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"SOME PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEMS IN THE BHĀGAVATA PURĀNA"

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Of the three currents of religious philosophy, that have been wielding stupendous influence over post-Vedic India, (Śaivism, Śāktaism and Vaiṣṇavism) Vaiṣṇavism is the most outstanding. Of the two schools of Vaiṣṇavism viz the Pāñcarātra and the Bhāgavata, the latter is conspicuous represented in the " Śrīmad-Bhāgavata Purāṇa "--- the work constituting the subject-matter of the present thesis.

The historical aspect of the work in question, such as, the evolution of the Purāṇas in general and the Bhāgavata in particular, the evolution of Vaiṣṇavism especially Bhāgavatism, is dealt with in the ' Introduction'.

As to its philosophical aspect, the three fundamentals of Bhāgavatism are : (1) Bhagavān Śrī-Kṛṣṇa is the ultimate reality, (2) he is the pivot of the doctrine of descents and (3) devotion is the means to attain him. Accordingly, these three have been dealt with, in details, in the thesis.

The treatment of the subject is mainly expository and is based upon the original text and the well-known commentator, Śrīdhara Svāmī. The meanings of terms and expressions in Sanskrit passages have been considered at their face value and no attempt has been made to adjust any of them to any particular viewpoints.

The work has so far been thought to be a conglomeration of diverse systems of philosophical and religious thoughts. The readers of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa have often missed to find in the text a consistent philosophical outlook, and various interpretations have thus been adduced mainly in regard to isolated episodes and in disregard of the poem as a unit. The present thesis is intended to be the first attempt to give the interpretation in the latter view.

The main contribution is (1) the assertion of the fourth grade of reality, over and above the first grade of reality as expounded by Śaṅkara and the second and the third grades of reality of later Vaiṣṇavism ; (2) devotion (bhāgavata dharma) as a compromise of knowledge (jñāna), devotion (bhakti) and detachment (vairāgya), standing upon the common

platform of actionlessness (naiṣkarmya). In the Bhāgavata, the cult of devotion seems to have been wedded to absolute monism.

.....

P R E F A C E .

The Purāṇa is a popular encyclopaedia of ancient and mediaeval Hinduism, religious, social and political. Enriched by the traditional mythology, cosmology, theology and philosophy of the Vedas, the Purāṇas are next to the Vedas in importance. During the course of their evolution which took several centuries, the Purāṇas, unlike the conservative Vedas, have thrown open their gates to all, irrespective of caste and creed, and so they became ~~to be~~ the Bible of the common people. This popularity can be envisaged by the huge bulk which Purāṇa literature, consisting of nearly a hundred works, attained. All the Purāṇas, taken together, are traditionally said to have 400,000 stanzas — respectable library themselves. It is no wonder then, that the Purāṇas have acquired a special sanctity which belongs to the Vedas. They are also rich mines of information on ancient Indian subjects, though they are primarily religious literature relating to the whole of India.

Among the Purāṇas, representing a very important category of Indian literature, the eighteen Mahā-purāṇas occupy the most exalted place. The Śrīmad Bhāgavata is the most famous of the eighteen. It is a work of great celebrity which wields a direct and powerful influence. Being an inspired work, it roused interest in a profound Western scholar —

Burnouf — who introduced this great Purāṇa to Europe as early as 1840. Burnouf, and, after him, his two disciples, Besnau and Roussel completed the French translation of the whole work in 1898. It was the first of the Purāṇas to be edited in Europe. Burnouf was attracted by "its crude simplicity and grandeur of the style of the Vedas, heroic nobleness of martial epos and great richness of modern poetry". To him, "it is a brilliant fruit of imagination fertilised by long culture of centuries and incessantly inspired by a receptacle of a vigorous and gigantic nature".

Burnouf and his disciples were concerned with a palatable translation of the work. But, in spite of some controversy, the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, in the author's opinion, is a philosophical work, rather than anything else. Work has been done on the Bhāgavata, both before and after Burnouf bearing upon its various aspects. Sir S. Radhakrishnan, Prof. S.N. Dasgupta and others have touched upon its philosophy. The Bhāgavata is a colossal work consisting of more than fourteen thousand stanzas. To attack its philosophy, in all its details, is not intended here. The author proposes to deal with 'some' of its philosophical problems, by marshalling the heterogenous materials, scattered over the whole work, into a consistent system.

In conclusion, the author feels highly grateful to Dr. A.V. Kunst M.A. Ph.D. for the wise guidance and invaluable suggestions that he has kindly offered in shaping the body and

the introduction of this thesis. But for his indefatigable labour on it, the thesis could not have attained its present form. The author expresses his heart-felt thanks for this kindness.

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ABBREVIATIONS.

Allahabad University Studies	AUS
Annals of the Bhāṇḍārkar Oriental Research Institute	ABORI
Āpastamba-Dharma-Sūtra	Āpa. D. Sū.
Atharva Veda	Atha. Veda.
Baudhāyana-Dharma-Sūtra	Bau. D. Sū.
Bhāgavata Purāṇa	Bh. P.
Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa	BV. P.
Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad	Br. Upa.
Cambridge History of India	Cam. H. Ind.
Chāndogya Upaniṣad	Ch. Upa.
Cultural Heritage of India	CHI
Devī Bhāgavata Purāṇa	D. Bh. P.
Dhyāna-bindūpaniṣad	Dhyā. Upa.
Dynasties of the Kali Age	DKA
Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics	ERE
Gautama-Dharma-Sūtra	Gau. D. Sū.
Hari-līlāmṛta	Hari.
Indian Antiquary	IA
Indian Culture	IC
Introduction to the Viṣṇu Purāṇa	IVP
Jaiminiya Uttara Brāhmaṇa	Jai. U. Br.
Journal of the Assam Research Society	JARS
Journal of the Bengal Royal Asiatic Society	JBRAS

Journal of Oriental Research Madras	JORM
Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society	JRAS
Laghu-Bhāgavatāmṛta	Lag. Bh.
Mahābhārata	Mbh.
Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad	Māṇ. Upa.
Matsya Purāṇa	Mat. P.
Muktikopaniṣad	Muk. Upa.
Nārada-Bhakti-Sūtra	Nā. Sū.
New Indian Antiquary	NIA
Pātañjala Yoga-darsana	Pāt.
Sāṃkhyāyana Śrauta Sūtra	Sām. Ś. Sū.
Śāṇḍilya-Bhakti-Sūtras	Śā. Sū.
Śarabha Upaniṣad	Śar. Upa.
Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa	Śa. Br.
Ṣaṭ. Sandarbha	Ṣaṭ. San.
Skandopaniṣad	Ska. Upa.
Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad	Śve. Upa.
Taittirīya Āraṇyaka	Tai. Ār.
Tri-Pāda-Vibhūti-Mahā-	
Nārāyaṇa Upaniṣad	Tri. Upa.
Ujjala-nīla-maṇi	Ujj. Maṇi.
Viṣṇu Purāṇa	VP
Yājña-valkya-Samhitā	Yāj.

INTRODUCTION

Section 1

Evolution of the Purāna Literature.

(A) Purānas — the fruits of evolution.

¹
Wilson observes that "the Purānas are works of evidently different stages and have been compiled under different circumstances". Indeed, the Purānas, in order to attain the status of the encyclopaedia of Hindu life, had to undergo constant changes, in response to the varying circumstances of national life. The different stages of the evolution of the Purānas may be broadly traced as follows :-

(B) Purāna as myths and legends.

A 'purāna', in its most primitive sense, meant "mytho-
²
logical and legendary lore". Even to this day, the Purānas are connected with traditional stories. In the sense of ancient legends, purāna may have preceded even the Vedas. Even in the Rg.Veda, we find ancient stories incorporated in the body of the hymns. ³ The Vedas and the Brāhmanas ⁴ even refer to such purāna. These myths and legends might have been verbally transmitted, from generation to generation; and, they were employed to interpret the Vedic passages. The knowledge of such purāna being thus essential, purāna, as traditional stories, was then part and parcel of the Vedas, until there came the ⁵ final moment of its separation from the Vedas.

(C) Purāna as 'Books'.

After the compilation of the Atharva Veda, the Purāna

6

became a distinct type of literature. Mazumdar thinks that the Purāṇa i.e. the stock of traditional stories which were so long an integral part of the Vedas, obtained the shape of 'anukramanīs' attached to respective Vedas. Pargiter, on the other hand, contends, on the evidence of some Purāṇas and the Āpastamba-Dharma-Sūtra, that as early as 900 B.C. there was one original Purāṇa which, during the course of its transmission, evolved into multifarious "Books". The grounds, for this contention of Pargiter, have been challenged by Keith; and, Winternitz as well as Mazumdar have doubted the doctrine of one original Purāṇa. It is really difficult to decide whether the traditional stories were embodied in one original Purāṇa or in several Purāṇas, before the time of the Atharva Veda. The period of the Atharva Veda is the definite landmark of the traditional stories assuming the form of the "Books". The Gautama-Dharma-Sūtra and the Āpastamba-Dharma-Sūtra presuppose the existence of purāṇa literature. Hence we can presume that before the fourth or fifth century B.C., to which these Dharma Sūtras are assigned, the traditional stories had been solidified into particular "Books".

(D) Purāṇa as 'itihāsa-purāṇa'.

As to his theory of one original Purāṇa, Pargiter says that "the original Purāṇa dealt with ancient tradition about Gods, ṛsis and kings, their genealogies and famous deeds". Whether there was one original Purāṇa or not, the earliest

Purāna or rather Purānas are found, at least in their earliest days, to be closely associated with 'itihāsa' (History)¹⁷. The original type of Purāna has been thus designated as 'itihāsa-purāna'¹⁸. This intimate relationship between history (itihāsa) and traditional stories (Purāna) explains how the original form of the Purāna (Books) gradually developed into the pañca-laksana¹⁹ Purāna.

(E) Purāna -- the pañca-laksana.

²⁰ Mazumdar and ²¹ Pargiter hold that the original form of the Purāna which has been called 'itihāsa-purāna', developed from the nucleus of 'vamsānucarita' i.e. chronology of royal dynasties, handed down by bards from remote antiquity. It is thus, they say, that the ksatriya tradition which had already²² fallen into a state of decadence, had found out a channel of survival. Sarga (creation), prati-sarga (dissolution for creation afresh), manvantara (the Manu-periods) and lastly vamsānucarita (genealogy of gods and ṛṣis) followed²³ vamsānucarita i.e. chronology of royal dynasties as its necessary corollaries. Farquhar, on the other hand, contends that the Purāna, as a distinct type of literature, began its career as "Book of²⁴ origin". Both these views are but theories, and, with our present state of knowledge, we do not feel any certain ground for asserting one or the other or a third proposition. Whatever might have served as the nucleus, if any at all, the collection or rather collections of the Purāna gradually

developed into the pañca-laksana Purāna out of heterogenous materials called summarily 'itihāsa-purāna'.

Of these five elements of pañca-laksana Purāna, the sarga, the prati-sarga and the manvantara have been held to be imaginary; the rest historical. Macdonell has traced sarga (creation) to the cosmogonic hymns of the Rg.Veda. Wilson, on the other hand, has pointed out that the theory of creation, as found in the extant Purānas, is a borrow from the early Sāṃkhya similar is the case with pratisarga. Sarga and prati-sarga ma both have been borrowed from the early Sāṃkhya; manvantara might have been grafted upon the Purāna from the then well-established concept of Manu, the law-giver, the alleged author of the Mānava-Dharma-Sūtra.

Of the rest, of the five, viz Vamśa and Vamśānucarita Pargiter holds that the ancient tradition was compiled in 900 B.C. ; further on, historical tradition was added to it by 800 B.C. ; this historical tradition was supplemented by the chronicles of the kings of the Kali age, which have been dragged down to the early fourth century A.D. The three dynasties that have been drawn upon for this purpose, are of Puru, Kuru and Magadha. Rapson has gone further than this and contends that even the early chronology is historical, though some may be fanciful, belonging to a still early stage. The entire chain of chronology may not be historical; but it has been proved beyond doubt that the chronology stated in the Purānas cannot be altogether discarded as fanciful. They really contain precious historical facts.

(a) Little of dharma in the pañca-laksana.

Vans Kennedy had remarked "I cannot discover any other object than that of religious instruction, in the Purāṇas"³² But in the early concept of the 'pañca-laksana' Purāṇa, one necessarily discovers any other object than of religious instruction. If there was any dharma it was only in the sarga. In fact, the Purāṇas could not have much of dharma, because they were still subordinated to the cause of the Vedas. They still served the main purpose of throwing light upon the interpretation of the Vedic episodes.

(b) Rise of dharma in the pañca-laksana.

It was perhaps when the atheistic thoughts, reflected even in the earliest Upaniṣads like the Chāndogya, gained³³ ground against the sacrificial doctrines of the Vedas, that the Purāṇas which were so far subservient to the Vedas, had to be employed, as defensive weapons, for the amplification of the Vedic truths. The Vedas, being very conservative, would not allow any change in them. Hence the Purāṇas were drawn upon to cope with the situation. The theory of Manu that the³⁴ Purāṇa is the interpreter of the Vedas, may thus be understood: the Purāṇa had always been employed to interpret the Vedas; as episodes, the Purāṇa explained Vedic stories; as the pañca-laksana, it interpreted Vedic thoughts.

(c) Transition to daśa-laksana Purāṇa.

When the pañca-laksana Purāṇas were employed to

interpret the Vedic truths, they naturally began to grow in importance. As the Purāṇas were meant for challenging the atheistic doctrines, they had to import theism. The Yajurveda marked a departure from the concept of elemental (bhautika)³⁵ deity of the Rg.Veda. This is the starting point of a new conception of deity, which found its culmination in the Brahmā-Visṇu-Maheśvara Triad. All attributes that belonged to the supreme deity of the Upaniṣads became vested in these gods. Durgā and Śiva joined the galaxy from possibly non-Vedic fold. In the struggle for supremacy among these five gods, Viṣṇu and Śiva prevailed; and, of the two, Viṣṇu took the lion's share. That is why, in the extant Purāṇas, Vaiṣṇavism is the dominating note. The stream of theism, springing forth from the Yajur-Veda, percolated into the pañca-lakṣana Purāṇa, through the vulnerable point, sarga. In course of centuries, this stream of theism completely overhauled the constitution of the pañca-lakṣana Purāṇa. The result was that the pañca-lakṣana Purāṇa became an assemblage of metaphysics, theology and ethics.

It is primarily due to the evolution of the dharma in the pañca-lakṣana Purāṇa, that it was replaced by the concept of the daśa-lakṣana Purāṇa; and, since the religion of Kṛṣṇa-Vāsudeva seems to have been the first expression of dharma in the pañca-lakṣana Purāṇa, dharma swelled through the channel of Vaiṣṇavism.

(d) Two layers of the pañca-laksana Purāna.

The stream of the pañca-laksana Purāna has laid two deposits viz the epics and the extant daśa-laksana Purānas. It has been mentioned before that the pañca-laksana Purāna was existent before the Gautama-Dharma-Sūtra i.e. before 400 or ³⁶500 B.C. Hopkins has asserted that the oldest portions of the ³⁷Mahābhārata cannot be later than 400 B.C. Hence it is chronologically possible that the Mahābhārata may be the first solid representation of the flexible form of the pañca-laksana Purāna. During the early stage of the religious evolution in the pañca-laksana Purāna, the Rāmāyana and the Mahābhārata were compiled. The extant daśa-laksana Purānas represent the second layer as given by the pañca-laksana Purāna. The relation between the Mahābhārata and the extant Purānas may, accordingly, be suggested as follows :-

(i) The Mahābhārata in the present form is earlier than the present Purānas. Hopkins has shown that the ³⁸Mahābhārata was more or less complete by 200 A.D. But the extant Purānas were overhauled by the time of the Imperial Guptas.

(ii) Both the Mahābhārata and the Purānas, being works of growth, have influenced each other while new matters have accumulated in each of them, which are not to be found in the other. The Purānas have freely imported matters which might have been sometimes foreign; sometimes, they have embodied old matters not incorporated in the Mahābhārata;

sometimes, again, the Mahābhārata has been drawn upon.

(iii) Still, the kernel of both the Mahābhārata and the Purāṇas is derived from the same source viz 'itihāsa-purāṇa' which latter on, assumed the name of the pañca-lakṣaṇa Purāṇa.

(iv) It has been suggested that, of the 'itihāsa-purāṇa', the Mahābhārata represents the 'itihāsa' (history) - side, while the Purāṇas stand for the purāṇa (legends)-side. If this ^{was} ~~might have been~~ the original motive, it could not be continued for long; for, both the present Mahābhārata and the present Purāṇas are as much history as legends.

(F) Purāṇa -- the daśa-lakṣaṇa.

It has been mentioned before that the steady growth of the dharma in the pañca-lakṣaṇa Purāṇa revolutionised the concept of the Purāṇa and consequently the latter was replaced by the concept of the daśa-lakṣaṇa Purāṇa. That dharma was the principal reason for this evolution in the Purāṇa literature may be evidenced by the fact that the five other topics, in addition to the five topics of the pañca-lakṣaṇa Purāṇa, are all concerned with the dharma. They are sthāna (maintenance of created beings by God), poṣaṇa (divine grace to devotees), ūti (residues of karma), īśa-kathā (biography of the avatars of Bhagavān and that of the devotees) and āśraya (supreme reality)³⁹. Obviously these are all related to dharma. Taken together, these additional topics would mean that due to the residues of action, the individual soul travels in earthly life; God maintains all, good as well as bad; but his divine grace shines upon

the devotees; God and his devotees are born in this world to liberate the suffering souls. Evidently, this is Vaisṇava metaphysics and theology; and this explains how the mahā-Purāṇas are predominantly Vaisṇavite.

40

The ten topics are enumerated by the Brahma-Vaivarta
41
and the Bhāgavata. These ten topics are to be found more or less in all the eighteen mahā-Purāṇas. They are distinguished from the upa-Purāṇas in that while the former are possessed of ten topics, the upa-Purāṇas have dealt with five topics only. Therefore, the upa-Purāṇas are, in a sense, the modern representatives of the pañca-lakṣaṇa Purāṇas.

(a) Evolution of the mahā-Purāṇas.

The evolution of the mahā-Purāṇas from the pañca-lakṣaṇa Purāṇa was not completed in a day. They neither evolved simultaneously nor at a single place. They evolved under varying circumstances and times. Mazumdar conjectures that the order of their enumeration in the lists, found in
42
different Purāṇas, shows the order of their evolution. Pargiter has opined that among the eighteen mahā-Purāṇas, Brahmāṇḍa was the first and the Bhāgavata was the last, in the chronological
43
ladder. The other Purāṇas occupy intermediate place.

The evolution of the eighteen mahā-Purāṇas extends over centuries. In the Mahābhārata, eighteen Purāṇas have
44
been referred to. In the Āpastamba-Dharma-Sūtra, at least one
45
of the Purāṇas viz the Bhaviṣya Purāṇa has been mentioned. Again, scholars have agreed that the final shape of the Purāṇas

excepting the Bhāgavata was given during the period of the
Imperial Guptas.⁴⁶

After them, the Purāṇas might have obtained accretion of new materials which are but of minor importance. Hence the Purāṇas i.e. the daśa-lakṣaṇa, may be held to be more or less completed by the fourth century A.D., the time of the Imperial Guptas. Now, if Āpastamba belongs to 400 B.C., then the evolution, from pañca-lakṣaṇa Purāṇa, contemporaneous with Āpastamba, to daśa-lakṣaṇa Purāṇa took not less than 800 years to complete. The daśa-lakṣaṇa Purāṇas were called simply by the name 'Purāṇa', previously;⁴⁷ the name 'mahā-Purāṇa' seems⁴⁸ to be as late as 300 A.D.

In the course of eight hundred years, the constitution of the Purāṇas was completely overhauled. The Purāṇas are⁴⁹ traditionally held to consist of 400,000 stanzas of which the⁵⁰ Viṣṇu Purāṇa is said to have 23000 stanzas. But the extant Viṣṇu Purāṇa, which enjoys the credit of being very little⁵¹ changed, contains less than 7000 stanzas. If this be the case with the Viṣṇu Purāṇa which is held to be very little changed, what can be expected of others? Moreover, vamsānucarita which according to one view, has been held to be the nucleus of the pañca-lakṣaṇa Purāṇa, is found in 5 only, out of the extant 18⁵² mahā-Purāṇas. Even in the five Purāṇas, vamsānucarita is⁵³ limited to the history of three dynasties only; lastly, the history of later dynasties has been only indirectly introduced in the shape of prophecy.⁵⁴ Lassen and Kirfel have critically⁵⁵ ⁵⁶

examined the pañca-lakṣaṇa theory with reference to the extant daśa-lakṣaṇa Purāṇas.

(G) Further evolution of the Purāṇas.

The Purāṇas had the accretion of new materials even after the epoch of Imperial Guptas. Tīrtha-stories, rites and customs, economics, erotics are to name a few. Accordingly, H.P.Sastri has challenged the daśa-lakṣaṇa theory, approving the definition of the Purāṇa, as given by the Matsya Purāṇa, on the ground of being more rational.

(H) The school of the Purāṇas.

The tradition of the Purāṇa literature had been continuously kept up by the sūtas (bards). They not only orally transmitted the Purāṇa literature, but also steadily developed it. Vyāsa and sūta may or may not be one and the same person. Both Vyāsa and Romācharṣaṇa, the alleged son of Vyāsa, may refer to a class of people, who constantly championed the cause of the Purāṇas.

Sūta literally means a chronicler residing in 'sūta'-country, a part of Magadha (modern Bihar). A sūta might also be a brahmin. Mārkaṇḍeya or Nārada are examples on this point. Sūta meaning a particular class is of later origin. The distinction between 'sūta' as simply meaning chronicles and 'sūta' meaning a special class, is found in the Artha-śāstra of Kautīlyā. The profession of sūta was looked down upon, perhaps because of Vedic conservatism or a sūta's greed. Thus sūta might have meant later on a particular class prohibited from

reading the Vedas. But it cannot be denied that Brāhmanas and Kṣatriyas had equally taken up the profession of a sūta. ⁶² Of the six disciples of Romaharṣaṇa, five, at least, were Brāhmanas. Thus the sūtas were responsible for the unbroken continuity of the Purāṇa literature.

Conclusion.

Thus in the hand of the sūtas, the Purāṇa had several epochs viz (i) legends, (ii) specified Books, (iii) itihāsa-purāṇa, (iv) pañca-lakṣaṇa Purāṇa and (v) daśa-lakṣaṇa Purāṇa. The sūtas also compiled the upa-Purāṇas. The Purāṇa literature has thus represented the metaphysical, religious and ethical life of a nation, in unbroken continuity.

SECTION II

(1)

The Bhāgavata Purāṇa.

(A) The Fundamental Outlook of the Bhāgavata.

(a) Religious atmosphere.

Like the Vāyu, the Bhāgavata is concerned with
63 Naimiṣāranya, where, against the background of a prolonged
sacrifice, the whole of the Bhāgavata is held to be narrated.
Sūta, the narrator in the Naimiṣāranya, reproduces, as he says,
the Bhāgavata which was recited by Śuka, in reply to the
question of Parīkṣit as to what a dying person should perform.
64 It is thus obvious that the Bhāgavata presupposes an atmosphere
of detachment and philosophic isolation.

(b) The Bhāgavata — the daśa-lakṣaṇa.

The religious atmosphere is manifest in the recog-
nition by the Bhāgavata that a Purāṇa consists of ten topics
instead of five. The Bhāgavata has given two lists of these
65 ten topics in two different contexts where the meaning of
66 these topics has been explained. A comparison of the lists
shows that the wording in one list does not totally tally with
that of the other; and the second list is a compromise between
the first list and the traditional definition of five topics
(pañca-lakṣaṇa). Again, these two lists taken together,
incorporate the five topics but with some improvement upon
their previous concepts. To wit, the prati-sarga, in pañca-
lakṣaṇa, meant cosmic dissolution (pralaya); but to the

Bhāgavata, prati-sarga includes emancipation (mokṣa).

The purpose of the recognition of the ten topics has been expressly mentioned by the Bhāgavata. It says that the other nine topics serve the purpose of bringing the tenth (āśraya-tattva) i.e. supreme reality to a clearer understanding⁶⁷. This discloses the philosophic attitude of the Bhāgavata.

(c) The Bhāgavata's indifferent attitude.

The philosophic indifference of the Bhāgavata to the other values of the nine topics is reflected in its mode of their treatment :-

(i) It asserts that the sarga and the prati-sarga i.e. creation and destruction are described to expose the transitoriness of the world.^{67/1}

(ii) The geography of the world is told, it says, for concentration of the mind. Concentration of the mind upon the world which is conceived to be the gross body of God, will lead to the visualisation of his subtle form.⁶⁸

(iii) The genealogy, it claims, is simply to inspire knowledge and detachment in the votary. Thus the Bhāgavata robs genealogy of its historical value and pushes it into the realm of myths.⁶⁹

(iv) The stories, the Bhāgavata only declares, are nothing but myths and there is no truth in them.⁷⁰ This explains why the Bhāgavata has very freely tackled the stories. Sometimes, traditional stories are elaborated and given

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philosophical interpretation. Ancient stories have been at
times summarised,⁷² order of narration and incidents changed.⁷³
Even old stories have been challenged on the ground of
irrationality.⁷⁴

The enthusiasm for philosophical transformation has thus run riot in the Bhāgavata. Maybe, some stories are creatures of pure myths; it is also admitted that stories, as they stand today, are a compound of history and myth. But the extreme position of discarding all stories as myths is in direct conflict with the modern research that has considered the stories not altogether myths.

(B) Genealogy.

Keeping in mind the philosophical rigour of the Bhāgavata it is no wonder that its genealogy, which according to one view, is the nucleus of the pañca-lakṣaṇa Purāṇa, would be unsatisfactory. It has made certain changes in genealogy which is often confused. In fact, the account is little more than a string fitted in with connected words and occasional terms of relationship. It may be useful only in determining the order of kings.

(C) Stories.

As regards stories of the Bhāgavata, Holtzmann has shown the close relationship between the Mahābhārata and the Bhāgavata.⁷⁵ The Bhāgavata is primarily based upon the Mahābhārata. In fact, it is the only Purāṇa that has stated the Purāṇa story in the Mahābhārata context. It has drawn upon

the Mahābhārata in general and the Gītā in particular. Apart from the close affinity of thoughts between the two, the Bhāgavata has borrowed many ^{75/1}ślokas, nay, many chapters from the Gītā. It has been suggested that the Bhāgavata knows only the vulg^are of the ⁷⁶Gītā.

Of the Purāṇas, the Harivamśa and the Viṣṇu Purāṇa are Kṛṣṇaite works of which the tradition says that the former is a Bhāgavata document while the latter is a Pāñca-rātra work. Both the Harivamśa and the Viṣṇu Purāṇa presuppose ^{the existence of} the whole of the Mahābhārata. Sports and exploits of Kṛṣṇa's youth, which are merely alluded to in the epic, are told in great details in these works. In the Harivamśa, the whole story of Kṛṣṇa's youth is told at much greater length than it has been done in the Viṣṇu Purāṇa; and, 'hallīśa' (amorous sport) is treated as involving sexual intercourse. The Bhāgavata has made improvement upon the Harivamśa. While it has taken from the Harivamśa the life of Kṛṣṇa in Gokula, it has invented some new stories. The episodes of tasting mud (mr̥d-bhakṣaṇa) or fastening of Kṛṣṇa by Yaśodā, his mother, are examples on this point.

Thus the Bhāgavata, for its stories, has drawn upon the Mahābhārata; and, of the Purāṇas, upon the Harivamśa and the Viṣṇu Purāṇa.

(D) Speciality of the Bhāgavata.

Thus the Bhāgavata was entirely devoted to philosophy and religion that characterise the extant mahā-Purāṇas; it has freely drawn upon other Purāṇas for its stories, genealogy etc

and is the latest of the extant mahā-Purānas. Perhaps on these grounds, the Padma Purāna declares the Bhāgavata to be the quint-essence of all other Purānas.⁷⁷ If the last part of the 12th Skandha and the whole of the 1st Skandha are later additions as H.P.Sastri has held,⁷⁸ then, according to the re-
 dactors who were responsible for those additions in the Bhāga-
 vata, the speciality of the Bhāgavata lies in its exclusive
 description of Hari.⁷⁹ It claims that it has given us a unique
 practical religion and has delineated the character of the
 supreme.⁸⁰ It professes to be the mature fruit of the Vedas.⁸¹
 It claims to represent the essence of the Purānas, the itihāsa,
 the dharma-sāstras and the Brahma-sūtras.⁸² Naturally, it is
 the sun in the galaxy of the Purānas — the best of all.⁸³ The
 pleasure which it imparts to the reader cannot be found else-
 where.⁸⁴ Vopadeva also remarks that the Bhāgavata stands for the
 Vedas, the Purānas and the literature.⁸⁵

Indeed, the Bhāgavata has incorporated fragments from the Vedas and the Upaniṣads. It partakes of the nature of a Purāna in so far as it deals with the sarga etc. It is, at the same time, an excellent piece of literature.⁸⁶ Passages of the Bhāgavata remind us frequently of Kālidāsa.⁸⁷

(E) Is the Bhāgavata the composition of one author?

