know anything else but me, and I do not know anyone else but them. SB 9.4.68

*evam sva-bhaktayo rājan bhagavān bhakta-bhaktimān
uṣitvādiśya san-mārgam punar dvāravatīm agāt*

O King, thus the Personality of Godhead, who is devoted to his own devotees, stayed for some time with his two great devotees Śrutadeva and Bahulāśva, teaching them the behavior of perfect saints. Then the Lord returned to Dvārakā. SB 10.86.59

The effulgence of the Kaustubha which spreads everywhere is the Śrīvatsa on the Lord's right upper chest. This is a fine curl of white hair whirling clockwise. This supports his *vibhūti* called *dharma*. Though not mentioned, on his left chest is the Lakṣmī-rekhā, a golden line similar to the line on a testing stone. That supports his *vibhūti* known as royal wealth.

|| 12.11.11-12 ||

*sva-māyām vana-mālākhyām nānā-guṇa-mayīm dadhat
vāsaś chando-mayam pītam brahma-sūtram tri-vṛt svaram*

*bibharti sāṅkhyam yogam ca devo makara-kunḍale
maulim padam pārameṣṭhyam sarva-lokābhayaṅ-karam*

TRANSLATION

His flower garland is his material energy, comprising various combinations of the modes of nature. His yellow garment is the Vedic meters, and his sacred thread, the syllable *om* composed of three sounds. In the form of his two shark-shaped earrings, the Lord supports the processes of Sāṅkhya and yoga, and his crown, bestowing fearlessness on the inhabitants of all the worlds, is the supreme position of Brahmaloaka.

COMMENTARY

The *vibhūti* of his garland is *māyā*, consisting of three *guṇas*. The *vibhūti* of his yellow cloth is the Vedic meters. The *vibhūti* of his sacred thread is known as *om*. In this way the parts of the Lord are equated with *vibhūtis* in this world. *Pārameṣṭhyam* means “Brahmaloka.”

|| 12.11.13 ||

*avyākṛtam anantākhyam āsanam yad-adhiṣṭhitam
dharma-jñānādibhir yuktam sattvam padmam ihocyate*

TRANSLATION

Ananta, the Lord’s sitting place, is *pradhāna*, and the Lord’s lotus throne is the mode of goodness, endowed with religion and knowledge.

COMMENTARY

The seat where he is situated, called Ananta, is *pradhāna*. *Pradhāna* is Ananta’s *vibhūti*. In the previous verse the *vibhūti* of the Lord’s garland was *māyā* or *prakṛti* (same as *pradhāna*), the cause of creation. However, Ananta is the root cause. His lotus throne, another seat, accompanied by *dharma* and *jñāna*, is *sattva-guṇa*.

|| 12.11.14-15 ||

*ojaḥ-saho-bala-yutaṁ mukhya-tattvaṁ gadāṁ dadhat
apāṁ tattvaṁ dara-varaṁ tejas-tattvaṁ sudarśanam*

*nabho-nibhaṁ nabhas-tattvaṁ asiṁ carma tamo-mayam
kāla-rūpaṁ dhanuḥ śārṅgaṁ tathā karma-mayeśudhim*

TRANSLATION

The club the Lord carries is the chief element, *prāṇa*, incorporating the potencies of sensory, mental and physical strength. His excellent conchshell is the element water, his Sudarśana disc the element fire, and his sword, pure as the sky, the element ether. His shield embodies the mode of ignorance, his bow, named Śārṅga, time, and his arrow-filled quiver the working sensory organs.

COMMENTARY

Mukhya-tattva means “*prāṇa*.” *Śruti* says *prāṇo vai mukhyaḥ*: *prāṇa* is the chief element. *Daravaram* means “conch.” His sword is ether element equal to the sky, being pure. His shield is *tamogūṇa*.

|| 12.11.16 ||

*indriyāṇi śarāṇ āhur ākūtīr asya syandanam
tan-mātrāṇy asyābhivyaktiṁ mudrayārtha-kriyātmatām*

TRANSLATION

His arrows are said to be the senses, and his chariot is the active, forceful mind. His external appearance is the subtle objects of perception, and the gestures of his hands are the essence of all purposeful activity.

COMMENTARY

The active mind (*ākūtīḥ*) endowed with *kriya-śakti* is the *vibhūti* of his chariot. The *tan-mātras* such as sound are the *vibhūtiś* of his appearance. The sense objects are the external manifestation of desire for grasping objects, to be grasped by the senses. By his *mudrās* such as giving benediction or fearlessness he supports the very nature of action with a purpose. The *vibhūtiś* of his giving benedictions and fearlessness are the actions with purpose.

|| 12.11.17 ||

*maṇḍalam deva-yajanaṁ dīkṣā saṁskāra ātmanaḥ
paricaryā bhagavata ātmano durita-kṣayaḥ*

TRANSLATION

The sun globe is the place where the *devatās* worship the Supreme Lord, spiritual initiation is the means of purification for the spirit soul, and rendering devotional service to the Lord is the process for eradicating all one's sinful reactions.

COMMENTARY

The globe of the sun, a form of the Lord, is the place where the *devatās* worship. Receiving *mantra* (*dīkṣaḥ*) is the *saṁskāra* of the *jīva*. The *vibhūti* of reciting *mantra* is the *jīva's saṁskāra*. Service to the Lord is the *vibhūti* of destruction of the sins of the *jīva*.

|| 12.11.18 ||

*bhagavān bhaga-śabdārtham līlā-kamalam udvahan
dharmaṁ yaśaś ca bhagavānś cāmara-vyajane 'bhajat*

TRANSLATION

Playfully carrying a lotus, which represents the various qualities designated by the word *bhaga*, the Supreme Lord accepts service from a pair of *cāmara* fans, which are religion and fame.

COMMENTARY

The *vibhūtis* of the lotus are material power, wealth, knowledge and *vairāgya*. The *vibhūtis* of his *cāmaras* are material *dharma* and material fame.

|| 12.11.19 ||

*ātapatram tu vaikuṅṭham dvijā dhāmākuto-bhayam
tri-vṛd vedāḥ suparnākhyo yajñam vahati pūruṣam*

TRANSLATION

O *brāhmaṇas*! The Lord's umbrella represents the fearlessness found in *Vaikuṅṭha*, and *Garuḍa*, who carries the Lord of sacrifice, is the sacrifice mentioned in the three *Vedas*.

COMMENTARY

Whatever small amount of fearlessness is seen in the world is the *vibhūti* of the Lord's umbrella. Garuḍa is the performance of sacrifice explained in the three Vedas—Rg, Yajur and Sāma.

|| 12.11.20 ||

*anapāyinī bhagavatī śrīḥ sākṣād ātmano hareḥ
viṣvakṣenas tantra-mūrtir viditaḥ pārśadādhīpaḥ
nandādayo 'ṣtau dvāḥ-sthās ca te 'nimādyā harer guṇāḥ*

TRANSLATION

Śrī, who never leaves the Lord's side, appears with him in this world as the representation of his internal potency. Viṣvakṣena, the chief among his personal associates, is known to be the personification of the Pañcarātra and other *tantras*. And the Lord's eight doorkeepers, headed by Nanda, are his mystic perfections, beginning with *aṇimā*.

COMMENTARY

Lakṣmī is the eternal *śakti* arising from the Lord's *svarūpa*, the *vibhūti* of the *hladini-śakti*, and is represented in this world by the bliss of Svarga etc. The Pañcarātra scriptures are the *vibhūti* of Viṣvakṣena. The doorkeepers such as Nanda are the qualities like *aṇimā*.

|| 12.11.21 ||

*vāsudevaḥ saṅkarṣaṇaḥ pradyumnaḥ puruṣaḥ svayam
aniruddha iti brahman mūrti-vyūho 'bhidhīyate*

TRANSLATION

Vāsudeva, Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha are the names of the direct personal expansions of Svayam Bhagavān, O *brāhmaṇa* Śaunaka.

COMMENTARY

After mention of the doorkeepers, the presiding deities of the directions, *catur-vyūha*, are now mentioned. *Puruṣaḥ svayam* should mean "Svayam Bhagavān."

|| 12.11.22 ||

*sa viśvas taijasaḥ prājñas turīya iti vṛttibhiḥ
arthendriyāśaya-jñānair bhagavān paribhāvya*

TRANSLATION

One can conceive of the Supreme Lord in terms of awakened consciousness, dreaming, deep sleep, and spiritual consciousness, by knowledge gained through external objects, the senses and the mind.

COMMENTARY

This explains the *vibhūti*s of the *catur-vyūha*. The senses and mind are endowed with impressions. "I slept happily. I was not even aware of happiness." In this example even in deep sleep there is ignorance and knowledge (caused by impressions of the mind and senses). By knowledge through the senses, mind and objects, in the states of waking, sleeping, deep sleep and the fourth state, the Lord is remembered. The four states are *vibhūti*s of the *catur-vyūha*. Vāsudeva represents the waking state. Saṅkarṣaṇa represents dreaming. Pradyumna represents deep sleep. Aniruddha represents the fourth state of knowledge.

|| 12.11.23 ||

*aṅgopāṅgāyudhākair bhagavāms tac catuṣṭayam
bibharti sma catur-mūrtir bhagavān harir īśvaraḥ*

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord, the master of the four states, who removes suffering for those who worship him; as his four expansions, each exhibiting limbs, associates, weapons and ornaments, maintains the four phases of existence.

COMMENTARY

The implied meaning is made clear. These four forms, with their limbs, associates, weapons and ornaments, maintain the four states of consciousness. The *vibhūti* of Vāsudeva along with his limbs, associates etc. is the waking state. *Hari* is the lord who removes the suffering of his worshippers. *Īśvara* means "the controller of all four states."

॥ 12.11.24 ॥

*dvija-ṛṣabha sa eṣa brahma-yoniḥ svayaṁ-dṛk
sva-mahima-paripūrṇo māyayā ca svayaitat
srjati haṛati pātīty ākhyayānāvṛtākṣo
vivṛta iva niruktas tat-parair ātma-labhyaḥ*

TRANSLATION

The Lord is the revealer of the Vedas, and he reveals himself. He is full in his own powers but by his *māyā* he creates, maintains and destroys through Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva. Though his knowledge is never covered, it appears he can be described by *māyā*. But this is not so. He is attained only by his devotees.

COMMENTARY

Four forms were explained. Now three forms are explained. O best of the *brāhmaṇas*! This Lord reveals the Vedas (*brahma-yoniḥ*). No one else is a revealer. He is self-revealed (*svayaṁ-dṛk*). He is not like a king who is dependent on his subjects. And he is complete in his own power (*sva-mahima-paripurṇaḥ*). But for his play, he creates, maintains and destroys by his *śakti* called *māyā*, represented by Brahmā and others. Though his knowledge is never covered, it appears he is described (*vivṛtaḥ*) or explained by *māyā*. But actually even Brahmā cannot describe the Lord properly. For what purpose do people make such effort? has he gone to so much effort? His devotees attain him by meditating on him in this form.

How do the devotees meditate upon him? By seeing and remembering the *vibhūtiś* of his feet such as earth etc, one can easily remember the Lord's feet. I should always remember my Lord, and I always see this *vibhūtiś* of my Lord's feet, the earth. All the animals and plants which take shelter of the earth also have taken shelter of my Lord's lotus feet. Therefore I must respect them all and not hate them. The *vibhūtiś* of the Kaustubha hanging on the chest of my Lord are all the *jīvas*. Therefore I should not criticize or harm even one of them. This is the result of contemplating the universal form.

|| 12.11.25 ||

*śrī-kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa-sakha vṛṣṇy-ṛṣabhāvani-dhruḡ-
rājanya-vaṁśa-dahanānapavarga-vīrya
govinda gopa-vanitā-vraja-bhṛtya-gīta
tīrtha-śravaḥ śravaṇa-maṅgala pāhi bhṛtyān*

TRANSLATION

O Kṛṣṇa! O friend of Arjuna! O chief among the descendants of Vṛṣṇi! O destroyer of those kings that are disturbing elements on this earth! O Lord whose prowess never deteriorates! O Govinda! O Lord who gives pleasure to the ears by the fame which purifies the universe, which is sung by Uddhava, the servant of the *gopīs* of Vraja! O Lord, please protect your devotees.

