

श्रीमद्भागवतं महापुराणम्

Śrīmad-bhāgavata

The Great Antiquity of the Lord

A bilingual translation
With the Comms. of
Śrīdharasvāmin
and
Śrīnātha Cakravartin
Version 0.01

Translation by Neal Delmonico
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Introduction

This bilingual translation of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* in addition to providing a careful translation in close proximity to the text itself, contains all the major commentators on the text who are regarded as important to the Caitanya Vaiṣṇava tradition. Naturally, that includes the pre-Caitanyite commentary of Śrīdharasvāmin, whom Caitanya himself thought of as *the* authoritative interpreter of the *Bhāgavata*, in spite of some leanings towards a nondual interpretation of some aspects of the text. The text itself is certainly amenable to such interpretations. The kind of Vaiṣṇavism the *Bhāgavata* presents is an earlier version of Vaiṣṇavism in which *advaita* and *dvaita* were complementary, or at least not thought of as at odds with each other. There is no doubt that for Śrīdharasvāmin the *advaita* tradition had found an important place for *bhakti*. Still, the impersonal aspect of the absolute was not to be excluded. Later, traditions that wanted to emphasize the personal or social character of deity over the impersonal, or absolute nature of deity had to do a hermeneutic polka in order to support their cases on the basis of the *Bhāgavata*, as did those who wanted to impose a purely impersonal (*advaita*) interpretation on the text. The former group includes the Caitanya Vaiṣṇavas, who, however, through Śrī Jīva Gosvāmin's attempted reconciliation of difference and non-difference, found a place for both alternatives while still favoring the social character of Kṛṣṇa. Nevertheless, the indebtedness of Caitanya Vaiṣṇava interpretations of the *Bhāgavata* to the interpretations of Śrīdharasvāmin and those who came before him is indelible.

The earliest Caitanyite interpreter of the *Bhāgavata* was Śrīnātha Cakravartin, a direct follower of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and the teacher of the great Caitanyite poet Kavikarnāpūra. His views and those of his prolific disciple were more or less superceded by the more sophisticated works of the Gosvāmins of Vṛndāvana (Sanātana, Rūpa, and Śrī Jīva). To some degree they represent a direction not taken by the main current of the Caitanya tradition. Nevertheless, their works are accepted as authentic efforts to express in words and

through scriptural authority the divine manifestations they perceived in the life of Caitanya and the differences between the works of Śrīnātha Cakravartin and Kavikarṇapūra and the works of the Vṛndāvana circle is never much noticed. At any rate, Śrīnātha Cakravartin's work is an important historical expression of the early views of an important branch of the followers of Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Śrīnātha Cakravartin begins his commentary with a verse that is often cited to summarize the view of Śrī Caitanya and presents in a nutshell his line of interpretation of the *Bhāgavata*. Here is a translation of that introductory verse:

To be worshiped is Bhagavān,
the son of the lord of Vraja,
and his land Vṛndāvana.
Delightful is that form of service
devised by the wives of Vraja.
Scripture is the *Bhāgavata*,
a flawless means of knowing;
divine love is the great goal of humankind.
Such is the view
of Gaura Mahāprabhu.
Therefore towards it
goes our highest respect.¹ (1)

¹Śrīnātha Cakravartin, *Śrī Caitanya-mata-maṅjuṣā*, 1.1.1:

आराध्यो भगवान् ब्रजेशतनयस्तद्धाम वृन्दावनं
रम्या काचिदुपासना ब्रजवधूवर्गेण या कल्पिता ।
शास्त्रं भागवतं प्रमाणममलं प्रेमा पुमर्थो महान्
इत्थं गौरमहाप्रभोर्मतस्तत्रादरो नः परः ॥ १ ॥

Part I

First Canto

Chapter 1

The Questions of the Seers (ऋषिप्रश्नः)

श्रीधरस्वामिकृतभावार्थदीपिका

श्रीगणेशाय नमः ॥

श्रीगोपालकृष्णाय नमः ॥

ओं नमः परमहंसास्वादितचरणकमलचिन्मकरन्दाय
भक्तजनमानसनिवासाय
श्रीरामचन्द्राय ॥

वागीशा यस्य वदने लक्ष्मीर्यस्य च वक्षसि ।

यस्यास्ते हृदये संवित्तं नृसिंहं भजे ॥ १ ॥

विश्वसर्गविसर्गादिनवलक्षणलक्षितम् ।

श्रीकृष्णाख्यं परं धाम जगद्धाम ननाम तत् ॥ २ ॥

माधवोमाधवावीशौ सर्वसिद्धिविधायिनौ ।

वन्दे परस्परात्मानौ परस्परनुतिप्रियौ ॥ ३ ॥

सम्प्रदायानुरोधेन पौर्वापर्यानुसारतः ।

श्रीभागवतभावार्थदीपिकेयं प्रतन्यते ॥ ४ ॥

क्वाहं मन्दमतिः क्लेदं मन्थनं क्षीरवारिधेः ।

किं तत्र परमाणुर्वै यत्र मज्जति मन्दरः ॥ ५ ॥

मूकं करोति वाचालं पङ्गुं लङ्घयते गिरिम् ।

यत्कृपा तमहं वन्दे परमानन्दमाधवम् ॥ ६ ॥

Śrīdharasvāmin's Bhāvārtha-dīpikā

Obeisance to Śrī Gaṇeśa!

Obeisance to Śrī Gopālakṛṣṇa!

Om! Obeisance to Śrī Rāmacandra,
the residence of the desires of the *bhaktas*,
the spiritual nectar of whose lotus-like feet
is relished by the highest geese [highest renunciants]!

I worship Nṛsimha,
in whose mouth is Sarasvatī,
on whose chest is Lakṣmī,
and in whose heart is pure awareness. (1)

I bow to the home of the universe,
the highest abode called Śrī Kṛṣṇa,
who is defined by the nine traits
beginning with the creation
and sub-creation of the world. (2)

I praise the two gods,
Mādhava and Umādhava (Śiva),
who bestow all achievements,
who are the very selves of each other,
who love to bow to one another. (3)

In compliance with my community
and following the proper sequence,
this *Lamp on the Intended Meaning
of the Śrī Bhāgavata* is composed. (4)

Where is dull-witted me
and where this churning
of the ocean of milk?
Can an atom stay afloat
where Mount Mandara has sunk? (5)

It makes the dumb vociferous
and the lame cross over mountains,
his compassion does; him do I praise,
Mādhava of the highest bliss. (6)

श्रीभागवताभिधः सुरतरुस्ताराङ्कुरः सज्जनिः
 स्कन्धैर्द्वादशभिस्ततः प्रविलसद्भक्त्यालवालोदयः ।
 द्वात्रिंशत्त्रिंशतं च यस्य विलसच्छाखाः सहस्राण्यलं
 पर्णान्यष्टदशेष्टदोऽतिसुलभो वर्वर्ति सर्वोपरि ॥ ७ ॥

श्रीनाथचक्रवर्तिकृतचैतन्यमतमञ्जूषा

आराध्यो भगवान् ब्रजेशतनयस्तद्धाम वृन्दावनं
 रम्या काचिद्दुपासना ब्रजवधूवर्गेण या कल्पिता ।
 शास्त्रं भागवतं प्रमाणममलं प्रेमा पुमर्थो महान्
 इत्थं गौरमहाप्रभोर्मतमस्तत्रादरो नः परः ॥ १ ॥

श्रीकृष्णचैतन्यमतानुसारि यत्किञ्चिदस्मिन्समञ्जसत्वम् ।
 तस्मिन् समाधावपि शक्तिहीनः श्रीनाथनामा विदधाति कश्चित् ॥ २ ॥

उपक्रमे चाप्युपसंहृतौ च
 कृष्णप्रकर्षोऽत्र मया निरूप्यः ।
 क्षमध्वमुच्चैर्मम बाल्यमेतन्
 नमो नमो ब्रह्मविदां वरिष्ठाः ॥ ३ ॥

श्रीधरस्वामिपादानां जीयाद्भावार्थदीपिका ।
 आलोकेन यदीयेन सर्वः पन्था विलोक्यते ॥ ४ ॥

न वादिनिग्रहः साध्यो न शिष्यानुग्रहोऽपि नः ।
 उभयायितरूपस्य मनसो ह्युभयं मतम् ॥ ५ ॥

The divine tree called the *Śrī Bhāgavata*,
 sprouted of salvation and born of the truth,
 with trunks twelve and rising from a basin of shining *bhakti*,
 with three hundred and thirty-two glowing branches,
 eighteen thousands leaves, a bestower of wishes,
 very easy to reach, shines brightly above all others. (7)