Winternitz and Pargiter have agreed that the Bhāgavata bears the stamp of unified composition.⁸⁸ Vaidya has gone further and holds that it seems to be the composition of one author.⁸⁹ But, in spite of the fact that the materials in the Bhāgavata

have been co-ordinated and systematised, the Bhāgavata is a Purāṇa of growth and not written down by a single author.

(a) Interpolation of three chapters.

Roy suggests that three chapters viz 1/3-, 6/8/- and 12/1/- are interpolations and he contends that the chapter 2/7/- contains the genuine list of avatāras. Hāzrā holds this chapter spurious. Vaidya has expressed the view that 12/1/- is genuine.

At the outset of his benedictory verses, Śrīdhara says that the Bhāgavata contains, in all, 332 chapters. But in the extant Bhāgavata, 335 chapters are to be found. Obviously then, 3 chapters had been interpolated into the Bhāgavata after the time of Śrīdhara.

Another three chapters seem to have been added. From Hari-līlāmṛta, a work by Vopadeva, which professes to be the index of the Bhāgavata, it can be found that the 4th Skandha has 29 chapters, whereas Śrīdhara has commented on 31 chapters therein. Similarly, Hari-līlāmṛta holds that the 8th skandha contains 23 chapters, while according to Śrīdhara, there are 24 chapters. Vopadeva, the author of Hari-līlāmṛta, preceded Śrīdhara (1400 A.D.) by a century. So during the course of a hundred years, 3 chapters were added to the Bhāgavata by the time of Śrīdhara. From the tendency of the Bhāgavata to pursue and elaborate traditional thoughts, it seems that the 10th and the 13th chapters of the 4th Skandha, and the 14th

chapter of the 8th Skandha are interpolations. This conclusion is arrived at by comparing the table of chapters as found in the extant Bhāgavata which Śrīdhara has commented upon and Hari-līlāmṛta.

(b) Manifold revision of the Bhāgavata.

In fact, with a Purāṇa of growth, interpolations are but normal; and, hence the author does not call them interpolations at all. They are part and parcel of the extant Bhāgavata.

(i) H.P.Sastri contends that the Bhāgavata was 'at least thrice revised'. Comparing the Bhāgavata with an egg, he goes on - "The yolk is the kernel, the white the first revision and the shell is the second revision. The interlocution between Śuka and Parīkṣit from the beginning of the 2nd Skandha to the first half of the 5th of the 12th Skandha, is the real Purāṇa. The introduction in the second half of the first Skandha, explaining who Śuka was, who Parīkṣit was and how they came together, With the sixth chapter of the 12th Skandha, shows the second development of the Purāṇa. The first half of the first Skandha and the last half of the 12th Skandha form the third stage".

(ii) The point of three-fold revision is also supported by a passage in Hari-līlāmṛta which speaks of three sets of speakers and listeners of the Bhāgavata.

(iii) The Bhāgavata also has set down the traditional

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transmission of itself. This shows also that the Bhāgavata is
a Purāna of growth.

(iv) Burnouf also noticed the varying styles of the
103 Bhāgavata. This also ^espeaks against its coming from one hand.

(c) A recommendation.

A work, like this, should be critically edited in the
line chalked out by Sukh^tankar in laying down the principles of
the critical edition of the Mahābhārata. 104 Much work has been
done towards the critical editions of the Vedas and the
Mahābhārata. It is high time that a critical edition of the
Bhāgavata should be attempted, on the basis of the manuscripts
105 106
from India and abroad.

(d) The extant Bhāgavata.

Though after the latest redaction brought about by
the Tamil saints of the South, the Bhāgavata has very little
changed, yet the counting of the actual stanzas as found in the
Baṅgavāsī edition, discloses the fact that in spite of the
traditional view that the Bhāgavata consists of 18,000 stanzas
and Śrīdhara's approval thereto, the edition in question
actually contains 14079 stanzas only. Where are ^{the} 3931 stanzas?

(F) Evolution of the Bhāgavata.

(a) Antiquity of the work.

The Bhāgavata has very little changed after the Ālwārs
Hence it must have lost nearly 4000 stanzas in course of its
evolution before the Ālwārs. Winternitz holds that the Bhāga-
107
vata has used very old materials. J. Meier has dealt with

archaism in the Bhāgavata. Dikṣitar has contended that at least ten principal Purāṇas (of which the Bhāgavata is one) as characterised by pañca-laksana, found entrance from North into the Tāmil country and they inspired the Tāmil saints with their ideas and ideals. The Mahābhārata contains^a list of 18¹¹⁰ Purāṇas. Taking together all these data, the story of the evolution of the Bhāgavata may be briefly traced as follows :-

Like other mahā-Purāṇas, the kernel of the Bhāgavata is very old. Though it has constantly changed through centuries, yet even in the extant Purāṇa, old material and old language may still be traced. The Bhāgavata, along with certain other principal Purāṇas, was imported from North to South where it received the final accretion of emotional devotion cultured by the Ālwārs for centuries. Though the main bulk of it, based upon the Mahābhārata and the Viṣṇu Purāṇa and the Hari-vamśa, was more or less complete by the time of the Imperial Guptas, yet it was the Ālwārs who gave it a finishing touch.

(b) The last phase.

The Bhāgavata-Māhātmya of the Padma Purāṇa substantiates the story of the evolution of the Bhāgavata, as chalked out above.

(i) Story in the Padma Purāṇa.

In the Padma Purāṇa, it is told, that Bhakti (devotion) travelled with her two sons, Jñāna and Vairāgya (knowledge and detachment) from South to North. Roaming through many countries

she at last reached Vṛndāvana, her destination. But the moment she placed her feet on the soil of Vṛndāvana, she suddenly grew young while her sons fainted away out of fatigue and old age. Subsequently, Nārada brought them to consciousness and they once again gained their youth to the utter delight of Bhakti. Nārada worked this wonder by reciting the Bhāgavata to jñāna and Vairāgya.

(ii) The story analysed.

The historical facts, clad in allegory, appear to be as follows :-

Jñāna coupled with vairāgya preceded bhakti. If we trace the history of sādhanā, we find that the oldest Upaniṣads reveal the path of knowledge. It was Kṛṣṇa who first gave an impetus to bhakti-sādhanā which, after his death, began to develop by leaps and bounds.

In South, bhakti began its career as an intoxicating emotion, and for centuries, led a rather secluded life in Karnāṭaka, Mahārāṣṭra and Guj^{-a-}rāt. In Vṛndāvana, however, bhakti remained all along fresh and invigorating, because it was closely associated with jñāna and vairāgya. Hence the tide of bhakti, in its purely emotional form, became assimilated to the bhakti of Vṛndāvana, and this was a compromise of the three elements i.e. bhakti, jñāna and vairāgya.

The word 'punah' (again), in one of the five chapters under consideration, indicates that devotion which had its

emotional development in the South, travelled formerly from North. The Southern Tāmil saints developed the emotional aspect of devotion through practice and translations of the Purānas, which show their conspicuous individuality. The Bhāgavata bears a definite stamp of their contribution in its final shaping. It was already existent as the phrase 'vartate pūrva eva hi' suggests; and was enriched by the wealth of emotional devotion of the Tāmil saints.

The story of the Padma Purāna further shows that though the Ālwārs are the main contributors, yet this type of bhakti was not confined to their fold. It flooded Karnāṭa, Mahārāṣṭra and Guj^arāt. ¹¹¹ Das Gupta has shown that other Vaiṣṇava saints had preceded the Ālwārs; Prapannāmṛta supports this view. Farquhar contends that side by side with the Ālwārs, there was a ¹¹² group of saints who practised emotional bhakti. Thus the emotional stream of bhakti, fed by several tributaries, at last amalgamated with the bhakti supported by jñāna and vairāgya in the already existent Bhāgavata.

The observation of Radhakriṣṇān, that "in the Bhāgavata, bhakti is a surging emotion, which thrills the whole frame, ¹¹³ chokes speech and leads to trance", does not seem to picture bhakti in all its bearings. If the statement means that emotionalism is the last word on bhakti in the present Bhāgavata then, it is opposed to tradition represented in the Padma Purāna and the Bhāgavata. The only moral that can be drawn from the story of the Padma Purāna is that the bhakti of the Bhāgavata is

a harmonious combination of emotion, knowledge and detachment. At the colophon of each chapter, the Bhāgavata has been called 'Pāramahamsya-Saṁhitā', which, also, means 'a work where emotion is wedded to knowledge re¹¹⁴-inforced by detachment.

Nevertheless, it must be admitted that the final redaction at the hands of the Southern saints, was a grand success. But as the great bulk of the work appears to have been brought into existence by the time of the Imperial Guptas when Vaiṣṇavism rose to its highest peak, the author pays his tribute to the redactor, belonging to the Gupta period, who was really ^a great poet and philosopher.

(II)

Date of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa.

(A) Different views.

A number of views have been put forward by the Eastern as well as Western scholars, as to the date of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. They are arranged here in chronological order :-

- | | | | | | | |
|-------|--|---|---|---|---------------------|-----|
| | a | b | c | d | | 115 |
| (i) | Burnouf, Wilson, Colebrooke and Macdonell-- | | | | 13th Cen. | |
| (ii) | Bhāṇḍārkar -- Two centuries before Ānandatīrtha. | | | | | 116 |
| (iii) | Vaidya, Winternitz..... | | | | 10th century. | 117 |
| (iv) | Farquhar----- | | | | 9th century. | 118 |
| (v) | Eliot----- | | | | 8th or 9th century. | 119 |
| (vi) | D.S. Śāstrī----- | | | | 825-850 A.D. | 120 |
| (vii) | Kṛṣṇamūrti Śarma----- | | | | 8th century. | 121 |

- (viii) A.N.Roy-----¹²²550-650 A.D.
 (ix) Hāzrā-----¹²³600 A.D.

It may be noted here that for the determination of the date of the Bhāgavata, some of the data are as follows :-

- (i) The author of the Bhāgavata was acquainted with ¹²⁴Gaudapāda.
 (ii) Gaudapāda refers to the Bhāgavata. ¹²⁵
 (iii) The Māthara Vṛtti refers to the Bhāgavata. ¹²⁶
 (iv) The Viṣṇu Purāṇa refers to the Bhāgavata. ¹²⁷
 (v) Śaṅkara's Govindāṣṭaka bears the influence of the Bhā. ¹²⁸
 (vi) Śaṅkara has commented on the Bhāgavata.

All these data are doubtful.

(B) The author's view.

The Bhāgavata being a work of growth as we have seen before, no particular period can possibly be assigned to it. But the Bhāgavata seems to have secured this present bulk mainly by the accumulation of materials of three different periods.

The periods of those accretions may be broadly traced as follows

- (1) Alberuni (about 1030 A.D.) ¹²⁹ gives two lists of Purāṇas, of which one refers to 'Vaiṣṇava Bhāgavata'. This concrete fact fixes the upper limit to about 1030 A.D. Again, the ¹³⁰ mention of Tāmil saints in the Bhāgavata, and, of the Hūṇas ¹³¹ accepting Vaiṣṇavism, ¹³² show that the last phase of the Bhāgavata cannot be earlier than the last quarter of the 5th century. Indeed, temple worship, in mass scale, attended with kathā, kīrtana etc, gives a picture of bhakti as enumerated in the

Bhāgavata, that came after 500 A.D. Thus the last phase of the Bhāgavata seems to fall between 500 to 1030 A.D.

(2) Though the last phase of the Bhāgavata was mainly the contribution of the saints of the South, yet the main bulk of it might have been complete during the time of the Imperial Guptas. Scholars agree that the extant mahā-Purāṇas were all compiled more or less during the Gupta period which is considered to be the epoch of Brāhmanical renaissance. If that be so, the main bulk of the Bhāgavata, the only extant work representative of the Bhagavata school besides the Gītā, should, in all probability, be assigned to that period of the 'pāramabhāgavata' Gupta emperors. In history, no other period can be traced when such a work which has been decidedly influenced by the Hari-vamśa and the Viṣṇu Purāṇa and which stands for the mature fruit of Bhāgavatism, might have been compiled except that of the Gupta emperors. The saints of the South were devotees but not scholars. Hence it cannot be conceived that such a scholarly work could have been shaped by the Tāmil saints. On the other hand, the Gupta period abounds in scholars. Thus if there was any period when the bulk of the Bhāgavata could have been compiled, it is likely to have been the Gupta period.

(3) But as Winternitz has said, the oldest part of the Bhāgavata may claim a remote antiquity like that of all other mahā-Purāṇas. This pushes the oldest portion of the Bhāgavata to the period of Gautam̐a and Āpastamba Dharma Sūtras.

Thus it may be concluded that the old Bhāgavata was

replaced by the extant Bhāgavata during the period of the Imperial Guptas when old materials were co-ordinated and systematised, whereas the wealth of its ethics was re-inforced finally by the invaluable contribution of emotional devotion by the saints from the South. These are then the three conspicuous landmarks in the history of evolution of the Bhāgavata Purāna.

(III)

The domicile of the author of the Bhāgavata.

The Bhāgavata being a work of growth, the question of the domicile of the author does not arise. But so far as the final redaction of the Bhāgavata is concerned, there are traces to the effect that it was Draviḍa country which had mainly contributed to its final shaping.

The philosophic attitude of the Bhāgavata, its unique uniformity of composition, its late origin in the present form while other mahā-Purānas were already completed, its variety and richness of poetic metre not to be found in other Purānas, the force of its grandeur and lack of simplicity, its worked out variety of style, all combine together to give rise to a couple of problems :-

- (1) Was the Bhāgavata written by some modern scholar?
- (2) If so, does the word 'Bhāgavata' found in the Purāna lists, as the fifth of the 18 mahā-Purānas, refer to the 'Devī Bhāgavata' and not to the 'Śrīmad Bhāgavata'?

The Vopadeva-theory.(A) Origin of the theory.

When did grammarian Vopadeva, the author of Hari-līlāmṛta, become linked up with the authorship of the Bhāgavata? It is difficult to say. But some doubt as to its authorship seems to have loomed large, from the days of the principal Purāṇas. The attempt, by not less than three mahā-Purāṇas viz¹³⁵ Garuda, Matsya and Padma, to define the Bhāgavata, anticipates this doubt. Śrīdhara was the first to give a concrete shape to¹³⁶ this doubt, as Wilson has noticed. While commenting upon the opening verse of the Bhāgavata, Śrīdhara has challenged this view. In the long-drawn history of doubt as^{to} its authorship, Vopadeva¹³⁷ became associated. Lately, three traditional scholars have dealt with this vexed question.

Of the modern scholars, Wilson, Burnouf and Colebrooke have all accepted this view that the Bhāgavata comes from the¹³⁸ hand of Vopadeva.¹³⁹ Vaidya leans towards this view.¹⁴⁰ But Far-^{a 140 b} quhar,^{140 c} Sharma and Śāstrī have all dissented from it on the ground of absurdity and un-historicity. It may be noted here that the only basis for the alleged authorship of Vopadeva is tradition and tradition only.

(B) The theory revised.

It is now settled that Vopadeva (1300 A.D.) who was a contemporary of Jayadeva and Hemādri, cannot be the author of the Bhāgavata which was already in existence when Alberuni visited India (about 1030 A.D.) Further, Mādhva Ānandatīrtha

who lived at least fifty years before Vopadeva, referred to the Bhāgavata in his commentary on the Gītā. In his Mādhva-vijaya, Nārāyaṇa Paṇḍitācārya in-¹⁴¹forms that textual problems had already started in the time of Mādhva. How can Vopadeva, under the circumstances, be credited with the authorship of the Bhāgavata?

Vopadeva has written three works bearing upon the subject viz Mukṭā-phala, Hari-līlāmṛta and Mukuṭa of which Hari-līlāmṛta professes to be an index of the Bhāgavata. A comparative study of Hari-līlāmṛta and the Bhāgavata discloses the following facts :-

(i) The interpretation of the ten topics (daśa lakṣa-¹⁴²nas) as given by Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, the commentator of Hari-līlāmṛta, does not tally with that of the Bhāgavata.^{143.}

(ii) The 12 Skandhas of the Bhāgavata have been held to have been arranged in the order of eligibility of the listener, that of the speaker and the ten lakṣanas respectively.¹⁴⁴ Hence, in accordance^{with} this arrangement, Vopadeva holds āśraya (reality), the tenth topic, to have been described in the 12th Skandha of the Bhāgavata. But, according to Śrīdhara, who claims to put forward the traditional view, the 10th Skandha deals with āśraya. Now, had the Bhāgavata been written by Vopadeva, how could Śrīdhara, who came only a century after Vopadeva and who claims to represent the traditional view, differ from Vopadeva? This apparent anomaly disappears if it be said that Vopadeva explained the Bhāgavata from a standpoint which, at least, did

not represent the particular tradition which Śrīdhara might have followed.

(iii) Vopadeva recognises Rāma and Kṛṣṇa as of equal¹⁴⁵ status. But according to the extant Bhāgavata, Rāma is an aṁśa-¹⁴⁶kalā of Puruṣa; Kṛṣṇa, on the other hand is the supreme deity. Moreover, he recognises Kṛṣṇa as an avatāra only, but not as the source of the avatāras, as the Bhāgavata has done.

(iv) Vopadeva holds Lakṣmī-pati had descended as Kṛṣṇa¹⁴⁷ Hence to him, Kṛṣṇa is the manifestation of Nārāyaṇa (Lakṣmī-pati). But the Bhāgavata tells of Nārāyaṇa as the manifestation of Kṛṣṇa. Vopadeva gives Kṛṣṇa the credit of being the perfect¹⁴⁸ and best manifestation of Nārāyaṇa.

(v) Contrary to the Bhāgavata, Vopadeva conceives¹⁴⁹ Paramātmā Para-Brahma Rāmā-pati as the supreme (āśraya).

(vi) Vopadeva has no where delineated the 'Bhāgavata¹⁵⁰ dharma' which constitutes one of the outstanding contributions¹⁵¹ of the Bhāgavata.

(vii) Vopadeva has recommended the Upaniṣadic methods¹⁵² of śravaṇa, manana and nididhyāsaṇa for spiritual emancipation. This is what Śaṅkara has done. But the Bhāgavata has been equally courteous to the path of knowledge as well as devotion.

(viii) Vopadeva emphasises karma, jñāna and bhakti as¹⁵³ three independant means. To him, dedication of action to Viṣṇu is karma-yoga; discussion about Viṣṇu is bhakti-yoga; while medi-¹⁵⁴tation of Viṣṇu in a lonely place is jñāna-yoga. To the Bhāgavata, on the other hand, bhakti-yoga and jñāna-yoga are two

methods, karma-yoga being subsidiary to both of them. The nature of jñāna-yoga and bhakti-yoga is also not so crude and simple as Vopadeva conceives.

To sum up: The position of Vopadeva differs fundamentally from that of the extant Bhāgavata; while the Bhāgavata considers Kṛṣṇa as the highest and Rāmā-pati as his manifestation; Vopadeva considers Rāmā-pati as the highest and Kṛṣṇa as his perfect manifestation; again, while the Bhāgavata emphasises 'Bhāgavata-dharma' consisting of bhakti-yoga, with all its details, to be the primarily means of attaining salvation, Vopadeva recommends śravaṇa, manana, nididhyāsana as well as karma-yoga, jñāna-yoga and bhakti-yoga — all independent methods of which bhakti-yoga is but the discussion on Viṣṇu.

In fact, Hari-līlāmṛta is, as Vopadeva frankly admits an index to the Bhāgavata; ¹⁵⁵ like Śrīdhara, Vopadeva also claims to represent a traditional view. The only conclusion that may be drawn, under the circumstances, is that Vopadeva was only a writer on the Bhāgavata and not of the Bhāgavata; further, he might have drawn upon a tradition which differs from the tradition of the Bhāgavata on which Śrīdhara comments.

(V)

The Devī-Bhāgavata theory.

Is the Devī Bhāgavata, and not the Śrīmad Bhāgavata, one of the 18 Mahā-Purāṇas?

Nīlakanṭha, the only commentator of the Devī Bhāgavata

and the disciple of Śrīdhara, has tackled this question at length. It may be noted here that the view of counting the Devī Bhāgavata among the mahā-Purānas is based upon tradition and tradition only. Nīlakantha has struck the golden mean by expressing the view that both the Devī Bhāgavata and the Śrīmad Bhāgavata are equally authoritative, though ^{some} Purānas vote for the Devī Bhāgavata while others for the Śrīmad Bhāgavata. ¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁷ Sāstrī has argued in favour of the Devī Bhāgavata which he places earlier than the Śrīmad Bhāgavata. Farquhar, on the other hand, has assigned the Devī Bhāgavata to a time between 900 and 1350 A.D. ^{157/1} Wilson doubts the claim in favour of the Devī Bhāgavata while Hāzrā is favourably inclined towards the Śrīmad Bhāgavata. ¹⁵⁸ On the whole, it appears from the trend of arguments, put forward by different scholars in favour of the Devī Bhāgavata, that none has openly challenged the status of the Śrīmad Bhāgavata. ¹⁵⁹

The theory revised.

A comparative study of the two Bhāgavatas discloses the following facts :-

(i) Nowhere in the Śrīmad Bhāgavata, may be found the slightest fling against the Devī Bhāgavata. But the Devī Bhāgavata seems to indulge in alluding unfavourably to the Śrīmad Bhāgavata. The introductory chapter, in the Devī Bhāgavata, where it asserts, as if in protest, the traditional view that a Purāna is pañca-laksana, is an illustration of this point. ¹⁶⁰

(ii) Introductory verses of the Devī Bhāgavata appear

to have been written in imitation of the Śrīmad Bhāgavata.

(iii) The Śrīmad Bhāgavata states that the present Purāṇas were composed after the present Mahābhārata, and calls itself to come last in the chronological ladder. This chronology is historical as shown above. But the Devī Bhāgavata asserts that the extant Purāṇas were compiled before the Mahābhārata. This statement cannot be warranted by history. Perhaps the author claimed remote antiquity for the Purāṇas in general, so that, by implication, the antiquity of the Devī Bhāgavata might be established.

(iv) The contents of the Devī Bhāgavata speak against its early origin. The Devī Bhāgavata rings of Sāṃkhya Kārikā by Īśvarakṛṣṇa. One complete chapter seems to be an amplification of the Vācaspati Miśra's remark to the effect that all objects are built up with the texture of the tripartite guṇas; a particular woman, Padmāvatī is given as an example of being endowed with three guṇas. There are other philosophic concepts which exhibit some influence of the Śāṅkara school. Its recommendation of incantation of Gāyatrī, in exclusion of other methods, is most modern; this is still practised by the orthodox Hindus.

All this shows that the Devī Bhāgavata is of later origin. The Śrīmad Bhāgavata is a work far superior to the Devī Bhāgavata. That this is so may be evidenced by the fact that while the Devī Bhāgavata has only one commentary by Nīlakantha Bhaṭṭa, the Śrīmad Bhāgavata has as many commentaries, treatises

and summaries as would, taken together, make a respectable library.

Though the question whether the Devī Bhāgavata or the Śrīmad Bhāgavata is a mahā-Purāṇa, is merely of academic interest, yet it may be concluded that the Śrīmad Bhāgavata is undoubtedly a mahā-Purāṇa, if the word 'mahā-Purāṇa' signifies a superior type, of the Purāṇas.

Section III

(I)

Vaiṣṇavism and its evolution.

Vaiṣṇavism is one of the most wide-spread religions of India. It was the religion of Heliiodorus, of the Imperial Guptas, of the great Rāmānuja, Caitanya and Tukārāma. Naturally, it inspired the interest of a group of scholars who have worked upon it, in its different aspects. Grierson has pointed out that bhakti and prasāda (the doctrines of devotion and divine grace) are its special contributions. Garbe has traced its history.

The evolution of Vaiṣṇavism may be broadly divided into three periods : (1) early period, (2) Paurāṇa period (200-1000 A.D.) and (3) period^{of} the sects (1000-up to now).

The early period.

(A)

Two currents of Vaisnavism.

(a) Origin of the two currents.

Vaisnavism is traced in general to the Viṣṇu hymns of the Rg.Veda and the Puruṣa Sūkta in particular. But, for all practical purposes, the history of the early period of Vaisnavism is more or less the history of the two early Vaisnava sects viz the Bhāgavata sect and the Pāñcarātra sect. Beyond the period of the sects, the story of Vaisnavism is shrouded in conjectural uncertainty. Hence the present treatment starts from the history of the early Vaisnava sects.

Two theories.

(i) Canda has traced both the Bhāgavata and the Pāñcarātra sects to Kṛṣṇa. He observes that the teachings of Kṛṣṇa were adopted in two different quarters of the Yādava family where Kṛṣṇa was born; ^{one} under the purview of the Brāhmanas, and another, living in the midst of the ābhīras and Saurāṣṭras. He concludes : "It can therefore be presumed that from the very outset, Vāsudevaism might have had two distinct phases -- one Brāhmanic professed by orthodox Brāhmins and tribes and castes, and the other un-Brāhmanic professed by ābhīras and Saurāṣṭras".¹⁶⁸ He further goes on: "Pāñcarātra evidently grew out of the primitive worship of Saṃkarṣaṇa, Vāsudeva and other Vṛṣṇi chiefs as the hero-gods by the barbarian ābhīras and Saurāṣṭras. The religion, on the other hand, of the Gītā, represents the orthodox phase of Vāsudevism in its full developed form".¹⁶⁹ Thus, according to Canda, Vaisnavism, which he obviously meant by the word

'Vāsude^{-a-}vism', had two distinct developments viz the Bhāgavata school and the Pāñcarātra school both of which emerged from Kṛṣṇa. Several other scholars have supported this view. ¹⁷⁰

(ii) The upholders of the Pāñcarātra school do not agree to this view. They are indifferent as to the contention that the Bhāgavata school has sprung from Kṛṣṇa. But they strongly oppose the contention that the Pāñcarātra is also derived from Kṛṣṇa. Their contention may be briefly stated as follows :-

1. The Pāñcarātra is associated with the Puruṣa Sūkta of the Rg.Veda. It was ṛṣi Nārāyaṇa to whom that Sūkta was revealed. Hence Nārāyaṇa is the founder of this system. ¹⁷¹

2. In the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, it is described that Nārāyaṇa saw the form of sacrifice called pāñcarātra and by performing it, he became the supreme.

3. In the Mahābhārata, it is told that seven 'citra-sikhaṇḍin ṛṣis' had proclaimed a śāstra which was on par with four Vedas. This śāstra (pāñcarātra) contained one lac of ¹⁷² verses and it was meant for the populace.

All this shows that the Pāñcarātra was more ancient than Kṛṣṇa who, then, cannot be the source of this school.

Though the nucleus of the Pāñcarātra may be very old, yet the Pāñcarātra, as a system, is later than the Bhāgavata school. In the Gītā, which forms one of the oldest part of the Mahābhārata, only Sāṃkhya and Yoga are mentioned. It is, in ¹⁷³ the Nārāyaṇīya, which is later than Gītā, that the Pāñcarātra is

also mentioned. Hence in between the period of the Gītā (not later than 400 B.C.) and the Nārāyaṇīya (100 A.D.), the system of the Pāñcarātra was framed. If the theory of Canda be accepted, then the propagation of Kṛṣṇa-cult began first in the family of Kṛṣṇa where he lived. The Yādava family, staying in the midst of Ābhīras and Saurāstras, must have been slow to adopt the religion of Kṛṣṇa. Thus, according to the theory of Canda, the Pāñcarātra might have come later than the Bhāgavata school.

(b) Rivalry between the two sects.

Whatever might have been their respective origin, the two streams of Vaiṣṇavism flowed in parallel channels. During the course of their evolution, each strived for superiority, followed by jealousy and rivalry. This under-current of rivalry seems to be present all the time though traces of it may be found few and far between. Rāmānuja who laid on sounder basis the doctrines of the Pāñcarātra, seems to have been a victim of this jealousy. Though he expressly does nowhere betray this weakness, yet it seems to be implied by his conduct. Rāmānuja is said to have wanted to substitute the Pāñcarātra for Vaikāṇasa Samhitā (a manual for the Bhāgavata school) wherever he went. Further, he mentions nowhere the Bhāgavata. Under ordinary circumstances, a Vaiṣṇava cannot keep reticence over a work like the Bhāgavata which already existed before Alberuni (1030 A.D.). This jealousy is so persisting that, even to this day, it is manifest among the sects of the South.