COMMENTARY

Worship of a portion of Kṛṣṇa (universal form) has been described. Now Kṛṣṇa, the real object of worship, is introduced with a prayer. O friend of Arjuna (*kṛṣṇa-sakha*)! His affection for the Pāṇḍavas brought him under their control. O chief of the Vṛṣṇis! His affection for the Vṛṣṇis brought him under their control. What is implied here? O fire, destroyer of dynasties of kings who afflicted the earth! Or you are the fire which arose by the friction of clans. You destroyed the enemies of the Pāṇḍava and Yadus and protected them because of your affection. O Lord with undiminished strength! By such strength you made the Pāṇḍavas and Yādavas victorious. O Govinda! You were even more affectionate to the inhabitants of Vraja. What does this mean? O Lord who gives pleasure to the ears by the fame which purifies the universe (*tīrtha*), which is sung by Uddhava (and consequently Śukadeva), the servant of the *gopīs* of Vraja!

Uddhava said:

*āsām aho caraṇa-reṇu-juṣām ahaṁ syām
vṛndāvane kim api gulma-latauśadhinām
yā dustyajam sva-janam ārya-patham ca hitvā
bhejur mukunda-padavīm śrutibhir vimṛgyām*

The *gopīs* of Vṛndāvana have given up the association of their husbands, sons and other family members, who are very difficult to give up, and they have forsaken the path of chastity to take shelter of the lotus feet of Mukunda, Kṛṣṇa, which one should search for by Vedic knowledge. Oh, let me be fortunate enough to be one of the bushes, creepers or herbs in Vṛndāvana, because the *gopīs* trample them and bless them with the dust of their lotus feet. SB 10.47.61

*dr̥ṣṭvaivam-ādi gopīnām kṛṣṇāveśātma-viklavam
uddhavaḥ parama-prītas tā namasyann idam jagau*

Thus seeing how the *gopīs* were always disturbed because of their total absorption in Kṛṣṇa, Uddhava was supremely pleased. Desiring to offer them all respect, he sang as follows. SB 10.47.57

|| 12.11.26 ||

*ya idam kalya utthāya mahā-puruṣa-lakṣaṇam
tac-cittaḥ prayato japtvā brahma veda guhāśayam*

TRANSLATION

Anyone who rises early in the morning and, with a purified mind, chants this description of the universal form, the form of the Supreme Brahman, will realize Paramātmā.

COMMENTARY

Anyone who chants this description of the universal form, which is Brahman, will realize Paramātmā (*guhāśayam*).

|| 12.11.27-28 ||

*śrī-śaunaka uvāca
śuko yad āha bhagavān viṣṇu-rātāya śṛṇvate
sau ro gaṇo māsi māsi nānā vasati saptakah*

*teṣām nāmāni karmāṇi niyuktānām adhīśvaraiḥ
brūhi naḥ śraddadhānānām vyūham sūryātmano hareḥ*

TRANSLATION

Śaunaka said: O Sūta! Śukadeva explained to Parīkṣit about the seven associations of the sun god in the different months. Please

describe to us, who have great faith in your words, the different sets of seven personal features and associates that the sun-god exhibits during each month, along with their names and activities. The associates of the sun-god, who serve their lord, are expansions of the sun, who is a form of the Supreme Lord, and are engaged by the Lord in their service.

COMMENTARY

You have explained to us the conversation of Śukadeva and Parīkṣit constituting the *Bhāgavatam*, and after that, the story of Mārkaṇḍeya our ancestor, and in answer to our request, a description of his method of worship. There is an example given of the sun comparing it to Kṛṣṇa, the subject of the *Bhāgavatam*:

*kṛṣṇe sva-dhāmopagate dharmajñānādibhiḥ saha
kalau naṣṭa-dṛśām eṣa purāṇārko 'dhunoditaḥ*

This Bhāgavata Purāṇa is as brilliant as the sun, and it has arisen just after the departure of Lord Kṛṣṇa 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 Kali shall get light from this Purāṇa. SB 1.3.43

*kṛṣṇa-dyumaṇi nimloce gīrṇeṣv ajagareṇa ha
kiṁ nu naḥ kuśalam brūyām gata-śrīṣu grheṣv aham*

My dear Vidura, the sun of the world, Lord Kṛṣṇa, has set, and our house has now been swallowed by the great snake of time. What can I say to you about our welfare? SB 3.2.7

Because the sun has been mentioned, I should now have Sūta explain about the sun, the king of all planets, with twelve forms, at the time of completion of the king of all Purāṇas, consisting of twelve volumes. In this way, Śaunaka considered in his mind. In the Fifth Canto it was said concerning the sun:

*tathānye ca ṛṣayo gandharvāpsaraso nāgā grāmaṇyo yātudhānā devā ity
ekaikaśo gaṇāḥ sapta caturdaśa māsi māsi bhagavantam sūryam*

· *ātmānam nānā-nāmānam pṛthañ-nānā-nāmānaḥ pṛthak-karmabhir dvandvaśa upāsate.*

Similarly, other sages, Gandharvas, Apsarās, Nāgas, Yakṣas, Rākṣasas and *devatās*, in fourteen groups in some months and pairing up to make seven groups in other months, assume different names every month and continuously perform different ritualistic ceremonies to worship the Supreme Lord as Sūryadeva, who has many names. SB 5.21.18

Adhīśvaraiḥ means “engaged by the Supreme Lord.” “What is the use of asking about the sun?” Tell us about the expansions of the Lord whose form is the sun.

|| 12.11.29 ||

sūta uvāca

*anādy-avidyayā viṣṇor ātmanaḥ sarva-dehinām
nirmīto loka-tantro 'yaṁ lokeṣu parivartate*

TRANSLATION

Sūta Gosvāmī said: The sun, created by Viṣṇu, the Supreme Soul of all embodied beings, through his beginningless material energy, travels among all the planets, establishing the movements of the planets.

COMMENTARY

One should not consider that the sun in the *Bhāgavatam* which is compared to Kṛṣṇa, who has a spiritual body of eternity, knowledge and bliss, is material. That is expressed in this verse. The sun has been created by Viṣṇu, the soul of all embodied beings. It is a form of his power or effulgence, created by his beginningless *māyā*. (Thus it is another *vibhūti*.) The sun establishes the movements of the planets (*loka-tantraḥ*).

|| 12.11.30 ||

*eka eva hi lokānām sūrya ātmādi-kṛd dhariḥ
sarva-veda-kriyā-mūlam ṛṣibhir bahudhōditaḥ*

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord, the one soul of all the worlds and the original creator, is also the sun. He is the source of all the ritualistic activities prescribed in the Vedas and has been divided in twelve forms by the Vedic sages.

COMMENTARY

The Lord, soul of the worlds and the creator, is the sun. The sun is said to have twelve forms.

|| 12.11.31 ||

*kālo deśaḥ kriyā kartā karaṇam kāryam āgamaḥ
dravyam phalam iti brahman navadhokto 'jayā hariḥ*

TRANSLATION

O Śaunaka! The Lord is described in nine aspects: the time, the place, the endeavor, the performer, the instrument, the specific ritual, the *mantras*, the paraphernalia of worship and the result to be achieved.

COMMENTARY

The Lord not only takes many forms as the sun, but as time and other aspects as well to institute sacred action. Time refers to dawn and other times. Place refers to the sacrificial altar or other sacred places. Endeavor refers to the performance undertaken. The performer is the brāhmaṇa. The instrument is the *sruk*, the sacrificial ladle. The ritual is the sacrifice. The *āgama* consists of the specific *mantras* for the rite. The materials are rice and other articles. The result is Svarga or other planets.

|| 12.11.32 ||

*madhv-ādiṣu dvādaśasu bhagavān kāla-rūpa-dhṛk
loka-tantrāya carati pṛthag dvādaśabhir gaṇaiḥ*

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord, in the form of time, travels through the twelve months, beginning with Madhu, to regulate planetary motion within

the universe. Traveling with the sun-god in each of the twelve months is a different set of six associates.

COMMENTARY

The Lord in the form of time, which is equated with the sun, moves about to accomplish the movements of the planets.

|| 12.11.33 ||

*dhātā kṛtasthalī hetir vāsukī rathakṛt mune
pulastyas tumburur iti madhu-māsam nayanty amī*

TRANSLATION

My dear sage! Dhātā as the sun-god, Kṛtasthalī as the Apsarā, Heti as the Rākṣasa, Vāsuki as the Nāga, Rathakṛt as the Yakṣa, Pulastya as the sage and Tumburu as the Gandharva rule the month of Madhu.

COMMENTARY

The question about the associates of the sun in different months is here answered. The seven persons for Caitra month are described first. Kṛtasthalī is the Apsarā, Heti is the Rākṣasa, Vāsuki is the Nāga, Rathakṛt is the Yakṣa, Pulastya is the sage and Tumburu is the Gandharva.

|| 12.11.34 ||

*aryamā pulaho 'thaujāḥ prahetiḥ puñjikasthalī
nāradaḥ kacchanīraś ca nayanty ete sma mādham*

TRANSLATION

Aryamā as the sun-god, Pulaha as the sage, Athaujā as the Yakṣa, Praheti as the Rākṣasa, Puñjikasthalī as the Apsarā, Nārada as the Gandharva and Kacchanīra as the Nāga rule the month of Mādham.

COMMENTARY

Mādham means "Vaiśākha month." Aryamā is the sun-god, Pulaha is the sage, Athaujā is the Yakṣa, Praheti is the Rākṣasa, Puñjikasthalī is the Apsarā, Nārada is the Gandharva and Kacchanīra is the Nāga.

|| 12.11.35 ||

*mitro 'triḥ pauruṣeyo 'tha takṣako menakā hahāḥ
rathasvana iti hy ete śukra-māsam nayanty amī*

TRANSLATION

Mitra as the sun-god, Atri as the sage, Pauruṣeya as the Rākṣasa, Takṣaka as the Nāga, Menakā as the Apsarā, Hāhā as the Gandharva and Rathasvana as the Yakṣa rule the month of Śukra.

COMMENTARY

Śukra is Jyeṣṭha month. Mitra is the sun-god, Atri is the sage, Pauruṣeya is the Rākṣasa, Takṣaka is the Nāga, Menakā is the Apsarā, Hāhā is the Gandharva and Rathasvana is the Yakṣa.

|| 12.11.36 ||

*vasiṣṭho varuṇo rambhā sahajanyas tathā huhūḥ
śukras citrasvanaś caiva śuci-māsam nayanty amī*

TRANSLATION

Vasiṣṭha as the sage, Varuṇa as the sun-god, Rambhā as the Apsarā, Sahajanya as the Rākṣasa, Hūhū as the Gandharva, Śukra as the Nāga and Citrasvana as the Yakṣa rule the month of Śuci.

COMMENTARY

Śuci is Āṣāḍha month. Vasiṣṭha is the sage, Varuṇa is the sun-god, Rambhā is the Apsarā, Sahajanya is the Rākṣasa, Hūhū is the Gandharva, Śukra is the Nāga and Citrasvana is the Yakṣa

|| 12.11.37 ||

*indro viśvāvasuḥ śrotā elāpatras tathāṅgirāḥ
pramlocā rākṣaso varyo nabho-māsam nayanty amī*

TRANSLATION

Indra as the sun-god, Viśvāvasu as the Gandharva, Śrotā as the Yakṣa, Elāpatra as the Nāga, Aṅgirā as the sage, Pramlocā as the Apsarā and Varya as the Rākṣasa rule the month of Nabhas.

COMMENTARY

Nabha is Śrāvaṇa month. Indra is the sun-god, Viśvāvasu is the Gandharva, Śrotā is the Yakṣa, Elāpatra is the Nāga, Aṅgirā is the sage, Pramlocā is the Apsarā and Varya is the Rākṣasa.

|| 12.11.38 ||

*vivasvān ugrasenaś ca vyāghra āsāraṇo bhṛguḥ
anumlocā śaṅkhapālo nabhasyākhyam nayanty amī*

TRANSLATION

Vivasvān as the sun-god, Ugrasena as the Gandharva, Vyāghra as the Rākṣasa, Āsāraṇa as the Yakṣa, Bhṛgu as the sage, Anumlocā as the Apsarā and Śaṅkhapāla as the Nāga rule the month of Nabhasya.