Śrīnātha Cakravartin's Caitanya-mata-mañjuṣā

To be worshiped is Bhagavān,
 the son of the Lord of Vraja,
 and his land Vṛndāvana.
 Delightful is that form of service
 devised by the wives of Vraja.
 Scripture is the *Bhāgavata*,
 a flawless means of knowing;
 divine love is the great goal of humankind.
 Such is the view
 of Gaura Mahāprabhu.
 Therefore towards it
 goes our highest respect. (1)

Whatever is unsound in this,
 while following the view of Śrī Kṛṣṇacaitanya,
 has been produced by someone named Śrīnātha
 who has not the power to resolve it. (2)

In the beginning and in the end,
 I have here described
 the superiority of Kṛṣṇa.
 Please forgive my extreme immaturity!
 Obeisance, obeisance, o Best Knowers of Brahman! (3)

Glory to the *Lamp of Intended Meaning*
 of Śrīdharasvāmipāda,
 by the light of which the whole path is seen! (4)

Neither the defeat of opponents
 nor the gracing of disciples is our goal.
 A mind that takes the form of both
 must indeed be considered divided. (5)

परात्परत्वं श्रीकृष्णे नित्यविग्रहलीलता ।
 प्राधान्यं भगवद्भक्तेः प्रेम्नि तत्फलरूपता ॥ ६ ॥
 प्रेमाकारा वृत्तिरेव भक्तेश्वेकात्मतालभि ।
 गोपीभूत्तमभक्तित्वं रुक्मिणीप्रभृतिष्वपि ॥ ७ ॥
 श्रेष्ठ्यं सर्वपुराणेभ्यः स्वस्मिन् भागवताभिधे ।
 इति श्रीकृष्णचैतन्यचन्द्रस्य मतमुत्तमम् ॥ ८ ॥
 अत्रैव नः परा श्रद्धा परा नैसर्गिकी रतिः ।
 इदं भागवतं नाम पुराणं ब्रह्मसम्मितम् ॥ ९ ॥
 सर्ववेदेतिहासानां सारं सारं समुद्धृतम् ।
 कलौ नष्टदृशामेष पुराणार्कोऽधुनोदितः ॥ १० ॥
 इत्यादिवचनैरत्र स्वतःप्रामाण्यसूचकैः ।
 श्रुत्यन्तरपुराणाद्यैः संवादार्थं कृतो ग्रहः ॥ ११ ॥
 उपक्रमोपसंहारतात्पर्यार्थस्य सङ्गतौ ।
 प्रसिद्धान्तोऽप्यन्यथैव व्याख्यातव्यः स्वकौशलैः ॥ १२ ॥
 तत्प्रामाण्यार्थमस्यैव वचनान्तरसंग्रहः ।
 श्रीमुखाम्भोजगीतायाः सूक्तेश्चेष्टप्रविग्रहः ॥ १३ ॥

Kṛṣṇa is best of the best,
his form and sport everlasting.
Bhakti for the Lord is foremost
and divine love its ripened fruit. (6)

The function itself in the form of prema
reaches in *bhaktas* oneness of self.
The highest *bhakti* is in the cowherd women
as well as in Rukmiṇī and the rest. (7)

Superiority over all the Purāṇas
resides in his own called the *Bhāgavata*.
This is the highest view
of Śrī Kṛṣṇacaitanya Candra. (8)

In that is our highest faith
and to that our highest attraction.
“This Purāṇa named *Bhāgavata*
is equal to Brahman”¹ (9)

“The essence of the essence is drawn
from the Vedas and histories.”²
“In Kali for those who’ve lost their sight
this Purāṇa has now arisen.”³ (10)

Because of these and other statements
indicating its self-evidential nature,
citation from other śrutis and Purāṇas
is done only for the sake of concurrence. (11)

For reaching agreement in the opening,
conclusion, and intended meaning,
even the accepted meaning
must be explained by one’s own skillfulness. (12)

Other statements of this very work
are gathered to give authenticity to that,
along with the agreeable dividing up
of the well-spoken song of the blessed lotus lips.⁴ (13)

¹Bhāg. 1.3.40.

²ibid., 1.3.41

³ibid., 1.3.43.

⁴That is, proof texts are also taken from the well-spoken *Song of the Lord*, the *Bhagavad-gītā*.

पूर्णं ब्रह्म परं ब्रह्म परमं ब्रह्म च क्वचित् ।
 नरः पुमान्वासुदेवः परः पुरुष इत्यपि ॥ १४ ॥
 ईशश्चापीश्वरश्चैव भूमा च भगवानिह ।
 अधोक्षजो हृषीकेशः क्वचिन्नारायणोऽपि च ।
 नामान्येतानि विष्णुश्च कृष्णार्थान्यत्र केवलम् ॥ १५ ॥

जन्माद्यस्य यतोऽन्वयादितरतश्चार्थेष्वभिज्ञः स्वराट्
 तेने ब्रह्म हृदा य आदिकवये मुह्यन्ति यत्सूरयः ।
 तेजोवारिमृदां यथा विनिमयो यत्र त्रिसर्गोऽमृषा
 धाम्ना स्वेन सदा निरस्तकुहकं सत्यं परं धीमहि ॥ १ ॥

Full Brahman, Superior Brahman,
and sometimes Supreme Brahman,
Man, Male, Vāsudeva and Superior Male, too,
Lord⁵ and God,⁶ The Whole⁷ and here Bhagavān
Beneath Sense Perception,⁸ Lord of the Senses⁹
and sometimes Nārāyaṇa,¹⁰ too,
those names and Viṣṇu as well
only refer to Kṛṣṇa here. (14-15)

Let us meditate¹¹ on the real supreme [lord] from whom comes the birth, [maintenance, and destruction] of this [universe] both directly and indirectly, who is completely aware of [all] objects, who is independent, who taught the sacred word to the first poet [creator] through his heart, about whom even the learned are confused, in whom the tri-creation [three strands] is not false as in the substitution of fire, water, and earth for one another, and who by his own splendor¹² is always free of deception. (1)

⁵Īśa.

⁶Īśvara

⁷Bhūman.

⁸Adhoksaja.

⁹Hṛṣīkeśa.

¹⁰He who rests in the waters.

¹¹The verbal form used here (*dhīmahī*) is an optative and it is in the first person plural (“we”). The optative mode expresses wish or desire and can often be translated as an entreaty or mild imperative, using English forms like “let us ... ” or “may we ...” The plural number is odd here. Śrīdhara says the plural number is used here because the author includes his disciples in his imperative. The idea that because of the use of this one word *dhīmahī* this first verse of the *Bhāgavata* is somehow related to the well known Sūrya or Brahma *gāyatrī* verse of the Ṛg Veda (3.62.10) is more than a little farfetched. Apart from the use of this one word, there is no other connection between this verse and that *gāyatrī* verse. It is not in the *gāyatrī* meter, nor is there any other connection between the words of this or that verse. Attempts to draw connections by various commentators are extremely artificial. Besides, Śrīdhara says that that form of the optative, the middle form (*ātmanepada*), is used primarily to fill out the meter. The correct form according to Śrīdhara is *dhyāyema*. A more important and intentional connection can be found between this verse and the *Brahma-sūtras*, one of the *sūtras* of which (*janmādyasya yataḥ* 1.1.2) forms the opening few words of this verse. It is doubtless the reason why to many in the Caitanya tradition the *Bhāgavata* is regarded as *the* authoritative commentary on the *Brahma-sūtras*. In addition, it places the composition of this verse at least after the composition of the *Brahma-sūtras*. This means according to Nakamura after 400-450 C.E. which is the earliest limit for the composition of the *Brahma-sūtras* as we now have it. Some portions of the work are may have been in existence much earlier than that, however, perhaps dating from a period before the Christian era. (Hajime Nakamura, *A History of Early Vedānta Philosophy*, 436)

¹²*Dhāman* can also mean abode. If taken so, it would mean “who along with his own abode is always free of deception.”