(c) Fusion of the two streams.

In spite of the rivalry, neither could avoid the influence of the other. Thus :—

(i) The doctrine of the Vyūhas propounded by the Pāñcarātra, has found entrance into the Bhāgavata as a part of the doctrine of the descents.

(ii) For stories, the Bhāgavata has drawn upon the Viṣṇu Purāṇa, a Pāñcarātra work.

On the other hand,

(iii) The theory of descents, first propounded by the Gītā, a Bhāgavata work, is accepted, in modified form, by the Pāñcarātra;

(iv) The Pāñcarātra recognises the worship of Vāsudeva.

(v) Certain stages of their respective evolution, disclose the fact that both the schools have been fed by the same stream. To wit, the Bhāgavata has been enriched by the contributions of the Ālwārs, who are conceived to be the spiritual teachers of the Śrī-Vaiṣṇava sect, the successor of the Pāñcarātra.
176

(vi) Because of the parallel streams, the border lines of the two schools have often been blurred. Heliodorus, the Greek, was thus recognised to be 'parama-Bhāgavata'.
177 If Heliodorus was a Vaiṣṇava at all, he could belong only to the Pāñcarātra sect which has not always moved within the stereotyped framework of the caste system. How then, can a

Pāñcarātrin be called 'Parama-Bhāgavata' ? Again, the Guptas, the 'Parama-Bhāgavata', encouraged the worship of Lakṣmī, the consort of Nārāyaṇa, the supreme of the Pāñcarātrins. Further, the Vaikhānasa Samhitā, the dharma-sāstra of the Bhāgavata school, is obviously based upon the Nārāyaṇīya, which is clearly a Pāñcarātra document. Only very recently, Moslim became Hari-dāsa (servant of Hari) in Caitanya sect which is based upon the Bhāgavata. There are many more instances like this.

(vii) The Gītā, the work of the Bhāgavata school, has been recognised as a great authority, by Rāmānuja, the Pāñcarātrin, and he commented on it.

(viii) Lastly, because of the close connection between the two schools, the 'Bhāgavata' and the 'Pāñcarātra' have been often used synonymously.

(d) The points of difference.

In spite of their close relationship, the following are the main points of distinction between the two schools :-

(i) The Bhāgavata school owes unconditional allegiance to the Vedas. The teachings of Kṛṣṇa, which served as the fundamentals of the Bhāgavata school. are borrowed from the Upaniṣads. But there is a tradition which asserts that the Pāñcarātra, which was on par with the Vedas, was preached by seven ṛsis.

(ii) The Bhāgavata school has confined its jurisdiction within the ^{Confines} ~~four walls~~ of the four castes. It only, unlike the Vedas, makes concession to women and ^{śūdras} ~~sūdras~~.

school, on the other hand, does not submit to this orthodoxy.

(iii) The Bhāgavata has recommended the Dharma-sūtras¹⁸⁴ for the guidance of its followers, while the Pāñcarātra has favoured its own saṁhitās.

(iv) The Bhāgavata has emphasised the doctrine of descents while the Pāñcarātra has stressed upon the doctrine of Vyūhas.

(v) The Bhāgavata recognises the identification between Śiva and Viṣṇu,¹⁸⁵ and supports the worship of five gods, while the Pāñcarātra propitiates Nārāyaṇa-Viṣṇu as the supreme.

(vi) The ritual mantra of the Bhāgavata is "om namo bhagavate Vāsudevāya", while that of the Pāñcarātra is "om namo Nārāyaṇāya".

(vii) The Philosophy of the Bhāgavata is monistic while that of the Pāñcarātra is dualistic.

(B)

The evolution of the Bhāgavata cult.

(a) Origin of Bhāgavatism.

Bhāgavatism had sprung from Kṛṣṇa-Vasudeva and steadily gathered strength as time rolled on, until by the¹⁸⁶ time of Megasthenes, it was fully established.¹⁸⁷ It was a new model of the old traditional religion. By extracting the best out of the Vedas, Upaniṣads, Sāṁkhya and Yoga, Kṛṣṇa-Vāsudeva preached the cult of self-less devotion to householders.

(b) The Gītā.

The association of Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa-Vāsudeva is held
188
as old as Pāṇini. It was during the great Mahābhārata battle
according to which was 189
~~held by Pargiter, to have been~~ fought between 950 and 925 B.C.
that the Śrīmad Bhāgavad Gītā was preached to Arjuna. If this
fact is literally true, then the 9th or 10th century B.C. heard
the first pronouncement of Kṛṣṇa's character. Macnicol has
190
tried to show that the Gītā is the precursor of Buddhism. While
Keith and Macnicol have traced the influence of Kṛṣṇa-worship
191
to Jainism. Even, the Gītā, in its present form, is pre-
192
Christian, and definitely pre-Pāṇinian.

(c) The Gītā— the first depository of Bhāgavatism.

The doctrine of Kṛṣṇa-Vāsudeva was confined, at the
outset, to the ksatriya circle ; for, Kṛṣṇa preached his
religion in his own family. The Gītā, even in the present form,
193
bears testimony to this fact. It further gives us the glimpse
of a time when the sap of Kṛṣṇa's religion was becoming dried
194
up. The Gītā is the first to embody, in concrete form, the
teachings of Kṛṣṇa-Vāsudeva. Perhaps, the teachings of Kṛṣṇa
were in the form of a dialogue between Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna; and
Sañjaya collected it under the name 'Kṛṣṇārjuna-samvāda'. Later
on, it took the name 'Gītā'. The Gītā was composed when the
worship of Vāsudeva was at its infancy; for, instead of the
doctrine of the four Vyūhas, only Vāsudeva is found in it.
195 196
Accordingly, Hill and Śāstrī have held the Gītā to belong to

400 B.C. This fits in with the account by Megasthenes as to the prevalence of Vaiṣṇavism by 400 B.C.

In the Gītā, 'Bhagavān' means spiritual teacher, and it is the epithet applied to Kṛṣṇa. Accordingly, the sect representing the Kṛṣṇa-cult came to be known as the Bhāgavata sect; and the religion which Kṛṣṇa propagated assumed the name 'bhāgavata dharma'. His religion was first accepted by Yādavas the members of his family, specially by the Sāttvata branch and so it was also called 'sāttvata dharma'. The word 'sāttvata' lost its family significance as early as the Śānti Parva of the Mahābhārata where it came to mean merely a devotee.

(d) The philosophy of the Gītā.

The Gītā is the layman's Upaniṣad; as such it is an old one but later than the Svetāśvatara. In Vaiṣṇavism it occupies a place which the Dharma-cakra-pravartana-sūtra does in Buddhism. In the Mahābhārata Śānti Parva, the Gītā is held to be the treasury of the Bhāgavata dharma. Side by side with the jñāna-yoga of the Upaniṣads, the Gītā has asserted selfless karmayoga, perhaps a very old ksatriya tradition. The theory of the inter-mixtures of jñāna and karma (jñāna-karma-samuccaya-vāda) seems to be an old interpretation of the Gītā, though superseded by the interpretation of Śaṅkara. The teachings of the Vedas, Upaniṣads, Sāṃkhya and Yoga are all incorporated in the small compass of the Gītā. Some brilliant Bhāgavata must have composed the Gītā, working up old materials into a simple

unity to meet the demands of his time. The Veda, the devas, the Upanisads with the Vedantic theory of Brahman-ātman, the conception of Puruṣa, Īśvara, Sāṃkhya-knowledge and Yoga-practice, all are profusely drawn upon. Liberation by jñāna, by devotion, divine grace brooding over all of them, performance of caste-duty, religious privilege extended to women and śūdras-are among the tenets of the Gītā: Kṛṣṇa's doctrine was the widely spreading flood, carrying all of them in its bosom.

(e) The Rāmāyana and the Mahābhārata.

The Rāmāyana and the Mahābhārata, in their present form, are Vaiṣṇavite, though Vaiṣṇavism may not be their dominant note. Of these, the Mahābhārata is very important for the purpose of the history of Vaiṣṇavism. In the Mahābhārata, several strata may be glimpsed, bearing upon the evolution of Vaiṣṇavism. The first wave of it, has represented Kṛṣṇa as merely a descent. The second wave was responsible for the accretion of the Mahābhārata to such an extent that the Bhārata of 24000 stanzas, became the Mahā-bhārata consisting of 100,000 stanzas, the new materials being designated as didactic epic. The earliest of these materials is the Gītā.

In the Mahābhārata, there are other Vaiṣṇava materials, besides the Gītā. The Gītā, Bṛhīśma-stava, Gajendra-
 201 202 203
 mokṣana, Viṣṇu-sahasra-nāma and Anu-smṛti are called the five
 jewels in the Mahābhārata. After the Gītā, Kṛṣṇa-cult de-
 204 205 206
 veloped in the Sanatsujātiya, Mokṣa-dharma, Bhīma-stava etc of
 the Mahābhārata. A considerable section of mokṣa-dharma is the

Nārāyaṇīya. Leaving mokṣa-dharma, the leading idea of the rest is the same as that of the Gītā. The Anu-gītā is simply an imitation of the Gītā. Hence broadly speaking the ideas of the Gītā have invaded major parts of the Mahābhārata. In other words, of the two schools, Bhāgavatism is the dominating note in the Mahābhārata.

After the Gītā, the Nārāyaṇīya marks the further development of Vaiṣṇavism. As the Gītā is the first analysis of the Bhāgavata school, so the Nārāyaṇīya is the first analysis of the Pāñcarātra. It consists of 18 chapters like the Gītā. ²⁰⁷ Probably, it was composed in the first century A.D.

In the Nārāyaṇīya, the doctrine of four Vyūhas is retained, though side by side the doctrine of incarnation is seen to be flourishing. The doctrine of Vyūhas is, as can be expected, absent in the early Bhāgavata school. The Nārāyaṇīya ²⁰⁸ describes ~~about~~ the abode of God. ²⁰⁹ Knowledge by the grace of God, ²¹⁰ the identity between jīva and Brahman, karma leading to bhakti, bhakti leading to divine grace, divine grace leading to jñāna ²¹¹ and finally jñāna securing salvation, the unity of Sāṃkhya and ²¹² Yoga--- all these disclose the close affinity between the Gītā and the Nārāyaṇīya. The worship of Vāsudeva, found in the Gītā, in elementary form, is described here in details.

The Paurāṇic Vaiṣṇavism.

(a) The Purāṇas.

The Brahma Purāṇa, the oldest of all extant Purāṇas,

is a Vaisnava work. Besides the Brahma Purāṇa, the Padma Purāṇa, the Viṣṇu Purāṇa, the Vāyu Purāṇa, the Brahma Vaiivarta Purāṇa, the Skanda Purāṇa, the Vāmana Purāṇa and the Kūrma Purāṇa— are all Vaisṇavite works. Of the Purāṇas, the Harivamśa, the Viṣṇu Purāṇa and the Bhāgavata are the strongholds of Paurāṇic Vaisṇavism. The Hari-vamśa and the Viṣṇu Purāṇa cannot be dated later than 400 A.D. The appearance of these two works attest the great place which Kṛṣṇa held in Hindu thought at the time. The Garuḍa and the Agni Purāṇas are 'smārta' manuals and the Bhāgavata-mantra is used at several places. The Skandopaniṣad identifies Viṣṇu with Śiva.

(b) Samhitās and the Upaniṣads.

Apart from the Pāñcarātra Samhitās that provided for the development of the Pāñcarātra school, the Mahā-nārāyaṇ-opaniṣad, the Viṣṇu-smṛti and the Vaikhāṇasa Samhitās represent Vaisṇavism at this period. The Mahā-nārāyaṇopaniṣad holds that Viṣṇu is Brahman from whom come 25 principles. It is the oldest Vaisṇava Upaniṣad and is quoted by Rāmānuja. The Viṣṇu-smṛti is affiliated to the black Yajur-veda. Kṛṣṇa receives no special mention here. The Vaikhāṇasa Samhitās are the Kalpa-sūtras of the Vaisṇavas and even in the South this day, in some temples, the Vaikhāṇasa Samhitās are used. They are historically note-worthy in two ways :- (i) They show the emergence of Śakti-principles in the Vaisṇava sects and (ii) they are the first manuals to express both belief and practice of Vaisṇavism.

(c) Last wave of Paurāṇic Vaiṣṇavism.

The Tāmīl saints represent the last wave of Paurāṇic Vaiṣṇavism. As early as the first century B.C., Vaiṣṇavism²¹³ travelled from North to South. The Tāmīl saints were responsible for the final re-touching of the Bhāgavata, as they gave impetus to the emergence of Śrī-Vaiṣṇavism from the Pāñcarātra. The Śrī-Vaiṣṇavas who represent the intellectual class, encased the religious sentiments of the Tāmīl saints within the framework of logical representation. Nāthamuni, Puṇḍarikākṣa, Rāma-Misra, Yāmuna and Rāmānuja were the Ācāryas (intellectuals) of the Śrī-Vaiṣṇava sect. Thus the period that immediately followed the time of the Tāmīl saints, marks, on the one side, the final shaping of the Bhāgavata, while, the starting of Śrī-Vaiṣṇavism, on the other. Since this time, the Bhāgavata became the Veda for all the sects, except for the Śrī-Vaiṣṇava sect, that arose one after another on the basis of the Bhāgavata. Thus Bhāgavatism had its third stage of evolution, at the hands of several sects.

Third phase of Vaiṣṇavism.

Sectarian Vaiṣṇavism represents the third phase of Vaiṣṇavism. This phase will be dealt with in reference to the evolution of the Bhāgavatism, as the history of this phase would be nothing but the very history of different sects that evolved from the Bhāgavata. It may only be noted here that in spite of the tremendous influence wielded by the sects, Paurāṇic Vaiṣṇavism is still thriving through a number of Sanskrit

and vernacular works.

(II)

Propagation of Vaisnavism.

The worship of Vāsudeva, the founder of the religion of the Gītā and the Anu-Gītā, originated among the Yādava family (Vṛsnis and Andhakas) and Kurus, and was handed down by them to the Saurasenakas. ²¹⁴ During the 400 B.C., the Vāsudeva-cult was thus confined to Mathurā, the country of the Saurasenakas. The Bhāgavatas are constantly mentioned from the time of Pāṇini onwards in the records of the Western part of Northern India, but are little known in the Magadha and its neighbourhood, ²¹⁵ though well-known to Gāndhāra and Central India. From Ghusandi ²¹⁶ and Besnagar Inscriptions, it is found that it had outstepped the boundaries of Mathurā and spread to the Indian borderland and its fame had reached the ears of non-Indian peoples of whom ²¹⁷ some became converts to the faith. The Nānāghat Inscription (100 A.D.) shows that Vaisnavism travelled from North to South and captured the heart of Mahārāṣṭra wherefrom it spread to the Tāmil country and then flew back with renewed vigour to the remotest corners of the Hindu world. From the first to the third century, Mathurā, the birth-place of the Bhāgavata-dharma, ceased to be its stronghold, perhaps because, during that period it was not favoured at the royal courts. During the time of the 'parama-Bhāgavata' Imperial Guptas, this religion flourished

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in the Panjab, Rajputānā, Central and Western India and Magadha. During this period, Bhāgavatism spread to the remotest corners of India. After the disintegration of the Gupta empire, the religion flourished in Central India. After the Guptas, Bhāgavatism lost prominence in Northern India. The powerful sovereigns, Mihiragula, Yaśovarman and Harṣa were adherents of non-Bhāgavata creed. The Bhāgavatas were an influential sect in the early part of the 9th century when Śaṅkara combats this doctrine. Lastly, the Tāmil country was the stronghold of Bhāgavatism, where the Alvars lived. Then comes the sectarian Vaisnavism.

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Section IV

Philosophical analysis of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa.

Introduction.

The three fundamentals.

The Bhāgavata is the most outstanding work representative of the Bhāgavata school. The two fundamental principles of Bhāgavatism are :- (a) Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa-Vāsudeva is the supreme deity and (b) bhakti is the means to attain him. (c) The doctrine of descents is a corollary to the first principle. Thus Kṛṣṇa-cult, bhakti-cult and the cult of descents are the three corner stones of Bhāgavatism.

(I)

(A) The Kṛṣṇa-cult.

(Philosophical)

(a) Kṛṣṇa— the svayam Bhagavān.

In the Bhāgavata, Kṛṣṇa is svayam Bhagavān— the main and only source of all kinds of descents (avatāras). Even Nārāyaṇa-Viṣṇu or Vāsudeva-Viṣṇu is the manifestation of Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa attained this status through the evolution of Bhāgavatism for centuries. The land-marks in the history of this evolution may be briefly traced as follows :—

(b) Kṛṣṇa — a historical figure.

The question whether Kṛṣṇa was a mythical creature²²¹ or a historical figure, had long puzzled scholars like Barth,²²² Hopkins²²³ and Keith. Barth held Kṛṣṇa as a popular solar deity, Hopkins as the patron god of the Pāṇḍavas, and, Keith as a deity of vegetation. These views have been criticised as unwarranted theories; and Hill,²²⁴ Roy Chowdhury²²⁵ and Sāstrī²²⁶ have shown, on the evidence of the Chāndogya Upaniṣad, Ghāṭa-jātaka, the Uttarādhyāyana-sūtra etc, that Kṛṣṇa was a historical figure who lived before 600 B.C. or perhaps 900 B.C. Indeed,²²⁷ if the chronology of Paurāṇic dynasties is not pure myth, as²²⁸ modern research has shown, then Kṛṣṇa, described to belong to the Sāttvata branch of the Vṛṣṇi family, is, in all probability, a historical figure.

(c) Kṛṣṇa — one or many?

Scholars have agreed that Kṛṣṇa was a human teacher.²²⁹ The Chāndogya Upaniṣad has painted him as the disciple of Ghora

Āṅgīrasa; and the Gītā embodies the teachings of Kṛṣṇa, incul-
 cated to him by the hermit. Roy Chowdhury and Hill have shown
 close affinity between the teachings of Āṅgīrasa and those
 found in the Gītā. The arguments of these scholars are con-
 vincing and they throw light upon the dictum that Kṛṣṇa of the
 Chāndogya Upaniṣad and Kṛṣṇa of the Gītā may be one and the
 same person. Again, Barth and Hopkins have contended that
 Kṛṣṇa of the Chāndogya Upaniṣad and Kṛṣṇa of the epic are
 identical. If that be so, then Kṛṣṇa's association with the
 teachings of the Gītā which forms an integral part of the epic,
 may not be improbable, for, it does not disturb the chrono-
 logical order.

In the Purāṇas, Kṛṣṇa is represented as the disciple
 of Garga, and not of Ghora Āṅgīrasa as in the Ch.Upaniṣad. This
 has led to the doubt whether the Paurāṇic Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa of the
 epic and ^{of} the Ch.Upaniṣad are one person or two. But unless the
 contrary is proved, the two Kṛṣṇas may be presumed to be one and
 the same person. Garga may be another name of Ghora Āṅgīrasa;
 or, if they are different persons, Kṛṣṇa might be the disciple of
 more than one teacher.

(d) Kṛṣṇa — a demi-god.

Grierson holds that the Bhāgavata doctrine is
 connected with sun-worship. It would be in fitness of things,
 that the Yādava clan in which first Kṛṣṇa preached his doctrine,
 would identify Kṛṣṇa with the god they worshipped. If the
 subject of their worship was the sun-god, then Kṛṣṇa satisfied

their cravings for a personal god, by being identified with the Sun-god, the impersonal one. But the Sun-god was a cluster of several gods, each of whom was called as Sun-god. During the further progress of the process of deification, Kṛṣṇa became identified with a particular Sun-god viz Viṣṇu. Now, during the early stage of his identification with the Sun-god, Kṛṣṇa was a demigod. Roy Chowdhury contends that the transformation of human Kṛṣṇa to the state of divinity was a fact of Indo-Scythian period. Kṛṣṇa may be traced as a demi-god, in Pāṇini i.e. before 400 B.C., when Vāsudeva and Arjuna were considered as a divine pair.

(c) Nara and Nārāyaṇa.

During this period, Vāsudeva and Arjuna are also represented as Nārāyaṇa and Nara respectively. The concept of Nārāyaṇa is earlier than that of Vāsudeva; and is first found in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa. Nārāyaṇa-worship may be Upaniṣadic. Nārāyaṇa is always associated with Nara. On the other hand, Megasthenes has traced the connection of Kṛṣṇa with Arjuna, a member of the Pāṇḍu family, from remote times. Naturally, when Nārāyaṇa became identified with Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna, by the law of association, could not but be identified with Nara. Identification ^{of} with Kṛṣṇa-Vāsudeva with Nārāyaṇa is first found in the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka (probably 300 B.C.) and the pair of Nara-Nārāyaṇa may be first witnessed in the Mahābhārata. In the Purāṇas, instead of Nara-Nārāyaṇa, Puruṣa-Nārāyaṇa is found. It may be concluded then, that before the Tai. Āraṇyaka,

Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa, the demi-god was identified with Nārāyaṇa; the identification of Kṛṣṇa with Viṣṇu came later on, though Hill, differing from this, suggests that by 200 B.C. Kṛṣṇa was identified with Nārāyaṇa and this identification is preceded by Kṛṣṇa's identification with Viṣṇu. ²⁴³

(d) Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu identified.

The identification of Nārāyaṇa with Viṣṇu is established by the time of the Baudhāyana Dharma Sūtra ^{244 a} and the Tai. ^{244 b} Aranyaka. But as to the identification of Kṛṣṇa with Viṣṇu, ²⁴⁵ scholars have differed in their views. Viṣṇu is a Vedic god. In the Brāhmaṇas, the lowest god is Agni and the highest Viṣṇu. ²⁴⁶ Gradually Viṣṇu became a family god. During the Mahābhārata, Viṣṇu became the supreme reality and was ²⁴⁷ identified with Kṛṣṇa-Vāsudeva.

The identification in the Mahābhārata was achieved gradually. The Mahābhārata, in its earliest form (i.e. as the Bhārata) was composed while Kṛṣṇa-worship was at its infancy. At the hand of Vaiśampāyana, Kṛṣṇa was glorified and thereby the doctrine of Kṛṣṇa's status as 'pūrṇa avatāra' was established. In the Rāmāyana, on the other hand, Rāma and Kṛṣṇa are only partial manifestations. In the Gītā, Kṛṣṇa is Brahman. In the early Mahābhārata, Kṛṣṇa is only a historical figure but in the Gītā he is a divine figure.

Thus the grounds for the identification of Kṛṣṇa with Viṣṇu were complete, by the time of the Mahābhārata. By that

time, Kṛṣṇa was enjoying a sublimated status. He was already identified with the Sun-god whom he had preached. One of the Sun-gods viz Viṣṇu, attained, in the mean²⁴⁸ time, supremacy and subsequently he became a family deity. Thus there was nothing left to make the identification incomplete. Though this identification might have started as early as 400 B.C. it was²⁴⁹ established by 200 A.D., when the Mahābhārata, in the present form, was more or less complete. However, this identification²⁵⁰ was, beyond any doubt, by the time of the Imperial Guptas (400 A.D.). Thus from the time of the Mahābhārata, Kṛṣṇa was the supreme god.

(e) The doctrine of Descent.

Once the supremacy of Kṛṣṇa was established, the doctrine of descent naturally followed. Identification of Kṛṣṇa, walking in a human form, with Viṣṇu-Brahman, led to the natural corollary viz the doctrine of descent, which was first²⁵¹ propounded in the Gītā and became steadily popular from 200 A.D. onward to 400 A.D. when the doctrine, in its developed²⁵² form, ousted the doctrine of Vyūha.

(B) Kṛṣṇa-cult.

HISTORICAL

(a) The biography of Kṛṣṇa.

Kṛṣṇa was born in the family of Vṛṣṇi, which may be²⁵³ traced even in the Brāhmaṇas. He was son of Devakī and²⁵⁴ Vāsudeva. The theory of Bhāṇḍārkar that Vāsudeva and Kṛṣṇa

were originally different persons has not been proved. Keith²⁵⁵ has criticised this view and the contrary is suggested by Roy²⁵⁶ Chowdhury on the basis of Patañjali. Kṛṣṇa's brother was²⁵⁷ Samkarsana.

The main incidents of Kṛṣṇa's life are connected with three places viz Vṛndāvana, Mathurā and Dvārakā. The life of Kṛṣṇa is tinged with myths and legends. Different data^{258 a} have been suggested by Roy Chowdhury and Hill.^{258 b} Ruben has set down principles for the historical reconstruction of Kṛṣṇa-²⁵⁹ story.^{260 a} Kirfel,^{260 b} Tadapatrikar and Katre have tried to reconstruct Kṛṣṇa-story on the basis of the Mahābhārata and the Purāṇas. Accepting the tradition of the Kṛṣṇa-story, tempered by historical criticism, the character of Kṛṣṇa may briefly be traced as follows :-

(b) Kṛṣṇa — through religious books.

²⁶¹
In the Chāndogya Upaniṣad, Kṛṣṇa is found to be the²⁶² disciple of Āṅgīrasa. Pāṇini mentions of a family of Kṛṣṇa. In the Mahābhārata, Kṛṣṇa is born in the family of the Vṛṣṇis, described as the friend and charioteer of Arjuna, maternal uncle's son of the Pāṇḍavas, an adviser to Yudhiṣṭhira, respected and worshipped by Bhīṣma, brave, courageous, calm, intelligent, learned, wise, dutiful, influential. He is also held there as a yogīśvara, incarnation of Nārāyaṇa and Viṣṇu. In the Gītā, he is the spiritual instructor, born in the family of Yadus and Vṛṣṇis, and a warrior. In the Hari-vamśa, are

described the childhood of Kṛṣṇa, his murder of Kamsa etc. In the Viṣṇu Purāṇa as well as in the Bhāgavata, ~~and~~ his career of a hero ^{is} ~~are~~ described in details from childhood.

(c) Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana, Mathurā and Dvārakā.

The life of Kṛṣṇa in Mathurā and Dvārakā is more or less historical. But the Vṛndāvana-life, depicted in the Purāṇas, has been held by the scholars as purely religious myth, concocted for the purpose of stimulating devotional sentiments. Roy Chowdhury has tried to show that though the Vṛndāvana episodes are taken from Viṣṇu legends, ²⁶³ yet gopāla Kṛṣṇa ²⁶⁴ may also be historical. If that be so, Bhāṇḍārkar's theory that Vāsudeva was ultimately identified with gopāla Kṛṣṇa becomes shaky. Nevertheless, it may be presumed that the historical nucleus, if there be any, of gopāla Kṛṣṇa was developed first by the Ābhīras, and then by the Tāmil saints from the South. The development might have taken centuries to complete; for, Vaiṣṇavism, along with the concept of gopāla Kṛṣṇa, was imported from North to South somewhere in the 200 B.C. and it was only after a few centuries that gopāla Kṛṣṇa assumed the most loving and lovable personification. The concept of the gopāla Kṛṣṇa was inherited by the Hari-vamśa and the Viṣṇu Purāṇa, from the Ābhīras, and it was given the final shape by the artistic hands of the Tāmil saints.

The residence at Gokula is referred to in the Nārāyaṇīya. In the Mahābhārata, Gopīs are found as the devotees

of Kṛṣṇa. In the Hari-vamśa, they are adultresses, but there is no mention of Rādhā in it. ²⁶⁵ Dikshitar has suggested that Nappinnai of the Tāmil saints may be the Rādhā of the later Vaiṣṇavism. In the Bhāgavata, she has not been mentioned by name. Only 'a certain gopī' has been mentioned to have been enjoying special ^{favour} ²⁶⁶ of Kṛṣṇa. Subsequently, Rādhā became a wife of Kṛṣṇa. Finally, Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa were symbols for individual souls and divinity. Neither the Bhāgavatas nor the Mādhvas recognise Rādhā. But all sects drawing upon the Bhāgavata do recognise her. The earliest sects to recognise her were those of Viṣṇuśvāmī and Nimbārka.

(II)

The bhakti-cult.

(a) The meaning of bhakti.

The word 'bhakti' is first found in the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad. ²⁶⁷ 'Bhakti' means love coupled with the knowledge of being sheltered by the object of love. These double bearings ^{268 a} ^{268 b} of bhakti are found in Yāska and Pāṇini. In the Gītā, worship is not simple love but love tinged with the performance of self-less action, glistening with the splendour of knowledge. The doctrine of tranquil worship (śāntopāśanā) as found in the Gītā is accepted by Rāmānuja.

(b) The evolution of bhakti.