COMMENTARY

Nabhasya is Bhādra month. Vivasvān is the sun-god, Ugrasena is the Gandharva, Vyāghra is the Rākṣasa, Āsāraṇa is the Yakṣa, Bhṛgu is the sage, Anumlocā is the Apsarā and Śaṅkhapāla is the Nāga.

|| 12.11.39 ||

*pūṣā dhanañjayo vātaḥ suṣeṇaḥ surucis tathā
ghṛtācī gautamaś ceti tapo-māsam nayanty amī*

TRANSLATION

Pūṣā as the sun-god, Dhanañjaya as the Nāga, Vāta as the Rākṣasa, Suṣeṇa as the Gandharva, Suruci as the Yakṣa, Ghṛtācī as the Apsarā and Gautama as the sage rule the month of Tapas.

COMMENTARY

Tapas is Māgha month.¹ Pūṣā is the sun-god, Dhanañjaya is the Nāga, Vāta is the Rākṣasa, Suṣeṇa is the Gandharva, Suruci is the Yakṣa, Ghṛtācī is the Apsarā and Gautama is the sage.

|| 12.11.40 ||

*ṛtur varcā bharadvājaḥ parjanyaḥ senajit tathā
viśva airāvataś caiva tapasyākhyam nayanty amī*

¹ The months are not listed in normal sequence.

TRANSLATION

Ṛtu as the Yakṣa, Varcā as the Rākṣasa, Bharadvāja as the sage, Parjanya as the sun-god, Senajit as the Apsarā, Viśva as the Gandharva and Airāvata as the Nāga rule the month known as Tapasya.

COMMENTARY

Tapasya means “Phālguna month.” Ṛtu is the Yakṣa, Varcā is the Rākṣasa, Bharadvāja is the sage, Parjanya is the sun-god, Senajit is the Apsarā, Viśva is the Gandharva and Airāvata is the Nāga.

|| 12.11.41 ||

*athāmśuḥ kaśyapas tārṣya ṛtasenas tathorvaśī
vidyucchatrur mahāśaṅkhaḥ saho-māsam nayanty amī*

TRANSLATION

Amśu as the sun-god, Kaśyapa as the sage, Tārṣya as the Yakṣa, Ṛtasena as the Gandharva, Urvaśī as the Apsarā, Vidyucchatru as the Rākṣasa and Mahāśaṅkha as the Nāga rule the month of Sahas.

COMMENTARY

Sahas means “Mārgaśīrṣa month.” Amśu is the sun-god, Kaśyapa is the sage, Tārṣya is the Yakṣa, Ṛtasena is the Gandharva, Urvaśī is the Apsarā, Vidyucchatru is the Rākṣasa and Mahāśaṅkha is the Nāga.

|| 12.11.42 ||

*bhagaḥ sphūrjo ’riṣṭanemir ūṛṇa āyus ca pañcamah
karkoṭakaḥ pūrvacittiḥ puṣya-māsam nayanty amī*

TRANSLATION

Bhaga as the sun-god, Sphūrja as the Rākṣasa, Ariṣṭanemi as the Gandharva, Ūṛṇa as the Yakṣa, Āyur as the sage, Karkoṭaka as the Nāga and Pūrvacitti as the Apsarā rule the month of Puṣya.

COMMENTARY

Puṣya means “Pauṣa month.” *Bhaga* is the sun-god, *Sphūrja* is the *Rākṣasa*, *Ariṣṭanemi* is the *Gandharva*, *Ūrṇa* is the *Yakṣa*, *Āyur* is the sage, *Karkoṭaka* is the *Nāga* and *Pūrvacitti* is the *Apsarā*.

|| 12.11.43 ||

tvaṣṭā ṛcīka-tanayaḥ kambalāś ca tilottamā
brahmāpeto 'tha satajīd dhṛtarāṣṭra iṣam-bharāḥ

TRANSLATION

Tvaṣṭā as the sun-god; *Jamadagni*, the son of *Ṛcīka*, as the sage; *Kambalāśva* as the *Nāga*; *Tilottamā* as the *Apsarā*; *Brahmāpetā* as the *Rākṣasa*; *Śatajit* as the *Yakṣa*; and *Dhṛtarāṣṭra* as the *Gandharva* maintain the month of *Iṣa*.

COMMENTARY

Iṣambharāḥ means “the protectors of *Āśvina* month.” *Tvaṣṭā* is the sun-god; *Jamadagni*, the son of *Ṛcīka*, is the sage; *Kambalāśva* is the *Nāga*; *Tilottamā* is the *Apsarā*; *Brahmāpetā* is the *Rākṣasa*; *Śatajit* is the *Yakṣa*; and *Dhṛtarāṣṭra* is the *Gandharva*.

|| 12.11.44 ||

viṣṇur aśvataro rambhā sūryavarcāś ca satyajit
viśvāmitro makhāpetā ūrja-māsam nayanty amī

TRANSLATION

Viṣṇu as the sun-god, *Aśvatarā* as the *Nāga*, *Rambhā* as the *Apsarā*, *Sūryavarcā* as the *Gandharva*, *Satyajit* as the *Yakṣa*, *Viśvāmītra* as the sage and *Makhāpetā* as the *Rākṣasa* rule the month of *Ūrja*.

COMMENTARY

Ūrja means “*Kārtika* month.” *Viṣṇu* is the sun-god, *Aśvatarā* is the *Nāga*, *Rambhā* is the *Apsarā*, *Sūryavarcā* is the *Gandharva*, *Satyajit* is the *Yakṣa*, *Viśvāmītra* is the sage and *Makhāpetā* is the *Rākṣasa*.

|| 12.11.45 ||

etā bhagavato viṣṇor ādityasya vibhūtayaḥ
smaratām sandhyayor nṛṇām haranty amho dine dine

TRANSLATION

All these personalities are the *vibhūtis* of the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu, in the form of the sun-god. These deities take away all the sinful reactions of those who remember them each day at dawn and sunset.

|| 12.11.46 ||

*dvādaśasv api māseṣu devo 'sau ṣaḍbhir asya vai
caran samantāt tanute paratreha ca san-matim*

TRANSLATION

Thus, throughout the twelve months, the sun travels in all directions with his six types of associates, disseminating among the inhabitants of this universe purity of consciousness for both this life and the next.

COMMENTARY

Thus sun (*asau devaḥ*) travels with his associates who are his *vibhūtis*.

|| 12.11.47-48 ||

*sāmarg-yajurbhis tal-liṅgaiḥ ṛṣayaḥ samstuvanty amum
gandharvās taṁ pragāyanti nṛtyanty apsaraso 'grataḥ*

*unnahyanti ratham nāgā grāmaṇyo ratha-yojakāḥ
codayanti ratham pṛṣṭhe nairṛtā bala-śālinaḥ*

TRANSLATION

While the sages glorify the sun-god with the hymns of the Sāma, Ṛg and Yajur Vedas, which reveal his identity, the Gandharvas also sing his praises and the Apsarās dance before his chariot. The Nāgas bind the chariot firmly and the Yakṣas harness the horses to the chariot, while the powerful Rākṣasas push from behind.

COMMENTARY

This describes the actions of the six associates. *Tal-liṅgaiḥ* means “by Vedic verses which reveal the sun.” The Nāgas bind up the chariot firmly. The Yakṣas connect the chariot to the horses. Rākṣasas push it with force.

|| 12.11.49||

*vālahilyāḥ sahasrāṇi ṣaṣṭir brahmaṛṣayo 'malāḥ
purato 'bhimukhaṁ yānti stuvanti stutibhir vibhum*

TRANSLATION

Facing the chariot, the sixty thousand *brāhmaṇa* sages known as Vālahilyas travel in front and offer prayers to the almighty sun-god with Vedic *mantras*.

|| 12.11.50 ||

*evaṁ hy anādi-nidhano bhagavān harir īśvaraḥ
kalpe kalpe svam ātmānaṁ vyūhya lokān avaty ajaḥ*

TRANSLATION

For the protection of all the worlds, the unborn Supreme Lord, without beginning or end, thus expands himself during each day of Brahmā and protects the worlds.

COMMENTARY

Vyuhya means “dividing up.”

Thus ends the commentary on Eleventh Chapter of the Twelfth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas*.

Chapter Twelve



Summary Of The *Bhāgavatam*

|| 12.12.1 ||

sūta uvāca

*namo dharmāya mahate namaḥ kṛṣṇāya vedhase
brahmaṇebhyo namaskṛtya dharmān vakṣye sanātānān*

TRANSLATION

Sūta Gosvāmī said: Offering my obeisances to *bhakti*; to Lord Kṛṣṇa, the supreme creator; and to all the *brāhmaṇas* like Vyāsa, I shall now describe the eternal activities of the Lord.

COMMENTARY

In the Twelfth Chapter, beginning from the First Canto, the famous stories are repeated in order for clarity. I offer respects to the great *dharma*, known as *bhakti*, dedicated to Kṛṣṇa, which is attained by *bhakti*, the cause of all things (*vedhase*), and the *brāhmaṇas* like Vyāsadeva, who reveal *bhakti*. *Brāhmaṇebhyaḥ* should be in the accusative with *namaskṛtya*. I will speak the stories of the Lord (*dharmān*). These are highest *dharma*, since they are subjects of hearing and chanting. They are eternal since the Lord, *bhakti* and his activities are beyond the *guṇas*.

|| 12.12.2 ||

*etad vaḥ kathitaṁ viprā viṣṇoś caritam adbhutam
bhavadbhir yad ahaṁ pṛṣṭo narāṇāṁ puruṣocitam*

TRANSLATION

O great sages, I have narrated to you the wonderful pastimes of Viṣṇu, about which you inquired from me. Hearing such narrations is the suitable engagement for a person who is a human being.

|| 12.12.3 ||

*atra sankīrtitaḥ sākṣāt sarva-pāpa-haro hariḥ
nārāyaṇo hṛṣīkeśo bhagavān sātvatām patiḥ*

TRANSLATION

This literature fully glorifies the Supreme Lord, who is the destroyer of sin, the shelter of the *jīvas*, the master of the senses, and master of the *Sātvatas*.

COMMENTARY

He who removes all sin (*hariḥ*), who is the shelter of all *jīvas* (*nārāyaṇaḥ*), who activates the senses (*hṛṣīkeśaḥ*), is Bhagavān who is glorified in the twelve volumes of the *Bhāgavatam*. Who is he? He is the master of the *Sātvatas*.

|| 12.12.4 ||

*atra brahma param guhyam jagataḥ prabhavāpyayam
jñānam ca tad-upākhyānam proktaṁ vijñāna-saṁyutam*

TRANSLATION

In this work, the great secret of impersonal Brahman along with the process of *jñāna* for its realization is presented through descriptions of the creation and destruction of the universe.

COMMENTARY

The impersonal Brahman is present in *Bhāgavatam*. Since it cannot be perceived by the senses such as voice, how is it possible? It is described through the creation and destruction of the universe, not directly. The method to attain Brahman, *jñāna* is also revealed, along with its realization.

|| 12.12.5 ||

*bhakti-yogaḥ samākhyāto vairāgyam ca tad-āśrayam
pārīkṣitam upākhyānam nāradaḥkhyānam eva ca*

TRANSLATION

The following topics are also narrated: the process of devotional service together with its subsidiary feature of renunciation, and the histories of Mahārāja Parīkṣit and the sage Nārada.