श्रीधरः—

अथ नानापुराणशास्त्रप्रबन्धैश्चित्तप्रसत्तिमलभमानस्तत्र तत्रापारितुष्यन्नारदोपदेशतः श्री-
मद्भगवद्गुणानुवर्णनप्रधानं भागवतशास्त्रं प्रारिप्सुर्वेदव्यासस्तत्प्रत्यूहनिवृत्त्यादिसिद्धये तत्प्र-
तिपाद्यपरदेवतानुस्मरणलक्षणं मङ्गलमाचरति जन्माद्यस्येति । परं परमेश्वरं धीमहि । ध्या-
यतेर्लिङ्गि च्छान्दसम् । ध्यायेमेत्यर्थः । बहुवचनं शिष्याभिप्रायम् । तम् एव स्वरूपतटस्थल-
क्षणाभ्याम् उपलक्षयति । तत्र स्वरूपलक्षणं सत्यमिति । सत्यत्वे हेतुः । यत्र यस्मिन् ब्रह्मणि
त्रयाणां मायागुणानां तमोरजःसत्त्वानां सर्गो भूतेन्द्रियदेवतारूपोऽमृषा सत्यः । यत्सत्यतया
मिथ्यासर्गोऽपि सत्यवत् प्रतीयते तं परं सत्यमित्यर्थः । अत्र दृष्टान्तः—तेजोवारिमृदां यथा
विनिमय इति । विनिमयो व्यत्ययोऽन्यस्मिन्नन्यावभासः । स यथाऽधिष्ठानसत्तया सद्वत्प्रती-
यत इत्यर्थः । तत्र तेजसि वारिबुद्धिर्मरीचितोये प्रसिद्धा । मृदि काचादौ वारिबुद्धिर्वारिणि च
काचादिबुद्धिरित्यादि यथायथमूह्यम् । यद्वा तस्यैव परमार्थसत्यत्वप्रतिपादनाय तदितरस्य
मिथ्यात्वमुक्तम् । यत्र मृषैवायं त्रिसर्गो न वस्तुतः सन्निति । यत्रेत्यनेन प्रतीतमुपाधिसंबन्धं
वारयति । स्वेनैव धाम्ना महसा निरस्तं कुहकं कपटं मायालक्षणं यस्मिंस्तम् ।

Śrīdhara:

Now, with his mind assuming a state of clarity by means of the many Purāṇas and scriptural works and yet not feeling satisfied by those, Vedavyāsa wishing in accordance with the advice of Nārada to undertake the *Bhāgavata* scripture, a work describing the qualities of Śrī Bhagavān, performs an act of auspiciousness,¹³ beginning with the words *janmādyasya*, that is characterized by remembering the highest deity who is to be established by that work. [This is done] in order to overcome obstacles and so forth.

Param means the Supreme Lord (*parameśvara*). Let us meditate on the Supreme Lord. The *liñ* form of the verb *dhyai* (to meditate) is used for the meter. The form should be *dhyāyema*, “let us meditate.” The plural is intended to include the author’s disciples. He characterizes that Supreme Lord by his essential (*svarūpa*) and marginal traits (*taṣastha-lakṣaṇa*).¹⁴ Among them, the essential trait is real (*satya*). The reason for his being real is that in him, in Brahman, the creation of the three threads of *māyā*, namely opacity, translucency, and clarity, which have the form of elements, senses, and deities [respectively], is not false; that is, it is real. He by the reality of whom even the false creation is perceived as real is the supreme real. This is the meaning.

Here there is an example: as in the substitution of fire, water, and earth. Substitution means transposition, the appearance of one thing in another. Like that, something is perceived as real through the reality of its substratum. In particular, the perception of water in fire is well known in case of the water of a mirage. In earth in the form of glass and so forth there is the perception of water and in water there is the perception of glass. Thus is it to be suitably understood. Or, in order to establish only him as having supreme reality, what is other than him is said to be false. “In whom this tri-creation is unreal since it is not trully existing.” By the word *yatra*, then, he excludes the perceived relationship [of the Supreme Lord] with an adjunct quality (*upādhi*). He is the one in whom deceit, charactized by *māyā*, is removed by his own *dhāman*, might or power.

¹³*Maṅgalācaraṇa* means an act meant to bring about auspiciousness. In most cases this means the composition of a verse that praises the preferred god or goddess of the author and asks for the blessing of that deity for the successful completion of a work or undertaking.

¹⁴A marginal or *taṣastha* trait is one that, while not coexisting with the thing it characterizes, serves to distinguish that thing from other things. (*Bhāratīya Darśana Koṣa*, vol. 3, part 1, 61.)

तटस्थलक्षणमाह जन्मादीति । अस्य विश्वस्य जन्मस्थितिभङ्गा यतो भवन्ति तं धीम-
हीति । तत्र हेतुः । अन्वयादितरतश्च । अर्थेष्वकाशादिकार्येषु परमेश्वरस्य सदूपेणान्वयाद-
कार्येभ्यश्च खपुष्पादिभ्यस्तद्व्यतिरेकात् । यद्वा अन्वयशब्देनानुवृत्तिः । इतरशब्देन व्यावृत्तिः ।
अनुवृत्तत्वात्सद्रूपं ब्रह्म कारणं मृत्सुवर्णादिवत् । व्यावृत्तत्वाद्विश्वं कार्यं घट-कुण्डलादिवदि-
त्यर्थः । यद्वा सावयवत्वादन्वयव्यतिरेकाभ्यां यदस्य जन्मादि तत्ततो भवतीति संबन्धः ।
तथा च श्रुतिः—यतो वा इमानि भूतानि जायन्ते । येन जातानि जीवन्ति । यत्प्रयन्त्यभि-
संविशन्तीत्याद्या । स्मृतिश्च

यतः सर्वाणि भूतानि भवन्त्यादियुगागमे ।
यस्मिंश्च प्रलयं यान्ति पुनरेव युगक्षये ॥

इत्याद्या ।

तर्हि किं प्रधानं जगत्कारणत्वाद्धेयमभिप्रेतं नेत्याह । अभिज्ञो यस्तम् । स ईक्षत लो-
कान् नु सृजा इति । स इमांल्लोकानसृजत इति श्रुतेः । ईक्षतेर्नाशब्दमिति न्यायाच्च । तर्हि
किं जीवो ध्येयः स्यान्नेत्याह । स्वराट् स्वेनैव राजते यस्तम् । स्वतःसिद्धज्ञानमित्यर्थः ।
तर्हि किं ब्रह्मा ध्येयः हिरण्यगर्भः समवर्तताग्रे भूतस्य जातः पतिरेक आसीदिति श्रुतेः ।
नेत्याह—तेन इति । आदिकवये ब्रह्मणेऽपि ब्रह्म चेदं यस्तेने प्रकाशितवान् ।

The marginal characteristic he conveys with “from whom comes the birth ...” From whom comes the birth, the abiding, and the breaking of this world, let us meditate on him. The reason for that: because of his connection and disconnection. Because of the connection through the Supreme Lord’s being-form (*sad-rūpa*) with existing things such as space, and so forth and because of his disconnection from unreal things like sky flowers and so forth. Or, connection means following after (*anuvṛtti*) and disconnection means separating from (*vyāvṛtti*). Because it is followed after, the being-form, Brahman, is a cause like earth, gold and so forth. Because it is separated from [it’s cause] the world is an effect like pots, rings and so forth. Or, because of having parts the birth and so forth of this [world] comes from that both directly and indirectly. Such is their relationship. And so says revelation (*śruti*):

Or, from whom these beings are born, by whom, once born, they survive, and to whom they go and enter into.¹⁵

And tradition (*smṛti*):

From whom all beings are born at the coming of the first age and in whom they go once more to their destruction at the end of the age.¹⁶

Then is primordial matter (*pradhāna*) meant to be meditated on because it is a cause of the universe? To this he [the author] says: no. One who conscious (*abhijñā*) is to be meditated on; as it is said in revelation: “he gazed and [thought] ‘I will create the worlds’”¹⁷ and “he created these worlds.”¹⁸ And also from argument: “because of [the statement in revelation] ‘he sees,’ it [the cause] is not [primordial matter]; it [primordial matter, *pradhāna*] is not found in revelation.”¹⁹ Then, should the living being (*jīva*) to be meditated on? No. He says: the independent (*svarāt*) one, one who shines on his own which means one whose knowledge is self-accomplished. Then is Brahmā to be meditated on, since it says in revelation: “the golden embryo (*hiranya-garbha*) arose in the beginning; being born he was the one lord of the existent?”²⁰ No. He says: the one who extended, that is, revealed, this sacred word to the first poet (creator), Brahmā.

¹⁵Taittirīya U., 3.1.

¹⁶Mahābhārata., 13.135.11.

¹⁷Aitareya U., 1.1.1.

¹⁸ibid., 1.1.2.

¹⁹Brahma-sūtra, 1.1.5.

²⁰Rg Veda, 10.121.1.