The cult of devotion may be traced, in its germinal

form, to various hymns addressed to the gods, in the Rg.Veda. Even in that hoary antiquity, different relationships had been established between the chanter of the hymns and the various gods who were the subjects of panegyrics. Even ritualism of the Brāhmanas and the doctrine of knowledge of the Upanisads are flushed with an under-current of bhakti. It was not without the influence of bhakti that practical ritualism was transformed into contemplative sacrifice (bhavanātmaka-yajña) in which representative worship (pratīkopāsanā) found expression in the religion of the Upanisads. This representative worship marks the transition of the votary from the impersonal to the personal. Upāsanā (worship) is first found in the Atharva Veda. It steadily progressed through contemplative worship (pratīkopāsanā) until in the Muṇḍaka Upanisad it was re-inforced by a spirit of self-lessness. Upāsanā of the personal, tempered by selflessness, has found pronouncement in the Gītā.

(c) Bhakti in the Bhāgavata.

As to the bhakti in the Bhāgavata, Hill, Farquhar, Radhakrishnan and Das Gupta are all inclined to think that bhakti as found in the Bhāgavata, is only "a surging emotion exemplified in highly erotic passages where Kṛṣṇa's dalliance with the gopīs is described. It may point to utter self-abandonment of their love, but it is nothing better than unreasoned ecstasy divorced from duties of practical life and the dictates of common sense". Thus, according to all of them, the

bhakti of the Bhāgavata is "very different" from that of the Gītā; and, it has had effect upon the society.

Emotionalism, contributed by the Tāmil saints, being the last wave of bhakti that found entrance into the Bhāgavata, it is an undeniable aspect of the Bhāgavata bhakti. But it may, again, be repeated that if the Bhāgavata is literally a 'pāramahansa samhita', as it is claimed to be at the colophon of every chapter, and if the episode of the Padma Purāṇa has any truth in it, then, the bhakti of the Bhāgavata is not merely emotionalism; but emotionalism tempered with proportionate ad-mixture of knowledge detachment, and the performance of selfless action. This point will be dealt with in details, later on.

(III)

The doctrine of descents.

(a) Evolution of the doctrine.

The Rg. Veda gives indication as to the doctrine of the descents. ²⁷² The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa and the Taittirīya ^{273 a} Samhitā describe how Prajāpati descended as Fish, Tortoise, ^{273 b} Boar and Dwarf. The Gītā first expounded the doctrine and has, it is said, influenced Buddhism in its concept of nirmanakāya and the stories of the Jātakas. In course of further evolution of the doctrine, Viṣṇu became the source of the descents and the number of descents began to augment in the

^{274 a} Mahābhārata until in the ^b Nārāyaṇīya the doctrine of ten descents was established. The number went on increasing through the ^{275 a} Purāṇas such as the ^{275 b} Varāha, ^{275 c} Agni, ^{275 d} Kūrma Vāyu and ^{275 e} Matsya. The ²⁷⁶ Pāñcarātra recognises 24 descents. By the time of Vopadeva, ^{276/1} the number of descents soared upto 40. The evolution of the theory of descents discloses a spirit of assimilation exemplified in the inclusion of Buddha in the category of descents.

Different aspects of the theory of descents have been tackled by different scholars. ²⁷⁷ Katre has launched upon a discussion regarding the descents. B. Bhattacharya treats the ²⁷⁸ descents as historical figures and has cast suggestions as to ascertainment of their dates. H. P. Śāstrī, on the other hand, has utilised the order of ten descents, as found in the conventional list, to fix up the date of the ²⁷⁹ Purāṇas. He has also ²⁸⁰ traced the evolution of the descents through the Purāṇas.

(b) The doctrine in the Bhāgavata.

²⁸¹ While the Gītā contains no list, the Bhāgavata has five lists of descents. It seems that the 'vibhūti' of the Gītā have taken the shapes of avatāras in the Bhāgavata. The Bhāgavata has enumerated 24 saviour descents, besides ²⁸² Manvantarāvatāras (cosmic descents) four or nine Vyūhas, Puruṣa (the primordial descent), the illustrious triad viz Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Mahesvara, and lastly, 12 other descents all designated by synonyms of Viṣṇu. The five lists taken together point to the suggestion that, in order to elevate the status of Kṛṣṇa,

the Bhāgavata has treated Nārāyaṇa-Viṣṇu as Puruṣa avatāra; it has accepted the traditional doctrine of ten descents and the triad of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Mahesvara, designated as guṇāvatāras by the Bhāgavata. The rest of the avatāras who, for the sake of convenience, may be designated as 'saviour descents', are supplied from the list of savants of the Bhāgavata-cult. To wit, Sanat-kumāra, Nārada, etc, described as descents in the Bhāgavata, are all upholders of Bhāgavatism. Lastly, a dozen of descents, known to us from other texts, are given the name of Viṣṇu; it can be explained by the very high position of Viṣṇu in the hierarchy of gods on the one hand, and, on the other, by the lack of ingenuity on the part of the Bhāgavatas.

(c) Further history of the doctrine.

The lack of ingenuity in designating the descents, in the Bhāgavata, gives us a glimpse of the fact that already the doctrine of descents had begun to sink into decadence. By the time of Jayadeva, ten, out of a jumbled crowd of descents, emerged as conspicuous. Out of the mess, Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, and Dattātreya had the fortune to be propitiated by the populace. They still share that fortune.

Section V

Influence of the Bhāgavata.

(a) Rāmānuja and the Bhāgavata.

The influence of the Bhāgavata, on sectarian Vais-

navism, cannot be over-estimated. Excepting Rāmānuja, all the other Vaisnava sects are based upon and inspired by the Bhāgavata. Indifference of Rāmānuja towards the Bhāgavata may be due to three reasons :- First, Rāmānuja considered the Purānas, in general, to be of secondary importance. Secondly, he belonged to the Pāñcarātra sect, and accordingly, owed allegiance to the Viṣṇu Purāṇa, which is said to be affiliated to the Pāñcarātra. Thirdly, because of his sectarian bias, he might have had deliberately passed over the Bhāgavata which belongs to his rival sect. We may venture to say that Rāmānuja may not have been un^{e-}acquainted with the ²⁸³ Bhāgavata. In his classification of the Purānas, he might have been influenced by the Bhāgavata. Sharma has gone ²⁸⁴ further to the extent of asserting that Rāmānuja has actually ²⁸⁵ quoted from the Bhāgavata.

(b) Other sects and the Bhāgavata.

The first sect to emerge from the Bhāgavata was that of Mādhva, professing the doctrine of the 'bhedābheda'. Iśvarapurī, who initiated Caitanya, the exponent of the Vaisnavism of Bengal, belongs to this school. Next to Mādhva, comes Viṣṇu-svāmī who professes the doctrine of the 'samuccaya'. Saint Bilvamaṅgala belongs to this sect. The schools of Vallabha and Caitanya have drawn upon this sect. Then comes the scholarly Nimbārka professing the doctrine of the 'bhedābheda', from the Telugu country. He waived the traditional rigour of the Bhāgavatas. Sāṅdilya, the author

of the bhakti-sūtra, probably belongs to this sect. Next in the chronological order, comes Vallabha with the 'suddhādvaita' doctrine. Suradāsa belongs to this sect. A standard work of this sect is the 'Bhakti-māla'; the followers of Rāmānanda and Kavīra owe allegiance to this sect. Tulsī-dāsa is a disciple of Rāmānanda. Among the Mārātha devotees who came under the influence of the Bhāgavata, the Mahānubhāvas, Jñāneśvara and Tukārāma are worthy of mention.

Thus Rāmānuja and Mādhva in the south, Śrī-sect (Rāmānandīs), Brahmā-sect (Mādhva), Rudra-sect (Viṣṇu-svāmī), Sanakādi-sect (Nimbārka) Mirābāī, Kavīr and Vallabha in the west, the saints of Mathurā in the North, and Caitanya, Candīdāsa and Vidyāpati in the east, all contributed to turn into Bhāgavataḥ the whole of India. The stupendous influence of the Bhāgavata is further noticeable in the large number of translations, treatises, commentaries and abridgements of the
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Bhāgavata, which, taken together, would make up a respectable library.

Solicitation.

Though the Bhāgavata, being a work of growth, received heaps of diverse materials for centuries, yet the assimilative and creative genius of its redactors, marshalled them into a coherent system. Some of the philosophical problems, which will now follow, are built and answered upon the presupposition of a harmonious unity of these materials.

VOLUME I

REALITY IN THE ABSTRACT AND THE CONCRETE

P A R T I

THE METAPHYSICAL APPROACH TO REALITY.

Introduction.

The Śrīmad Bhāgavata has, at the very opening śloka, contemplated the supreme truth with the remark :- satyam param¹ dhīmahi. In the very next śloka, it has laid down that absolute reality (vāstava vastu) is to be realised through this work, not as a philosophic abstraction, but as a concrete reality embraced in the heart of hearts, by a person going² through this book. Hence quest for truth, it can be presumed, has been the living substance of the philosophic trend of thought in the Śrīmad Bhāgavata.

Chapter I

Nature of Reality.

What is the nature of the supreme truth (para satya or vāstava vastu) which the Bhāgavata holds to be the goal of its philosophy? The most outstanding answer to this fundamental question has been given in the next chapter. Reality, according to the Bhāgavata, not being a distant possibility reigning in a sublime altitude unapproachable by the aspiring individuals, is held to constitute the very essence of the man. This is why desire to know the essence of the individual soul involves the knowledge of reality. So it is that in connection with the desire of knowing the essence of the ego (jīvasya

tattva-jijñāsā) the supreme reality has been propounded by the Bhāgavata in the well-known śloka as follows :-

vadanti tat tattva-vidas tattvam yaj jñānam advayam.
Brahmeti Paramātmēti Bhagavāniti śabdyate..^{2/1}

This stanza has a couple of famous interpretations — one by Śrīdhara Svāmī, another by Jīvagōsvāmī.

Śrīdhara.

The interpretation of Śrīdhara may be summarised as follows :-

The votaries have spoken of reality as being non-dual consciousness. People of diverse creed have differently designated this non-dual consciousness. Thus the followers of the Upanisads designate it as Brahman. The Yogins call it Paramātmā while the devotees name it as Bhagavān.

It is clear from what has been stated above that Śrīdhara holds that Brahman, Paramātmā and Bhagavān are but different names of the same truth viz non-dual consciousness.

Jīvagōsvāmī.

Jīvagōsvāmī, on the other hand, has discovered hierarchy among the three consecutive grades of reality, viz Brahman, Paramātmā and Bhagavān. Thus, according to him Brahman is the first revelation, in the mind of those divested of the spirit of devotion. Mere knowledge, unattended by bhakti, (devotion) reveals Brahman as a blank mass of intelligence. It is only with the spirit of devotion that the votary

can penetrate through that mass of intelligence and discover Bhagavān, the centre of that cosmic consciousness. Though Bhagavān per se is formless yet he assumes spiritual form. Paramātmā, on the other hand, is a special manifestation endowed with nearly the same capacities which Bhagavān possesses, with the distinction of a specific form which has been conceived to be four-handed. Being a representation of Bhagavān, Paramātmā has been called, by the vaiṣṇava school of Bengal, as the vilāsa of Bhagavān.³ The living substance running through Paramātmā is the same as that of Bhagavān. In this way, Brahman is the first manifestation of reality which comes about with the aid of pure knowledge, while Paramātmā and lastly Bhagavān are revealed when devotion operates upon the votary. It is therefore evident that there is a hierarchy among the revelations viz Brahman, Paramātmā and Bhagavān.

Jīvagovāmī explained.

This hierarchy may be illustrated by a description of Nārada (Śisupāla-badha-kāvya) coming down upon the earth from the distant horizon to the presence of Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa. The description runs as follows :-

cayas-tviṣām ityavadhāritam purā
tataḥ śarīrīti vibhāvitākṛtim.
vapur vibhaktāvayavam pumāniti
kramādamūm Nārada ityavodhi sah.⁴

"First, Nārada appeared as a lump of lustre in the distant horizon; gradually he began to come nearer and nearer

and from the lump of lustre he began to appear in a human form. Still nearer, he could be recognised as a male and lastly he was fully recognised to be none else than Nārada."

Evidently, the difference of perceptions is accountable by the distance, though the object of perception remained the same all the time. So with the case of the perceptions of Brahman and Bhagavān. The intuitional knowledge of the votaries is the only evidence in the revelations of Brahman, Paramātmā and Bhagavān. The example of Nārada testifies to the fact that the perception of him as a lump of lustre shows that the perceiver is far away from the object; while, recognition as Nārada indicates that the object is close at hand of the perceiver. Carrying this analogy into the field of intuitive vision, it may be held that the perception of Brahman as an un-differentiated mass of intelligence shows that the votary is visualising reality as we see a distant star, while perception of Bhagavān with his spiritual form fully differentiated reveals the fact that we have attained the stage when reality stares us in the face directly.

Though we are realising the same truth which we had realised as Brahman, yet the full-fledged splendour of the realisation of Bhagavān makes a difference. Thus Brahman as an undifferentiated mass of intelligence is sometimes described as the external splendour (aṅga-kānti) of Bhagavān.⁵ The same reality viz non-dual consciousness reveals itself with its

conditions undifferentiated as Brahman and with its potentialities perfectly manifested as Bhagavān. Brahman is a revelation from a distance while Bhagavān is revealed as truth "in flagranti".⁶ Evidently then Bhagavān is a higher grade of truth than Brahman; and, Paramātmā, being endowed with conditions differentiated, stands higher than Brahman; while, not being embellished with the perfect manifestation of all potentialities, he is lower than Bhagavān. Thus Brahman, Paramātmā and Bhagavān are the three hierarchical grades of reality as comprehended by the progressive spiritual intuition of the votary. In this light, the śloka (vadanti etc as mentioned above) means that non-dual consciousness is the reality, which, again is revealed as Brahman, Paramātmā and Bhagavān, in response to the progressive journey of the votary towards the summit of introspection.

Chapter II

Nature of reality — its four grades.

Let us now examine the merits of the interpretations given by Śrīdhara and Jīvagosvāmī in order to determine the sense of the śloka which is held to represent the metaphysical standpoint of the Bhāgavata. The Bhāgavata itself has claimed at the very outset that it is the mature fruit of the Vedas (Nigama-kalpa-taror galitaṃ phalam). Following this observation of the Bhāgavata, we shall henceforth interpret the Bhāgavata in the light of the Upaniṣads.

If the contention of the Bhāgavata, that it stands for and vivifies the Upaniṣadic truths, is to be taken literally, then, we dare say, the metaphysical position of the Bhāgavata can be well understood in the light of the Upaniṣads.

The authenticity of some of the Upaniṣads has been often questioned. But there is unanimity as to the authenticity of the Upaniṣads that have been commented upon by Śaṅkara. Again, of these, the position of Māṇḍūkya has been held to be the highest as may be evidenced from Mukti-kopaniṣad which observes :—

kaivalya-muktir ekaiva pāramārthika-rūpiṇī⁷
iyam kaivalya-muktis tu kenopāyena sidhyati⁸
Māṇḍūkyam ekam evālaṃ mumukṣūṇāṃ vimuktaye⁸
tathāpy asiddham cejñānam dasopaniṣadam patha⁹

According to the Mukti-kopaniṣad, Māṇḍūkya is the representative of all the Upaniṣads. Let us see, in the light of the Māṇḍūkya, how the dark portals of the above-mentioned śloka (vadanti etc) can be illustrated. Our contention is that the same central truth beathes through Māṇḍūkya as well as the Bhāgavata as represented by our śloka.

(A) The four grades as propounded by the Māṇḍūkya

Māṇḍūkya has, at the outset, identified all pragmatic existence with Brahman and then has identified the individual soul with Brahman. Then it proceeds to describe the soul

as catuspāda i.e. having four feet (four grades)¹⁰

1st grade.

The Māṇḍūkya reads about the first grade as follows:—
jagarita-sthāno bahih-prajñāḥ saptāṅga ekonaviṁśatimukhaḥ
sthūla-bhūg vaiśvānaraḥ prathamah pādah¹¹

In the light of Śaṅkara, this passage may be interpreted as follows :— The first grade comprehends the pragmatic existence (jāgarita-sthāna), it is conceived to have seven limbs (drawing upon the analogy of sacrifice), it is possessed of five sense organs, five conative organs, five prāṇas and four internal organs mind etc (nineteen in all); it is connected with gross objects and lastly it is called vaiśvānara for it represents composite bodies and is identified with all material existence.

Second grade.

Next goes the description of the second grade:—

svapnasthānoḥtaḥ-prajñāḥ saptāṅga ekonaviṁśati-mukhaḥ
praviviktabhuk taijaso dvitīyah pādah¹²

Śaṅkara comments :— "The second grade is as if in a dream (svapna-sthāna). So the Ātharvāna Śruti says:—atraiva devaḥ svapne mahimānam anubhavati. Here consciousness operates internally. Hence the second grade is called taijasa in that it is consciousness unsophisticated with external objects".

Third grade.

Then the third grade is described as follows:—

yatra supto na kañcana kāmam kāmāyate na kañcana svapnam paśyati

tat susuptam. susupta-sthāna ekībhūtaḥ prajñāna-ghana
evānandamayo hyānandabhuk cetomukhaḥ prājñas tritīyaḥ pādaḥ. ¹³

"The third grade is marked by the absence of any desire or distorted vision. At this stage, all are integrated into one indivisible whole. It is solidified consciousness. It is all bliss. It is the state of realisation of bliss. Here mind only operates in the occurrence of dream etc. It is, again the state of omniscience".

This third grade has been further described as:-
eṣa sarveśvara eṣa sarvajña eṣonaryāmī yoniḥ sarvasya
prabhavāpya¹⁴yau hi bhutānām.

"This is the lord of all, all-knowing inner controller; this is the cosmic base from which all beings emanate and into which all enter".

4th grade.

Lastly the fourth grade is described as follows :-
Nāntaḥ-prajñam na bahiḥ-prajñam nobhayataḥ-prajñam na prajñā-
ghanam na prajñam nā prajñam. adṛśyam avyavahāryam agrāhyam
alaksanam acintyam avyapadeśyam ekātma-pratyasāram prapañcop-
-asaman+śāntam śivam advitam caturtham manyate sa ātmā sa
vijñeyah. ¹⁵

"The fourth grade is divested of internal or external consciousness or any state falling between these two types of consciousness. Nor is it solidified consciousness. It has no object to behold, yet, it is not other than pure consciousness. It is invisible, unspeakable, unconceivable, indefinable,

inscrutable, indescribable; yet it is self-consciousness marked by the absence of all diversity. Naturally, it is calm, auspicious. This is the true nature of the soul and this is the goal of all knowledge".

(B) The Bhāgavata and the Māṇḍūkya compared.

(1) The 4th grade.

It is interesting to trace these thoughts in the śloka (vadanti etc) of the Bhāgavata. Following the order of the description of the Bhāgavata, let us start from the fourth grade. Our contention is that the fourth grade as described by the Māṇḍūkya is identical with the non-dual consciousness of the Bhāgavata. In the Māṇḍūkya, the description of the fourth grade is mainly negative in that it cannot be described (avyavahārya, avyapadeśya). Yet the Śruti could not refrain from describing it positively. It is thus held to be ātma-pratyaya-sāra and nāprajñā. The substance of this description is that the fourth foot consists in the nature of consciousness which is advaita, or, in terms of the Bhāgavata, advaya. Hence the fourth foot of the Māṇḍūkya is the advaya jñāna of the Bhāgavata.

Why the fourth grade is consciousness.

To account for holding the fourth grade as consciousness by the Māṇḍūkya as well as the Bhāgavata the following may be suggested. We are steeped in ajñāna which has driven us to

spiritual striving, to get rid of the troubles which ajñāna produces. Now, even if the promised land of perfection is not free from the coils of ajñāna, then the purpose of spiritual strivings is at once frustrated. To crown the spiritual aspirations with success, ajñāna is to be ousted. Jñāna being contradictory to ajñāna, the Upaniṣads and, in their track, the śrīmad Bhāgavata have presumed the ultimate (turiya) as consciousness. It is by picturing the ultimate as non-dual consciousness that our innate cravings for some thing positive have been satisfied. Yet the Upaniṣads as well the Bhāgavata are fully aware that the ultimate cannot be described positively. Hence all conventional concepts are negated against the ultimate.

Here is a quotation from the Bhāgavata to show the trend of thought regarding the ultimate :-

śaśvat-praśāntam abhayam pratibodha-mātram
 śuddham samam sada-sataḥ param ātma-tattvam.
 śabdo na yatra puru-kāra-kavān kriyā-rtho
 māyā paraity-abhimukhe ca vilajjamānā.
 tad vai padam bhagavataḥ paramasya pumsa
 Brahmeti yad vidur ajasra-sukhaṁ viśokam.¹⁶

If we compare the Māṇḍūkya with these ślokaś we arrive at the conclusion that the ideas of the former have been faithfully incorporated in the above passage of the Bhāgavata.

Reality - The fourth grade is positive.

The negative description of the ultimate may, in some minds, give rise for misconception. It may appear to be simply

a philosophic abstraction. Hence to clarify this atmosphere the Bhāgavata asserts the ultimate existence as forming the essence of the absolute. So the Bhāgavata reads :-

rūpam yat tat prāhur avyaktam ādyam

Brahma jyotiḥ nir-guṇam nir-vikāram

sattā-mātram nir-viśeṣam nirīham

sa tvam sāksāt viṣṇur adhyāma-dīpaḥ. ¹⁷

The Māndūkya also has established the nature of reality as pure existence beyond doubt by using the adjunct ātma-pratya-sāra. In other words, the nature of its pure existence is self-evident, for, none is ever doubtful of one's own existence. Existence of the individual soul is the existence of the ultimate because the Māndūkya clearly states "sa ātmā". And this truth has been reiterated in the Bhāgavata where the question of determiningⁿⁱ the essence of jīva has started the determination of reality as mentioned above. Hence the ultimate being the soul, its existence can never be challenged.

Thus the assertion of the ultimate as non-dual consciousness has served twofold purpose. It has on the one hand contradicted^a the extravagant claims of the nihilists who have, according to the āstika philosophers, driven reality into an inconceivable negation, while, on the other, it has satisfied our innate thirst for a positive entity. Hence the fourth grade is advaya jñāna of the Bhāgavata. It is pure existence.

It can never be denied, being the soul of all. Still it is beyond all description. It is in fact what the Bhāgavata has summed up in a sentence :- yat tad rūpam i.e. reality is what it is.¹⁸

The ultimate reality as described above has three grades viz Brahman, Paramātmā and Bhagavān, though the ultimate is also described as the fourth grade. The word "pāda" is to be taken in relation to Brahman, Paramātmā and Bhagavān, meaning "grade" as revealed in the progressive advancement of enlightenment; but, if applied to the advaya jñāna, i.e. the ultimate, it means "goal". Ācārya also remarks to the same effect:-
trayānām viśvādīnām pūrva-pūrva-vilāpanena turīyasya pratipattir
iti karaṇa-sādhanaḥ pāda-śabdah. Turīyasya tu padate iti
karṇa-sādhanaḥ pāda-śabdah.¹⁹ With reference to Viśva etc 'pāda'
means 'medium' while as applied to the ultimate, the word signifies 'goal'.

The third grade.

The Bhāgavata, following the description of the third grade by the Māṇḍūkya, quoted above, recognises Bhagavān as ānanda marked by the fullest manifestation of all potencies.²⁰ Jīva-gosvāmī in Ṣaṭ-sandarbhā, has accordingly defined Bhagavān as 'ānanda endowed with all potencies fully revealed'.²¹ Again, the presence of infinite potencies in Bhagavān has led to his designation as ananta.²² Of course, the Bhāgavata, besides giving the interpretation of 'ananta' as having infinite

potencies, has attempted at other interpretations also.

Bhagavān is ananta as he possesses infinite merits,²³ and as he is the receptacle of all the worlds which are like atoms in²⁴ comparison with his infiniteness.

The second grade.

Now this perfect ānanda, in order to become the goal of man's emancipation, has to condescend to the individual soul. But the limited capacity of the individual soul cannot comprehend perfect ānanda. Hence Bhagavān standing for perfect ānanda has to narrow down his scope to come within the compass of human comprehension. In other words, he must be manifested to be grasped by the individuals.

The concept of pure matter.

The medium which would limit him down to a perceptible form cannot be conceived to be outside him, since Bhagavān would then become determined from outside. It is to be assumed, therefore, that the medium belongs to his intrinsic nature which is not affected by this process. Naturally the medium, with a unique character of its own, cannot belong to the material existence which drags the soul to limitations. Thus that element which serves as the medium of the Bhagavān for his manifestations is beyond the world of nescience. It is called²⁵ viśuddha-sattva i.e. pure matter. Pure matter is the solidified manifestation of Yogamāyā. Yogamāyā is the collective name for the infinite inherent potencies of ānanda

which the Bhāgavata calls Bhagavān; and the Yogamāyā accounts for the manifestations of the infinite without injuring its innate nature.

Paramātmā as Vāsudeva

Through the medium of pure matter, Bhagavān i.e. ānanda as marked by the perfect display of all potencies, is revealed to the individuals as Paramātmā. The Bhāgavata has called the pure matter as vāsudeva and accordingly has named Bhagavān as vāsudeva of the devotees (sāttvatas), for Bhagavān²⁶ is revealed through pure matter.

Creation is the dream of Patamātmā, for, he is the svapna-sthāna as noted down by the Māṇḍūkya (see supra). It is for this limited manifestation of Bhagavān as Paramātmā that the latter has been described by the Bengal school of Vaiṣṇavism as the vilāsa²⁷ (manifestation) of Bhagavān. Paramātmā as the revelation of Bhagavān has been called by the Māṇḍūkya as taijasa

The first grade.

Brahman.

Vāsudeva is related to creation in its speculative stage (īksana). But creation is actualised in Brahman. Now, creation being a phenomenon, presupposes a 'before' and an 'after', and, conveys with it the idea of cosmic activity. Hence we can conceive a stage when there was a cosmic lull. This state of static existence is designated as Brahman. It is like the sombre stillness of atmosphere before the rise of a

tempest. Hence Brahman has been conceived as a still expanse
of intelligence which breaks into the cosmic process of creation. ²⁸

Puruṣa.

On the other hand, the state of reality, when creation
is on, has been designated as Puruṣa by the Bhāgavata. ²⁹ While
Brahman is the passive existence at the background of creation,
Puruṣa is the manifestation of Brahman within the creation.
Due to this, Puruṣa is conceived to be a descent, ³⁰ whereas
Brahman, Paramātmā and Bhagavān are acknowledged as the three
grades of the ultimate, that have transcended the cosmic
process. The description of the Māṇḍūkya as ekona-vimśati-
mukha and sthūla-bhūk may point to this Puruṣa whom the Bhāga-
vata conceives as endowed with the principles beginning from
mahat down to the five suble elements which are all nineteen in
number recognised by the Sāṃkhya system; ³¹ and this Puruṣa is
conceived by the Bhāgavata to be enjoying the gross objects. ³²
Again, the epithets like jāgarita-sthāna, bahiḥ-prajāña,
vaiśvānara all appear to indicate Brahman which oozes out, as
it were, in the shape of Puruṣa incorporating within his body
all phenomenal existence. ³³

From what has been stated above, it follows that
Brahman and Puruṣa being the different stages of the same
principle have been taken by the Māṇḍūkya as one and are
summarily described as one grade. The Bhāgavata has elaborated
and analysed this grade into two aspects viz Brahman and Puruṣa,

so that the four grades of the Māṇḍūkya correspond to those of the Bhāgavata.

Chapter III

Different epithets of the three grades.

Sat, cit and ānanda.

Bhagavān stands for 'ānanda'; Paramātmā for jñāna ^{which} is another name for revelation, while Brahman is passive existence. These are the grades of reality, the fourth grade, which the Bhāgavata, in the wake of the Māṇḍūkya, has described as advaya jñāna. It may be noted here that the ultimate i.e., the fourth grade of reality is also described as Brahman by the Bhāgavata, due to its being the ultimate source of manifestation (vṛ³⁴mhana). Hence it is that Brahman the ultimate is referred to in the Upaniṣads sometimes as sat, sometimes as cit and sometimes as ānanda; (~~etc.~~ The reference as saccidānanda is, except for the Nṛsiṃha-uttara- tāpanī Upaniṣad, never explicitly mentioned in the same context. The Ānanda-vallī may be referring to it, but nothing can be definitely said), sat being existence, cit being jñāna.

The Bhāgavata has defined sat as that entity which persists in all three stages of the cosmic process viz creation, sustenance and destruction; and Brahman, the first grade in the hierarchical order, can naturally be called sat. ³⁵ Sat may be another name for satya. The Bhāgavata considers that entity ³⁶ as satya which persists for all the times.

This is how Brahman, the ultimate, the fourth grade of reality can also be described as 'satyam jñānam ānandam anantam Brahma'.

Avidyā-pāda, vidyā-pāda and ānanda-pāda.