COMMENTARY

Sādhana and *sādhya bhakti* are explained (*sam*) completely with introductory and concluding actions as well as renunciation which arises from it. Then the topics are listed in order. One should not object to omitting parts of the stories that are famous in presenting a table-of-contents chapter. A table of contents makes no attempt to present everything. The very famous chapter about Kṛṣṇa's birth, the punishment of Aśvatthāmā, the passing of Bhīṣma, the story of Citraketu, the destruction of Tripura, the story of Ambarīṣa, the killing of Aghāsura and the bewilderment of Brahmā are omitted or passed over very briefly, and sometimes stories are put in a different order.

|| 12.12.6 ||

*prāyopaveśo rājarṣer vipra-śāpāt pārīkṣitaḥ
śukasya brahmaṛṣabhasya samvādaś ca pārīkṣitaḥ*

TRANSLATION

Also described are saintly King Parīkṣit's sitting down to fast until death in response to the curse of a *brāhmaṇa*'s son, and the conversations between Parīkṣit and Śukadeva Gosvāmī, who is the best of all *brāhmaṇas*.

|| 12.12.7 ||

*yoga-dhāraṇayotkrāntiḥ samvādo nāradaḥjayoḥ
avatārānugītam ca sargaḥ prādhāniko 'grataḥ*

TRANSLATION

The *Bhāgavatam* explains how one can attain liberation at the time of death by practicing fixed meditation in *yoga*. It also contains a discussion between Nārada and Brahmā, an enumeration of the incarnations of the Lord, and a description of how the universe was created in progressive sequence, beginning from *pradhāna*.

|| 12.12.8 ||

*viduroddhava-saṁvādaḥ kṣatṛ-maitreyayos tataḥ
purāṇa-saṁhitā-praśno mahā-puruṣa-saṁsthitih*

TRANSLATION

This scripture also relates the discussions Vidura had with Uddhava and Maitreya, the inquiries about the subject matter of this Purāṇa, and the winding up of the creation within the body of the Supreme Lord at the time of annihilation.

COMMENTARY

Samsthitih means “destruction when Brahmā sleeps in the abdomen of Viṣṇu.”

|| 12.12.9 ||

*tataḥ prakṛtikaḥ sargaḥ sapta vaikṛtikāś ca ye
tato brahmāṇḍa-sambhūtir vairājaḥ puruṣo yataḥ*

TRANSLATION

The creation from *prakṛti*, the seven transformations, and the construction of the universal egg, from which arises the universal form of the Supreme Lord—all these are thoroughly described.

|| 12.12.10 ||

*kālasya sthūla-sūkṣmasya gatiḥ padma-samudbhavaḥ
bhūva uddharāṇe 'mbhodher hiraṇyākṣa-vadhō yathā*

TRANSLATION

Other topics include the subtle and gross movements of time, the generation of the lotus from the navel of Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, and the killing of the demon Hiraṇyākṣa when the earth was delivered from the Garbhodaka Ocean.

COMMENTARY

The deliverance of the earth from the water is described. The use of *uddharaṇe* instead of *uddharaṇam* is for metrical consideration.

|| 12.12.11 ||

*ūrdhva-tiryag-avāk-sargo rudra-sargas tathaiva ca
ardha-nārīśvarasyātha yataḥ svāyambhuvo manuḥ*

TRANSLATION

The *Bhāgavatam* also describes the creation of *devatās*, animals and demoniac species of life; the birth of Śiva; and the creation of man and woman who were known as Svāyambhuva Manu (and his wife).

COMMENTARY

Ardha-nārī īśvarasyā means “he who had two parts, a man and a woman.”

|| 12.12.12 ||

*śatarūpā ca yā strīṇām ādyā prakṛtir uttamā
santāno dharmā-patnīnām kardamasya prajāpateḥ*

TRANSLATION

Also related are the appearance of the first woman, Śatarūpā, who was the excellent consort of Manu, and the offspring of the pious wives of Prajāpati Kardama.

|| 12.12.13 ||

*avatāro bhagavataḥ kapilasya mahātmanaḥ
devahūtyās ca saṁvādaḥ kapilena ca dhīmatā*

TRANSLATION

The *Bhāgavatam* describes the incarnation of the Lord as the exalted sage Kapila and records the conversation between that greatly learned soul and his mother, Devahūti.

|| 12.12.14-15 ||

*nava-brahma-samutpattir dakṣa-yajña-vināsanam
dhruvasya caritaṁ paścāt pṛthoḥ prācīnabarhiṣaḥ*

*nāradasya ca saṁvādas tataḥ praiyavrataṁ dvijāḥ
nābhes tato 'nucaritam ṛṣabhasya bharatasya ca*

TRANSLATION

Also described are the progeny of Marīci and others, the destruction of Dakṣa's sacrifice, and the history of Dhruva Mahārāja, followed by the histories of King Pṛthu and King Prācīnabarhi, the discussion between Prācīnabarhi and Nārada, and the life of Mahārāja Priyavrata. Then, O *brāhmaṇas*, the *Bhāgavatam* tells of the character and activities of King Nābhi, Ṛṣabha and King Bharata.

COMMENTARY

Nava-brahma-samutpattiḥ means "the sons of the nine great *brāhmaṇas*: Marīci and others."

|| 12.12.16 ||

*dvīpa-varṣa-samudrāṇāṁ giri-nady-upavarṇanam
jyotiś-cakrasya saṁsthānam pātāla-naraka-sthitiḥ*

TRANSLATION

The *Bhāgavatam* gives an elaborate description of the earth's *dvīpas*, *varṣas*, oceans, mountains and rivers. Also described are the arrangement of the zodiac and the abodes in hell and Pātāla.

|| 12.12.17 ||

*dakṣa-janma pracetobhyas tat-putrīṇāṁ ca santatiḥ
yato devāsura-narās tiryak-naga-khagādayaḥ*

TRANSLATION

The rebirth of Prajāpati Dakṣa as the son of the Pracetās, and the progeny of Dakṣa's daughters, who initiated the races of *devatās*, demons, human beings, animals, serpents, birds and so on is described.

|| 12.12.18 ||

*tvāṣṭrasya janma-nidhanam putrayoś ca diter dvijāḥ
daityeśvarasya caritam prahrādasya mahātmanah*

TRANSLATION

O brāhmaṇas! Also recounted are the births and deaths of Vṛtrāsura and of Diti's sons Hiraṇyākṣa and Hiraṇyakaśipu, as well as the story of the greatest of Diti's descendants, the exalted soul Prahlāda.

|| 12.12.19 ||

*manv-antarānukathanam gajendrasya vimokṣanam
manv-antarāvatārās ca viṣṇor hayaśirādayaḥ*

TRANSLATION

The reign of each Manu, the liberation of Gajendra, the special incarnations of the Lord in each Manvantara, and the appearance of Hayagrīva and others, are described as well.

|| 12.12.20 ||

*kaurmanḥ mātṣyam nārasimham vāmanam ca jagat-pateḥ
kṣīroda-mathanam tadvad amṛtārthe divaukasām*

TRANSLATION

The *Bhāgavatam* also tells of the appearances of the Lord of the universe as Kūrma, Matsya, Narasimha and Vāmana, and of the *devatās'* churning of the milk ocean to obtain nectar.

|| 12.12.21 ||

*devāsura-mahā-yuddham rāja-varṣānukīrtanam
ikṣvāku-janma tad-varṣaḥ sudyumnasya mahātmanah*

TRANSLATION

An account of the great battle fought between the *devatās* and the demons, a description of the dynasties of various kings, and narrations concerning Ikṣvāku's birth, his dynasty and the story of the pious Sudyumna—all are presented within this literature.

COMMENTARY

The story (this word “story” is to be supplied) of Sudyumna is told.

|| 12.12.22 ||

*ilopākhyānam atroktaṁ tāropākhyānam eva ca
sūrya-vaṁśānukathanam śaśādādyā nṛgādayaḥ*

TRANSLATION

Also related are the histories of Ilā and Tārā, and the description of the descendants of the sun-god, including such kings as Śaśāda and Nṛga.

|| 12.12.23 ||

*saukanyam cātha śaryāteḥ kakutsthasya ca dhīmataḥ
khaṭvāngasya ca māndhātuḥ saubhareḥ sagarasya ca*

TRANSLATION

The histories of Sukanyā, Śaryāti, the intelligent Kakutstha, Khaṭvānga, Māndhātā, Saubhari and Sagara are narrated.

|| 12.12.24 ||

*rāmasya kośalendrasya caritaṁ kilbiṣāpaham
nimer aṅga-parityāgo janakānām ca sambhavaḥ*

TRANSLATION

The *Bhāgavatam* narrates the pastimes of Rāmacandra, the King of Kośala, which destroy all sin, and also explains how King Nimi abandoned his material body. The appearance of the descendants of King Janaka is also mentioned.

|| 12.12.25-26 ||

*rāmasya bhārgavendrasya niḥkṣatrī-karaṇam bhuvah
ailasya soma-vaṁśasya yayāter nahuṣasya ca*

*dauṣmanter bharatasyāpi śāntanos tat-sutasya ca
yayāter jyeṣṭha-putrasya yador vaṁśo 'nukīrtitaḥ*

TRANSLATION

The Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam describes how Lord Paraśurāma, the greatest descendant of Bhṛgu, annihilated all the *kṣatriyas* on the face of the earth. It further recounts the lives of glorious kings who appeared in the dynasty of the moon-god-kings such as Aila, Yayāti, Nahuṣa, Duṣmanta's son Bharata, Śāntanu and Śāntanu's son Bhīṣma. Also described is the great dynasty founded by King Yadu, the eldest son of Yayāti.

|| 12.12.27 ||

*yatrāvātīrṇo bhagavān kṛṣṇākhyo jagad-īśvaraḥ
vasudeva-grhe janma tato vṛddhiś ca gokule*

TRANSLATION

This *Bhāgavatam* describes how Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Bhagavān, the Lord of the universe, descended into this Yadu dynasty, how he took birth in the home of Vasudeva, and how He then grew up in Gokula.

|| 12.12.28-29 ||

*tasya karmāṇy apārāṇi kīrtitāny asura-dviṣaḥ
pūtanāsu-payaha-pānam śakaṭoccātanam śiṣoḥ*

*tṛṇāvartasya niṣpeṣas tathaiva baka-vatsayoh
aghāsura-vadho dhātrā vatsa-pālāvagūhanam*

TRANSLATION

Also glorified are the innumerable pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the enemy of the demons, including his childhood pastimes of sucking out Pūtanā's life air along with her breast-milk, breaking the cart, crushing Tṛṇāvarta by the child, killing Bakāsura, Vatsāsura and Aghāsura, and the pastimes when Lord Brahmā hid his calves and cowherd boyfriends in a cave.

COMMENTARY

Pūtanāsu-payaha-pānam means "drinking milk along with the life air of Pūtanā." *Śiṣoḥ* means "by the baby." *Niṣpeṣaḥ* means "crushing."

|| 12.12.30 ||

*dhenukasya saha-bhrātuḥ pralambasya ca saṅkṣayaḥ
gopānām ca paritrāṇam dāvāgneḥ parisarpataḥ*

TRANSLATION

The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* tells how Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Balarāma killed the demon Dhenukāsura and his companions, how Lord Balarāma destroyed Pralambāsura, and also how Kṛṣṇa saved the cowherd boys from a forest fire that had encircled them.

COMMENTARY

Saha-bhrātuḥ means “with his companions.”

|| 12.12.31-33 ||

*damanam kāliyasyāher mahāher nanda-mokṣaṇam
vrata-caryā tu kanyānām yatra tuṣṭo 'cyuto vrataiḥ*

*prasādo yajña-patnibhyo viprāṇām cānutāpanam
govardhanoddhāraṇam ca śakrasya surabher atha*

*yajñabhiṣekaḥ kṛṣṇasya strībhiḥ krīdā ca rātriṣu
śaṅkhacūḍasya durbuddher vadho 'riṣṭasya keśinaḥ*

TRANSLATION

The chastisement of the serpent Kāliya; the rescue of Nanda Mahārāja from a great snake; the severe vows performed by the young *gopīs*, who thus satisfied Lord Kṛṣṇa; the mercy he showed the wives of the Vedic *brāhmaṇas*, whose husbands felt remorse; the lifting of Govardhana Hill followed by the worship and bathing ceremony performed by Indra and the Surabhi cow; Lord Kṛṣṇa's nocturnal pastimes with the cowherd girls; and the killing of the foolish demons Śaṅkhacūḍa, Ariṣṭa and Keśī—all these pastimes are recounted.