यो ब्रह्माणं विदधाति पूर्वं यो वै वेदांश्च प्रहिणोति तस्मै ।
तं ह देवमात्मबुद्धिप्रकाशं मुमुक्षुर्वै शरणमहं प्रपद्ये ॥

इति श्रुतेः ।

ननु ब्रह्मणो अन्यतो वेदाध्ययनमप्रसिद्धम् । सत्यम्, तच्च हृदा मनसैव तेने विस्तृतवान् ।
अनेन बुद्धिवृत्तिप्रवर्तकत्वेन गायत्र्यर्थोऽपि दर्शितः । वक्ष्यति हि —

प्रचोदिता येन पुरा सरस्वती
वितन्वताऽजस्य सतीं स्मृतिं हृदि ।
स्वलक्षणा प्रादुराभूत्किलास्यतः
स मे ऋषीणामृषभः प्रसीदताम् ॥ इति ।

ननु ब्रह्मा स्वयमेव सुप्तप्रतिबुद्धन्यायेन वेदमुपलभतां नेत्याह । यद्यस्मिन् ब्रह्मणि सूरयो
मुह्यन्ति । तस्माद्ब्रह्मणोऽपि पराधीनज्ञानत्वात्स्वतःसिद्धज्ञानः परमेश्वर एव जगत्कारणम् ।
अतएव सत्योऽसतः सत्ताप्रदत्वाच्च परमार्थसत्यत्वेन सर्वज्ञत्वेन च निरस्तकुहकस्तम् । धी-
महीति गायत्र्या प्रारम्भेण च गायत्र्याख्यब्रह्मविद्यारूपमेतत्पुराणमिति दर्शितम् । यथोक्तं
मत्स्यपुराणे —

यत्राधिकृत्य गायत्रीं वण्यन्ते धर्मविस्तरः ।
वृत्रासुरवधोपेतं तद्भागवतमिष्यते ॥
लिखित्वा तच्च यो दद्याद्धेमसिंहसमन्वितम् ।
प्रौष्ठपद्यां पौर्णमास्यां स याति परमं पदम् ।
अष्टादशसहस्रं तत्पुराणं परिकीर्तितम् ॥

पुराणान्तरे च —

As revelation says:

I, wishing for liberation, take shelter of that God, who is revealer of awareness of the self, who created Brahmā previously and gave him the Vedas.²¹

Now, Brahmā's learning the Vedas from someone other than himself is unheard of. True, therefore [the author says] he stretches it, that is, expands upon it through his [Brahmā's] heart, that is, through his mind. By this, that is, by [his] being an initiator of objects of cognition, the meaning of the *gāyatrī*, too, is shown. He will say later:

Inpelled by whom previously Sarasvatī placed true recollection (*smṛti*) in the heart of the unborn one [Brahmā] and indeed as herself appeared from his mouth. May that most excellent of seers be pleased with me.²²

Now, let Brahmā himself perceive the Veda like one asleep who awakens. No. If in this matter of Brahman even the learned are confused, then Brahmā, too, is dependent on another for his knowledge. The Supreme Lord alone, whose knowledge is self-accomplished or independent of any other, is the cause of the universe. And, therefore, because it gives existence to the unreal, because it is the real of the highest order, and because it is the knower of all, the real (*satya*) is free of deception. On that let us meditate. And by starting with the *gāyatrī* it is shown that this Purāṇa has the form of the brahman-incantation called the *gāyatrī*. As it is said in the *Matsya Purāṇa*:

That in which, after placing the *gāyatrī* at its head, the details of *dharma* are described, replete with killing of Vṛtra, is the *Bhāgavata*. He who having copied it and gifted it on a stand adorned with a golden lion on the full moon day goes to the highest abode. Of eighteen thousand [verses] is that Purāṇa recognized to be.

And, in another Purāṇa [*Skandha Purāṇa*]:

²¹*Śvetāśvatara U.*, 6.18.

²²*Bhāg.*, 2.4.22.

ग्रन्थोऽष्टादशसाहस्रो द्वादशस्कन्धसंमितः ।
 हयग्रीवब्रह्मविद्या यत्र वृत्रवधस्तथा ।
 गायत्र्या च समारम्भस्तद्वै भागवतं विदुः ॥

पद्मपुराणेऽम्बरीषं प्रति गौतमोक्तिः —

अम्बरीष शुक्रप्रोक्तं नित्यं भागवतं शृणु ।
 पठस्व स्वमुखेनापि यदीच्छसि भवक्षयम् ॥ इति ।

अतएव भागवतं नामान्यदित्यपि न शङ्कनीयम् ॥ १ ॥

श्रीनाथचक्रवर्तिन् —

अत्र तावत् श्रीकृष्णस्य परात्परत्वं तल्लोकस्य च नित्यत्वम् प्रतिपादयन्नभिधेयतया म-
 ङ्गलरूपतया च श्रीवादरायणः श्रीभागवतारम्भे श्रीकृष्णं नमस्कुर्वन्नाह — जन्माद्यस्येत्यादि ।
 परं — क्षराक्षरातीतं पुरुषोत्तमं श्रीकृष्णं धीमहि । पालयति पिपत्तिं वा विश्वमिति पिपत्तेरणि
 सिद्धम् । वक्ष्यति च — (भा. ११.६.१४)

कालस्य ते प्रकृतिपुरुषयोः परस्य ।
 शं नस्तनोतु चरणः पुरुषोत्तमस्य इति

परत्वे पुरुषोत्तमत्वम् । पुरुषोत्तमो हि श्रीकृष्ण एव ; उक्तञ्च स्वयमेव (गी. १५.१८)

यस्मात्क्षरमतीतोऽहमक्षरादपि चोत्तमः ।
 अतोऽस्मि लोके वेदे च प्रथितः पुरुषोत्तमः ॥ इति ।

The book having eighteen thousand [verses], consisting of twelve books [trunks], in which are found the Hayagrīva brahman-incantation as well as the killing of Vṛtra and which begins with the *gāyatrī*, they know indeed to be the *Bhāgavata*.²³

In the *Padma Purāṇa*, Gautama addresses Ambarīṣa:

Ambarīṣa, listen daily to the *Bhāgavata*, spoken by Śuka. Read it out loud with your own lips, as well, if you desire the destruction of material existence.

Therefore, it should not be doubted that the *Bhāgavata* is some other work.

Śrīnātha Cakravartin:

Here, to start with, in establishing the supremacy of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the eternity of his world and in offering obeisance to Śrī Kṛṣṇa at the beginning of the *Śrī Bhāgatava* through an auspicious verse that conveys the meaning (*abhidheya*) of the text, Śrī Bādarāyaṇa says: “Let us meditate ...” Highest (*param*) means beyond the perishable and imperishable, the supreme person, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, on him let us meditate. He protects and saves the universe. Thus *param* comes from the verbal root $\sqrt{pṛ}$ (to protect. save) with the primary suffix *aṅ* added [to form *para*]. And he will say:

Let the feet of you, the supreme person, who are time, beyond (*param*) material nature and the self, bestow on us happiness.²⁴

In being beyond (*param*) is being the supreme person. The supreme person is indeed none other than Śrī Kṛṣṇa. He himself says:

Since I am beyond the perishable and above the imperishable, too, therefore, I am known in the Veda and in the world as the supreme person (*puruṣottama*).²⁵

²³The *Bhāgavata* is often said to have eighteen thousand verses. In actuality, it has somewhat less than that (16,256, according to Bryant). I am not sure what the Hayagrīva brahman-incantation refers to.

²⁴Bhāg., 11.6.14, second half.

²⁵Bg., 15.18.

एतेन विशेषणमर्यादया श्रीकृष्णरूपं विशेष्यमवगम्यते । तं विशिनष्टि — सदा सत्यं सृष्टेः प्रागन्ते मध्ये च सन्तम् । ... तत्किं तथा श्रीकृष्णतया वेत्याह — स्वेन स्वकीयेन रूपेण श्रीमुरलीविलासिविग्रहेण; यद्वा अं विष्णुं धीमहि । कोऽसौ विष्णुर्जगत्पालयिता वा? नेत्याह — परं ब्रह्मणोऽपि परं श्रीकृष्णमेव — विष्णुर्नारायणः कृष्ण इत्यादिकृष्णपर्यायात् । तदा यत्रेत्यस्य विशेषणम् — सतीति ।

पुनर्विशिनष्टि — निरस्तकुहकं कुं पृथिवीं घ्नन्तीति कुहनो दैत्याः कंसादयः; निरस्तं कुघ्नां कं शिरो येन; पृथिवीभारापहारकमित्यर्थः । अथवा, निरस्तानां कुघ्नां कं सुखं मोक्षो यस्मात्तम् — विष्णुना हतस्य कालनेमेः पुनः कंसरूपत्वेन जातत्वात्, अन्यकृतहनने मोक्षाप्रसक्तेः । श्रीकृष्णकृतहननेनैव (सः) इत्यनुपहितचैतन्यशक्तिस्तस्य परत्वं सुसिद्धमेव । नन्वायातमस्य परात्परत्वं सत्यत्वञ्च तन्नोकस्य कथं सत्यत्वमित्याह धाम्ना धाम परमवैकुण्ठं श्रीवृन्दावनम्, तेन सह सदा सत्यम्, सहार्थे तृतीया ।