Tri-pāda-vibhūti-mahā-nārāyaṇa- Upaniṣad describes the three grades of reality as avidyā-pāda, vidyā-pāda and ānanda-pāda, respectively. Brahman, the first grade of reality, is avidyā-pāda for it is from Brahman that avidyā emanates and fetters the individual soul. Paramātmā is vidyā-pāda for vidyā-pāda stands for consciousness while Bhagavān is ānanda-pāda.

Abhaya, kṣema and amṛta.

37 In the puruṣa-sūkta which the Bhāgavata also represents, these three grades have been described by the terms 'abhaya', kṣema' and 'amṛta' respectively. Brahman is the state of abhaya for it is only in Brāhma-kaivalya when the individual soul merges into the cosmic soul i.e. Brahman, that all duality involves bhaya (affliction) disappears. 38 But mere warding off of affliction is not enough. Release from burden needs be supplemented by peace. Abhaya has got to be attended with kṣema i.e. welfare. Paramātmā is this state of welfare. But welfare reaches its zenith when infinite bliss dawns upon the votary. Bhagavān is this infinite bliss.

Jāgrat, svapna and susupti.

The three grades of reality may, in another aspect, be described as jāgrat, svapna and susupti i.e. waking state,

sleep and dreamless sleep. These states, however, in the present context, belong to the fourth grade which we have dealt with above and have named non-dual consciousness. We know that the individual soul experiences in its pragmatic life the three states. But in regard to the individual soul, they are due to the influence of ignorance. Hence all three may be metaphysically called to be the states of dream, including the waking state. It is only when the individual soul transcends these states by attaining Brahman that it becomes awakened. Brahman the first grade, signifies this awakening to reality, and then it becomes, in fact, the fourth state, additional to the three pragmatic states of waking (Jāgrat) etc. Thus the fourth state of jīva is Brahman, the first grade of reality, equal to jāgrat. It is in this sense that the Bhagavad Gitā observes :-

ya nisā sarva-bhūtānam tasyām jāgarti samyamī
 39
 yasyām jagrati bhūtāni sā nisā paśyato muneh.

But the votary has to advance further to the states of svapna and susupti of reality in order to reach the climax of perfection. Paramātmā is the state of svapna because his dreamy speculation (saṁkalpa) matures into the manifestation of the cosmic process.

Bhagavān is the state of susupta in as much as the turmoils of creation as well as cosmic hankering have all ceased in him; and, he is peacefully indulged in the realisation of his intrinsic nature of bliss. That is why the Māndūkya describes him as ānandamaya. As all diversity coalesces into one

integral whole in the concept of Bhagavān; so he is described as *susupti*.

Aum

Patañjali says that *praṇava* i.e. *aum* is the designation of God, (*Praṇavaḥ tasya vācakaḥ*). "*Tasya*" indicates *īśvara*, according to Patañjali. *īśvara*, to him, is the primordial teacher unaffected by pragmatic impurities (*kleśa*, *karma*, *vipāka* and *āśaya*). *īśvara* stands for three aspects of reality i.e. Brahman, *Paramātmā* and Bhagavān. The *praṇava* may be described similarly, as the *Māṇḍūkya* has done in its speculation on the sounds *aum*. In this speculation, the *Māṇḍūkya* holds that 'a' is Brahman, 'u' is *Paramātmā* and 'm' is Bhagavān. There is also in *aum*, according to the *Māṇḍūkya*, a fourth unutterable sound which stands for the transcendental ultimate. The idea behind it is to convey, that the realisation of *aum* is equivalent to the realisation of reality in all its degrees of hierarchy.

Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśvara.

Dhyāna-bindū-Upaniṣad describes Brahman, *Paramātmā* and Bhagavān as *Brahmā*, *Viṣṇu* and *Maheśvara* on the basis of their close relationship with 'a' and 'u' and 'm' respectively. The *Upaniṣad* observes:—

om ityekākṣaram Brahma dhyeyam sarvair mumukṣubhiḥ.
prthivyagniś ca ṛgvedo bhūr ity—eva pitā-mahaḥ.
akāre tu layam prāpte prāthame praṇavāmsake

antarīkṣam yajur vāyur bhuvo viṣṇur janārdanaḥ.
 ukare tu layam prāpte dvitiye prāṇavāmsake
 dyauh sūryaḥ sāmavedaś ca svar ity⁴¹⁻⁴³eva mahesvaraḥ.

Here Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Mahesvara are not used in the sense of presiding deities of sattva, rajas and tamas, accounting for creation, sustenance and destruction of the universe; for, 'a', 'u' and 'm' stand for three grades of reality as shown above by the evidence of the Māndūkya. It appears that Brahman is called here Brahmā in so far as Brahman is energised into the cosmic process, whereas Brahmā is held responsible for the creation of the gross universe. Similarly, Paramātmā is Viṣṇu by virtue of his nature of revelation, whereas Bhagavān has been represented as Mahesvara because all merge into the indivisible essence of Bhagavān.

tat tvam asi.

The three grades of reality may also throw some light upon the interpretation of mahā-vākya viz tat tvam asi.⁴⁴ According to the Bhāgavata, tvam is Brahman; tat is Vāsudeva while asi, as Tri-pāda-vibhūti-mahā-nārāyaṇa-Upaniṣad observes, stands for identification attainable at the state of Bhagavān.

To this the Bhāgavata reads :---

tasmins tadā labdha-rucer mahāmate
 priya-śravasy-āskhalitā matir mama.
 yay-āham etat sadasat sva-māyayā⁴⁵
 pasye mayi Brahmani kalpitaṃ pare.

Here Nārada visualised the identification between him

and the cosmic soul i.e. Brahman, the first grade. Śrīdhara, while commenting on the next śloka, remarks that this realisation of Brahman is the realisation of 'tvam' (tvam-padārtha-suddhi)⁴⁶. According to the Bhāgavata, Brahman is the true nature of the individual soul, though 'tvam' is generally used to mean the individual soul.

Again, after this realisation, Nārada had to go through a course of training when :-

yenaivāhaṃ Bhagavato Vāsudevasya vedhasaḥ
māyānubhāvaṃ avidaṃ yena gacchanti tat-padam.⁴⁷

Śrīdhara also indicates that the realisation of Vāsudeva is tat-padārtha-suddhi.⁴⁸

We may supplement the meaning of "asi" from Tri-pāda-vibhūti-mahā-nārāyaṇa- Upaniṣad where Mahāviṣṇu i.e. Bhagavān addresses the votary entering ānanda-pāda in the following strain :-

tvam Brahmāsi, ahaṃ Brahmāsmi, āvayor antaram na vidyate,
tvam evāhaṃ, ahaṃ eva tvam.

It shows that the identity between the individual soul and Bhagavān is perfectly complete in ānanda-pāda.

Lastly, when the individual soul and Bhagavān coalesce into one integral whole, the sense (akhaṇḍārtha) of the above-mentioned mahā-vākya glistens forth as non-dual consciousness, the fourth and last grade of reality.

All these interpretations of different epithets as

applied to the grades of reality substantiates our view viz that the Bhāgavata has in conformity with ~~tradition~~ propounded reality, the fourth grade, as advaya jñāna with three hierarchical gradations: Brahman, Paramātmā and Bhagavān. The Māndūkya as well as many other Upaniṣads support this view; Patañjali and the Gītā fall in line with this contention.

C H A P T E R I V

Analysis of the Metaphysical structure of reality.

INDETERMINATION OF THE ABSOLUTE.

The Māndūkya describes the realisation of the fourth grade of reality as follows:- samvisati ātmanā ātmānam ya evaṁ^{48/1} veda. Ācārya has explained the passage thus:- samvisati, ātmanā - svenaiva; svam - pāramāthikam ātmānam, ya evaṁ veda. On the evidence of Māndūkya it appears from the trend of this interpretation that the fourth grade is the intrinsic nature of the votary.

The fourth grade standing for the perfection of the individual soul cannot be touched by determination. If the state of perfection involved determination then the individual soul would be doomed to be imprisoned in pragmatic life for ever. If all spiritual strivings are worth making, the state of perfection represented by the fourth grade is to be recognised as beyond the scope of determination, and must be conceived as a state of absolute independence.

Independence accounts for the fact that reality, though eternally non-dual, yet can be dressed in a variety of forms. The Bhāgavata has described this phenomenon several times in the life of Kṛṣṇa whom the Bhāgavata identifies with Bhagavān. To the bewildered eyes of Brahmā, a strange thing happened-. The Bhāgavata has put the following in the mouth of Brahmā :-

adyaiva tvad r̥tēśya kiṃ mama na te māyātvam ādarśitam
 ekōsi prathamam tato vraja-suhṛd vatsāḥ samastā api
 tāvantōpi catur-bhujās tad-akhilāḥ sākam mayopāsītāḥ
 tāvantyeva jagantibhūḥ tad amitam Brahmādvayam śiṣyate. ^{48/2}

"To-day, is revealed to my eyes your divine sovereignty. First, you were one and only one; then you became all cowherd boys and calves; further, you became expressed as all the worlds; next all became four-handed (the popular form of God). Lastly, all this heterogeneity became integrated into non-dual Brahma".

The Doctrine of divine sport.

This absolute independence (svācchāndya) of reality explains how multiplicity plays against the background of absolute non-duality. The position may startle logic but reality is the melting crucible of all contradictions. ^{48/3} It is designated as divine sport.

But sport cannot be done alone. A child requires a toy to play with. So does the absolute. Yet how can Brahman,

which is non-dual, manage for a second to play with? To avert this trouble the non-dual is conceived to bring a second out of its own being by its absolute sover^eign₄ty and yet to remain non-dual for ever. The second is but a shadow of its own self. ^{48/4}

The concepts of śakti and śaktimān.

Reality thus plays with a second as a child plays with its own shadow. ^{48/5} Now, this fact has been logically represented as follows:- Due to the divine will to play, which is another name of its sover^eign nature, reality, (i.e. the fourth grade) bifurcated itself; one is the static existence while the other is the dynamic movement. If reality was only to evolve into dynamic movement without a static existence serving as the background of the dynamic movements, then cosmic dancing would have been impossible. A dancer always requires a stable ground to dance upon. Conveying this idea into the field of metaphysics, reality has two aspects: one is static, the other is dynamic. The static existence is called śaktimān while the dynamic movement is designated as śakti.

These two aspects are symbolised in the conception of goddess Kālī dancing upon the chest of Śiva, lying beneath her feet as a dead mass (śava). Both Kālī and Śiva are naked for both are symbolic representations of indetermined intelligence (anāvṛta caitanya) or in the language of the Bhāgavata, non-dual consciousness, that has transcended all limitations. Again, being the base of Kālī, the static existence is held to be the

substratum of the cosmic dynamism. All transcendental and cosmic manifestations emerge from these two aspects of reality, in order to satisfy the eternal thirst of play.

Bhagavān and Yogamāyā.

On the analogy of the playing child, we may conceive that the first manifestation of reality, in its static aspect, becomes pronounced as ānanda-maya, under the urge of divine play. Thus ānandamaya is the first manifestation of śaktimān. This ānandamaya is the third grade of reality, the Bhagavān of the Bhāgavata; and the śakti, the dynamic movement corresponding to this Bhagavān, is Yogamāyā.⁴⁹

The instinct of play began to be pronounced as full-fledged arrangements were being done to satisfy it. The concepts of Goloka and Vṛndāvana are specimens of these arrangements. They are conceived to be divine cities where Bhagavān is settled along with his śakti, Yogamāyā. It is for this pictorial conception of being housed in the city (pura) that Bhagavān acquired the designation of puruṣa; and, Yogamāyā, his⁵⁰ potency, came to be conceived to be a woman, his bride. Though the Bhāgavata has used the term 'puruṣa' to mean primarily⁵¹ reality as dwelling in a composite body built up by five elements, yet, on the analogy of staying within, Bhagavān, (the third grade) has also been called puruṣa. He is thus called parama-puruṣa as residing in Goloka, the heavenly city, enjoying the company of Yogamāyā, his spouse.

Paramātmā and Lakṣmī.

The instinct of divine sport became further inspired and manifestations began to descend from the super-cosmic plane to the worldly one. The starting point of these manifestations is represented in the conception of Nārāyaṇa designated as Paramātmā by the Bhāgavata. ⁵² He stands for vidyā-pāda, i.e. for consciousness; because, the cosmic manifestations were ⁵³ originated in the shape of divine speculation (īkṣāṇa) which the Tr. Upaniṣad describes as the awakening of Nārāyaṇa from slumber (unmeṣa). Paramātmā is held to be a representation of Bhagavān for, only one viz non-dual consciousness is engaged in play. Reality has acquired designations like Brahman, Paramātmā and Bhagavān in response to the different states of the unfoldment of the instinct of divine sport.

The energy corresponding to Nārāyaṇa is designated by the Bhāgavata as Viṣṇu-patnī i.e. ⁵⁴ Lakṣmī. As Nārāyaṇa is a specific manifestation of Bhagavān, similarly Lakṣmī is the vilāsa (manifestation) of Yogamāyā. Although the principle underlying the two is one and the same, yet Yogamāyā is termed as Lakṣmī because of her different functions at this stage.

It is thus that the link of non-duality is never broken, through all the manifestations, whether empirical or transcendental. Śakti is transformed into all sorts of manifestations while śaktimān who serves as their base, pervades all, in order to enjoy the wealth of happiness brought about by these manifestations. Thus reality in its static aspect, is

the universal base, and is at the same time, all-pervasive. It is in this sense that the Gītā observes :-

yo mām paśyati sarvatra sarvaṁ ca mayi paśyati
tasyāham na pranaśyāmi sa ca me na pranaśyati.^{54/1}
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The Bhāgavata remarks to the same effect.

The manifestation of reality may be considered to be against its nature since the latter is defined as self-contented (āpta-kama) and thus inaccessible to any further experience of pleasure. At the same time, however, the manifestations implying pleasure are inside the intrinsic qualifications of reality which therefore will necessarily have to ^apartake of the qualifications of all its hypostases.

Brahman and Ātmamāyā.

The suspense of reality which is to be brought from the state of speculation into the state of existence is called Brahman, and Brahman's potency of bursting into existence is called Ātma-māyā. Ātmamāyā functioning as the śakti of Brahman, has been conceived as the principle of hetero⁵⁶geneity; it is the vilāsa of Lakṣmī which, in its turn, is the vilāsa of Yogamāyā as said above. Śakti has the justification for acquiring a name separate from Yogamāyā and Lakṣmī in as much as the stages of Yogamāyā and Lakṣmī are marked by the constant revelation of non-duality though duality plays against their background. That is why votaries, ascending these planes of Lakṣmī and Yogamāyā, become firmly grounded in non-duality though they can feel duality surging like ripples over the non-dual

surface. But the stage of Ātmamāyā is different.

Purusa and Māyā and cit-śakti.

Ātma-māyā anticipates contradiction between duality and non-duality. Contradiction becomes complete when Ātmamāyā evolves into two contradictory potencies, ⁵⁷ Cicchakti and ⁵⁸ Māyā. Conditioned by these two potencies Brahman became Puruṣa, the first descent.

(A) Māyā.

According to the Bhāgavata, Māyā seems to have three-fold function. It first formulates individual soul by setting up a partition in Brahman, the first grade. This process of formulation of individual soul has been described by the Śrutis ⁵⁹ as the process of outburst (vyuccarana). Secondly, the individual soul loses the sense of its true nature that the individual soul is Brahman; and, aggrieved by the loss of its nature, *it* wails for its svarūpa. In the meantime the pragmatic existence clasps it in response to its wailings. The mourning individual soul, thirdly, wistfully embraces the world as its svarūpa and it is thus that gradually troubles begin.

(a) Māyā and Avidyā.

The process of breaking up into so many parts of Brahman, designated as individual souls, is the primary function of ⁶⁰ Māyā. The function of embracing a fictitious self by the individual soul, forgetting its true nature, is conceived, by the Bhāgavata, to belong to Avidyā which consists of five knots (pañca-parvā avidyā) ⁶¹ leading to empirical life. Thus the

Bhāgavata seems to make a distinction between Māyā and Avidyā of which Māyā provides fall from heaven; whereas, Avidyā makes the individual soul drink the water of forgetfulness and induces the individual soul to embrace a counterfeit self as its own. These two functions of Avidyā, viz veiling and inducing to embrace are described as āvarana and vikṣepa in the Śāṅkarā's school.⁶²

(b) Avidyā and Prakṛti.

Again, the Bhāgavata seems to set up a distinction between the universe as it is and as it appears to the eyes distorted by Avidyā. The Bhāgavata seems to affirm that the universe per se does not trouble the individual soul; it is due to the misapprehension of the universe that the individual soul suffers. In other words, the principle of bondage and the principle of cosmic evolution seem to be different according to the Bhāgavata. The principle of bondage is named as Avidyā while the principle of cosmic evolution is designated as Prakṛti⁶³ or Guṇamāyā.

The conception of Prakṛti⁶⁴ is apparently a borrow from the Sāṃkhya system, as other Purāṇas have done; and naturally, the Purāṇas in allegiance to the sāmkhya system, have to maintain the truth of the universe. Yet the truth of the universe has been subordinated to the truth of reality, by the Bhāgavata. Thus the universe is not absolutely true, for none is absolutely true except reality. Accordingly, prakṛti which the Sāṃkhya school holds as eternal, has been described by the Bhāgavata as

derived from Māyā.

We may re-tell the same truth by affirming that Māyā, according to the Bhāgavata, has two different evolutions :- Prakṛti or, to borrow a Tāntric terminology, akliṣṭa ajñāna which though not causing suffering, provides for the show of an external universe; and, Avidyā or kliṣṭa ajñāna i.e. the cause of all phenomenal afflictions.

(c) Māyā and Vidyā.

It may be recalled that through all these manifestations the instinct of divine play is going to be satisfied. If the satisfaction of that instinct involves suffering to the individual soul, brought about by Avidyā, then the purpose of divine instinct seems to defeat itself. If suffering of the individual soul is the eternal doom to be provided for the satisfaction of divine instinct of play, then this instinct is certainly of obnoxious nature. The ultimate truth cannot be conceived to possess this obnoxious nature, for then the ultimate truth cannot be the ideal of all human aspirations. After all, the individual souls are not other than Brahman, the first grade, as shown above; and thus the suffering of the individual souls means, in a way, the suffering of Brahman. Thus suffering, if at all, is to be recognised to be a temporary phase. Accordingly, reality has been conceived by the Bhāgavata to have an eternal knack of extricating the individual souls from the bondage. It is ingrained in creation from its very start and is designated

by religion as divine grace. The Bhāgavata has conceived it as emerging from Māyā in the form of the third principle distinct from Avidyā and Prakṛti. The Bhāgavata calls this third principle Vidyā.

Vidyā operates to exterminate Avidyā and thus makes for the release of the individual souls. The Bhāgavata has held Vidyā as well as Avidyā to have equally emerged from Māyā.^{65,66} It is because of their emergence from the same stuff, viz. Māyā, that Vidyā may react upon Avidyā, for, two absolutely alien elements cannot react upon each other. This inherent Vidyā can be brought to surface with the teacher's touch called dīkṣā (spiritual initiation), whereby Avidyā, Prakṛti and lastly Māyā gradually fall off.

(d) Māyā & Kāla, Karma and Svabhāva.

Prakṛti begins to evolve into subtle and gross creation as conceived by the Sāṃkhya school but with a few variations. With the Sāṃkhya, Prakṛti is the equilibrium of the tripartite energy viz Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. The process of creation has been conceived by the Bhāgavata as follows:-

Prakṛti is the equilibrium of the three guṇas; the state of suspense which Prakṛti represents, must first be broken so that evolution may proceed. After the equilibrium has been disturbed, an onward push is required, followed by an arrest of the movement, so that principles (tattvas) may come into being. The disturbance of equilibrium, onward drive, and, lastly, arrest of movement are held by the Bhāgavata as being done ^{respectively} by kāla,

Karma and Svabhāva another set of three principles, all emerging from Māyā.⁶⁷

(B) Cit-sakti.

Prakṛti moves on, on its progressive journey, due to the operation of Kāla, Karma and Svabhāva under the superintendence of Puruṣa, the first descent.⁶⁸ In each of the successive stages of the cosmic evolution, the three principles are always at work so that under the guidance of Puruṣa, the arrest may be broken afresh, another onward push followed by arrest of movement, may be possible.⁶⁹ This superintendence of Puruṣa has been done by the aid of Cit-sakti, another principle distinct from Māyā,⁷⁰ which co-operates with the cosmic process, and at the same time, assists Vidyā in kindling it up into flames to swallow Avidyā, Prakṛti and Māyā.⁷¹

Summary.

The Bhāgavata conceives the static aspect of reality as having three grades of manifestations viz Brahman, Paramātmā and Bhagavān, the first of which further manifests itself as Puruṣa, the controller of the cosmic process. On the other hand, the dynamic aspect of reality has its successive unfoldment in Yogamāyā,⁷² Lakṣmī, Ātmamāyā, Cit-sakti and Māyā, the last of which gives rise to two different sets of principles, each consisting of three viz (a) Vidyā, Avidyā and Prakṛti and (b) Kāla, Karma and Svabhāva. All these manifestations are woven into the fabric of the instinct of divine play.

It may once again be recalled here that though different names have been assigned to account for diversity of functions, yet Bhagavān, Paramātmā and Brahman, with its manifestation as Puruṣa, are not three or four distinct principles but one and the same, though endowed with distinct functions. Similarly, the different designations of śakti are in fact the different names for the same principle. The Bhāgavata has summarily described the static and the dynamic aspects of reality as Puruṣa and Prakṛti.⁷³

The concepts of Puruṣa and Prakṛti.

As has been mentioned before, the Bhāgavata has described Bhagavān as parama-puruṣa;⁷⁴ it has similarly called Paramātmā⁷⁵ as ādi-puruṣa;⁷⁶ and lastly, it has called Brahman, Puruṣa.⁷⁶ So all the three different grades of reality may be collectively included in the category of Puruṣa. Similarly, all the different grades of Śakti may be incorporated in the category of Prakṛti⁷⁷ which means dynamism.

But Prakṛti and Puruṣa are not two different concepts mutually exclusive, but refer to the same reality which the Bhāgavata describes as non-dual consciousness.^{77/1} In this way, in spite of diverse manifestations, the chain of absolute non-duality is never broken.

The doctrine of 28 categories.

From the conventional standpoint, the Bhāgavata acknowledges twenty eight principles.⁷⁸ Prakṛti assumes two designations in view of its state of equilibrium (avyakta) and its

state when the equilibrium is disturbed (triguṇa). The concept of Prakṛti is split into four categories viz, the Avyakta and the three guṇas. Prakṛti and Puruṣa thus make five principles. The other principles are :- Mahat (universal intelligence), Ahaṁkāra (the principle of individualism), five sense organs, five conative organs, mind, five subtle elements (sūkṣma bhūta) and five gross elements. All these make up twenty eight categories (tattvas) which may be enumerated in any order on the basis that cause and effect are one or two categories.

Considering cause and effect as one and same, we can hold that from Mahat down to the five gross elements, all evolutes of Prakṛti are nothing but Prakṛti. If so, then there are two principles, Prakṛti and Puruṣa, both of which, ultimately, merge into one integral whole described as non-dual consciousness.

We may conclude, on the basis of the Upaniṣads, that the structure of the ultimate reality is non-dual consciousness which is endowed with three grades of manifestation viz Brahman, Paramātmā and Bhagavān.

Chapter V

Intuition and psychological evidence as to the grades.

(A) Intuition evidence.

So far we have tried to establish the grades of

reality on the basis of authoritative texts. We now propose to corroborate the same by the evidence of actual realisations of the votaries. The Bhāgavata has itself laid much stress upon the realisation of the votaries. It claims that the delineation of reality is based upon the utterance of the enlightened persons. The Bhāgavata has given several instances of votaries whose soteriological apprehensions substantiate the doctrine of the grades of reality. Prajāpati Kardama, maharṣi Malayadhvaja, Devaḥhūti, the mother of Kapila are all traditional examples on this point.

Prajāpati Kardama

Thus the Bhāgavata describes how Prajāpati Kardama reached his perfection, in the following strain :-

mano Brahmani yuñjāno yat tat sadasataḥ param.
 guṇāvabhāse viguṇe ekabhaktyanubhāvite..
 nirahamkṛtir nirmamaś ca nirdvandvaḥ samadrk svadrk.
 pratyak-prāśanta-dhīr dhīraḥ prasāntormir ivodadhiḥ..
 Vāsudeve Bhagavati sarvajñe pratyagātmani.
 pareṇa bhakti-bhāvena labdhātmā mukta-vandhanaḥ..
 ātmānam sarva-bhūteṣu Bhagavantam avasthitam.
 apasyat sarva-bhūtāni Bhagavatyaṇi cātmani..
 icchā-dveṣa vihinena sarvatra sama-cetasā.
 Bhagavad-bhakti-yogena prāptā Bhāgavati gatiḥ..

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Kardama first attained eligibility for the revelation of Brahman by 'eka-bhakti' and then he could vision it. Thence-

forward, he acquired some special merits when Vāsudeva was revealed to him by 'para-bhakti'; lastly he realised Bhagavān by 'Bhagavad-bhakti-yoga' and thus secured what the Bhāgavata describes as Bhāgavatī gati.

Maharsi Malayadhvaja.

The life of Malayadhvaja tells the same story. The Bhāgavata says:---

tapasa vidyayā pakya-kaśāyo niyamair yamaih.
yuyuje Brahmanyātmānam vijitākṣānilāṣayah..
āste sthānur ivaikatra divyaṁ varṣa-śatam sthirah.
Vāsudeve bhagavati nānyad vedodvahan ratim..
sa vyāpakatayātmānam vyatiriktatayātmāni.
vidvān svapna ivāmarṣa-sākṣiṇam virarāma ha..
sākṣād Bhagavatoktena gurunā Hariṇā nrpa.
viśuddha-jñāna-dīpena sphuratā viśvato-mukham..
pare Brahmani cātmānam param Brahma tathātmāni.
īkṣamāṇo vihāyeksām asmād upararāma ha..
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Here also the successive grades of reality have been realised by Malayadhvaja in the progressive course of his evolution.

Devahūti, the mother of Kapila.

These successive stages of attainment have been summarised in the life of Devahūti, the mother of Kapila, of whom the Bhāgavata describes :---

evam sā Kapiloktena mārgenacirataḥ param.

ātmanam, Brahma, Nirvāṇam, Bhagavantam avāpa sā.

Ātma-lābha is technically described by the Sāṃkhya school as Puruṣa-kaivalya where the votary realises the distinction between buddhi and Puruṣa, and consequently, between body and Puruṣa. Brahma-lābha is another name for Brahma-kaivalya as the followers of Śaṅkara have described i.e. the realisation of individual soul as identified with the cosmic soul. Nirvāṇa-lābha is the realisation of Vāsudeva and final is the Bhagaval-lābha.

These and many other instances may substantiate the view that Brahman, Paramātmā and Bhagavān are three successive grades of reality, in hierarchical order, comprehended by the progressive realisation of the enlightened ones.

(B) Psychological evidence.

Sat.

The recognition of three grades of reality may also be justified by psychological approach to the subject. Until the individual soul attains Brahma-kaivalya, it cannot be said to be sat i.e. self-reposed; for, being carried away by taints (mala) that pollute its being, it is nothing better than asat. It is only when the individual soul cutting asunder the pragmatic coils soars beyond pragmatic existence, that it may become sat; for, it has then abandoned the association with asat, for the Brahma-kaivalya is the state of sat.

Cit

The mere attainment of the state of self-repose cannot

be the final goal. Release from the burden of pragmatic life may mean ease; but, it is more negative than positive. Thus cessation of all afflictions (~~duḥkṣā~~-nivr̥tti) cannot mean the state of perfection. In fact, the teachings of pragmatic life point to the truth that ānanda deserves always to be the goal of life in either its material existence or its philosophical journey. The individual soul, after Brahma-kaivalya, has to move forward towards ānanda which is a positive entity. This journey from the sat to ānanda, unlike the material movement faintly lighted up with the wane streak of modal knowledge, is illuminated with the light of perfect consciousness. This mellow light of consciousness stands for Vāsudeva. Hence sat can be held to be succeeded by cit. In other words, Brahman is superseded by Paramātmā.

Ānanda.

Spiritual strivings are, at their best, nothing but modal knowledge. Modal knowledge is an off-shoot of Māyā, for, Vidyā, the highest type of modal knowledge, has emerged from the Māyā. The individual soul may attain Brahma-kaivalya and may, consequently, transcend mr̥tyu (death) or bhaya (affliction), by means of the modal knowledge which, is, in a sense, Avidyā, in being a manifestation of Māyā. Since spiritual strivings are crowned with amṛta or ānandā, one cannot strive for ānanda until one is free from anxiety. This ānanda is realised through the Vidyā when the votary has passed the whole way illuminated by

pure consciousness. Vāsudeva stands for the Vidyā. Thus avidyā leads to Brahma-kaivalya while Vidyā makes for ānanda. The Īśopaniṣad observes that crossing death by Avidyā, one finally attains ānanda by Vidyā. Ānanda is but another name for Bhagavān.