COMMENTARY

Śakrasya surabher yajñabhiṣekaḥ means “the worship and bathing by Indra and Surabhi.”

|| 12.12.34 ||

*akrūrāgamanam paścāt prasthānam rāma-kṛṣṇayoḥ
vraja-strīṇām vilāpaś ca mathurālokanam tataḥ*

TRANSLATION

The *Bhāgavatam* describes the arrival of Akrūra, the subsequent departure of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, the lamentation of the *gopīs* and the viewing of Mathurā.

|| 12.12.35 ||

*gaja-muṣṭika-cāṇūra- kamsādinām tathā vadhaḥ
mṛtasyānayanam sūnoḥ punaḥ sāndīpaner guroḥ*

TRANSLATION

Also narrated are how Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma killed the elephant Kuvalayāpīḍa, the wrestlers Muṣṭika and Cāṇūra, and Kamsa and other demons, as well as how Kṛṣṇa brought back the dead son of his *guru*, Sāndīpani Muni.

|| 12.12.36 ||

*mathurāyām nivasatā yadu-cakrasya yat priyam
kṛtam uddhava-rāmābhyām yutena hariṇā dvijāḥ*

TRANSLATION

Then, O *brāhmaṇas*, this scripture recounts how Kṛṣṇa, while residing in Mathurā in the company of Uddhava and Balarāma, performed pastimes for the satisfaction of the Yadu dynasty.

|| 12.12.37 ||

*jarāsandha-samānīta- sainyaḥ bahuśo vadhaḥ
ghātanam yavanendrasya kuśasthalyā niveśanam*

TRANSLATION

Also described are the annihilation of each of the many armies brought by Jarāsandha, the killing of the Yavana king Kālayavana and the establishment of Dvārakā City.

|| 12.12.38 ||

*ādānam pārijātasya sudharmāyāḥ surālayāt
rukmiṇyā haraṇam yuddhe pramathya dviṣato hareḥ*

TRANSLATION

This work also describes how Lord Kṛṣṇa brought from heaven the *pārijāta* tree and the Sudharmā assembly hall, and how he kidnapped Rukmiṇī by defeating all his rivals in battle.

|| 12.12.39 ||

*harasya jṛmbhaṇam yuddhe bāṇasya bhujā-kṛntanam
prāgjyotiṣa-patiṁ hatvā kanyānām haraṇam ca yat*

TRANSLATION

Also narrated are how Lord Kṛṣṇa, in the battle with Bāṇāsura, made Śiva yawn, how the Lord cut off Bāṇāsura's arms, and how he killed the master of Prāgjyotiṣapura and then rescued the young princesses held captive in that city.

|| 12.12.40-41 ||

*caidyā-pauṇḍraka-śālvānām dantavakrasya durmateḥ
śambaro dvividaḥ pīṭho muraḥ pañcajanādayaḥ*

*māhātmyam ca vadhas teṣām vārāṇasyāś ca dāhanam
bhārāvatarāṇam bhūmer nimittī-kṛtya pāṇḍavān*

TRANSLATION

There are descriptions of the great exertion and the deaths of the King of Cedi, Pauṇḍraka, Śālva, the foolish Dantavakra, Śambara, Dvivida, Pīṭha, Mura, Pañcajana and other demons, along with a description of how Vārāṇasī was burned to the ground. The *Bhāgavatam* also recounts how Lord Kṛṣṇa relieved the earth's burden by engaging the Pāṇḍavas in the Battle of Kurukṣetra.

COMMENTARY

Māhātmyam means "great exertion."

|| 12.12.42-43 ||

*vipra-śāpāpadeśena saṁhāraḥ sva-kulasya ca
uddhavasya ca saṁvādo vasudevasya cādbhutaḥ*

*yatrātma-vidyā hy akhilā proktā dharma-vinirṇayah
tato martya-parityāga ātma-yogānubhāvataḥ*

TRANSLATION

The *Bhāgavatam* also narrates how the Lord withdrew his own dynasty on the pretext of the *brāhmaṇas'* curse; Vasudeva's conversation with Nārada; the extraordinary conversation between Uddhava and Kṛṣṇa, which reveals the science of the self in complete detail and elucidates religious principles; and then how Lord Kṛṣṇa gave up this mortal world by his own power.

COMMENTARY

The *Bhāgavatam* narrates how the Lord disappeared from the material world by the power of his *yoga-māyā*, which was inconceivable to the world.

|| 12.12.44 ||

*yuga-lakṣaṇa-vṛttiś ca kalau nṛṇām upaplavaḥ
catur-vidhaś ca pralaya utpattis tri-vidhā tathā*

TRANSLATION

This work also describes people's characteristics and behavior in the different ages, the destruction of *dharma* in the age of Kali, the four kinds of annihilation and the three kinds of creation.

COMMENTARY

The *Bhāgavatam* describes the characteristics of the *yugas* and the corresponding behavior. *Upaplavaḥ* means "destruction of *dharma*." The three types of creation are the creation from *prakṛti*, the daily creation of *Brahmā* and the normal creation of individual bodies.

|| 12.12.45 ||

*deha-tyāgaś ca rājarṣer viṣṇu-rātasya dhīmataḥ
śākhā-praṇayanam ṛṣer mārkaṇḍeyasya sat-kathā
mahā-puruṣa-vinyāsaḥ sūryasya jagad-ātmanah*

TRANSLATION

There are also an account of the passing away of the wise and saintly King Parīkṣit, an explanation of how Śrīla Vyāsadeva disseminated the branches of the Vedas, a pious narration concerning Mārkaṇḍeya Rṣi, a description of arrangement of the Lord's universal form and his form as the sun, the soul of the universe.

|| 12.12.46 ||

*iti coktam dvija-śreṣṭhā yat pṛṣṭo 'ham ihāsmi vaḥ
līlāvatāra-karmāṇi kīrtitāṇiha sarvaśaḥ*

TRANSLATION

Thus, O best of the *brāhmaṇas*, I have explained herein what you have inquired from me. This literature has glorified in full detail the activities of the Lord's pastime incarnations.

|| 12.12.47 ||

*patitaḥ skhalitaś cārtaḥ kṣuttvā vā vivaśo gr̥ṇan
haraye nama ity uccair mucyate sarva-pātakāt*

TRANSLATION

When falling, slipping, feeling pain or sneezing, if one involuntarily cries out in a loud voice, "Obeisances to Lord Hari!" one will be automatically freed from all sins.

COMMENTARY

"Please tell us the results of glorifying such pastimes." He answers by *kaimutya-nyāya*. If just chanting the name of the Lord casually does so much, how much more chanting the pastimes of the Lord with faith will bestow. If one falls from a high place, or stumbles on even ground, experiences pain on displacing the feet, or sneezes, or cries out loudly due to witnessing or committing a terrible sin, and chants the name of the Lord, one is freed from all sins.

|| 12.12.48 ||

*saṅkīrtiyamāno bhagavān anantaḥ śrutānubhāvo vyasanam hi puṁsām
praviśya cittam vidhunoty aśeṣam yathā tamo 'rko 'bhram ivāti-vātaḥ*

TRANSLATION

When people properly glorify the Supreme Lord or simply hear about his power, the Lord personally enters their hearts and destroys unlimited misfortune, just as the sun removes the darkness or as a powerful wind drives away the clouds.

COMMENTARY

Entering the heart, the Lord destroys unlimited distress, like the sun destroys darkness. However, if the clouds come, the sun does not destroy darkness. Therefore, another example is given. A powerful wind destroys clouds.

|| 12.12.49 ||

*mṛṣā giras tā hy asatīr asat-kathā na kathyate yad bhagavān adhokṣajah
tad eva satyaṁ tad u haiva maṅgalaṁ tad eva puṇyaṁ bhagavad-guṇodayam*

TRANSLATION

Words that do not describe the transcendental Lord but instead deal with temporary matters are simply false, harsh and useless. Only those words that manifest the qualities of the Supreme Lord are actually truthful, auspicious and pure.

COMMENTARY

The conclusion of this scripture is that one should glorify Kṛṣṇa. Other glorification, though not done badly, should not be done. Glorification of the Lord, even if done badly by animalistic men, should be done. Though the words are true, they are also false (*mṛṣā*). Though the words are sweet, they are painful (*asatī*). Even if the words are uttered by learned persons, they are useless (*asat-kathā*). Why? Because they do not speak about Bhagavān. Thus, true words are false, sweet words are harsh and learned words are useless. If the words are false, because they come from one's imagination, but they glorify the Lord, then the words are true. Though the words are inauspicious because they destroy the householder's world, they are actually auspicious words. And though the irreligious say that speeches describing how the Lord takes others' wives are impure, it is pure because those indicate good qualities in the Lord, not faults.

|| 12.12.50 ||

*tad eva ramyaṁ ruciraṁ navam navam tad eva śaśvan manaso mahotsavam
tad eva śokārṇava-śoṣaṇam nṛṇām yad uttamaḥśloka-yaśo 'nugīyate*

TRANSLATION

Those words describing the glories of the all-famous Lord are pleasing, relishable and ever-fresh. They bring intense joy to the mind, and they dry up the ocean of misery.

COMMENTARY

Though Kṛṣṇa's following Prasena into Jāmbavān's cave is not pleasant, it is also pleasant. Though Rāma's giving up Sītā is not pleasurable, it is also pleasurable. Though the stories of the Lord are old, they are ever-new. Though Rāma's pursuing Mārīca and Rāvaṇa's stealing Sītā destroys the happiness of the mind, it is also a festival for the mind. Though one falls into an ocean of lamentation from seeing Kṛṣṇa give up wives and sons, the event also dries up the ocean of lamentation.

|| 12.12.51 ||

*na yad vacaś citra-padam harer yaśo
jagat-pavitram pragṛṇīta karhicit
tad dhvāṅkṣa-tīrtham na tu haṁsa-sevitam
yatrācyutas tatra hi sādhave 'malāḥ*

TRANSLATION

Those colorful words that do not describe the glories of the Lord, who alone can sanctify the whole universe, are considered to be a place of pilgrimage for crows, and are never used by those situated in transcendental knowledge, for pure and saintly devotees relish only the topics glorifying the infallible Lord.

|| 12.12.52 ||

*tad vāg-visargo janatāgha-samplavo yasmin prati-ślokaṁ abaddhavaty api
nāmāny anantasya yaśo 'ṅkitāni yat śṛṅvanti gāyanti gṛṇanti sādhaveḥ*

TRANSLATION

The use of words, though not perfectly composed, in which there are the names of the Lord and descriptions of his glories which devotees hear, sing, and again receive, destroys the sins of all people.

COMMENTARY

Verse 51, 52 and 53 glorify the supreme position of the devotees. They are placed at the beginning and end of the *Bhāgavatam*. Just as a great *mantra* has a *bija* syllable placed before and after it, so the *Bhāgavatam* is enclosed within these three verses at the beginning and end of the work.

|| 12.12.53 ||

naiṣkarmyam apy acyuta-bhāva-varjitam
na śobhate jñānam alam nirañjanam
kutaḥ punaḥ śaśvad abhadram īsvare
na hy arpitaṁ karma yad apy anuttamam

TRANSLATION

Even the stage of *jñāna* without the bondage of *karma* is not glorious because it is devoid of *bhakti* to the Supreme Lord. What is the use of having destroyed ignorance? What then to speak of *sakāma-karma*, which is suffering during both practice and perfection, and *niškāma-karma*, when not offered to the Lord?

COMMENTARY

Anuttamam means “the best *niškāma-kārma*.”

|| 12.12.54 ||

yaśaḥ-śriyām eva pariśramaḥ paro varṇāśramācāra-tapaḥ-śrutādiṣu
avismṛtiḥ śrīdhara-pāda-padmāyor guṇānuvāda-śravaṇādarādibhiḥ

TRANSLATION

The great endeavor one undergoes in executing *varṇāśrama* duties, in performing austerities and in hearing from the Vedas culminates only in fame and wealth. But by respecting and attentively hearing the recitation of the Lord’s qualities, one can remember his lotus feet.

COMMENTARY

Moreover, the great (*paraḥ*) effort in performing *varṇāśrama*, austerities or study generally results in fame and wealth. Those processes produce wealth and fame, but not attainment of the Lord. However, the effort of hearing about the qualities of the Lord makes one always remember the lotus feet of the Lord. That person never forgets the Lord's lotus feet.

|| 12.12.55 ||

*avismṛtiḥ kṛṣṇa-padāravindayoḥ kṣiṇoty abhadrāṇi ca śam tanoti
sattvasya śuddhiṁ paramātma-bhaktiṁ jñānam ca vijñāna-virāga-yuktam*

TRANSLATION

Remembrance of Lord Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet destroys everything inauspicious and allows one to fix the intelligence in the Lord. It purifies the heart and bestows devotion for Lord, along with knowledge enriched with realization and renunciation.