धाम विशिनष्टि — स्वेन स्वं ब्रह्म, तदूपेण; उक्तञ्च (भाग्., ११.२०.३७) क्षेमं विन्दन्ति मत्स्थानं यद्ब्रह्म परमः विद्मः; यद्वा, स्वेन सदा — स्वस्वरूपेण विसरता, सद् विसरणगत्यादिषु क्षिपि । एवमेतदेव प्रपञ्चयति — यत्रेत्यादि; यत्र धाम्नि सति सत्ये त्रिसर्गस्त्रयानां गुणानां सर्गो मृषा — नास्त्येवेत्यर्थः (भाग्., २.९.१०) प्रवर्तते यत्र रजः इत्यादि न यत्र माया किमुतापरे हरेरनुव्रता यत्र सुरासुरार्चिताः इत्यन्तम् । तस्य मायाकार्यत्वे स्वरूपमाह — तेजोवारीत्यादि । एषां यथा विनिमयोऽतस्मिंस्तत्प्रतीतिर्यथा त्रिसर्ग इव त्रिसर्गोऽमृषा सत्यः । कुतः? स्वेन चित्स्वरूपेण हेतुना यथा तेजोवारिमृदामविनिमयो यथार्थभावः । यद्वा, त्रयाणां भूतभविष्यद्वर्तमानानां सर्गो मृषा — नास्त्येवे इत्यर्थः — (भाग्., २.२.१७) न यत्र काल इत्यादेः; यद्वा, त्रयाणामूर्द्धस्रोतःप्रभृतीनां प्राणिनां सर्गोऽमृषा — सत्य एव । ऊर्द्धस्रोतास्तर्वादिः, अधःस्रोताः स्त्रीपुरुषादिः, तिर्यक्स्रोतास्तु पशुपक्ष्यादिः । कुतः? स्वेन चिदानन्देन हेतुना सदा — विसरणशीलेन । वक्ष्यति च (भाग्., ३.१५.१६) कैवल्यमिव मूर्तिमदिति कैवल्यपादानमित्यर्थः; (भाग्., ३.१५.१६) वनं कामदुघैर्द्रुमैः इत्यादिना द्रुमादिः, (भाग्., ३.१५.१८) पारावतान्यभूतः इत्यादिना खगादिः, (भाग्., २.९.११-२) उयामावदाताः शतपत्रलोचनाः, प्रमदोत्तमाद्युभिः इत्यादिना स्त्रीपुरुषाः । एवं त्रिसर्गः स्वेन हेतुनाऽमृषा । नो केवलं त्रिसर्गः, तेजोवारिमृदामविनिमयो यथार्थभावोऽपि स्वेन स्वधाम्ना यथा यथावत् प्रकाशत इत्यर्थः । तेजः — सूर्यचन्द्रादि, वारि — वापीतडागादि, मृत — तटपुलिनादिः । सर्वमेव भौतिकभिन्नं चिन्मयत्वात् ।

By this, through the limits of the adjectives, the form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is comprehended. That is further qualified by “always real,” that is, existing before, at the end, and during the creation. ...²⁶ And is that with that or with Śrī Kṛṣṇa? To which he replies with “his own (*svena*),” that is, with his own form, the form of the player of the flute (Muralī-vilāsin). Or, let us meditate on *aṃ* [from the word *satyaṃ*], that is, on Viṣṇu. Who is that Viṣṇu? The protector of the universe? No. He says *param*, higher, higher than even *brahman*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa himself. The names Viṣṇu, Nārāyaṇa, Kṛṣṇa and so forth are all synonyms of Kṛṣṇa. Then, the qualifier of where (*yatra*) is existing (*sati*) [the rest of the word *satyaṃ*, *sati* + *aṃ* = *satyaṃ*]

²⁶ Apparently, there is a gap in the manuscript at this place.

धर्मः प्रोज्झितकैतवोऽत्र परमो निर्मत्सराणां सतां
वेद्यं वास्तवम् अत्र वस्तु शिवदं तापत्रयोन्मूलनम् ।
श्रीमद्भागवते महामुनिकृते किं वा परैरीश्वरः
सद्यो हृद्यवरुध्यतेऽत्र कृतिभिः शुश्रूषुभिस्तत्क्षणात् ॥ २ ॥

निगमकल्पतरुर्गलितं फलं
शुकमुखादमृतद्रवसंयुतम् ।
पिबत भागवतं रसमालयं
मुहुर्हो रसिका भुवि भावुकाः ॥ ३ ॥

Here is the highest *dharma*, free from all deceit, of holy ones who are unselfish; here the real substance, which bestows happiness and uproots the three sufferings, is to be known. Here, in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata*, composed by the great sage, the controller is suddenly captured in the heart that instant by the accomplished who are desirous of hearing it. What need is there for others?²⁷ (2)

Śrīdhara

The ripened fruit of the desire tree of the Vedas, mixed with the nectar flowing from the mouth of Śrī Śuka, drink from that vessel containing juice related to the Lord repeatedly on earth, o lovers of juice, o connoisseurs!²⁸ (3)

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- 01010041 नैमिषेऽनिमिषक्षेत्रे ऋषयः शौनकादयः
 01010043 सत्रं स्वर्गाय लोकाय सहस्रसमम् आसत
 01010051 त एकदा तु मुनयः प्रातर्हुतहुताग्नयः
 01010053 सत्कृतं सूतम् आसीनं पप्रच्छुरिदम् आदरात्
 0101006 ऋषय ऊचुः
 01010061 त्वया खलु पुराणानि सेतिहासानि चानघ
 01010063 आख्यातान्यप्यधीतानि धर्मशास्त्राणि यान्युत
 01010071 यानि वेदविदां श्रेष्ठो भगवान् बादरायणः
 01010073 अन्ये च मुनयः सूत परावरविदो विदुः
 01010081 वेत्थ त्वं सौम्य तत् सर्वं तत्त्वतस्तदनुग्रहात्
 01010083 ब्रूयुः स्निग्धस्य शिष्यस्य गुरवो गुह्यम् अप्युत
 01010091 तत्र तत्राञ्जसायुष्मन् भवता यद्विनिश्चितम्
 01010093 पुंसाम् एकान्ततः श्रेयस्तन् नः शंसितुम् अर्हसि
 01010101 प्रायेणाल्पायुषः सभ्य कलावस्मिन् युगे जनाः
 01010103 मन्दाः सुमन्दमतयो मन्दभाग्या ह्युपद्रुताः

- 01010111 भूरीणि भूरिकर्माणि श्रोतव्यानि विभागशः
01010113 अतः साधोऽत्र यत् सारं समुद्धृत्य मनीषया
01010115 ब्रूहि भद्राय भूतानां येनात्मा सुप्रसीदति
01010121 सूत जानासि भद्रं ते भगवान् सात्वतां पतिः
01010123 देवक्यां वसुदेवस्य जातो यस्य चिकीर्षया
01010131 तन् नः शुश्रूषमाणानाम् अर्हस्यङ्गानुवर्णितुम्
01010133 यस्यावतारो भूतानां क्षेमाय च भवाय च
01010141 आपन्नः संसृतिं घोरां यन्नाम विवशो गृणन्
01010143 ततः सद्यो विमुच्येत यद्विभेति स्वयं भयम्
01010151 यत्पादसंश्रयाः सूत मुनयः प्रशमायनाः
01010153 सद्यः पुनन्त्युपस्पृष्टाः स्वर्धुन्यापोऽनुसेवया
01010161 को वा भगवतस्तस्य पुण्यस्रोक्तेऽकर्मणः
01010163 शुद्धिकामो न शृणुयाद्यशः कलिमलापहम्
01010171 तस्य कर्माण्युदाराणि परिगीतानि सूरिभिः
01010173 ब्रूहि नः श्रद्धधानानां लीलया दधतः कलाः
01010181 अथाख्याहि हरेर्धामिन् अवतारकथाः शुभाः
01010183 ईला विदधतः स्वैरम् ईश्वरस्यात्ममायया
01010191 वयं तु न वितृप्याम उत्तमस्रोक्विक्रमे
01010193 यच्छृण्वतां रसज्ञानां स्वादु स्वादु पदे पदे
01010201 कृतवान् किल कर्माणि सह रामेण केशवः
01010203 अतिमर्त्यानि भगवान् गूढः कपटमानुषः
01010211 कलिम् आगतम् आज्ञाय क्षेत्रेऽस्मिन् वैष्णवे वयम्
01010213 आसीना दीर्घसत्रेण कथायां सक्षणा हरेः
01010221 त्वं नः सन्दर्शितो धात्रा दुस्तरं निस्तित्तीर्षताम्
01010223 कलिं सत्त्वहरं पुंसां कर्णधार इवार्णवम्
01010231 ब्रूहि योगेश्वरे कृष्णे ब्रह्मण्ये धर्मवर्मणि
01010233 स्वां काष्ठाम् अधुनोपेते धर्मः कं शरणं गतः