Chapter VI

Grades of the Bhāgavata.

and

Grades as represented by Śankara.

(A) Interrelation of the grades.

What is the interrelation among the grades? Are the grades independent of one another or are they relegated independently to the structure of reality as its independent aspects, or, is there a close unity among the grades?

We may summarily discard the first alternative, as the recognition of so many independent principles would militate against the non-dual structure of reality. Similarly, the grade cannot form links in the chain of hierarchy, as shown above, if they are independent aspects. Hence, the third possibility only is open to us.

In fact, the Bhāgavata has also adopted it as consistent with its philosophy. The Bhāgavata has expressly stated that the essence of Bhagavān is the non-dual consciousness viz
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the Brahman of the Upaniṣads. In other words, the third grade

is but a manifestation of the fourth grade. Similarly, Paramātmā or Vāsudeva, (the second grade) is traced to Bhagavān⁸⁵ (the third grade) whom the Bhāgavata calls Kṛṣṇa. So also, Brahman (the first grade) is a revelation of Vāsudeva (the⁸⁶ second grade)⁸⁷. Lastly, Puruṣa has his essence in Brahman.

The Bhāgavata has described this fact in another way i.e. from top to bottom. Thus tūrīya (the fourth grade) is⁸⁸ said to be manifested as Bhagavān or Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa, is manifested⁸⁹ in the shape of Vāsudeva, in the state of meditation and vision. Vāsudeva reveals himself as Brahman; the latter has expressed it⁹⁰ self as Puruṣa, the inner controller.⁹¹

According to the Bhāgavata, each of the successive grades is the manifestation of its immediately higher grade, till we come up to the fourth grade, the non-dual consciousness. Again, the fourth grade incorporates within itself all the three grades taken jointly and/or severally. The structure of the four grades is so that each higher grade implicates all grades that⁹² are below it.

On this principle, Bhagavān i.e. Kṛṣṇa of the Bhāgavata is described as the second or first grade. To him are also ascribed the functions and characteristics that are generally assigned to the second or the first. This explains how Kṛṣṇa can function as ādya-puruṣa Nārāyaṇa dispelling māyā with the⁹³ aid of cit-śakti. Similarly, Bhagavān is conceived in the form of puruṣa though Brahman should be held prima facie to have been⁹⁴ manifested as Puruṣa. Conversely, Puruṣa, the first descent, is

described as ādi-puruṣa i.e. Nārāyaṇa, the second grade.

It is on the same principle, that the avatāras, who seemingly descend from Puruṣa as their nearest source, are described as having descended from and having the characteristics of the grades beyond Puruṣa.

The intrinsic identity among the grades and the incorporation of the lower grade into the higher may be viewed from another point of view. The hierarchy among the grades is, from the psychological aspect, the progressive manifestation of potency in the votary during the course of his ascending the spiritual scale until he becomes Bhagavān with all potencies fully manifested. Viewed in this light, the micro-and-macro-cosmic identity may be reconciled.

(B) Grades propounded by Śaṅkara.

The viewpoint that turīya, the ultimate, incorporates all the three lower grades, is also recognised by Śaṅkara though in a somewhat different way. Ācārya remarks:—

sarpādi-vikalpa-pratishedhenaiva rajju-svarūpa-pratipattivat
tryavasthasyivātmanas turīyatvena pratipipādayiṣitatvāt;
tat-tvam-asītivat. Yadi hi tryavasthātma-vilakṣaṇam turīyam
anyat, tat, pratipattidvārābhāvāt śāstropadeśānarthā⁹⁷kyam śūnyatā-
pattir vā.

Obviously Śaṅkara holds that turīya incorporates all the three grades. He also recognises Brahman of the Upaniṣads as consisting of four grades. But the fundamental distinction between Śaṅkara and the Bhāgavata lies in the fact that Śaṅkara

has had to discard the three other grades as illusory (māyika). The reason is not far to seek. Śaṅkara has, at his disposal, only Māyā, the principle of illusion, which he has employed to explain all dynamism. The Bhāgavata, on the other hand, holds that all the three grades are really existent. To uphold their existence, the Bhāgavata recognises principles such as Yogamāyā, ātmamāyā etc, wider in scope than Māyā. Having in mind the small significance of Māyā, ^{the} Trī. Upaniṣad has called the first grade, which is connected with Māyā, to be the starting point of destruction (mrta) while the other three grades as eternal (amṛta).

(a) The plea for examining the Māndūkya.

Here then the Bhāgavata differs fundamentally from Śaṅkara as to the nature of the grades. According to the Bhāgavata all the four grades are true while Śaṅkara maintains the fourth grade (Brahman) as true and discards all the rest as illusory. Now, this divergence of opinions is based upon the conflicting interpretations of some passages of Māndūkya.

The problem may be solved by the settlement of the question whether the description of the four grades in the Māndūkya refers to the individual soul or to the cosmic soul. Śaṅkara holds that the grades in the Māndūkya refer to the individual soul; so except for the fourth grade which is the perfection of the individual soul, the other three grades, standing for the pragmatic life, are illusory. The Bhāgavata contends that the grades refer to reality and they are all true not illusory.

(b) Śaṅkara's Contention.

The Māṇḍūkya describes the entire creation as equal to Brahman. Immediately after, it identifies the ātman (as ayam ātmā) with Brahman. Following this statement, there is an identification of the 'ayam ātmā' with the catuspāda (so'yam ātmā catuspādā). This leads Śaṅkara to the conclusion that catuspāda (four grades) referring to 'ayam ātmā' must belong to the individual soul; for, the phrase 'ayma atma' means the individual soul. The gist of Śaṅkara's contention appears to be that Brahman cannot be referred to by the term 'this' which is wont to mean an object close to the observer's hand. Hence the four grades that are described in the Māṇḍūkya as belonging to 'this' soul are obviously referring to the individual soul and not to the cosmic soul. Therefore the four grades as belonging to the individual soul are to be interpreted as pointing to four states of jīva viz waking state, dream, dreamless sleep and the fourth state transcending all the three former pragmatic states.

(c) Śaṅkara's contention examined.

On this point, we submit that the description of the four grades in the Māṇḍūkya primarily refers to the four grades of reality viz Brahman, Paramātmā, Bhagavān and advaya jñāna. The grounds on which our contention is based are as follows:-

1. Let us first ascertain the meaning of the word 'ātmā' which the Māṇḍūkya refers to as 'this'; for, the Māṇḍūkya describes the four grades as relating to 'this' ātmā. Now, Śaṅkara himself

interprets 'āyam ātmā' as the donotative sense of 'Om' i.e. reality immanent as well as transcendant. (Omkarābhidheyah parāparatvena vyavasthitah),^{97/1} and thus the phrase cannot refer to the individual soul.

2. After delineating the fourth grade, the Māṇḍūkya concludes with the remark:- sa ātmā, sa vijñeyah i.e. this is the soul and this is the goal of knowledge. If ātmā means the individual soul, then the individual soul would be referred to by the Māṇḍūkya as the goal of knowledge. But this is against the tradition of the Upaniṣads.

3. There are definite indications in the other passages of the Māṇḍūkya, that cannot be consistent with the reference to the individual soul but can be considered in regard to Brahman only. The Māṇḍūkya describes the third grade as follows:-

eṣa sarveśvara eṣa sarvajña eṣoṭtaryamī eṣa yoniḥ sarvasya prabhavāpyayau hi bhūtānām (i.e. this is all-knowing, the lord of all, the inner-controller, the ultimate source of all beings and accounts for their origin and destruction). The individual soul could by no means be described as such.

4. All Upaniṣads are held by Śaṅkara to have their final import in Brahman. He has clearly stated this while interpreting the fourth Brahma-sūtra (tat tu samanvayāt) If the passage of the Māṇḍūkya refers to the individual soul, then this fundamental proposition of Śaṅkara falls to the ground. There is no other passage in the Māṇḍūkya which may refer to Brahman, to save the

position of Śaṅkara. Hence it is consistent even with Śaṅkara's proposition that the four grades described in the Māṇḍūkya refers to Brahman and not to the individual soul.

5. In fact, Ānandagiri has tried to explain that the four grades described in the Māṇḍūkya do refer to Brahman though apparently the Śruti may seem to describe the four grades as referring to the individual soul.

But ~~the~~ point held out by the commentator still differs from our standpoint. Though according to the commentator, the grades may be referring to Brahman and not to the individual soul, still, save and except the fourth grade, the other three grades are illusory. We, on the other hand, contend that all the four grades are real as referring to the Brahman of the Upaniṣads.

(D) Corroboration of our contention.

Our contention that the four grades refer to reality and not to the individual soul is also substantiated by the evidence of Tri.Upaniṣad. The Upaniṣad reads as follows:-

katham Brahma ? saguṇa-nirguṇa-svarūpaṁ Brahma ; pāda-
catuṣṭayātmakam Brahma. Kim tat pāda-catūṣṭayātmakam Brahma
bhavati ? Avidyā-pādaḥ suvidyā-pādaḥ, ānanda-pādaḥ turiya-
pādaś ceti..... Mūlāvidyā prathame pāde, nānyatra; vidyānandaturī-
yāmsāḥ sarveṣu pādeṣu vyāpya tiṣṭhanti. Evaṁ tarhi vidyādinām
bhedaḥ katham ? tat-tat-prādhānyena tat-tad-vyapadeśaḥ. Vastutas
tu abheda eva. tatra adhastanam ekam pādam avidyā-śavalam bhavati;
uparitana-pāda-trayaṁ śuddha-bodhānanda-lakṣaṇam amṛtaṁ bhavati.

The same view is held by the Bhāgavata.

(E) Why Śaṅkara interpreted the grades to belong to Jīva?

To appreciate the interpretation as given by Śaṅkara, the following point deserves consideration. Śaṅkara was born in an age when Buddhism had penetrated India through and through. It was in those days when reality, as something positive, was to be defended not only by means of logic against the negative interpretation of the Buddhists. Hence the task which lay before Śaṅkara was to re-place Buddhism by the Upaniṣadic tradition and to uphold reality as a positive entity and the individual soul as identical with Brahman. Thus Śaṅkara had to emphasise the fourth state of the individual soul as identical with Brahman, the positive reality.

Thus, whatever the interpretation of the Śūnya-vāda may be, to Śaṅkara, the establishment of the positive reality of the ātman (ātma-pratiṣṭhā) was the sum and substance of his philosophy. For this, he had to discard all impositions upon the individual soul as illusory; he ultimately asserted the positive entity of the ātman by identifying it with Brahman. Śaṅkara had established Brahman as something positive and not negative. This he did on the basis of the Upaniṣads. All his attempts are, therefore, centred round discarding the limitations (upādhis) of the individual soul, so that it may rest at ease, grounded upon its intrinsic nature of pure existence (svarūpa-sthiti).

(F) Śaṅkara and the Bhāgavata compared.

(a) Śaṅkara's position explained.

We propose to throw light upon the position of Śaṅkara

by an illustration from the Yoga-vāsiṭha. There is a story that a prince was lost in a forest. The prince himself was not aware that he belonged to a royal family. He wandered for years in the forest until he was found one day. He was cleansed, shaved and washed. Ultimately, he was crowned.

Śaṅkara has established the identity of the individual soul lost into the maze of pragmatic existence. His philosophy is mainly concerned with the question of cessation of afflictions (duḥkha-nivṛtti). Peaceful rest marked by the termination of all mundane limitations seems to be the goal of his philosophy.

But it must not be assumed that, in order to do justice to the demands of his time, Śaṅkara had no time to notice this pure existence of the soul, culminating in the states of knowledge and bliss. To Śaṅkara, also, Brahman of the Upaniṣads was not only sat (existence) but also cit (intelligence) and ānanda (bliss). This fact may be illustrated by the interpretation of Śaṅkara dealing with the aphorism — 'tat tu samanvayāt' where Brahman is as existent as he is self-luminous and self-contented (idantu pāramāthikam nitya-triptam svayaṁ-jyotiḥ-svabhāvam).

(b) Position of the Bhāgavata.

The Bhāgavata following the trend of the Upaniṣads, has developed upon Śaṅkara, by conceiving reality as having four eternal grades, Brahman, Paramātmā, Bhagavān and non-dual consciousness. It holds that spiritual aspirations reach their

perfection by soaring beyond pure existence of reality to non-dual consciousness, through the medium of pure knowledge (cit) and pure bliss (ānanda).

(c) The Bhāgavata supplements Śaṅkara.

With the aid of Māyā, the principle of illusion, Śaṅkara ascended to Brahman which he recognised to be the fourth state of the individual soul. In order to reach this goal, Śaṅkara had to discard the three other pragmatic states of the individual soul, viz waking, dream and dreamless sleep. Thus Śaṅkara employed the method of exclusion for the attainment of Brahman, the fourth and ultimate state of the individual soul.

The Bhāgavata has recognised the position of Śaṅkara. It admits that in order to reach Brahman, (the first grade of reality), one should resort to the method of exclusion for discarding the three pragmatic states viz waking state etc. But the Bhāgavata does not stop there. It soars further from Brahman to Paramātmā, then to Bhagavān and ultimately to advaya jñāna. For this further soaring, the Bhāgavata has employed the method of transcendence, in supplement to the method of exclusion of Śaṅkara. It is an outlook whereby all manifestations whether cosmic or supercosmic are integrated into one spiritual commonwealth. The method of transcendence posits that Brahman incorporates within itself the world though the realisation of Brahman was obtained, at the outset, by discarding the world.

The method of transcendence further posits that Brahman is transcended by Paramātmā and so on, until we reach non-dual consciousness.

(d) Difference of standpoints.

Śaṅkara, by employing the method of exclusion, had to shut out the objective world, in order to reveal reality beyond the objective world. Śaṅkara's outlook contemplates a contradiction between absolute reality and the world. One cannot have the vision of reality and that of the world simultaneously. The Bhāgavata, on the other hand, seems to entertain a standpoint where this contradiction has coalesced into one integral whole marking the absolute harmony between world and reality. This standpoint has been expressed by the Bhāgavatā which observes that under four circumstances, non-dual consciousness emerges as the living substance of reality. They are :-

asīj jñānam atho hyartha ekam evāvikalpitaṃ.

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yadā viveka-nipunā, ādau, kṛta-yuge-yuge..

"The duality between reality and the world melts away under four circumstances. To the wise, there is never any duality; before the creation there was also no duality. In the golden era, it is conceived that there was an enlightened mass of people to whom unity was a living truth. Lastly, duality fades away when any one transcends the space-time scheme".

Chapter VII

Is reality of the dualists higher
than
that of the monists?

(A) Fundamental misconception.

The Vaiṣṇava sects which arose after Śaṅkara often contend that reality which they worship as the highest, is higher than that of the Śaṅkara school. Brahman of Śaṅkara, they assert, is only a light of Bhagavān, the supreme of the Vaiṣṇava sects.

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja, a great exponent of the Vaiṣṇava school of Bengal, writes, at the introduction of his work 'Caitanya-caritāmṛta' about the Brahman of the Upaniṣads as follows:-

'yad advaitam Brahmopaniṣadi tad apyasya tanubhā.'

Brahman of the Upaniṣads is nothing but the light of Kṛṣṇa.

Though in later Vaiṣṇavism, this contention has been much emphasised to embitter the relation between the monists and the dualists, yet, it must be pointed out to the credit of earlier Vaiṣṇavism, that the fundamental unity between Brahman and Bhagavān, was not lost sight of by scholars like Rūpa-gosvāmī and Jīva-gosvāmī. Thus Rūpa observes :-

Brahma nirdharmakam vastu nirviśeṣam amūrtikam.

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iti sūryopamasyāśya kathyate tat prabhopamam..

"Though the living substance between Brahman and Bhagavān is the same, yet, Brahman is described by analogy to be the light of Bhagavān, because of its character of undifferentiated mass of intelligence."

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Jīva also corroborates this view.

(B) Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja's view reviewed.

The claim of the later Vaiṣṇavas is based upon the confusion between Brahman of the Upaniṣads and Brahman, the first grade. We agree to the contention of Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja that Brahman, the first grade, is the splendour of Bhagavān, the third grade of reality, but we cannot accept the view that Brahman of the Upaniṣads is the light of Bhagavān, Kṛṣṇa of the Vaiṣṇavas. Brahman of the Upaniṣads and Brahman, the first grade, are two distinct concepts. Brahman of the Upaniṣads means reality consisting of all the four grades i.e. Brahman, Paramātmā, Bhagavān and advaya Jñāna. The Bhāgavata has clearly used the word 'Brahman' in the meaning of all the grades of reality, taken together. Evidently, therefore, the word 'Brahman' as used in the śloka 'vadanti' etc, and interpreted by us as the first grade of reality, is the lowest in the scale of the grades.

Why does the Bhāgavata describe the first grade as Brahman? Because the first grade pervades the world (vṛṇhana). Brahman, the first grade, or, to borrow the terminology of Tr.Upaniṣad, avidyā-pāda is so designated because Māyā, the dynamic aspect of Brahman, has evolved into the material world. Though really Māyā evolves, yet Brahman is said to evolve because of the identity between śakti and śaktimān.

Thus the concept of Brahman of the Upaniṣads and

Brahman, the first grade, being different, the contention of Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja, based upon the confused identity between the two Brahmanas, is unmerited.

(C) Reality of the Gītā.

The Gītā throws some light on this point. The Gītā seems to have acknowledged the grades of reality, though in different terms. Brahman, first grade, has been designated as Kṣara, by virtue of its/oozing out into pragmatic existence through its potency, māyā. Vāsudeva or Paramātmā, being the mere witness, is called akṣara. But beyond Kṣara and akṣara, is uttama puruṣa who controls all; being the supreme lord, he is also called Paramātmā. ¹⁰⁴ The supreme lordship of uttama puruṣa closely corresponds to the description of the third grade in the Māṇḍūkya:--

'eṣa sarveśvaraḥ..... eṣōntaryāmi' etc. It suggests that the third grade of Māṇḍūkya is the Paramātmā of the Gītā.

Thus it appears that kṣara, akṣara and puruṣottama of the Gītā, correspond to Bhāgavata's Brahman, Paramātmā and Bhagavān respectively.

(D) Brahman of the Śarava Upaniṣad.

Sectarian Vaiṣṇavism is fed with the doctrine of the Bhāgavata. It is, again, the misinterpretation of the Bhāgavata, that has led the later Vaiṣṇavism to that extravagant claim. In fact, the word 'Brahman', misunderstood by the Vaiṣṇavas in Bhāgavata context, is not unique with the Bhāgavata, to mean the

first grade. The Śarava Upaniṣad also uses the word 'Brahman' to mean the same thing viz the first grade:--

Parāt parataram Brahma, yat-parāt parato Hariḥ, 105
tat-parāt parataro hiśas tasmāt stutyōdhiko na hi..

(E) Our suggestion.

Still the use of the word 'Brahman' in 'vadanti' etc is not quite happy, we admit. A distinction is required to avoid confusion between the two Brahmanas. What the Gītā calls ksara, the Bhāgavata calls Brahman. We refer accordingly, to the Brahman, the first grade, as ksara-Brahman, and to the Brahman of the Upaniṣads as akṣara-Brahman.

Now, with Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja, we admit that ksara-brahman, as an undifferentiated mass of intelligence, is the light of Bhagavān. We, at the same time, assert, on the basis of the Bhāgavata, that akṣara-Brahman as consisting of all the four grades, is higher than Kṛṣṇa whom the Bhāgavata calls Bhagavān, the third grade. Akṣara-Brahman, the sum-total of all the four grades, is the Brahman of the Upaniṣads. How can this Brahman of the Upaniṣads be the light of Kṛṣṇa?

CHAPTER VIII.Reality of the World

and

non-duality of reality.(A) Māyā explains plurality.

Māyā is the principle, which the Bhāgavata holds, to account for the appearance of plurality. The Bhāgavata has defined Māyā as follows:-

pr̥ter̥tham yat pratiyeta na pratiyeta cātmani.
tad vidyāt ātmano māyām yathābhaso yathā tamah ..¹⁰⁶

The principle which accounts for the appearance of the world, without any objective counter-part, is Māyā. Reality shows itself as the empirical world which has diversity in its structure. Māyā is the potency of kṣara-brahman; and there is identity between śakti and saktimān. The kṣara-¹⁰⁷Brahman is manifested as the empirical world. While Māyā^{107/1} cannot create anything real in the sense of absolute, kṣara-Brahman, lying at the background of creation is appearing, through the Māyā, as the phenomenal world.¹⁰⁸ The world being the appearance of Brahman, has no reality apart from kṣara-Brahman. Thus the world of apparent diversity does not affect the doctrine of non-duality of reality.

(B) Relations between reality and the world.

The intimate connection between the world and reality (kṣara-Brahman) has been approached in the Bhāgavata through

all possible concepts. It says of the universe : -

yasmin yato yena ca yasya yasmai
 yad yo yathā kurute kāryate ca.
 parāvareṣaṁ paramaṁ prāk prasiddham
 tad Brahma tad dhetur ananyaḥ ekam.¹⁰⁹

There are other instances on this point.¹¹⁰

Behind the appearance of plurality, absolute indetermination is at work. The reality has manifested the world in order to realise its own intrinsic beauty and charm.¹¹¹ It has made itself immanent in creation, in the shape of Puruṣa, the first descent who enjoys the objective universe. But reality is not only immanent in the universe, it is also beyond the universe. All conception of the hierarchical grades is based upon the view that reality has transcended the universe. Thus reality is both immanent and transcendent.¹¹²

(C) Puruṣa - the custodian of non-duality.

The concept of puruṣa as the reality, immanent in the creation, justifies non-duality even if confronted with the empirical plurality. While the individual souls are wandering in the maze of plurality which appears to them the only truth, the concept of non-duality does not appear to their conventional reasoning. It is puruṣa who always keeps burning the torch of consciousness revealing non-duality as the innermost core of apparent diversity.

Like Patañjali, the Bhāgavata has conceived Puruṣa,¹¹³ as the primordial teacher, always ready, from the start

of creation, to instill into the human mind the divine spark of knowledge, to which non-duality is the living truth. Puruṣa is eternally awake to the spiritual vision of non-duality. The individual souls are all endowed with vidyā thanks to Puruṣa, so that even within the pragmatic existence, there is at least one person viz Puruṣa to whom non-duality is true for all the times.

The apparent diversity of the world fits in, in this way, with the non-dual structure of Brahman. Monism reigns, in the Bhāgavata, as the highest concept of reality.

(D) Final conclusion as to the interpretation of 'avadanti' etc.

Reality has been approached from different angles and the final conclusion as to the nature of reality is that reality is non-dual consciousness; the same reality pervades all the grades viewed in their hierarchical order.

In this sense, both the interpretations by Śrīdhara and Jīvagōsvāmī of the śloka 'avadanti' etc, can be reconciled. Reality is one and only one - says Śrīdhara; reality has different grades - says Jīvagōsvāmī. We propose to supplement both these truths by asserting that reality is not exhausted in the three grades. It has incorporated the three grades but is still something more. It is the fourth grade which the Bhāgavata calls non-dual consciousness. This is the highest truth of the Bhāgavata.

CHAPTER IX.From abstract to concrete.(A) Kṛṣṇa - the Bhagavān of the Bhāgavata.

The primary task of the Purāṇa literature is to present philosophic truths in such a form that even laymen will be able to assimilate them. Accordingly, the abstract concept of Bhagavān, (the third grade of reality,) is, to the Bhāgavata, Kṛṣṇa, a living personality of fresh and blood, a paragon of beauty perpetually renewing itself, playing upon his invincible lute and warmly embracing cowherd women assembled at the bank of the Jumnā, in the full-moon-lit nights of the autumn. Kṛṣṇa of the Bhāgavata is the popular embodiment of the abstract principle viz pure bliss (ānanda). With the help of allegory, metaphor, creative imagination, the Purāṇas have presented the abstract principles in concrete forms to appeal to the common people.

(B) Is Kṛṣṇa a contribution of the Bhāgavata ?

We have shown above that the fourth grade of reality is indescribable. But as the Purāṇas are out to describe reality to common people, they have to fall back upon the highest point where śabda can reach. This highest point is Bhagavān. The Bhāgavata has, accordingly, described this third grade as the highest reality though it is not represented there as Bhagavān but as lute-mouthed Kṛṣṇa.

Kṛṣṇa is however, not the original contribution of the Bhāgavata as the idea may be seen afloat before. Nevertheless, the lovely structure of the concept of Kṛṣṇa, that appeals to and stirs the innermost core of our being is definitely the Bhāgavata's most outstanding contribution to the world literature.

(C) The concept of Kṛṣṇa analysed.

(1) Is Kṛṣṇa mythical ?

In order to judge the life and personality of Kṛṣṇa from philosophic standpoint, it is necessary to trace the principles and circumstances under which the concept of Kṛṣṇa has developed. Our attempt has twofold purpose in view. It will, on the one hand, show how the popular concept of Kṛṣṇa has been deduced from the abstract concept of reality by the creative imagination of the Hindus, while, on the other, it may supply materials against those who are prone to discard the stories in the Purāṇas, charging them as legends and myths and fabrications of imagination running riot.

(2) Kṛṣṇa - Bhagavān.

The Bhāgavata has laid down the equation that Kṛṣṇa and Bhagavān, the third grade of reality, are identical. It boldly asserts that Bhagavān means Mukunda.^{113/1} Mukunda is another name for Kṛṣṇa.^{113/2} Thus, indirectly, the Bhāgavata holds that Bhagavān and Kṛṣṇa are identical. The Bhāgavata has also explicitly expressed the identification that Kṛṣṇa is none other than Bhagavān himself (Kṛṣṇas tu Bhagavān svayam¹¹⁴).

(3) Kṛṣṇa - the black.

Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa cannot be other than black. (a) We have seen before that Bhagavān, the third grade of reality stands for susupti-pāda; it is a state when/all diversity fuses into one integral whole. This phenomenon of all-absorption reminds us of moonless night (amābasyā), when the world becomes, as it were, absorbed in all-embracing gloom. Bhagavān being the melting crucible of all diversity¹¹⁵, may have been described as dark. (b) The absence of all colours is black. Bhagavān, being marked by the absence of all conditions, may have been, on the basis of popular analogy, described as black. (c) 'om', the mysterious syllable, has been described before/as suggesting the three grades of reality. We have seen that 'a' stands for Brahman, 'u' for Paramātmā and 'm' for Bhagavān. The Dhyānabindu Upaniṣad describes the colours of these as follows: -

akāraḥ pītavarṇaḥ syāt rajo-guṇa udīritah.

ukāraḥ sāttvikah śuklo makāraḥ Kṛṣṇa-tāmasah ..

Here 'm' or Bhagavān has been clearly described as black.

(4) Kṛṣṇa - the name of Bhagavān.

Originally, Bhagavān, the third grade, was kṛṣṇa (black). Later on, Bhagavān became 'Kṛṣṇa.' With the development of Vaiṣṇavism, Bhagavān, the kṛṣṇa (black) became Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa, meaning a particular personality standing out against the other concepts of reality.

(5) Kṛṣṇa - Śiva.

As Kṛṣṇa is only a designation of Bhagavān, the third grade of reality, Kṛṣṇa and Rudra are identical, for, both the designations refer to the same truth.

(a) Brahmopaniṣad has described reality as follows :-
 athāśya puruṣasya catvāri sthānāni bhavanti : -
 nābhīr, hr̥dayam, kanṭham, mūrdhā ca. tatra catus-
 pādām Brahma vibhāti; jāgarite Brahmā, svapne Viṣṇuḥ,
 susuptau Rudras, turīyam akṣaram.

Here we find that, in the catus-pāda series, Brahman, the third grade is mentioned as Rudra.

(b) From Śarava Upaniṣad also the status of Rudra as the third grade of reality may be ascertained : -

parāt parataram Brahma, yat parāt parato Hariḥ.
 tat parāt parataro hīśas tasmāt stutyodhiko na hi ..¹¹⁶

Īśa of the Śarava Upaniṣad is Rudra as can be gathered from the context.

(c) Again, Viṣṇu and Śiva (Rudra) are described in the Skanda Upaniṣad as mutually identical : -

Śivāya Viṣṇu-rūpāya Śiva-rūpāya Viṣṇave.

Śivasya hr̥dayam Viṣṇuḥ Viṣṇos ca hr̥dayam Śivah ..¹¹⁷

According to the Bhāgavata ~~also~~, Viṣṇu and ~~Kṛṣṇa~~^{Śiva} are identical;^{117/1} it follows, then, that Śiva and Kṛṣṇa are also identical.