COMMENTARY

What happens by remembrance of the Lord? *Śamam* means having one's intelligence fixed in the Lord for the *Bhāgavatam* says *śamo man-niṣṭhatā buddher*. (SB 11.19.36)

|| 12.12.56 ||

*yūyam dvijāgryā bata bhūri-bhāgā yac chaśvad ātmany akhilātma-bhūtam
nārāyaṇam devam adevam īsam ajasra-bhāvā bhajatāviveśya*

TRANSLATION

O most eminent of *brāhmaṇas*! You are all indeed extremely fortunate, since you have already placed within your hearts Nārāyaṇa—the supreme controller and the ultimate soul of all existence—beyond whom there is no other god. Having undeviating love for him, please worship him.

COMMENTARY

Adevam means “he who does not have a *devatā* to worship” or “above whom there is no one worthy of worship.” *Bhajata* is in the imperative mood.

|| 12.12.57 ||

*aham ca saṁsmārīta ātma-tattvaṁ śrutaṁ purā me paramarṣi-vaktrāt
prāyopaveśe nṛpateḥ parīkṣitaḥ sadasy ṛṣiṇām mahatām ca śṛṅvatām*

TRANSLATION

I also now fully remember the nature of God, which I previously heard from the mouth of the great sage Śukadeva Gosvāmī while the great sages heard him speak in the assembly to King Parīkṣit as the monarch sat fasting until death.

|| 12.12.58 ||

*etad vaḥ kathitaṁ viprāḥ kathaniyuru-karmaṇaḥ
māhātmyaṁ vāsudevasya sarvāsubha-vināśanam*

TRANSLATION

O *brāhmaṇas!* I have thus described to you the glories of the Supreme Lord Vāsudeva, whose extraordinary activities are most worthy of glorification. These glories destroy all inauspiciousness.

|| 12.12.59 ||

*ya etat śrāvayen nityaṁ yāma-kṣaṇam ananya-dhīḥ
ślokaṁ ekaṁ tad-ardhaṁ vā pādaṁ pādārdham eva vā
śraddhāvān yo 'nuṣṅuyāt punāty ātmānam eva saḥ*

TRANSLATION

One who with undeviating attention constantly recites this literature at every moment of every hour, as well as one who faithfully hears even one verse or half a verse or a single line or even half a line, certainly purifies his very self.

|| 12.12.60 ||

*dvādaśyām ekādaśyām vā śṛṅvann āyuṣyavān bhavet
paṭhaty anaśnan prayataḥ pūto bhavati pātakāt*

TRANSLATION

One who hears this *Bhāgavatam* on the Ekādaśī or Dvādaśī day is assured of long life, and one who recites it with careful attention while fasting is purified of all sinful reactions.

|| 12.12.61 ||

*puṣkare mathurayām ca dvāravatyām yatātmavān
upoṣya saṁhitām etām paṭhitvā mucyate bhayāt*

TRANSLATION

One who controls his mind, fasts at the holy places Puṣkara, Mathurā or Dvārakā, and studies this scripture will be freed from all fear.

|| 12.12.62 ||

*devatā munayaḥ siddhāḥ pitaro manavo nṛpāḥ
yacchanti kāmān grṇataḥ śṛṇvato yasya kīrtanāt*

TRANSLATION

The *devatās*, sages, Siddhas, Piṭṛs, Manus and kings of the earth bestow all desirable things to the person who glorifies this Purāṇa by chanting or hearing it.

|| 12.12.63 ||

*ṛco yajūmṣi sāmāni dvijo 'dhītyānuvindate
madhu-kulyā ghr̥ta-kulyāḥ payaḥ-kulyās ca tat phalam*

TRANSLATION

By studying this *Bhāgavatam*, a *brāhmaṇa* can enjoy the same rivers of honey, ghee and milk he enjoys by studying the hymns of the Ṛg, Yajur and Sāma Vedas.

COMMENTARY

The result—honey, ghee and milk—enjoyed by the *brāhmaṇa* studying the Vedas is attained by one who recites this work.

|| 12.12.64 ||

*purāṇa-saṁhitām etām adhītya prayato dvijaḥ
proktaṁ bhagavatā yat tu tat padam paramam vrajet*

TRANSLATION

A *brāhmaṇa* who diligently reads this essential compilation of all the Purāṇas will go to the supreme destination, which the Supreme Lord Himself has herein described.

|| 12.12.65 ||

*vipro 'dhītyāpnuyāt prajñām rājanyodadhi-mekhalām
vaiśyo nidhi-patitvaṁ ca śūdraḥ śudhyeta pātakāt*

TRANSLATION

A *brāhmaṇa* who studies the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam achieves firm intelligence, a king who studies it gains sovereignty over the earth, a *vaiśya* acquires great treasure and a *śūdra* is freed from sinful reactions.

COMMENTARY

In order to inspire persons with material desires to study this work, these temporary results are mentioned. The *sandhi* in *rājanyodadhi-mekhalām* is poetic license.

|| 12.12.66 ||

*kali-mala-saṁhati-kālano 'khileśo harir itaratra na giyate hy abhikṣṇam
iha tu punar bhagavān aśeṣa-mūrtiḥ paripaṭhito 'nu-padam kathā-prasaṅgaiḥ*

TRANSLATION

Nārāyaṇa, the soul of the universal form, who annihilates the accumulated sins of the Kali age, is not glorified much in other works. But Bhagavān, who has unlimited forms, is abundantly and constantly described throughout the various narrations of this Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.

COMMENTARY

The Lord is the destroyer (*kālanaḥ*) of the accumulated sins of Kali. *Anupadam* means “in every subject or chapter.” *Akhileśaḥ* means “the soul with the universal form, Nārāyaṇa, or the protector of the world, Viṣṇu.” Other works (*itaratra*) glorify *karma* and *devatās* like Brahmā. Those works do not glorify Viṣṇu. Even if they do, it is not much. The word *tu* indicates restriction. In *Bhāgavatam* alone (*iha tu*), Bhagavān, who has unlimited forms like Nārāyaṇa, is profusely glorified. This topic is not discerned properly in other works. By all topics introduced, in every line, Bhagavān is glorified completely (*pari*).

|| 12.12.67 ||

*tam aham ajam anantam ātma-tattvaṁ
jagad-udaya-sthiti-saṁyamātma-śaktim
dyu-patibhir aja-śakra-śaṅkarādyair
duravasita-stavam acyutaṁ nato 'smi*

TRANSLATION

I bow down to that unborn and infinite conscious being, Kṛṣṇa, whose personal energies effect the creation, maintenance and destruction of the material universe, whose glories Brahmā, Indra, Śiva and the other lords of the heavenly planets cannot fathom through their prayers.

COMMENTARY

He offers respects to the Lord who has created this scripture. I bow to the unborn. Are you offering respects to Brahmā (*ajaḥ*)? No. I offer respects to the unlimited (*anantam*). Oh, that is *pradhāna*? No. He is the very form of consciousness (*ātmā-tattvaṁ*). Is that the *jīva*? No. He possesses powers for creating, maintaining and destroying the universe. Is that Śiva? No. *Devatās* such as Brahmā and Śiva do not understand him despite offering him praises. He is Acyuta, Kṛṣṇa.

|| 12.12.68 ||

*upacita-nava-śaktibhiḥ sva ātmany uparacita-sthira-jaṅgamālayāya
bhagavata upalabdhi-mātra-dhamne sura-ṛṣabhāya namaḥ sanātanāya*

TRANSLATION

I offer my obeisances to the eternal Lord and the leader of all other deities, the form of pure knowledge, who by evolving his nine material energies has arranged within himself the abode of all moving and nonmoving creatures.

COMMENTARY

He offers respects to the Lord as the soul within himself. The nine śaktis are *prakṛti*, *puruṣa*, *mahat-tattva*, *ahankāra*, and the five *tan-mātras*.

|| 12.12.69 ||

sva-sukha-nibhṛta-cetās tad-vyudastānya-bhāvo
'py ajita-rucira-līlākṛṣṭa-sāras tadīyam
vyatanuta kṛpayā yas tattva-dīpaṁ purāṇaṁ
tam akhila-vrjina-ghnaṁ vyāsa-sūnuṁ nato 'smi

TRANSLATION

Let me offer my respectful obeisances unto the son of Vyāsadeva, Śukadeva Gosvāmī, who destroys all sin, and who, though fixed in his own bliss with no distractions, became attracted to the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa and mercifully spread the *Bhāgavatam* which describes Kṛṣṇa and reveals the *rasa* of his pastimes.

COMMENTARY

Having offered respects to Kṛṣṇa, he offers respects to his *guru*. Śukadeva's heart was completely filled (*nibhṛtam*) with the bliss of Brahman. Because of that, his mind was devoid of other subjects. But though he had achieved this state, he became strongly attracted by the pleasing pastimes of Kṛṣṇa. Thus his mind was drawn away from Brahman and he became capable of tasting *rasa*. He realized that the taste of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes was sweeter than Brahman. He became fixed in those pastimes. The *rasa* of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes was not an obstacle which broke his *samādhi*. By that he could have striven for the goal of *samādhi*. But he did not do that. Rather, by his mercy, desiring that others should taste Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, he spread the *Bhāgavatam* which reveals the nature of the *rasa* of the pastimes (*tattva-dīpaṁ*).

harer guṇākṣipta-matir bhagavān bādarāyaṇiḥ
adhyagān mahad ākhyānaṁ nityaṁ viṣṇu-jana-priyaḥ

Śukadeva, the son of Vyāsa, whose mind became disrupted from brahman trance by the qualities of Kṛṣṇa, and who became attracted to the Vaiṣṇavas, studied this great *Bhāgavatam*. SB 1.7.11

pariniṣṭhito 'pi nairguṇya uttama-śloka-līlayā
grhīta-cetā rājarṣe ākhyānaṁ yad adhītavān

Though I was fixed in Brahman and beyond the *guṇas*, my mind became attracted to the pastimes of the Lord. I thus learned his pastimes SB 2.1.9

Thus ends the commentary on Twelfth Chapter of the Twelfth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas*.

Chapter Thirteen



Enumeration Of The Purāṇas

|| 12.13.1 ||

sūta uvāca

*yam brahmā varuṇendra-rudra-marutaḥ stuvanti divyaiḥ stavair
vedaiḥ sāṅga-pada-kramopaniṣadair gāyanti yaṁ sāma-gāḥ
dhyānāvasthita-tad-gatena manasā paśyanti yaṁ yogino
yasyāntaṁ na viduḥ surāsura-gaṇā devāya tasmai namaḥ*

TRANSLATION

Sūta Gosvāmī said: Unto that personality whom Brahmā, Varuṇa, Indra, Rudra and the Maruts praise by chanting transcendental hymns of the Vedas with all their corollaries, *pada-kramas* and Upaniṣads, whom the chanters of the Sāma Veda glorify, whom the perfected *yogīs* see within their minds after fixing themselves in meditation, and whom neither the *devatās* or demons can fathom—unto that Supreme Lord I offer my respects.

COMMENTARY

The Thirteenth Chapter offers respects and prayers of auspiciousness concerning the Lord, enumerates the Purāṇas and glorifies gifting them. In the final chapter again respects are offered to the Lord. *Stuvanti* should be *stuvanti*. *Upaniṣadaiḥ* should be *upaniṣadbhiḥ*. By reciting this Purāṇa I have to some degree praised, meditated on and chanted about the Supreme Lord, but have not completely understood everything.

|| 12.13.2 ||

*pr̥ṣṭhe bhrāmyad amanda-mandara-giri-grāvāgra-kaṇḍūyanān
nidrāloḥ kamaṭhākṛter bhagavataḥ śvāsānilāḥ pāntu vaḥ
yat-saṁskāra-kalānuvartana-vaśād velā-nibhenāmbhasām
yātāyātam atandritam jala-nidher nādyāpi viśrāmyati*

TRANSLATION

When the Supreme Lord appeared as Kūrma, a tortoise, he became sleepy when his back was scratched by the edges of the stones on heavy, rotating Mount Mandara. May you all be protected by the winds caused by the Lord's breathing at that time! Even up to the present day, the ocean motions follow the Lord's inhalation and exhalation by coming in and going out, which appear to be the tides.