Part II

Tenth Canto

Chapter 2

The Approach of Kṛṣṇa's Descent

श्रीराजोवाच

कथितो वंशविस्तारो भवता सोमसूर्ययोः ।

राज्ञां चोभयवंश्यानां चरितं परमाद्भुतम् ॥ १ ॥

यदोश्च धर्मशीलस्य नितरां मुनिसत्तम ।

तत्रांशेनावतीर्णस्य विष्णोर्वीर्याणि शंस नः ॥ २ ॥

अवतीर्थं यदोर्वंशे भगवान् भूतभावनः ।

कृतवान् यानि विश्वात्मा तानि नो वद विस्तरात् ॥ ३ ॥

निवृत्ततर्षैरुपगीयमानाद्

भवौषधाच्छ्रोत्रमनोऽभिरामात् ।

क उत्तमश्लोकगुणानुवादात्

पुमान् विरज्येत विना पशुघ्नात् ॥ ४ ॥

पितामहा मे समरेऽमरञ्जयैर्

देवव्रताद्यातिरथैस्तिमिङ्गलैः ।

दुरत्ययं कौरवसैन्यसागरं

कृत्वातरन् वत्सपदं स्म यत्प्रवाः ॥ ५ ॥

द्रौण्यस्त्रविस्फुष्टमिदं मदङ्गं

सन्तानबीजं कुरुपाण्डवानाम् ।

जुगोप कुक्षिं गत आत्तचक्रो

मातुश्च मे यः शरणां गतायाः ॥ ६ ॥

वीर्याणि तस्याखिलदेहभाजाम्

अन्तर्बहिः पूरुषकालरूपैः ।

प्रयच्छतो मृत्युमुतामृतं च

मायामनुष्यस्य वदस्व विद्वन् ॥ ७ ॥

रोहिण्यास्तनयः प्रोक्तो रामः सङ्कर्षणास्त्वया ।

देवक्या गर्भसम्बन्धः कुतो देहान्तरं विना ॥ ८ ॥

[The story of Kṛṣṇa's descent as it is given in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* begins with the questions of King Parikṣit to his informant Śuka.]

The king said:

“You have described the lineages of the families of the Moon and the Sun, the highly amazing careers of the kings of both families, and [the lineage] of the Law-respecting Yadu. (1)

“Tell us now about the heroic deeds of Viṣṇu who descended with a portion of himself there (among in the descendents of Yadu).¹ (2)

“Tell us in detail what actions the Lord, creator of beings, very Self of the Universe, performed after descending in the family of Yadu. (3)

“What person can become detached without recounting the qualities of Uttamaḥśloka (Kṛṣṇa) pleasing to the ear and mind, medicine for material existence, sung even by those whose thirsts [for sensual pleasures] have been quenched, except for a killer of animals? (4)

“He was the boat on which my grandfathers crossed, as if a small calve's hoof, the dangerous ocean of the Kaurava army which was filled with god-conquering, super warriors, like Devavrata (Bhīṣma) and others, who were like whale-swallowing monsters in the ocean. (5)

“He entered into the womb of my mother, who had sought his shelter, with his discus in hand and hid this body of mine, the seed of the descendents of the Kurus and Pāṇḍavas, as it was being burned by the weapon of the son of Droṇa. (6)

“Tell us about the powerful deeds of this illusory man (*māyā-manuṣa*) who is inside and outside all embodied beings in his forms as personal god and time, giving them death or immortality.² (7)

“Rāma, who is Saṅkarṣaṇa, you said is the son of Rohiṇī. How is he connected with the womb of Devakī, then, if not in some other body? (8)

¹An interesting comment is found in Śrīnātha Cakravartin's commentary. He and the author of the *Br̥hat-krama-sandarbhā* take the word *aṁśa*, part or portion, to be *āṁśa* instead which they define as *aṁśānāṁ samūhaḥ*, the collection of all the parts, ie. the whole. Thus, Kṛṣṇa is not just a partial descent among the Yādavas, he is a full descent. Kṛṣṇa is thus believed to be the fullest self-revelation of deity.

²*Māyā-manuṣya*, “illusory man” in the sense that he is not like an ordinary man. Saṅātana gives a variety of meanings for the word *māyā* in this verse: power of will (*icchā-śakti*), play (*līlā*), full of tricks (*kaitava*), and compassion (*dayā*).

कस्मान्मुकुन्दो भगवान्पितुर्गेहाद्भ्रजं गतः ।
 ॐ वासं ज्ञातिभिः सार्धं कृतवान्सात्वतां पतिः ॥ ९ ॥
 ब्रजे वसन् किमकरोन्मधुपुर्यां च केशवः ।
 भ्रातरं चावधीत्कंसं मातुरद्धातदर्हणम् ॥ १० ॥
 देहं मानुषमाश्रित्य कति वर्षाणि वृष्णिभिः ।
 यदुपुर्यां सहावात्सीत्पत्न्यः कत्यभवन्प्रभोः ॥ ११ ॥
 एतदन्यच्च सर्वं मे मुने कृष्णाविचेष्टितम् ।
 वक्तुमर्हसि सर्वज्ञ श्रद्धधानाय विस्तृतम् ॥ १२ ॥
 नैषातिदुःसहा क्षुन्मां त्यक्तोदमपि बाधते ।
 पिबन्तं त्वन्मुखाम्भोजच्युतं हरिकथामृतम् ॥ १३ ॥
 सूत उवाच
 एवं निशम्य भृगुनन्दन साधुवादं
 वैयासकिः स भगवानथ विष्णुरातम् ।
 प्रत्यर्च्य कृष्णचरितं कलिकल्मषघ्नं
 व्याहर्तुमारभत भागवतप्रधानः ॥ १४ ॥
 श्रीशुक उवाच
 सम्यग्व्यवसिता बुद्धिस्तव राजर्षिसत्तम ।
 वासुदेवकथायां ते यज्जाता नैष्ठिकी रतिः ॥ १५ ॥
 वासुदेवकथाप्रसन्नः पुरुषांस्त्रीन्पुनाति हि ।
 वक्तारं प्रच्छकं श्रोतृस्तत्पादसलिलं यथा ॥ १६ ॥

“Why did Lord Mukunda go from his father’s house to Vraja? Where did the Lord of the Sātvats along with his family live? (9)

“While living in Vraja and in Madhupurī (Mathurā) what did Keśava³ do? Didn’t he kill Kaṁsa, the brother of his mother, who was not worthy of such treatment? (10)

“How many years in human form did he live with the Vṛṣṇis in Yadupurī and how many wives did the Lord have? (11)

“This and everything else that the Lord did you should describe in detail, all-knower, to someone faithful like me. (12)

“This difficult to tolerate hunger does not impair me, though I have also given up water, while I am drinking the nectar of stories of Hari fallen from the lotus of your mouth.” (13)

Śrī Suta said:

Hearing this worthy speech, son of Bhṛgu, that fortunate son of Vyāsa, the foremost devotee of the Lord, after honoring that gift of Viṣṇu (Parīkṣit), began to relate the life of Kṛṣṇa, which destructive of the evils of the Kali age. (14)

Śrī Śuka said:

“Your intellect is completely settled, truest of the sage-kings, since your unwavering attraction to discussions of Vāsudeva is awakened. (15)

“A question about Vāsudeva purifies three persons: the speaker, the asker, and the hearer like water from his feet. (16)

³*Ka* is *Brahmā* and *Īśa* is *Śiva*. *Va* means he who pervades them with his own greatness. Keśava is thus he who pervades *Brahmā* and *Śiva* with his own greatness, that is, *Viṣṇu*. (Sanātana)

भूमिर्दृसनृपव्याज दैत्यानीकशतायुतैः ।
 आक्रान्ता भूरिभारेण ब्रह्मारां शरणां ययौ ॥ १७ ॥
 गौर्भूत्वाश्रुमुखी खिन्ना क्रन्दन्ती करुणं विभोः ।
 उपस्थितान्तिके तस्मै व्यसनं समवोचत ॥ १८ ॥
 ब्रह्मा तदुपधार्याथ सह देवैस्तया सह ।
 जगाम सत्रिनयनस्तीरं क्षीरपयोनिधेः ॥ १९ ॥
 तत्र गत्वा जगन्नाथं देवदेवं वृषाकपिम् ।
 पुरुषं पुरुषसूक्तेन उपतस्थे समाहितः ॥ २० ॥
 गिरं समाधौ गगने समीरितां
 निशम्य वेधास्त्रिदशानुवाच ह ।
 गां पौरुषीं मे शृणुतामराः पुनर्
 विधीयतामाशु तथैव मा चिरम् ॥ २१ ॥
 पुरैव पुंसावधृतो धराज्वरो
 भवद्भिरंशैर्यदुषूपजन्यताम् ।
 स यावदुर्व्या भरमीश्वरेश्वरः
 स्वकालशक्त्या क्षपयंश्चरेद्भुवि ॥ २२ ॥
 वसुदेवगृहे साक्षाद्भगवान् पुरुषः परः ।
 जनिष्यते तत्प्रियार्थं सम्भवन्तु सुरस्त्रियः ॥ २३ ॥
 वासुदेवकलानन्तः सहस्रवदनः स्वराट् ।
 अग्रतो भविता देवो हरेः प्रियचिकीर्षया ॥ २४ ॥