All this shows that the conflict between the Śaivas and the Vaiṣṇavas is unmerited; for, both of them worship

the same reality, though the names may be different.

(6) Kṛṣṇa - the two-handed.

Kṛṣṇa is the name for Bhagavān, the third grade which is conceived to be the final goal of attainment (prāpti). Beyond that, is the fourth grade which the Māṇḍūkya has described as inscrutable. The conception of attainment may be carried only up to the third grade. In other words, Bhagavān is, to empirical individuals, the perfection of all spiritual aspirations. He is the highest ideal of humanity. Bhagavān, then, standing for the perfection of humanity, may be conceived as two-handed as all human beings are.^{118, 119.}

(7) Lute of Kṛṣṇa.

(a) Indetermination of the absolute

The lute of Kṛṣṇa has gained fame due to its power of breaking the fetters of pragmatic existence (durjara-geha-¹²⁰srīkhalā) and drawing towards him all gopīs living in Vṛndāvana. The absolute is working behind the spiritual and material manifestations. But it has a knack to bring back all diversity to its original status of non-dual consciousness. If reality had only the independence to unfurl, without the power to bring back to ^{its} ~~their~~ original status, then the indetermination of reality could not be absolute, but conditional. Thus immersion and emersion both pertain to the intrinsic nature of reality.

(b) Gopīs.

Thus while creation is complete, the individual souls are naturally endowed with lust for enjoying happiness. All

individual souls, are, in a way, gopīs as they are all in search of Kṛṣṇa, standing for ānanda. The alluring nature of ānanda is symbolised in the concept of Kṛṣṇa's lute. It is due to their desire for realising perfect ānanda that the gopīs take to spiritual strivings, by cutting asunder the knots of pragmatic existence and at last meet that parama Puruṣa.

(c) Vṛndāvana.

Bhagavān had promised that he would not move a single step out of Vṛndāvana. Hence Vṛndāvana is the place where Bhagavān resides for ever. ¹²¹ Iśopaniṣad declares that reality has pervaded everything. Hence all existence whether cosmic or spiritual is blessed with the presence of Īśa, the supreme. All this implies that we are all gopīs and are all inhabitants of Vṛndāvana.

This attraction has been variously designated as divine grace, the fervour of devotion and lastly the lute of Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is so called for he attracts (karṣatīti Kṛṣṇaḥ).

(d) Secret of rāsa līlā

Though we all are inhabitants of Vṛndāvana, yet, for us, Bhagavān is still asleep. His līlās commence with 'kuñja-bhaṅga' i.e. with the moment when, lying with his beloved, he will be awakened by the gopīs. In other words, we are to awaken the highest in us by means of consciousness so that we can witness the infinite līlās of Bhagavān. It is only when the barriers of pragmatic existence are broken that the individual soul will attain the deepest embrace of Bhagavān.

This, in fact, is the secret of rāsa-līlā where all souls, like gopīs, become one with Bhagavān.

(e) Ananda - The final goal.

Enjoyment of innate ecstasy has been responsible for different manifestations of reality. And so, Brahman, or rather Puruṣa, enjoys the gross world; Paramātmā enjoys the subtle, while Bhagavān enjoys pure bliss.¹²²

Gauḍapāda remarks : -

Viśvo hi sthūlabhun nityam Taijaso pra-vivikta-bhuk.
 ānanda-bhuk tathā Prājñas tridhā bhogaṁ nivodhata ..
 sthūlam tarpayate viśvaṁ praviviktaṁ tu taijasaṁ.
 ānandaś ca tathā prājñaṁ tridhā trptiṁ nibodhata ..¹²³

Again, Gauḍapāda concludes : -

bhogārtham sṛṣṭir ityanye kṛdārtham iti cāpare.
 daivasyaiṣa svabhāvo'yaṁ aptakāmasya kā sprhā ..¹²⁴

(D) Kṛṣṇa - the perfection of emotional life.

Moulded of beauty and charm, Kṛṣṇa stands for the perfection of emotional life. S.Freud has pointed out that Kāma (sex instinct) is the root-instinct that constitutes the foundation of our life. The artistic concept of Kṛṣṇa is the result of the paramount sublimation of that instinct.

Here lies the special contribution of the Bhāgavata that it has presented to us a concept of reality and an appropriate method of spiritual approach (sādhana) by which Kāma, the root-instinct of our life, may be so sublimated that the votary, without excluding any of his mental phenomena, will find the highest fulfilment of spiritual life, by the attain-

ment of parā bhakti (supreme fervour of devotion). The Bhāgavata concludes that by listening to the dalliances of the gopīs with Kṛṣṇa, the votary would conquer kāma (the base sexual instinct), followed by the dawning of parā bhakti :-

vikṛīḍitaṁ vraja-vadhūbhir idaṁ ca Viṣṇoḥ

śraddhānvitoṇuśrṇuyād atha varṇayed yaḥ.

bhaktiṁ parāṁ Bhagavati prati-labhya kāmam

hr̥d-rogam āsvapahinotyacireṇa dhīraḥ ..¹²⁵

^{3a}
Conclusion - Bhāgavata, the sāt̥tvata-saṁhitā.

The Bhāgavata describes itself as Sāt̥tvata-saṁhitā¹²⁶ and as such it owes allegiance to Vāsudeva, the supreme deity¹²⁷. Though the Bhāgavata is essentially engaged with Kṛṣṇa, yet its allegiance to Vāsudeva is not affected; for, Kṛṣṇa is but the essence of Vāsudeva.

The Bhāgavata seems to have classified the four grades of reality into two sections. It calls the first three grades as śabda-Brahman,¹²⁸ while the fourth grade as para-Brahman.¹²⁹ Again, the Brahman of the Upanisads, consisting of four grades,¹³⁰ is the para-devata of the Bhāgavata.

For all practical purposes, Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa is the para devatā. He is the highest point of śabda-Brahma. Hence the Bhāgavata, a colossal embodiment of śabda, is justified in being mainly engaged with Kṛṣṇa and his manifestation, Vāsudeva.

P A R T II.BHAGAVAN ŚRĪ-KṚṢṆA.Chapter I

Śrī-Kṛṣṇa - the final import
of the Bhāgavata.

(A) The Bhāgavata - concerned with Śrī-Kṛṣṇa.

The Śrīmad Bhāgavata is so called because it is predominantly concerned with Śrī-Kṛṣṇa. This point is elaborated by means of an episode at the beginning of the Bhāgavata: Vyāsa, the alleged composer of the Mahābhārata, was still unsatisfied. With a restless mind, he approached Nārada, a great hermit, in order to ask about means for peace of mind. Nārada retorted that the main reason, why Vyāsa was still unsatisfied, lay in the fact that, though he had described various subjects including reality, yet he has not composed any work which is exclusively devoted to the description of reality. Mind cannot attain peace unless reality has been described, in its details. Thus, the Bhāgavata exclaims :

idaṃ hi puṃsas tapasaḥ śrutasya vā
sviṣṭasya sūktasya ca buddha-dattayoh.
avicyuto'rtho kavī'hir nirūpito
yad uttamah-śloka-guṇānuvarṇanā¹m.

This 'uttamah-śloka' is none else than Kṛṣṇa². So the episode implies that it was because the Bhāgavata is primarily

concerned with Śrī-Kṛṣṇa that Vyāsa's purpose was fulfilled and he found peace of mind. Whether Vyāsa is the author of the Bhāgavata or not, the episode wants to bring home the fact that the Bhāgavata is built upon the corner stone of the life and activities of Śrī-Kṛṣṇa. So the Bhāgavata has concluded with the remark : -

atra samkīrtitah sākṣāt sarva-pāpa-haro Hariḥ.
nārāyaṇo hr̥ṣīkeśo bhagavān sāttvatam patiḥ..³

(B) The Bhāgavata incorporated the teachings of Kṛṣṇa

The intimate connection between Kṛṣṇa and the Bhāgavata may be also shown in a different argument. In Naimiṣāranya, where the whole of the Bhāgavata is alleged to have been recited, the assembly of the hermits had asked Śuta, the narrator, the following :-

vṛuḥi yogesvare Kṛṣṇe brahmanyē dharma-varmanī.
svam kāṣṭhām adhunopete dharmah kam saraṇam gataḥ..⁴

"Now that Kṛṣṇa has departed from this world, tell us to whom has religion resort^{-ed}, in the absence of Kṛṣṇa."

Śuta replied : -

Kṛṣṇe sva-dhāmopagate dharma-jñānā-dibhiḥ saha.
kalau naṣṭa-dr̥śam eṣa purāṇārko⁵dhunoditah ..

"After the departure of Kṛṣṇa, religion which was so long sheltered in Kṛṣṇa, found a new abode in the Bhāgavata."

(C) Theological standpoint as to the relation between Kṛṣṇa and Bh.P.

The theologians contend that though Kṛṣṇa had apparently departed from this world at the end of the Dvāpara era, yet

he, in fact, cast off his human form and took shelter in the Bhāgavata which served as his verbal form. This explains why listening to the Bhāgavata inspires devotion towards Kṛṣṇa, as the Bhagavata claims :-

yasyāṃ vai śrūyamānāyāṃ Kṛṣṇe parama-pūruṣe.
bhaktir utpadyate pumsaḥ śoka-moha-bhayāpahā⁶..

The theologians take pains to give a psychological analysis of the process involved in the origin of devotion towards Kṛṣṇa. To substantiate their view they quote the Bhāgavata as follows:-

śṛṇvataḥ śrādhayā nityaṃ grṇataś ca sva-ceṣṭitam.
nātidīrghena kālena Bhagavān viśate hr̥di..
pravīṣṭaḥ karna-randhrena svānāṃ bhāva-saro-ruham.
dhunoti śamalam Kṛṣṇaḥ salilasya yathā śarat ..
dhautātma puruṣaḥ Kṛṣṇa-pāda-mūlam na muñcati.
mukta-sarva-parikleśaḥ pānthah sva-śaranam yathā⁷.,

The substance of the above is that listening to the episode of Kṛṣṇa, produces devotion by purifying the mind. Devotion, as we shall see later, is understood as a type of revelation and not merely sublimated emotion. It means intuitive knowledge i.e. direct perception. Yet the question is: how can sound, which, listening to the episodes of Kṛṣṇa stands for, lead to perceptual knowledge? The theologians have quoted the well-known theory of the Vivaraṇa school of Śaṅkara, which holds that even sound (śabda) can produce perceptual knowledge. For instance, listening to the Vedānta, may lead to the perceptual knowledge of Brahman.

This process has found a practical demonstration in the life of Nārada who conveys his autobiography to Vyāsa in the following strain :-

ittham 'sarat-prāvṛṣikāvṛtū Hareh
viśṛnvato meṇusavam yaśomalam.
saṁkīrtya mānaṁ munibhir mahātmabhiḥ
bhaṭ^Kiḥ pravṛttātma-rajas-tamopahā⁸..

The status of Nārada is very high in the Bhāgavata which holds that the doctrine of devotion (sāttvata tantra) was propagated by him⁹; his very life demonstrates the theory that listening to Kṛṣṇa produces devotion.

The fundamental contention of the theologians as to the relation between Kṛṣṇa and the Bhāgavata is that Kṛṣṇa has found embodiment in the Bhāgavata. The moral is that Bhāgavata stands for all that was best in Kṛṣṇa. Thus the theologian view throws light upon the fact that the Bhāgavata is substantially given to the episodes and teachings of Kṛṣṇa.

(D) Kṛṣṇa - the soul of the Bhāgavata.

It is no wonder then, that out of the five fundamental questions asked of sūta by the assembly of the hermits, at the beginning of the Bhāgavata, four relate to Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa has been referred to in every Skandha of the Bhāgavata. To wit, the second Skandha refers to Kṛṣṇa in the episode of Brahmā and Nārada. In the third Skandha, the dialogue between Viḍura and Uddhava brings in Kṛṣṇa. So in every other Skandha. Moreover, the tenth Skandha which is the largest of all, is exclusively devoted to Kṛṣṇa.

The Bhāgavata holds that it has utilised all the twelve volumes (Skandhas) as pegs to hang on the episodes of Kṛṣṇa. To prove this, the Bhāgavata describes how it incorporates the ten topics, as follows:-

atra sargo visargaś ca sthānam poṣaṇam ūtayah.
manvantareśānukathā nirodho muktir āśrayah..¹⁰

Of these ten themes, the explanations of which are to be found in the Bhāgavata itself,¹¹ nine are subordinated to the last i.e. to the āśraya. The Bhāgavata holds that it is for the better understanding of the tenth that the other nine subjects have been drawn upon.¹² It defines the tenth (āśraya) as follows:-

ābhāsaś ca nirodhaś ca yato'styadhyavasiyate.
sa āśrayah param Brahma paramatmeti śabdyate..¹³

Though all the ten themes are diffused in the other volumes, the tenth volume of the Bhāgavata is absolutely given to the description of reality, the subject viz āśraya. Śrīdhara, the commentator, has defined the nature of this āśraya at the introductory verses, at the beginning of the tenth volume, thus:-

viśva-sarga-visargādi-nava-lakṣaṇa-lakṣitam.
Śrī-Kṛṣṇākhyam param dhāma jagad-dhāma namāmi tat ..
daśame daśamam lakṣyam āśritāśraya-vigraham.
kṛidāḍ Yādu-kulāmbhodhū^a paramānandam udiryate..¹⁴

- - - - -

CHAPTER 11.The Status of Kṛṣṇa.(A) Kṛṣṇa - the source of all descents.

In order to appreciate the status of Kṛṣṇa in relation to the various types of descents (avatāra) it is necessary to examine the nature of four out of five fundamental questions, put to Sūta, by the assembly of the hermits at the Naimiṣāranya. They are :-

- (1) Sūta jñāsi bhadrām te bhagavān sātṭvatam patih.
Devakyam Vasudevasya jāto yasya cikīrṣayā¹⁵..
- (2) tasya karmānyudārāṇi parigītāni sūribhiḥ.
brūhi naḥ śraddadhānānām līlayā dadhataḥ kalāḥ ..
- (3) athākhyāhi Harer dhīman avatāra-kathāḥ subhāḥ.
līlā vidadhataḥ svairam īśvarasyātma-māyayā..
- (4) vayan tu na vitṛpyāma uttamah-śloka-vikrame.
yac chṛṇvatām rasa-jñānām svādu svādu pade pade ..
kṛtavān kila karmāṇi Rāmeṇa saha Keśavaḥ.
ati-martyāṇi bhagavān gūḍhaḥ kapata-mānuṣaḥ¹⁶..

These four questions may be re-arranged in the following way :-

The second and the third questions refer to the activities of Hari (Kṛṣṇa) displayed as different descents; they reveal themselves through the cosmic process (kalpāvatāras etc) in order to maintain law and order in the world without being perceptible; some of the descents/reveal themselves as saviour

coming down to liberate humanity. The fourth question relates to Kṛṣṇa himself when he was doing various acts, in the company of Balarama at the end of the Dvāpara era; whereas the first question is about the mission of Kṛṣṇa who was born in this world as the son of Devakī and Vasudeva.

The trend of these questions, taken together, suggests that it was Kṛṣṇa who was born as various types viz cosmic as well as saviour descents: it further suggests that Kṛṣṇa-avatāra, in the company of Balarama, is distinct from all other avatāras; had Kṛṣṇa-avatāra been like all the other descents, his activities could not have been separately treated as they were, in the question No.4. It follows that Kṛṣṇa is the source of all other descents and ^{at} the sometime, perfect manifestation of Bhagavān, when we find him upon the earth at the end of the dvāpara era.

The view that Kṛṣṇa is the source of both cosmic and saviour descents has been demonstrated by the Bhāgavata in the following passages :-

matsyāśva-kacchapa-nṛsimha-varāha-hamsa-
rājanya-vipra-vibhūdheṣu kṛtāvatārah.
tvam pāsi naś tribhuvanam ca yathādhuneśa
bhāram bhuvo hara yadūttama vandanam ¹⁷ te..

Kṛṣṇa's descents as Fish, Tortoise etc are held by the Bhāgavata to be saviour descents who have come down upon the earth to liberate the suffering beings:

Again,

sattvaṃ rajas tama iti prakṛter guṇās taiḥ
yuktāḥ paraḥ puruṣa eka ihāsyā dhatte.
sthityādaye Hari-Virīñci-Hareti-samjñāḥ
śreyāṃsi tatra sattva-tanor nṛnāṃ syuh..¹⁸

Here para-puruṣa is held to have manifested himself as Brāhmā, Viṣṇu and Mahēśvara who control the world. They are cosmic descents; whereas, the para-puruṣa, the source of this triad, is none else than Kṛṣṇa.¹⁹

Kṛṣṇa is the ultimate source of all of them though Puruṣa, the first descent, is apparently traced to be the source of descents.²⁰ All over the Bhāgavata, we come across descriptions of different descents. Yet the Bhāgavata is concerned with the episodes of Kṛṣṇa only; for, to the Bhāgavata, the different descents are but Kṛṣṇa, in different forms.

(B) Kṛṣṇa-avatāra is the perfect descent.

Although Kṛṣṇa-avatāra who was acting on the earth at the end of the Dvāpara era, and the Bhagavān whom we discussed in the first Part, as the third grade of reality, are identical, yet, the distinction between the two must be maintained for practical purposes.

Kṛṣṇa-avatāra is the perfect manifestation of Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa, the third grade of reality, whereas all the other descents are only partial manifestation of reality. This is the truth that the Bhāgavata asserts in the "ete cāṃśa-kalāḥ pumsaḥ Kṛṣṇās tu Bhagavān svayam"²¹

Wherein lies the perfection of Kṛṣṇa-avatāra ?

Śrīdhara, in explaining the above passage, has laid down the criterion. He says that Kṛṣṇa-avatāra is perfect (pūrṇa) since all potencies may be noticed as revealed in him. Other descents like Matsya etc, being equally the manifestation of Bhagavān, the third grade, do possess all potencies but they are not brought into play during their mundane career. The mere presence of the potencies does not justify the designation of the 'perfect'. The Bengal school of Vaiṣṇavism has pointed out that majesty, play, ²²lute and the exquisitely beautiful ²³form of Kṛṣṇa have all combined together to make him the perfect manifestation of Bhagavān ²⁴Kṛṣṇa, the third grade of reality.

(a) Is Kṛṣṇa-avatāra a partial manifestation ?

The doctrine that Kṛṣṇa-avatāra is perfect, seems to raise this objection: The concept of avatāra inevitably involves an idea of limitation. Reality cannot condescend to us unless it is condensed into a limited form. Hence reality has to narrow down its frontiers to fit in with our limited scope of comprehension. Hence, Kṛṣṇa, as an avatāra, cannot be perfect.

The answer is this: The condescension of reality in the shape of avatāra does not necessarily affect its perfection. True, the reality has come down to a limited sphere. Still there is no law that its intrinsic potencies will be thereby arrested. Avatāra, as Jīvaśvāmī has defined, ²⁵means a coming down of reality from the spiritual to the cosmic plane. "Coming down" in this context, means that reality reveals itself within the cosmic process in such a way ~~was~~ to be visible by

ordinary human beings; or, to work behind the cosmic process, away from the sight of the mortals. Kṛṣṇa, as descent, makes himself visible to the naked eyes of human beings. But still all his potencies are intact and they can be brought into play at his will. Kṛṣṇa willed that his potencies should be brought into play; accordingly, they played at their full swing. How can the full play of the potencies be/arrested simply by his coming down from the spiritual to the material plane?

(b) Textual problem as to the perfection of Kṛṣṇa-avatāra.

The Bhāgavata has described Kṛṣṇa-avatāra as partial (amśa or kalā) in a number of places.²⁶ How can these descriptions be reconciled with the doctrine that Kṛṣṇa is perfect and not, like other descents, partial manifestation?

We propose, on the basis of the Bhāgavata, the following suggestions as to the descriptions of Kṛṣṇa-avatāra as partial manifestations:-

(1) Bhagavān, the third grade of reality, is not exhausted in the specified form which we call Kṛṣṇa-avatāra. In fact, the form of Kṛṣṇa is one of the infinite forms in which Bhagavān can manifest himself. All the forms are as perfect as Kṛṣṇa-avatāra.²⁷ But the multiplicity of forms does not disturb the fundamental non-duality of Bhagavān. If we call those infinite forms, taken together, as universal Kṛṣṇa, then Kṛṣṇa-avatāra, looked upon as a detached individual among infinite forms, may be described as only a partial manifestation of reality in view of universal Kṛṣṇa.

(2) All the avatāras are apparently traced to Puruṣa. The Bhāgavata conceives them to have emanated from Puruṣa, just as rivers emerge from a great reservoir of water.²⁸ Kṛṣṇa-avatāra being an avatāra is no exception to them. Puruṣa serves as the medium through which all the avatāras are manifested in this world. Hence in the chain of other descents that are held by the Bhāgavata as partial manifestations (amśa-kalā), Rāma and Kṛṣṇa have been described as nineteenth descent.²⁹ The Bhāgavata has made the general conclusion that all the descents including Kṛṣṇa-avatāra, are 'amśa-kalā's of Puruṣa. Yet the Bhāgavata, in the same context, declares that Kṛṣṇa is svayam Bhagavān - he is pūrṇa, the perfect.³⁰ Even in the description of Kṛṣṇa, as the nineteenth descent, the epithet 'Bhagavān' has been used.³¹ In this way, the same chapter describes Kṛṣṇa as 'amśa' and 'pūrṇa' i.e. partial and at the same time, perfect manifestation. How to solve this altercation?

Our answer is that Kṛṣṇa-avatāra is 'pūrṇa' i.e. perfect because all potencies are found to be perfectly manifested in him; Kṛṣṇa-avatāra is 'amśa' i.e. partial, for, he has, like other descents, come down, to the world, via Puruṣa.

Śrīdhara also holds 'the view that Kṛṣṇa-avatāra is 'pūrṇa'. In interpreting the phrase 'amśa-bhāga'³² with relation to Kṛṣṇa-avatāra, he has adduced several alternative meanings; but he finally says that the conclusion is inevitable that Kṛṣṇa-avatāra is perfect. (sarvathā paripūrṇena

rūpeneti vivakṣi tam, Kṛṣṇas tu Bhagavān svayam ityuktatvād
iti).

(C) Does the question of perfection of Kṛṣṇa-avatāra
arise at all ?

We have mentioned before that ³³all manifestations of
the Bhagavān, the third grade of reality, are equally per-
fect. The Br. Upaniṣad as well as the Bhāgavata ³⁴endorse their
approval to it. How can then the question as to Kṛṣṇa-avatāra's
perfection arise at all ?

In fact, it is on the ground of our imperfect know-
ledge, that we have introduced discrimination among the differ-
ent manifestations of reality. We hold Kṛṣṇa as 'pūrṇa' be-
cause we discover in him the potencies at full play. We call
the other avatāras as 'amśa' for we visualise in them only
partial manifestation of potencies. Our designation as 'amśa'
or 'pūrṇa' as applied to the descents, reflects the plane of
our knowledge. It is from that plane that we interpret reality
as 'amśa' or 'pūrṇa'. Kṛṣṇa-avatāra, the perfect manifestation,
also appeared to laymen as 'amśa'. Śrīdhara's observation
³⁵points this out. (amśeneti pratityabhiprāyenoktam.) With the
extension of the frontiers of our knowledge, all manifestations
of reality are revealed as perfect; and the distinction of
'amśa' and 'pūrṇa' falls off.

CHAPTER III.Eternal Kṛṣṇa and avatāra Kṛṣṇa.(A) The doctrine of eternal Kṛṣṇa.(a) Eternality of Kṛṣṇa's sports.

In the context of the Bhāgavata, reality is none else than Kṛṣṇa. The Bhāgavata holds that sports of Kṛṣṇa Bhagavān are eternal. Let us, for the sake of convenience, call this Kṛṣṇa conceived as reigning eternally in the region of intellect, 'eternal Kṛṣṇa', and 'avatāra Kṛṣṇa' when he is deemed to have come down into the world, at the end of the dvāpara era. Now, the eternality of his sports is implied by the Bhāgavata in its reference to Nārada who is described to have foretold the activities of Kṛṣṇa, which he³⁶ was to do in Mathurā.

(b) Eternality of Kṛṣṇa's abodes.

The spiritual regions where Kṛṣṇa reigns eternally are also conceived as eternal. Avatāra Kṛṣṇa displayed his sports in three regions viz Vṛndāvana, Mathurā and Dvārakā. Corresponding to these three regions, there are conceived three non-phenomenal regions which are held to be eternal.

The Bhāgavata has put the following in the mouth of Nārada addressing Maitreya: -

tat tāta gaccha bhadram te. Yamunāyās tatam śuci.
punyam Madhuvanam yatra sannidhyam nityadā Hareh.³⁷

Here the eternal presence of Kṛṣṇa in Mathurā is

expressly mentioned; and the eternal presence implies eternality of Mathurā.

Again, the Bhāgavata lauds Kṛṣṇa as follows :-

jāyati jaya-nivāso Devakī-janma-vādo
Yadu-vara-pariṣat svair dorbhir asyannadharmam.
sthira-cara-vṛjinaghnah su-smita-srī-mukhena
vraja-pura-vanitanām vardhayan kāmādevam..³⁸

Here, in the first half, Dvārakā and in the second half Vṛndāvana have been described. The present tense in 'jāyati' and the suffix 'sātṛ' in 'asyan' and 'vardhayan' are very significant. They imply that still Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa is adorning the family of the Yādavas in Dvārakā and is still inspiring the passion of the Gopīs Vṛndāvana, though apparently he has long ago departed from this world.

(c) Eternality of Kṛṣṇa's form.

Akrūra, a great devotee exclaims:-

drakṣyeṅghri-padmaṁ prahitomunā Hareḥ.
.....³⁹

yad arcitaṁ Brahma-Bhavādibhiḥ suraiḥ
śriyā ca devyā munibhiḥ sa-sātvataiḥ.
go-cāranāyanucaraiś carad vane
yad gopikānāṁ kuca-kunkumāṁkitam..⁴⁰

The fact that the same feet which are worshipped by Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva i.e. are seen by Akrūra, suggests that the form in which Kṛṣṇa has condescended has its eternal prototype.

Thus Kṛṣṇa's form, sports as well as abodes are eternal. This standpoint explains how, by the grace of Kṛṣṇa, the eternal plane of Goloka was revealed to the cowherd men⁴¹ and Akrūra.⁴²

(B) Identity between eternal Kṛṣṇa and avatāra Kṛṣṇa.

(a) Rāsa-līlā.

The girls of Vṛndāvana observed a vow (kātyāyanī-vrata) at the end of which they solicited:-

Kātyāyani mahābhāge mahāyoginyadhisvari.

Nanda-gopa-sutaṁ devī patim me kuru te namaḥ..⁴³

The word 'me' deserves attention. It suggests that though many girls assembled together to observe that vow, yet each one of them prayed for avatāra Kṛṣṇa to be her husband only. Their wish could not be fulfilled if Kṛṣṇa married them all; but they wished to possess him exclusively.

Therefore, on the occasion of rāsa-līlā, avatāra Kṛṣṇa had to be as many as there were gopīs. Yet all the forms were equally original and equally perfect. That is described by the Bhāgavata which concludes about the sport of avatāra as follows:-

kṛtvā tāvantam ātmānam yāvatīr goḥa-yoṣitaḥ.

reme sa Bhagavāns tābhir ātmāramopī līlaya⁴⁴.

Those forms, as the Bhāgavata describes, were all 'ātmans' i.e. infused with life equally with their proto-type. Yet through these forms played one and the same reality viz Kṛṣṇa. This fact is indicated in 'sa reme'. This shows that Bhagavān can simultaneously remain one^{and}/be many. ~~This~~

This constitutes the majesty of Bhagavān. The same truth has been demonstrated also by the Bhāgavata on other occasions⁴⁵

Just as avatāra Kṛṣṇa could simultaneously be many yet remain one, so inspite of the duality of eternal Kṛṣṇa and avatāra Kṛṣṇa, non-duality is never disturbed. In other words, avatāra Kṛṣṇa and eternal Kṛṣṇa are perfectly identical. This position may puzzle logic. But it is logic which is bound by Kṛṣṇa and not Kṛṣṇa by logic. Thus the Bhāgavata declares:-

yad darsanam nigama ātma-rahah-prakāśam
muhyanti yatra kavayojaparā yatante.
tam sarva-vāda-viṣaya-pratirūpa-sīlam
vande mahā-puruṣam ātma-nigūḍha-boḍhaṁ⁴⁶ ..

(C) Why eternal Kṛṣṇa descended as avatāra Kṛṣṇa.

Rūpagosvāmī has designated the perfect manifestation of reality as 'prakāśa'⁴⁷ (manifestation). But the question is why should reality i.e. eternal Kṛṣṇa manifest himself with so much perfection as is to be found in the avatāra Kṛṣṇa ? What is purpose behind this manifestation ?