COMMENTARY

Actually the Lord in the form of Kūrma churned the Milk Ocean. *Devatās* were cause in name only. Similarly, the churning of the ocean of the Vedas to produce the *Bhāgavatam* was done by the Lord alone. Vyāsadeva only repeated it. That is expressed in this verse. By the scratching caused by the edges of stone of the very heavy Mandara Mountain being rotated, Kūrma became sleepy. May the breathing of that sleepy Lord protect you. The Lord, taking the nectar obtained from the churning in the form of Mohinī, cheated the demons and gave it to the *devatās*, his devotees. Similarly, the Lord has churned the Vedas and produced the *Bhāgavatam* containing the nectar of *bhakti*. Cheating the demons, may he give the nectar to you! This is in the form of a benediction to the devotees. Because of following a few moments of the traces of the breathing of Kūrma, the oceans continually ebb and flow. "But the oceans move because of the tides, not because of the Lord's breathing." The tides are only a pretext. Actually it is the Lord doing this.

|| 12.13.3 ||

*purāṇa-saṅkhyā-sambhūtim asya vācya-prayojane
dānam dānasya mātmyam pāṭhadeś ca nibodhata*

TRANSLATION

Now please hear a summation of the length of each Purāṇa according to the number of verses, and also hear the subject and purpose of this *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, the proper method of giving it as a gift, the glories of giving it, and finally the glories of hearing and chanting it.

COMMENTARY

Just as the various rulers who come before the emperor of the world to praise him should be counted, so the various Mahā-purāṇas should be counted in the presence of the emperor among Mahā-purāṇas. *Sambhūtim* means “manifestation.” Please hear the manifested number of Purāṇas and also *Bhāgavatam*’s subject and purpose.

|| 12.13.4-9 ||

*brāhmaṇam daśa sahasrāṇi pādman pañcāṣaṣṭi ca
śrī-vaiṣṇavam trayo-vimśac catur-vimśati śaivakam*

*daśāṣṭau śrī-bhāgavatam nāradam pañca-vimśati
mārkaṇḍam nava vāhnam ca daśa-pañca catuḥ-śatam*

*catur-daśa bhaviṣyam syāt tathā pañca-śatāni ca
daśāṣṭau brahma-vaivartam laṅgam ekādaśaiva tu*

*catur-vimśati vārāham ekāṣīti-sahasrakam
skādam śatam tathā caikam vāmanam daśa kīrtitam*

*kaurmam sapta-daśākhyātam mātsyam tat tu catur-daśa
ekona-vimśat sauparṇam brahmāṇḍam dvādaśaiva tu*

*evam purāṇa-sandohaś catur-lakṣa udāhṛtaḥ
tatrāṣṭadaśa-sāhasram śrī-bhāgavatam iṣyate*

TRANSLATION

The *Brahmā Purāṇa* consists of ten thousand verses, the *Padma Purāṇa* of fifty-five thousand, *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* of twenty-three thousand, the *Śiva Purāṇa* of twenty-four thousand and *Śrīmad-*

Bhāgavatam of eighteen thousand. The *Nārada Purāṇa* has twenty-five thousand verses, the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* nine thousand, the *Agni Purāṇa* fifteen thousand four hundred, the *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa* fourteen thousand five hundred, the *Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa* eighteen thousand and the *Līṅga Purāṇa* eleven thousand. The *Varāha Purāṇa* contains twenty-four thousand verses, the *Skanda Purāṇa* eighty-one thousand one hundred, the *Vāmana Purāṇa* ten thousand, the *Kūrma Purāṇa* seventeen thousand, the *Matsya Purāṇa* fourteen thousand, the *Garuḍa Purāṇa* nineteen thousand and the *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa* twelve thousand. Thus the total number of verses in all the *Purāṇas* is four hundred thousand. Eighteen thousand of these belong to the *Bhāgavatam*.

COMMENTARY

Trayoviṁśat means “twenty-three.” *Śaivakam* means *Śiva Purāṇa*. *Vāhnam* means *Agni Purāṇa*. It has fifteen thousand four hundred verses. *Skanda Purāṇa* has eighty-one thousand verses. Just as Kṛṣṇa is included in the listing of *avatāras* since he appears in this world as an *avatāra*, and yet is distinguished by the words *kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svavyam*, so *Bhāgavatam* is included in the list of *Purāṇas* since it is also a *Purāṇa*, but it again mentioned at the end as having eighteen thousand verses, to indicate its role as the emperor among the *Purāṇas*. Just as the *svayam* indicates the supreme position of Kṛṣṇa in the First Canto verse, the word *śrī* with *Bhāgavatam* indicates that it is the most complete among all *Purāṇas*.

|| 12.13.10 ||

*idaṁ bhagavatā pūrvam brahmaṇe nābhi-pankaje
sthitāya bhava-bhītāya kārūṇyāt samprakāśitam*

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord first revealed the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to Lord Brahmā. At the time, Brahmā, frightened by material existence, was sitting on the lotus flower that had grown from the Lord’s navel.

|| 12.13.11-12 ||

*ādi-madhyāvasāneṣu vairāgyākhyāna-saṁyutam
hari-līlā-kathā-vrātā- mṛtānandita-sat-suram*

*sarva-vedānta-sāraṁ yad brahmātmaikatva-lakṣaṇam
vastv advitīyaṁ tan-niṣṭhaṁ kaivalyaika-prayojanam*

TRANSLATION

From beginning to end, the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is full of the Lord's pastimes which give bliss to devotees endowed with a sense of renunciation. This Bhāgavatam is the essence of all Vedānta philosophy because its subject matter is one Brahman, a substance with no duality. The main goal of the work is merging.

COMMENTARY

This verse speaks of the subject matter and goal. The host (*vrāta*) of topics concerning the pastimes of the Lord is sweet. The devotees who are called *devatās* become blissful because of these topics. The subject of these topics is *bhakti*, and *bhakti* is sweet nectar. The goal is *prema*, because by *prema* one can taste the sweetness of *bhakti-rasa*. The phrase "it gives bliss to the devotees" means that the devotee's experience *prema*. By the use of the words "nectar" and "*devatās*", the *Bhāgavatam* giving nectar to the devotees is indicated. By this, the scripture's nature as Mohinī is indicated, since she is famous for giving nectar to the *devatās*. With a movement of her brow to the devotees who know her identity, unseen by others, she says, "Appearing in this way, I must be favorable to you. Cheating the demons, I will give you nectar."

By moving her eyebrows at the demons who do not know her identity, she says clearly, "By my appearance you should gain victory. Giving you nectar is a secondary affair. The main thing is that I will constantly give you astonishing bliss while you remain householders. I will serve a little nectar first to the lowly *devatās*." Similarly, the *Bhāgavatam* in half a verse, speaking of giving the devotees the nectar of the Lord's pastimes, indicates the goal of the *Bhāgavatam*. But the Lord has also said *parokṣa-vādā ṛṣayaḥ parokṣaṁ mama ca priyam*: the Vedic seers and *mantras* deal in esoteric terms, and I

also am pleased by such confidential descriptions. (SB 11.21.35) Thus having said what is unnoticed by most people, he speaks another subject and goal for the person who does not know the Lord, but thinks he knows scriptures. It is the essence of all Vedāntas, which is oneness with Brahman, an object with no duality. The work has Brahman as its subject (*niṣṭham*) and merging in Brahman as its main goal.

Some people explain the verse as follows. Because this scripture speaks of both *bhakti* and *jñāna*, after speaking of the subject and goal of *bhakti* and *prema*, the work then speaks of *jñāna* and merging as the subject and goal. Brahman is the subject. This work has as its goal merging (*kaivalyam*) as its one goal.

Others explain as follows. At the beginning of this work it is understood from the second verse that *bhakti* is the subject with the words (*dharmah projjhita-kaitavo 'tra*) and from the same verse with the words *sadyo hr̥dy avarudhyate atra kṛtibhiḥ* it is understood the *prema* is the goal. Thus by the predominance of *bhakti* over *jñāna* and liberation, its goal, in the whole work, *bhakti* is indicated as the main subject and *prema* is the goal.

It is also necessary to give an esoteric meaning to the verse so it becomes suitable for devotees, in the manner of Mohinī's appearance to both parties. The meaning *tan-niṣṭham* is as follows. This work remains (*stham*), having given up (*niṣṛtya*) Brahman and merging. The work has as its goal only the mood of exclusive devotion (*kaivalyam*), devoid of *jñāna*, *karma* and *Svarga*.

|| 12.13.13 ||

*prauṣṭhapadyām paurnamāsyām hema-simha-samanvitam
dadāti yo bhāgavatam sa yāti paramām gatim*

TRANSLATION

If on the full moon day of the month of Bhādra one places Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam on a golden throne and gives it as a gift, he will attain the supreme destination.

COMMENTARY

Prauṣṭhapadyām means “related to Bhādra month.” In that month Śukadeva completed the *Bhāgavatam*. One should see the *Uttara-khaṇḍa* of *Padma Purāṇa*. The king of all scriptures, the sun among the Purāṇas, should be seated on a throne and treated royally. The king of all planets, the sun, enters into Simha or Leo zodiac sign during Bhādra month. Thus it is like a king seated on his throne (*simhāsana*). This is the metaphor.

|| 12.13.14 ||

*rājante tāvad anyāni purāṇāni satām gaṇe
yāvad bhāgavatam naiva śrūyate 'mṛta-sāgaram*

TRANSLATION

All other Puranic scriptures shine forth in the assembly of saintly devotees only as long as that great ocean of nectar, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, is not heard.

COMMENTARY

This is the king of all scriptures. That is indicated by the verb *rājante*. The other Purāṇas reign as kings until *Bhāgavatam* appears, since *Bhāgavatam* is like an emperor among kings. Or the verb *rājante* indicates “shining.” The other Purāṇas shine like stars in the night, until *Bhāgavatam* rises like the sun.

|| 12.13.15 ||

*sarva-vedānta-sāram hi śrī-bhāgavatam iṣyate
tad-rasāmṛta-triptasya nānyatra syād ratiḥ kvacit*

TRANSLATION

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is declared to be the essence of all Vedānta philosophy. One who has felt satisfaction from its sweet *rasa* will never be attracted to any other literature.

|| 12.13.16 ||

*nimna-gānām yathā gaṅgā devānām acyuto yathā
vaiṣṇavānām yathā sambhuḥ purāṇānām idam tathā*

TRANSLATION

Just as the Gaṅgā is the greatest of all rivers, Acyuta is the supreme among deities and Lord Śiva is the greatest of Vaiṣṇavas, so Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the greatest of all Purāṇas.

|| 12.13.17 ||

*kṣetrānām caiva sarveṣām yathā kāśī hy anuttamā
tathā purāṇa-vrātānām śrīmad-bhāgavatam dvijāḥ*

TRANSLATION

O *brāhmaṇas*, in the same way that the city of Kāśī is unexcelled among holy places, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is supreme among all the Purāṇas.

|| 12.13.18 ||

*śrīmad-bhāgavatam purāṇam amalam yad vaiṣṇavānām priyam
yasmin pāramahaṁsyam ekam amalam jñānam param gīyate
tatra jñāna-virāga-bhakti-sahitam naiṣkarmyam āvīkṛtam
tac chṛṇvan su-paṭhan vicāraṇa-paro bhaktyā vimucyen naraḥ*

TRANSLATION

This glorious *Bhāgavatam* is the spotless Purāṇa, and therefore dear to the Vaiṣṇavas. It also describes pure *jñāna* beneficial even for *paramahamsas*. This *Bhāgavatam* rejects the process of *karma* and is endowed with the processes of *jñāna*, *vairāgya* and *bhakti*. Anyone who contemplates Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and who properly hears and chants it with devotion becomes completely liberated.