“The Earth, overrun by hundreds and thousands of armies of arrogant demons pretending to be kings, went with her huge burden to Brahmā for help. (17)

“Taking the form of a cow, with tears on her face, distressed and crying, she spoke mournfully of her plight to him when she drew near to the powerful being. (18)

“Learning of that Brahmā along with her and the gods and accompanied by three-eyed Śiva went to the shore of the ocean of milk. (19)

“Arriving there he, with concentrated mind, offered worship to the master of the universe, the god of gods, Vṛṣākapi (the man-ape), the primal male with the *Puruṣa-sūkta* (Hymn of the Primal Man).⁴ (20)

“Hearing in his trance words spoken in the sky, Brahmā told the gods: ‘Immortal Ones, listen carefully to my words coming from the Primal Lord and then let them be carried out just so without delay. (21)

“Even before this the Lord knew of the affliction of the earth. You should take birth through your portions among the Yadus as long as he, the god of gods, wanders on the earth destroying its burden by his power of time. (22)

“In the house of Vasudeva the Supreme Lord himself, the supreme person, will be born. Let the wives of the gods be born to please him. (23)

“Ananta, Vāsudeva’s portion, possessor of a thousand faces, a self-ruler, will be born before him out of a desire to do what pleases him. (24)

⁴The Hymn of the Man is a famous hymn of the Ṛg Veda (10.90). It describes a primordial human sacrifice out of which the universe was created. The being address here as Puruṣa is identified in the commentaries as Aniruddha, a partial expansion of Kṛṣṇa according to Vaiṣṇava theology. Vṛṣākapi is an ancient Vedic name the exact meaning of which is now obscure. It seems to mean “Bull-ape” or “Man-ape.” It is a word charged with virility and male power. Vṛṣākapi is the subject of a rather mysterious hymn (Ṛg Veda 10.86) in which he appears to have seduced the wife of Indra. Sanātana interprets the name Vṛṣākapi to mean “the one who causes one’s desired objects to rain down on one (*varṣayati kāmān*) and who causes one’s pains to tremble (*ākampayati kheṣān*).” In other words Vṛṣākapi fulfills one’s desires and destroys one’s afflictions.

विष्णोर्माया भगवती यया सम्मोहितं जगत् ।
आदिष्टा प्रभुणांशेन कार्यार्थे सम्भविष्यति ॥ २५ ॥

श्रीशुक उवाच

इत्य् आदिश्यामरगणान् प्रजापतिपतिर्विभुः ।
आश्वास्य च महीं गीर्भिः स्वधाम परमं ययौ ॥ २६ ॥

शूरसेनो यदुपतिर्मथुरामावसन् पुरीम् ।
माथुरान् छूरसेनांश्च विषयान् बुभुजे पुरा ॥ २७ ॥

राजधानी ततः साभूत्सर्वयादवभूभुजाम् ।
मथुरा भगवान् यत्र नित्यं सन्निहितो हरिः ॥ २८ ॥

तस्यां तु कर्हिचिच् छौरिर्वसुदेवः कृतोद्वहः ।
देवक्या सूर्यया सार्धं प्रयागो रथमारुहत् ॥ २९ ॥

उग्रसेनसुतः कंसः स्वसुः प्रियचिकीर्षया ।
रश्मीन् हयानां जग्राह रौक्मै रथशतैर्वृतः ॥ ३० ॥

चतुःशतं पारिबर्हं गजानां हेममालिनाम् ।
अश्वानामयुतं सार्धं रथानां च त्रिषट्शतम् ॥ ३१ ॥

दासीनां सुकुमारीणां द्वे शते समलङ्कृते ।
दुहित्रे देवकः प्रादाद्याने दुहितृवत्सलः ॥ ३२ ॥

शङ्खतूर्यमृदङ्गाश्च नेदुर्दुन्दुभयः समम् ।
प्रयागाप्रक्रमे तात वरवध्वोः सुमङ्गलम् ॥ ३३ ॥

“The goddess who is Viṣṇu’s Māyā, by whom the whole universe is deluded, has been instructed by the Lord in what is to be done and will be born with her portion.”⁵ (25)

Śuka said:

“Having thus instructed the immortal gods, the mighty Lord of Lord of Progeny (*Prajāpati-pati*, i.e. Brahmā) reassured the earth with his words and returned to his highest abode. (26)

“The Lord of the Yadus, Śūrasena, lived in the city of Mathurā and ruled the citizens of Mathurā as well as his own clan as his subjects in the days of old. (27)

“Since then it was the capital city of all the kings of the Yādavas, that Mathurā, in which Lord Hari is always close by. (28)

“Once upon a time in that city, a descendent of Śūra, Vasudeva, having just wed, climbed on to a chariot along with his new wife, Devakī, to journey [to their home]. (29)

“Kāṁsa, son of Ugrasena, wishing to please his sister, took hold of the reins of the horses surrounded by hundreds of golden chariots.⁶ (30)

“Devaka, who doted on his daughter, give as household property four hundred elephants adorned with gold, fifteen thousand horses, and eighteen hundred chariots to his daughter who was accompanied by two hundred young serving maidens. (31-32)

“At the beginning of the departure of the bride and groom, conchs, musical instruments, clay-bodied drums, and kettle drums sounded together with such auspiciousness. (33)

⁵The author of the *Bṛhat-krama-sandarbhā* comments that this *māyā* is Yoga-māyā and that she is of two types: with form and without form. Yogamāyā with form is Durgā and Yogamāyā without form is only a power that brings about things that are difficult to do. Both varieties of Yogamāyā act to remove the delusion of the universe. [This author has read an “a” (not) in front of the word *saṁmohitam* (deluded) in the verse. That is possible since the preceding word is *yayā* (by which) and its *sandhi* with the following word may obscure a leading “a” on *saṁmohitam*. Trans.]

⁶Sanātana says that the root of Kāṁsa is \sqrt{kasi} which means “destroying, cutting down.” Thus his name indicates that he was a destroyer of the world.

पथि प्रग्रहिणां कंसमाभाष्याहाशरीरवाक् ।
 अस्यास्त्वामष्टमो गर्भो हन्ता यां वहसेऽबुध ॥ ३४ ॥
 इत्युक्तः स खलः पापो भोजानां कुलपांसनः ।
 भगिनीं हन्तुमारब्धः खड्गपाणिः कचेऽग्रहीत् ॥ ३५ ॥
 तं जुगुप्सितकर्माणां नृशंसं निरपन्नपम् ।
 वसुदेवो महाभाग उवाच परिसान्त्वयन् ॥ ३६ ॥
 श्रीवसुदेव उवाच
 श्लाघनीयगुणाः शूरैर्भवान् भोजयशस्करः ।
 स कथं भगिनीं हन्यात् स्त्रियमुद्धाहपर्वणि ॥ ३७ ॥
 मृत्युर्जन्मवतां वीर देहेन सह जायते ।
 अद्य वाब्दशतान्ते वा मृत्युर्वै प्राणिनां ध्रुवः ॥ ३८ ॥
 देहे पञ्चत्वमापन्ने देही कर्मानुगोऽवशः ।
 देहान्तरमनुप्राप्य प्राक्तनं त्यजते वपुः ॥ ३९ ॥
 ब्रजंस्तिष्ठन् पदैकेन यथैवैकेन गच्छति ।
 यथा तृणजलौकैवं देही कर्मगतिं गतः ॥ ४० ॥
 स्वप्ने यथा पश्यति देहमीदृशं
 मनोरथेनाभिनिविष्टचेतनः ।
 दृष्टश्रुताभ्यां मनसानुचिन्तयन्
 प्रपद्यते तत्किमपि ह्यपस्मृतिः ॥ ४१ ॥
 यतो यतो धावति दैवचोदितं
 मनो विकारात्मकमाप पञ्चसु ।
 गुणेषु मायारचितेषु देह्यसौ
 प्रपद्यमानः सह तेन जायते ॥ ४२ ॥

On the road a bodiless voice addressed Kaṁsa who was holding the reins: “Idiot! The eighth child of this one whom you are conveying will be your killer.” (34)

Addressed so, that sinful, wicked, disgrace to the ancestry of the Bhojas, ready to kill his sister, took her by the hair with his sword in hand. (35)

Vasudeva of great fortune spoke appeasingly to him whose actions disgust, who was cruel and shameless. (36)

Śrī Vasudeva said:

“Why would you having qualities worthy of praise by wise, a bringer of fame to the Bhojas kill your sister, a woman on the day of her marriage? (37)

“Hero, death is born right along with the body for those who have taken birth. Now or in a hundred years, death is certain for living beings.⁷ (38)

“When the body dies [lit., attains fiveness], the embodied being, without control and according to its past actions, attains another body and leaves its former one.⁸ (39)

“Like a caterpillar, moving with one foot and standing with one foot, goes forth, so does the embodied being go to the goal of its action. (40)

“It is just like in a dream when one whose consciousness is absorbed in wishful thinking; while contemplating with the mind what been seen and heard, one sees just that sort of body and forgetful [of the former or waking body] becomes involved in that [dream body]. (41)

“Wherever it runs, impelled by the divine [i.e., the force of its past actions], and whatever [body] the changeable mind attains among the five qualities [elements] created by *māyā*, the embodied being resorting [identifying with?] to that [mind] is born along with it. (42)

⁷Śrī Sanātana: Just as birth is inevitable so is death. Therefore, it is born with the body. Thus, too, is it said in the *Gītā*: “the death of one born is certain and certain is the birth of one who has died.” (2.27) He calls him “hero” to mollify him and by double entendre to say: you are only capable in battle, not in thoughtful reflection. Now, Kaṁsa might think: because of my heroism I will not die. To that he replies: even for a hero is death born with the body. Therefore, death is certain for all living beings.

⁸Śrī Sanātana: now, indeed there will be death, but since enjoyment cannot be accomplished without a body is it not fitting to want to keep one’s body for awhile for the purpose of enjoyment? Thus he responds: “when the body dies ...” Since the self is distinguished from the body by referring to it as “embodied” (*dehin*), its destruction is refuted. The cause of attaining another body is its following the results of its actions, since it must enjoy [or suffer] those results. Nor need the embodied being exert effort to do that since he says “without control.” Under the force of past *karma* that is accomplished on its own.

ज्योतिर्यथैवोदकपार्थिवेष्वदः
 समीरवेगानुगतं विभाव्यते ।
 एवं स्वमायारचितेष्वसौ पुमान्
 गुणेषु रागानुगतो विमुह्यति ॥ ४३ ॥
 तस्मान्न कस्यचिद्गोहमाचरेत्स तथाविधः ।
 आत्मनः क्षेममन्विच्छन् द्रोग्धुर्वै परतो भयम् ॥ ४४ ॥
 एषा तवानुजा बाला कृपणा पुत्रिकोपमा ।
 हन्तुं नार्हसि कल्याणीमिमां त्वं दीनवत्सलः ॥ ४५ ॥
 श्रीशुक उवाच
 एवं स सामभिर्भेदैर्बोध्यमानोऽपि दारुणः ।
 न न्यवर्तत कौरव्य पुरुषादाननुव्रतः ॥ ४६ ॥
 निर्बन्धं तस्य तं ज्ञात्वा विचिन्त्यानकदुन्दुभिः ।
 प्राप्तं कालं प्रतिव्योढुमिदं तत्रान्वपद्यत् ॥ ४७ ॥
 मृत्युर्बुद्धिमतापोह्यो यावद्बुद्धिबलोदयम् ।
 यद्य् असौ न निवर्तेत नापराधोऽस्ति देहिनः ॥ ४८ ॥
 प्रदाय मृत्यवे पुत्रान् मोचये कृपणामिमाम् ।
 सुता मे यदि जायेरन् मृत्युर्वा न म्रियेत चेत् ॥ ४९ ॥
 विपर्ययो वा किं न स्याद्गतिर्धातुर्दुरत्यया ।
 उपस्थितो निवर्तेत निवृत्तः पुनरापतेत् ॥ ५० ॥
 अग्नेर्यथा दारुवियोगयोगयोर्
 अदृष्टतोऽन्यन् न निमित्तमस्ति ।
 एवं हि जन्तोरपि दुर्विभाव्यः
 शरीरसंयोगवियोगहेतुः ॥ ५१ ॥

Like yonder light reflected in water and other earthly substances is imagined to be influenced by the motion of the wind, so, too, is that person [the self], affected by passion, confused among the qualities [bodies] created by its own *māyā*.⁹ (43)

Therefore, one who is of that kind should not perform an act of harm if he desires the welfare of the self. One who is violent fears others. (44)

This poor girl is your younger sister like daughter to you. You who are kind to the afflicted do not deserve to kill this excellent girl.¹⁰ (45)

Śrī Śuka said:

Even though the pitiless one was thus appealed to with different words of appeasement, o descendent of the Kurus, he was not stopped, being a follower of those who eat humans. (46)

After realizing his obstinacy and thinking of a way to avert the present danger, Ānakadundubhi entered upon this. (47)

⁹This could be interpreted as a verse supporting the Advaitin position. The *sva* meaning “own” seems to suggest that the person in this verse is the possessor of the *māyā* that creates the qualities that form the bodies. Śrīdhara takes *sva-māyā* as *svāvidyā*, one’s own ignorance. This is an interpretation more amenable to the idea that the person meant here is the individual self.

¹⁰Sanātana says that Vasudeva who is a speaker of the truth does not lie here when he calls Kaṁsa, *dīnavatsala*, kind to the afflicted, because when Ugrasena or Devaka used to instruct Kaṁsa to give cows to the *brāhmaṇas*, Kaṁsa, thinking that it would not do to ignore Ugrasena’s instruction, used to give nearly dead and useless (*dīna*) calves (*vatsa*) to them. Therefore, Kaṁsa was indeed *dīna-vatsala*, giver of wretched calves.

एवं विमृश्य तं पापं यावदात्मनिदर्शनम् ।
 पूजयामास वै शौरिर्बहुमानपुरःसरम् ॥ ५२ ॥
 प्रसन्नवदनाम्भोजो नृशंसं निरपत्रपम् ।
 मनसा दूयमानेन विहसन्निदमब्रवीत् ॥ ५३ ॥
 श्रीवसुदेव उवाच
 न ह्यस्यास्ते भयं सौम्य यद्वै साहाशरीरवाक् ।
 पुत्रान् समर्पयिष्येऽस्या यतस्ते भयमुत्थितम् ॥ ५४ ॥
 श्रीशुक उवाच
 स्वसुर्वधान् निववृत्ते कंसस्तद्वाक्यसारवित् ।
 वसुदेवोऽपि तं प्रीतः प्रशस्य प्राविशद्गृहम् ॥ ५५ ॥
 अथ काल उपावृत्ते देवकी सर्वदेवता ।
 पुत्रान् प्रसुषुवे चाष्टौ कन्यां चैवानुवत्सरम् ॥ ५६ ॥
 कीर्तिमन्तं प्रथमजं कंसायानकदुन्दुभिः ।
 अर्पयामास कृच्छ्रेण सोऽनृतादतिविह्वलः ॥ ५७ ॥
 किं दुःसहं नु साधूनां विदुषां किमपेक्षितम् ।
 किमकार्यं कदर्याणां दुस्त्यजं किं धृतात्मनाम् ॥ ५८ ॥
 दृष्ट्वा समत्वं तच्च छौरेः सत्ये चैव व्यवस्थितिम् ।
 कंसस्तुष्टमना राजन् प्रहसन्निदमब्रवीत् ॥ ५९ ॥
 प्रतियातु कुमारोऽयं न ह्य् अस्मादस्ति मे भयम् ।
 अष्टमाद्युवयोर्गर्भान् मृत्युर्मे विहितः किल ॥ ६० ॥
 तथेति सुतमादाय ययावानकदुन्दुभिः ।
 नाभ्यनन्दत तद्वाक्यमसतोऽविजितात्मनः ॥ ६१ ॥

yes

नन्दाद्या ये ब्रजे गोपा याश्चामीषां च योषितः ।
 वृष्णायो वसुदेवाद्या देवक्याद्या यदुस्त्रियः ॥ ६२ ॥
 सर्वे वै देवताप्राया उभयोरपि भारत ।
 ज्ञातयो बन्धुसुहृदो ये च कंसमनुव्रताः ॥ ६३ ॥
 एतत् कंसाय भगवान् छशंसाभ्येत्य नारदः ।
 भूमेर्भारायमाणानां दैत्यानां च वधोद्यमम् ॥ ६४ ॥
 ऋषेर्विनिर्गमे कंसो यदून् मत्वा सुरान् इति ।
 देवक्या गर्भसम्भूतं विष्णुं च स्ववधं प्रति ॥ ६५ ॥
 देवकीं वसुदेवं च निगृह्य निगडैर्गृहे ।
 जातं जातमहन् पुत्रं तयोरजनशङ्कया ॥ ६६ ॥
 मातरं पितरं भ्रातृ-न् सर्वांश्च सुहृदस्तथा ।
 घ्नन्ति ह्य् असुतृपो लुब्धा राजानः प्रायशो भुवि ॥ ६७ ॥
 आत्मानमिह सञ्जातं जानन् प्राग् विष्णुना हतम् ।
 महासुरं कालनेमिं यदुभिः स व्यरुध्यत ॥ ६८ ॥
 उग्रसेनं च पितरं यदुभोजान्धकाधिपम् ।
 स्वयं निगृह्य बुभुजे शूरसेनान् महाबलः ॥ ६९ ॥