COMMENTARY

This verse explains *Bhāgavatam*'s supreme position. This Purāṇa alone is endowed with all glory (*śrīmat*), since it does not have contamination arising from the three *guṇas* (*amalam*). Because of this it is dear to the devotees. This shows the excellence of its *bhakti*. Even those who are greedy to attain *jñāna* arising from *bhakti*, those who have attained *jñāna* and those who are *ātmārāmas* should take shelter of this work. *Pāramahaṁsyam* means "beneficial for *paramahamsas*." In this *Bhāgavatam*, knowledge beneficial for

paramahamsas, the best (*param*) knowledge, since it arises from *bhakti*, is explained. Those who are practicing *jñāna* should hear this work. It is completely without *karma* (*naiṣkarmyam*).

|| 12.13.19 ||

*kasmai yena vibhāsito 'yam atulo jñāna-pradīpaḥ purā
tad-rūpeṇa ca nārādāya munaye kṛṣṇāya tad-rūpiṇā
yogīndrāya tad-ātmanātha bhagavad-rātāya kārūnyatas
tac chuddham vimalam viśokam amṛtam satyam param dhīmahī*

TRANSLATION

I meditate upon that pure, spotless Nārāyaṇa, who is free from suffering and death and who previously revealed this incomparable lamp of knowledge to Brahmā. Brahmā then spoke it to the sage Nārada, who narrated it to Kṛṣṇa-dvaipāyana Vyāsa. Śrīla Vyāsa revealed this *Bhāgavatam* to the greatest of sages, Śukadeva Gosvāmī, and Śukadeva mercifully spoke it to Mahārāja Parīkṣit.

COMMENTARY

He invokes auspiciousness, with meditation on the Lord who started the *sampradaya* of *Bhāgavatam* knowledge. *Kasmai* means “Brahmā.” It is inflexed like a pronoun as a poetic license. The twelve volumes of *Bhāgavatam* previously, at the beginning of the *kalpa*, was given by Brahmā to Nārada. By Nārada it was given to Vyāsadeva. Vyāsadeva gave it to Śukadeva. Śukadeva gave it to King Parīkṣit (*bhagavat-rātāya*). I meditate on the form of Nārāyaṇa (*tat param satyam*). Just as the work began with *gāyatrī* it concludes with *gāyatrī*. *Gāyatrī* is equated with knowledge of the Vedas. Thus this work is equated with knowledge of the Vedas.

|| 12.13.20 ||

*namas tasmai bhagavate vāsudevāya sākṣiṇe
ya idam kṛpayā kasmai vyācacakṣe mumukṣave*

TRANSLATION

I offer respects to the Supreme Lord, Vāsudeva, the witness of my task, who mercifully explained this to Brahmā when he desired liberation.

COMMENTARY

Having ended the scripture, he offers respects to his personal deity. I offer respects to the son of Vasudeva, the witness: he directly sees whether I am a devotee or am devoid of *bhakti*, whether I am righteous or sinful, whether I know or do not know how to explain the intended meaning of *Bhāgavatam*. I take shelter of his mercy. I am such a rascal. Even Brahmā, without his mercy, does not know the meaning of *Bhāgavatam*. Vāsudeva mercifully explained it to him, who desired liberation. Previous to his request for the knowledge, Brahmā desired liberation. After the instructions however, he desired *prema* and became indifferent to liberation.

|| 12.13.21 ||

*yogīndrāya namas tasmai śukāya brahma-rūpine
saṁsāra-sarpa-daṣṭam yo viṣṇu-rātam amūmucat*

TRANSLATION

I offer my humble obeisances to Śukadeva Gosvāmī, the best of *yogīs*, and the very form of *para-brahman*, who saved Mahārāja Parīkṣit, bitten by the snake of material existence.

COMMENTARY

He offers respects to Śukadeva. He is addressed as king of the *yogīs* because he is the chief master of *bhakti-yoga*, *jñāna-yoga*, *karma-yoga* and *aṣṭāṅga-yoga*. He is the very form of *parabrahman* (*brahma-rūpine*). He delivered Parīkṣit who was bitten by the snake of *saṁsāra*. Just as the Lord removed Arjuna's illusion by teaching the *Gītā*, and he removed Uddhava's illusion by instructions in the Eleventh Canto, Śukadeva removed Parīkṣit *saṁsāra* by the *Bhāgavatam*. This is a statement made for common people. Actually, since all three are eternal associates of the Lord, they have no trace of *saṁsāra*. It is seen that the system for the continuation of beneficial teachings takes support of a single, great devotee among many merciful devotees who expertly bears the task of making the *jīvas* receive benefit. In this case the word *viṣṇu-rāta* is used to describe Parīkṣit. *Viṣṇu-rāta* means Parīkṣit who was given (*rāta*) to

Yudhiṣṭhira by the mercy of Viṣṇu, or who was received by the Lord himself. What foolish person could think he was affected by *samsāra*? Moreover, just as in this world a *mantra* to remove poison does not depend on material knowledge, so whether one knows or does not know material subjects, the sounds of the *Bhāgavatam* completely uproot the poison of *samsāra*. This is the intention of the speaker in choosing his words.

|| 12.13.22 ||

*bhave bhave yathā bhaktiḥ pādayos tava jāyate
tathā kuruṣva deveśa nāthas tvam no yataḥ prabho*

TRANSLATION

O Lord of lords! O master! Please grant us pure devotional service at your lotus feet, life after life.

|| 12.13.23 ||

*nāma-sankīrtanam yasya sarva-pāpa pranāśanam
pranāmo duḥkha-śamanas tam namāmi harim param*

TRANSLATION

I offer my respectful obeisances unto the Supreme Lord, whose names when chanted, destroy all sins. Offering of obeisances to him destroys all suffering.

COMMENTARY

I offer respects to *guru* and Kṛṣṇa, and to the ocean of mercy, Lokanatha.¹ O Kṛṣṇa Caitanya! O Gauraṅga along with your associates! O unconditional ocean of mercy! Please fill me with *prema*. Glory to the couple expert in pastimes of *rasa* in Vṛndāvana! Please lead me to your *gopī* associates! Be merciful to this commentary! Though I am ignorant, you have made me write this commentary. O Kṛṣṇa! O *Bhāgavatam*! Be pleased with this commentary! O protector of the cows! Though I am not intelligent, please accept and protect this work! Drink its milk and, if you are

¹ Viṣvanāthas dīksā line is as follows: Lokanātha, Narottama, Gaṅgānārāyaṇa Cakravartī, Kṛṣṇacarāṇa Cakravartī, Rādhārāmana Cakravartī, Viṣvanātha Cakravartī.

pleased, give it to your devotees. This commentary has been completed on the sixth lunar day of the waxing moon, in Māgha month, 1626 Śaka era.

May the devotees of the Lord relish this commentary! Since the most learned among the learned have no taste for the *Bhāgavatam* whose sole function is to play in the waves of sweetness—a mood incomprehensible to the six philosophies, let it remain an unfortunate creation, defective in every word for them, though it is actually endowed with all good qualities and dances with divine wisdom.

There is no harm if the *Bhāgavatam* contains *ārambha-vāda* (*asatkārya-vāda*) of the Vaiśeṣikas and Nyāyikas,² *pariṇāma-vāda* (*satkārya-vāda*) of the Sāṅkhya philosophers or *vivarta-vāda* of the Advaitins. The final conclusion of *bhakti*, the jewel of human endeavors, will be seen by devotion, by the mercy of *guru*. Therefore I offer repeated respects to my *guru*. O devotees! This foolish person with fickle mind is crying at your door. Like a dog without a master, may he receive a little mercy!

I offer respects to Govardhana, the best of the Lord's servants. I offer repeated respects to Rādhā-kuṇḍa and Kṛṣṇa-kuṇḍa.

Thus ends the commentary on Thirteenth Chapter of the Twelfth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas*.

² This is also called *paramāṇu-vada*.

ABOUT BHANU SWAMI

His Holiness Bhanu Swami Maharaja was born in Canada on the 26th December 1948 to the most fortunate Japanese parents. HH Bhanu Swami Maharaja is one of the senior disciples of His Divine Grace A.C Bhaktivedanta Swami Srila Prabhupada, founder acharya of ISKCON, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. He holds a BA Degree in Oriental fine arts history from the University of British Colombia. He joined the Hare Krishna movement in India in 1970. Initiated in 1971 by Srila Prabhupada, he took sannyasa vows in 1984. Bhanu Swami was personally instructed in the art of Deity worship by Srila Prabhupada, and within ISKCON he has become an authority on the topic. He is a great inspiration for many devotees around the world and he preaches Krishna consciousness in India ,Japan, Malaysia, Australia and Russia.

By 1972, His Holiness Bhanu Swami maharaja already earned credit from Srila Prabhupada for his exact Sanskrit pronunciation, expertise in cooking and excellence in deity worship. He also began to translate Srila Prabhupada's books into Japanese.

A scholar in Sanskrit and Bengali, Bhanu Swami has translated more than twenty significant works of the Gaudiya Vaishnava canon. Many of these works are commentaries from primary members of the Gaudiya sampradaya .

Bhanu Swami is a quiet achiever and has studied a variety of disciplines including martial arts, Reiki healing, Carnatic music (specifically veena). He is a reputed astrologer.

Bhanu Swami's depth of scholarship has enabled him to create presentations on topics like karma, reincarnation, yoga and Srimad Bhagavatam. He continues with this translation service to this day, giving us the nectar from the Bengali and Sanskrit works of the previous Vaishnava acharyas to enhance our understanding of the Gaudiya Vaishnava philosophy. He is also a member of the Governing Body Commission(GBC) of ISKCON.

Ānanda Vṛndavana Campū	- Kavikarṇapūra
Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu	- Rūpa Goswāmī
Bhakti Tattva Viveka	- Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura
Bhāvārtha Saṅgraha	- Kavikarṇapūra
Brahma-saṁhitā	- Jīva Goswāmī
Brahma Sūtras	- Baladeva Vidyābhūṣanā
Caitanya Siksamṛta	- Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura
Daśa Mūla Tattva	- Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura
Dāna keli kaumudī	- Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura
Defining Parakīya & Defeating Svakīya	- Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura
Gāyathṛī Vyākhyā	- Jīva Goswāmī
Gītā Bhūṣaṇa	- Baladeva Vidyābhūṣanā
Gīta-Govinda	- Jayadeva Goswāmī
Gopāla Campū	- Jīva Goswāmī
Gopāla-tāpanī-upaniṣad	- Jīva Goswāmī
Harināma Cintāmaṇi	- Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura
Krama Sandarbha	- Jīva Goswāmī
Kṛṣṇa Karṇāmṛta	- Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura
Kṛsnahika Kaumudī	- Kavikarṇapūra
Laghu Bhāgavatāmṛta	- Rūpa Goswāmī
Mādhurya Kādambinī	- Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura
Navadvīpa Dhāma Māhātmya	- Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura
Rāga Vartma Candrikā	- Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura
Śrī Aiśvarya Kādambinī	- Baladeva Vidyābhūṣanā
Śrī Chamatkāra Candrikā	- Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura
Śrī Govinda Lilāmṛta	- Śrī Krishna Dasa Kaviraja Goswāmī
Śrī Īsopaniṣad (Commentaries)	- Madhvācārya, Vedānta deśika, Baladeva Vidyābhūṣanā, & Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura
Śrī Kṛṣṇa Bhajanāmṛta	- Śrīla Narahari Sarakāra Ṭhākura
Śrī Lalitā-Mādhavaḥ	- Rūpa Goswāmī
Śrī Mukta Caritram	- Raghunātha Dāsa Goswāmī
Śrī Vidagdha-Mādhavaḥ	- Rūpa Goswāmī
Ṣaṭ-Sandarbhas (6 Books)	- Jīva Goswāmī
Sat kriyā sāra dipikā	- Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Goswāmī
Sarartha Darśini(Śrīmad Bhāgavatam)	- Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura
(Canto 1 to 12) in 9 Volumes	
Sārārtha Varṣinī Ṭikā	- Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura
Sri Mādhava Mahotsava	- Jīva Goswāmī
Ujjvala Nilamaṇi	- Rūpa Goswāmī
Ujjvala Nilamaṇi kiraṇa	- Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura
Vraja rīti Cintāmaṇi	- Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura
Vaiṣṇava toṣaṇī	- Jīva Goswāmī