⁴⁸ The Bhāgavata has put forward different views regarding this fact. Ultimately the Bhāgavata has declared :-

bhave'smin kliśyamānānām avidyā-kāma-karmabhiḥ.
śravaṇa-smaraṇārthāni kariṣyanniti kecana..⁴⁹

Śrīdhara has remarked that Kuntī, the mother of the Pāṇḍavas, supports this view and as such it should be given some significance. However, apart from the authenticity of Kuntī, it follows from the remark of Śrīdhara that avatāra Kṛṣṇa

had come down to us to extricate people from the maze of
^{-ld-} worldly life, by introducing to this world, the perfect character of eternal Kṛṣṇa, the final goal of the votaries. It is by resorting to the perfect character of avatāra Kṛṣṇa that people would transcend the bounds of phenomenal existence. With a view to fulfil this altruistic mission, eternal Kṛṣṇa had manifested himself as avatāra Kṛṣṇa endowed with as perfect character as eternal Kṛṣṇa possesses.

(D) Variation between two Kṛṣṇas.

To Nārada, not introduced to conjugal life, it was a puzzle how Kṛṣṇa could settle down to domestic life with sixteen thousand wives in Dvārakā⁵⁰. He proceeded to see personally about this affair. In each of the sixteen thousand rooms assigned to each of his wives, Nārada saw Kṛṣṇa engaged in different operations. The Bhāgavata has described Kṛṣṇa in this context as follows :-

yajantam sakalan devan kvāpi kratubhir ūrjitaiḥ.
 pūrtayantam kvacid dharmam kupāramā-mathādibhiḥ ..
 carantam mṛgayam kvāpi hayam aruḥṣā saindhavam.
 ghnantam tatra paśun medhyān paritam yadu-puṅgavaiḥ ..⁵¹

It is obvious from this description that one and the same Kṛṣṇa was simultaneously engaged in diverse operations. Thus the Bhāgavata concludes :-

"tam eva sarva-geheṣu santam ekam dadarśa ha.."52

(F) The doctrine of perfect manifestation.

The doctrine of perfect manifestation, the theory of 'prakāśa' of the Gauḍiya school, may be traced even in the

Upaniṣads. The Ch.Upa. declares: - sa ekadhā bhavati, tridhā bhavati, pañcadha bhavati, navadhā caiva punaś caikādaśa smṛtaḥ śatañ ca daśa caivaś ca sahasraṇi ca vimśatiḥ..⁵³

The Bhāgavata has adduced two analogies which give us a glimpse of this doctrine. They are :-

(a) tābhir vidhūta-sokābhir bhagavān acyuto vṛtaḥ.
vyarocatādhikam tāta puruṣaḥ śaktibhir yathā..⁵⁴

(b) evaṁ pariṣvaṅga-varābhimaśa-
snigdheksanoddāma-vilāsa-hāsaiḥ.
reme rameso vraja-sundarībhiḥ.
yathārbhakah sva-pratibimba-vibhramah..⁵⁵

(G) Avatāra Kṛṣṇa merges into eternal Kṛṣṇa.

Avatāra Kṛṣṇa had descended from eternal Kṛṣṇa to uplift the fallen . Avatāra Kṛṣṇa, again, merges into eternal Kṛṣṇa when the purpose of his descent is fulfilled. So the Bhāgavata says :-

Bhagavān pitāmahaṁ vīkṣya vibbūtir ātmano vibhuh.
samyojyātmani cātmanam padmaṇetre nyamīlayat..⁵⁶

lokābhirāmāṁ sva-tanum dharanā-dhyāna-maṅgalam.
yoga-dhāraṇāyāgneyyādagdhvā dhāmāviśat svakam.⁵⁷

CHAPTER IV.Life of Kṛṣṇa and its final import.(A) Vṛndāvana-līlā - the highest.

Srī Kṛṣṇa is the only avatāra, amidst all other avatāras described in the Bhāgavata, whose eventful life has been dealt with, in details, from birth till death. The multitude of the incidents of his life may be broadly classified, into three heads, in accordance with the regions in which they occurred. Events in Vṛndāvana may be designated as Vṛndāvana-līlā, while those displayed in Mathurā and Dvārakā may be respectively termed as Mathurā-līlā and Dvārakā-līlā. Again, of these three sets of līlās, Vṛndāvana-līlā stands the highest, for, it was here that the majesty of Kṛṣṇa, as Bhagavān, the third grade of reality, has been best exhibited. In Vṛndāvana we find the natural element over-arched by Kṛṣṇa's supernatural activities, which always inspire awe into the mind of the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana.⁵⁸ In Mathurā and Dvārakā, the life of Kṛṣṇa discloses another picture. There he is more human than divine. In those regions the super-human aspect of his life displayed only in the background of the human.

(B) Ānanda- the final import of Kṛṣṇa's life.

We have stated before the view of Kuntī, about the mission of Kṛṣṇa's descent. But the final word may be expected from Brahmā to whom Bhagavān had first inculcated the central doctrine of the Bhāgavata.⁵⁹

Brahmā exclaims : -

prapañcam niṣprapañcōpi vidānvayasi bhūtale.

prapanna-janatā-nanda-saṁdoham prathitum prabho..⁶⁰

According to Brahmā, Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa had descended in order to inspire divine exhilaration into the mind of his devotees (prapanna). In fact, a descent may have diverse purposes to serve. Thus, on the evidence of the hermit Garga, Kṛṣṇa was a yugavatāra and as such had in view the threefold purpose enumerated in the Gītā viz liberation of the good, destruction of the wicked and the re-establishment of the dharma.⁶¹ Moreover, he may have had in view, as Kuntī points out, the exhibition of an ideal character to ennoble laity. But the highest mission, as Brahmā holds, lies in inspiring pleasure in his devotees.

(C) Significance of rāsa-līlā.

The close contact of the devotees with Kṛṣṇa reached its climax in rāsa-līlā which has been described by the Bhāgavata in five chapters.⁶² The śloka which introduces to us these five chapters reads as follows:-

Bhagavān api tā rātriḥ śaradotphulla-mallikāḥ.

vikṣya rantum manas' cakre yogamāyām upāsritāḥ..⁶³

The ātmane-pada, used in 'cakre' is very significant. It is the grammarians' tradition that the ātmane-pada is used where the fruit of the action denoted by the verb, is intended to be consumed by the agent. Hence we have to admit that Bhagavān had commenced rāsa-līlā to derive self-enjoyment.

But does not this view contradict the standpoint

mentioned above, namely, that Kṛṣṇa had descended to offer pleasure to the devotees ? The answer is, no. The gopīs for whose pleasure Kṛṣṇa had descended may be held to be either identical with Kṛṣṇa being his intrinsic potencies, or, distinct from him, according to strict dualism. In the first alternative, pleasure of the gopīs is the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa. The Bhāgavata had in mind, probably, this point when it described the sport of Kṛṣṇa, similar to the play of a child with his shadows.⁶⁴ If, on the other hand, the gopīs are distinct from Kṛṣṇa, still we may hold that the pleasure which Bhagavān enjoys in the company of the gopīs, is the same that the devotees (gopīs) enjoy in his association. This pleasure is conceived to have double forks, one of which is sunk into Kṛṣṇa, while another is plunged into his devotees. Thus, what is to Kṛṣṇa, self-enjoyment, may be enjoyment to the devotees. It is in this sense, that the Bhāgavata said:-
 atmāramōpyarī-ramat.⁶⁵

That ānanda was the mission of avatāra Kṛṣṇa is quite in fitness of things, because, avatāra Kṛṣṇa is the perfect manifestation of external Kṛṣṇa, the Bhagavān of the Bhāgavata, whom the Bhāgavata has conceived as ānanda.

Hence Śrīdhara also had held avatāra Kṛṣṇa as 'prem-avatāra', as can be seen in his remark:- līlāvatāresu
 īpsitam jagataḥ premāspadam śrī-Rāma- Kṛṣṇa-di-jannā.⁶⁶

'Prema' which serves as the treasure house of the divine pleasure, found its highest fulfilment in

Vraja-gopīs on the occasion of rāsa-līlā. That the cowherd women of Vraja (Vṛndāvana) had set up the highest ideal of 'prema' (love) may be witnessed by the remark of Uddhava, a great devotee, who exclaims :-

Bhagavatyuttamah-śloke bhavatībhir anuttamā.

bhaktiḥ pravartitā diṣṭyā muninām api durlabhā⁶⁷ ..

This 'prema' reached its perfection on the occasion of rāsa-līlā as the Bhāgavata says :-

Nāyam śrīyōṅga nitānta-rateḥ prasādaḥ

svaryoṣitām nālina-gandha-rucaṁ kutōnyāḥ.

rāsotsaveśya bhuja-daṇḍa-grhīta-kaṇṭha-

labdhāśiṣām⁶⁸ ya udagād Vraja-vallavinām..

The pleasure which the Vraja-gopīs had derived in the ovation of rāsa has transgressed the joy which divine women including Śrī, the consort of Nārāyaṇa, obtain.

CHAPTER V.

Kṛṣṇa's connection with the gopīs challenged.

(A) The allegation.

Līlā of Kṛṣṇa with the Vraja-gopīs has raised a serious objection in some quarters. The conduct of Kṛṣṇa appears to be liable to be impeached. He played with Vraja-gopīs who were married to others. Does it not import immorality in the society? Of all, Kṛṣṇa, the perfect manifestation of reality, can be least expected to violate the social principles.

The same question disturbed king Parīkṣit also. The whole of the Bhāgavata is addressed to him. The king objected:-

samsthāpanāya dharmasya prasamāyetasya ca
 avatīrno hi Bhagavān amśena jagadīśvarah ..
 katham sa dharma-sethūnām vaktā kartābhirakṣitā.
 pratīpaṁ ācarad brahman paradārābhimarśanam..
 āpta-kāmo yadupatīḥ kṛtavān vai jugupsitam.
 kimabhiprāya etaṁ naḥ saṁśayaṁ chindhi su-vrata..⁶⁹

“Bhagavān had descended to restore moral law and order. It does not behove him to transgress them by illicit connection with others' wives. Bhagavān being self-contented, how can he be conceived, on the other hand, to have lust for women? Do tell me, then, what is the secret of his indulgence in what is obviously immoral.”

(B) Answers by Śuka.

The Bhāgavata has proposed more than one answer to this question. They are :-

1. The Bhāgavata admits this omission and says that to the powerful, fault is without its sting: -

dharma-vyatikramo drṣṭa īśvaraṇām ca sēhasam.
 tejiyasām na doṣāya vāneh sarva-bhujo yathā..⁷⁰

2. The Bhāgavata denies that gopīs were others' wives. Bhāgavān pervades equally the gopīs and their husbands. Hence, he being the inner essence of their husbands, gopīs can never be others' wives with relation to Kṛṣṇa:-

Gopīnām tat-patīnām ca sarveṣām eva dehīnām.

yontas carati sōdhyakṣaḥ kṛīḍaneneha deha-bhāk.⁷¹

3. As regards the purpose of his indulging in what appears to be transgression of moral laws, the Bhāgavata holds that Bhagavān indulged in aesthetic play in order to direct the attention, towards him, of people sunk in sensuality. Hence this process was adopted to shower grace upon common people, by capturing their attention:-

anugrahāya bhūtānām mānuṣaṁ deham āśritāḥ.

bhajate tādṛśīḥ kṛīḍā yā śrutvā tat-paro bhavet.⁷²

This is what the Bhāgavata has adduced in support of the action of Bhagavān, through the mouth of Śuka; the king, Parīkṣit, calls it 'para-dārābhi-marśana' i.e. outrage on others' wives.

(C) Śrīdhara's reply.

Śrīdhara has put forth the following in support of Kṛṣṇa's conduct:-

Before commenting upon the five illustrious chapters describing rāsa-līlā, Śrīdhara lauds Kṛṣṇa :-

Brahmādi-jaya-samrūḍha-darpaṣkandarpa-darpa-hā.

jayati Śrī-patir gopī-rāsa-maṇḍala-maṇḍanaḥ..

Śrīdhara raises the objection that the indulgence in others' wives appears to speak against the fact that Kṛṣṇa had full control over his sexual instinct. He answers that there are several indications in the Bhāgavata as to the fact that Kṛṣṇa had conquered the amorous perplexity. The

phrases like 'yoga-^āmyām upāśritah', 'atmā-rarōpyarīramat', sākṣāt manmatha-manmathah' speak undoubtedly of the supremacy of Kṛṣṇa over sex. In fact, the whole of amorous sports with the gopīs is a chronicle of Kṛṣṇa's conquest of sex. All the five chapters have their final import in spiritual advancement (nivr̥tti) under the cover of sexual enjoyment. Thus the question of Kṛṣṇa's moral violation does not arise at all. ⁷³

CHAPTER VI.

Reply by the Vallabha school.

In spite of the solutions adduced by the Bhāgavata and Śrīdhara, as to the question of Kṛṣṇa's alleged breach of moral principles, the question has a long-drawn history of its own. Nearly all the prominent Vaiṣṇava sects have tackled this question. We shall deal with the answers given by Vallabha and Caitanya schools only, as their views are most representative. The present chapter is devoted to the answer given by the Vallabha school.

In order to avert the fling cast upon ŚrīKṛṣṇa from social standpoint, the Vallabha school has held the līlās of Kṛṣṇa as merely symbolical. In Premeya-ratnārnava by Bālakṛṣṇa Bhaṭṭa, the episodes from the life of Kṛṣṇa have been interpreted as follows:-

(A) Bāla-līlās of Kṛṣṇa.

Birth of Kṛṣṇa is nothing but the manifestation of his divine form (śrī-mūrti) in the mind of the votary. Instruction of Vasudeva in favour of leaving Vṛndāvana and settling down in Gokula is really the instruction of the preceptor to his disciples about the obstacles in the path of devotion. The death of Pūtānā (demoness) is the destruction of ignorance which binds man to external objects. Cutting asunder of the attachment to things other than Hari, is the death of the demon, Śakata. The visualisation of the world in the mouth of Kṛṣṇa by Yośoda is the awakening of the devotees, to the true nature of reality⁷⁴. In this way, all the līlās during Kṛṣṇa's childhood may be explained.

(B) Vṛndāvana-līlās.

When obstructing sins are destroyed and God's grace shines upon the votary, then listening to Kṛṣṇa-episodes etc (śravaṇa etc) kindles love for God (Bīja-bhāva) which, heightened in intensity, destroys all guṇas. By service to God (sevā), this love matures into a deep passion (vyasana); and with the destruction of the guṇas, the votary visualises Brahman (Brahma-bhāva). At this stage, the votary visions himself to be identified with all that is animate and inanimate (sarvātma-bhāva). Revelation of Puruṣottama becomes steady when sarvātma-bhāva is achieved. Consequently the gross (sthūla) and subtle (sūkṣma) bodies are destroyed and the devotee becomes endowed with a spiritual body befitting the enjoyment of divine sports, and, finally enters the

region of eternal sports. This is⁷⁵ salvation.

It is evident from the above description of Vrnda-
 āvana-līlā that the votary crosses the portals of Brahman,
 Paramātmā and ultimately visualises Puruṣottama, the Bhagavān
 of the Bhāgavata. This description shows that Bālakṛṣṇa
 Bhaṭṭa also recognises the hierarchy among Brahman, Paramātmā
 and Bhagavān. This sight of Bhagavān, as described by the
 author, corresponds to the description of the Bhāgavata :-
 teṣāṁ āvirabhūt śauriḥ smayamāna-mukhā-mvujah⁷⁶ etc. But so
 teṣāṁ āvirabhūt śauriḥ smayamāna-mukhā-mvujah⁷⁶ etc. But so

From what has been stated before, it is obvious
 that before the devotee enters into the conjugal sports with
 Kṛṣṇa in the eternal region, he has to abandon his gross
 and subtle bodies and with them all social bindings. This

view is based upon the remark of the Bhāgavata :- "tam
 eva paramātmānam jāra-budhyāpi saṁgatāḥ. jahur guṇamayam
 deham sadyaḥ prakṣīṇa-vandhanāḥ⁷⁷.. After the surrender of
 material bodies, the votary proceeds to the spiritual region
 (Goloka), with a spiritual form, to enjoy the conjugal
 union with Kṛṣṇa, the eternal.

Hence actual union, which is impeached on social
 grounds, happens in Goloka and not in this world. There the
 social laws of the world have no binding force at all.

It appears from the trend of the arguments that the
 Vallabha school recognises eternal gopīs playing eternally
 with Kṛṣṇa in Goloka. With respect to these gopīs, the

phenomenal laws have no bearing. The devotees of the world, who intend to join the eternal sports, cannot do so, as long as they are in this world. They have to forsake the material bodies and enter the eternal region, before they are allowed to taste the pleasure of divine sport. Then only, they attain the status of the gopīs, not before. Hence the divine sport of Kṛṣṇa with the gopīs and social laws are mutually exclusive. How, then, does the question of violation of moral principles arise at all ?

CHAPTER VIII.

Reply by the Caitanya school.

(A) View of Jīva-gosvāmī.

We propose to take Jīva-gosvāmī first because of his historical priority over Viśvanātha Cakravartī whose view shall be given later.

(1) The doctrine of twofold līlā.

Jīva-gosvāmī maintains that śṛṅgāra (sex) is also designated as pure (śuci). Hence there can be no violation of morality in the sports of Kṛṣṇa with the gopīs. In fact, līlās of Kṛṣṇa are twofold viz manifest (prakāṭa) and un-manifest (a-prakāṭa). Līlās of avatāra Kṛṣṇa were manifest ^{- cause} before they were accessible to all. But the līlās of eternal Kṛṣṇa in the eternal region of Goloka, are un-manifest; for, only the votaries have access to them.

In unmanifest sport, the gopīs are none else than the intrinsic potencies of Kṛṣṇa. As the manifest līlā is nothing but a projection of the unmanifest līlā, the fundamental principles underlying unmanifest līlā cannot be altered in manifest līlā. Hence, even in manifest līlā, the gopīs cannot be other than his intrinsic potencies. That they were intrinsic potencies even in manifest līlā is hinted by Uddhava. He distinguished⁷⁸ the gopīs from all goddesses and even from Lakṣmī, the potency of Vāsudeva, the vilāsa (manifestation) of Kṛṣṇa. Being potencies, the gopīs are identical with Kṛṣṇa, for, there is identity between śakti and śaktimān. Now, identity being the most intimate connection that may be conceived of, how can the gopīs be others' ? Thus the gopīs being Kṛṣṇa's own, no question of adultery can arise at all.

(2) Why does the Bhāgavata describe them as others' wives ?

The descriptions of the Bhāgavata regarding gopīs to be others' wives, continues Jīvagosvāmī, are significant. Bharata, the father of dramatic art, remarks: - vāhuḥ vāryate yataḥ khalu, yatra pracchanna-kāmukatvañ ca. yā ca mitho dur-labhatā sā paramā manmathasya ratih ..

Hence on the analogy of the psychology of conventional love, the Bhāgavata has described the gopīs as others' wives in order to convey to us an idea of intensity of love, for Kṛṣṇa, in the gopīs. The description of the gopīs as others' wives drops a further suggestion. It gives a practical hint to the aspirant souls. It advises that one should

strive for Kṛṣṇa in the same way as the gopīs hankered after him. One should aspire after Kṛṣṇa with such impetuosity of love that one becomes prepared to quite all, for the sake of Kṛṣṇa. The Gītā also holds the same view:-

sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaranam vraja.
 ahaṁ tvām sarva-pāpēbhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi mā ⁷⁹śuca..

The use of ātmane-pada in the opening śloka of rāsa-pañcādhyāyī (five chapters describing the dalliances of Kṛṣṇa with the gopīs) suggests the above implication. It was to enjoy more lavishly the power of love that Bhagavān conducted rāsa-līlā with the gopīs.

(3) Gopīs -the wives of Kṛṣṇa.

Scriptural evidence proves that the gopīs were not others' wives but they always have been the wives of Kṛṣṇa. So Gāṭhī Tantra holds :-

aneka-janma-siddhānām gopinām parir eva vā.
 Nanda-nandana ityuktas trailokyānanda-varḍhanah..

Gopāla-tāpanī also observes :-
 sa vo hi svāmī bhavati.

The Bhāgavata observes :-

"Kṛṣṇa-vadhvāḥ", and uses it as an epithet of the gopīs.

Under the circumstances, Jīvaśvāmī concludes, the gopīs can never be others' wives. The description in the Bhāgavata as others' wives is only apparent. Therefore, gopīs not being others' wives, the question of violation of social

law does not arise at all.

(B) View of Viśvanātha Cakravartī.

(I) Gopīs were others' wives.

Viśvanātha Cakravartī, as great an exponent of Bengal school of Vaiṣṇavism, as Jīvagoṣvāmī, has opposed the view of the latter. He holds that so far as avatāra Kṛṣṇa is concerned, the gopīs were others' wives. In support of this view, he mentions that (a) Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa himself has recognised that they were others' wives :-

'bhrātarah patayas' ca vah.⁸¹

This evidently shows that according to Kṛṣṇa himself, they were others' wives. Hence this state of being others' wives (parakīyatva) is real and not apparent as Jīvagoṣvāmī maintained.

(b) The very fact that the gopīs were others' wives is the foundation on which Uddhava, the great devotee, lays the excellence of the love of the gopīs. Had this been illusory, Uddhava's contention would have hopelessly failed. Thus Uddhava remarks :-

āsām aho carāṇa-reṇu-juṣām ahaṁ syām

Vṛndāvane kim api gulma-latauṣadhīnām.

yā dustyajam sva-janam ārya-patham ca hitvā

bhejur Mukunda-pāda-viṁ munibhir vi-mṛgyām..⁸²

(c) Moreover, the question of adultery has been raised by the Bhāgavata itself by no less a person than

Parikṣit.

Undoubtedly, then, the gopīs were others' wives.

(2) How is then Kṛṣṇa innocent ?

The so-called adultery cannot affect Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa being the perfect manifestation of reality, conventional laws of morality do not apply to him. So the Bhāgavata observes:-

kuśalācaritenaiṣām iha svārtho na vidyate.
viparyayaṇa vānārtho nirahamkārinām prabho ..
kim utākhilasattvānām tiryah-marttya-divaukasām.
īśituś ceśitavyānām kuśalakuśalānvayaḥ⁸³..

Had Kṛṣṇa been plunged into adultery like ordinary human beings, then the episodes of Kṛṣṇa could not have been palatable to the good people, as the Bhāgavata holds :-

tad vāg visargo janatāgha-viplavo
yasmin pratislokaṁ abaddhavadatyapi.
nāmānyanantasya yaśonīkitāni yat
śṛṇvanti gāyanti gṛṇanti sādhanavah⁸⁴..

In another context, the Bhāgavata holds that mundane merits and demerits do not touch reality :-

karma pravṛttam ca nivṛttam apyṛttam
vede vivicyobhaya-līgam āśritam.
virodhi tad yaugapadaika-kartari
dvayam tathā Brahmanī karma narecchati⁸⁵.

Hence, on the basis of these observations, Kṛṣṇa, the perfect manifestation of reality, cannot be charged with adultery.

(3) The state of being others' wives explained.

The state of being others' wives, subsisting in the gopīs is a creation of Māyā, but not illusory, as Jīva^{-v-}goṣāmi holds. Māyā, says Cakravartī, is twofold:- (a) Binding principle and (b) spiritual. The first kind is Avidyā, while the second helps the divine sports of Bhagavān. Kṛṣṇa's state of being the husband of gopīs is spiritual; whereas, the state of the gopīs being the husbands of the gopīs is conventional, the creation of avidyā.

According to this, Kṛṣṇa is the spiritual husband of the gopīs; yet Kṛṣṇa, not being their conventional husband, they are also others' wives with reference to Kṛṣṇa. ⁸⁶

Viśvanātha Cakravartī summarised.

Cakravartī acknowledges the violation of moral laws which Kṛṣṇa's association with the gopīs involves; yet he contends that the violation does not entail any fault on his part, for, Kṛṣṇa is the perfect manifestation of reality. Cakravartī eases the unpleasant situation ⁱⁿ which Kṛṣṇa is placed, by admitting Kṛṣṇa as the spiritual husband of the gopīs. The dalliances of the gopīs with Kṛṣṇa, as described in 'rāsa-pāñcadhyāyī', are meant for the devotees only. There, the spiritual husbands plays with his divine wives. Hence the criticism of rāsa-līlā from social standpoint is unmerited. It is an intrusion of social standard upon the domain of spiritual life.

Conclusion.

It appears from several passages of the Bhāgavata that the gopīs felt sexual desire for Kṛṣṇa. Still the charge of adultery does not affect Kṛṣṇa who was conceived as the perfect manifestation of Bhagavān. . On the other hand, although the primary motive of the gopīs was affection for Kṛṣṇa, yet this affection gradually sublimated to self-less love, by means of their constant association with Kṛṣṇa. Hence the charge of adultery, as understood in the ordinary sense, cannot be levelled against either Kṛṣṇa or the gopīs.

Kṛṣṇa is thus the perfection of humanity. His life disclosed a compromise between spiritual and phenomenal. His conduct like ordinary human being had puzzled Kuntī who exclaims:-

gopyādade tvayi kṛtāgasi dāma tāvaḍ
yā te daśāśru-kalilāñjana-sambhramākṣam.
vaktram niniya bhaya-bhāvanayā sthitasya
sā māṁ vimohayati bhīr api yat vibhetti..⁸⁷

In spite of his human behaviour, he is perpetually settled in his intrinsic glory:-

māyāṁ vyudasya cic-chaktyā kaivalye sthita ātmani.⁸⁸

The compromise of spiritual and the phenomenal is done by his potency, yoga-māyā. With the inscrutable potency of yoga-māyā, Kṛṣṇa, the converging point of material and spiritual, Bhagavān, the ānanda-pāda, is rightly considered to

be the goal of sādhanā. We worship Kṛṣṇa in order to be Kṛṣṇa ourselves.

PART III.

THE THEORY OF DESCENTS.

Introduction

The theory of descents occupies a most exalted place in the Bhāgavata. It has been mentioned before that Bhagavān - the Kṛṣṇa of the Bhāgavata, is the ultimate reality. The theory of descents conceives Bhagavān to be in the midst of us, when he feels to do so, in various shapes and forms.

The concept of descent.

In its largest sense, 'descent' means all manifestations of the world, sentient and insentient. Even personal God whom the Bhāgavata calls Puruṣa and who is conceived to be the creator of the world, is also deemed to be the first descent (ādyāvatāra). This concept of descent is definitely an improvement upon the concept of descent held out by the Gītā. While the Gītā accepts outstanding (vibhūtimat) objects of the world only to be the manifestations of God, the Bhāgavata includes all, whether outstanding or not, in the category of descents.

But, in a narrower sense, the Bhāgavata means the saviour descents, while it refers to a 'descent.' They are conceived to come down upon the world, in visible form, to liberate the suffering beings. Śrīdhara echoes this view

by the remark that though all have been indiscriminately described by the Bhāgavata to be descents of reality yet some discrimination should be recognised among them; thus some are held as śaktis, others as guṇāvatāras while still others as vibhūti⁹² and so on. This is the traditional concept of descent, first propounded by the Gītā⁹³.

The source of descents.

Bhagavān, the third grade of reality, is the ultimate source of all descents for, descents are nothing but earthly manifestations of Bhagavān. Puruṣa, the personal God also is, in this sense, a descent of Bhagavān, as we have indicated above. But for all practical purposes, Puruṣa, the first descent, is held by the Bhāgavata to be the source of different types of descents⁹⁴. They are held, by the Bhāgavata, to emanate from Puruṣa and again recede to him⁹⁵. The descents are conceived to have emerged from Puruṣa like streamlets, springing from an inexhaustible reservoir of water⁹⁶. This analogy suggests constancy between Puruṣa and his descents. In fact, the Bhāgavata holds the descents and Puruṣa as identical; and being identical with Puruṣa, they are held to possess all the merits and activities which are conceived to subsist in Puruṣa⁹⁷. In short, the Bhāgavata has conceived the descents to be Puruṣa, i.e. personal God, in miniature form⁹⁸.

Classification of descents.

The Bhāgavata seems to have broadly classified the

descents into three heads viz (a) ¹⁰¹amśas, (b) ¹⁰²kalās and (c) ¹⁰³amśa-
¹⁰⁴kalās. Amśas are, strictly speaking, the descents of Puruṣa, who are conceived as emerging from Puruṣa like streamlets.

¹⁰¹Yajña, ¹⁰²Vibhu, ¹⁰³Vāmana and ¹⁰⁴Rṣabha are all examples on this point.

The kalās, on the other hand, are, properly speaking, individual souls (jīva); but they are described as kalās of God and so are a type of descents on the ground that they are enlightened souls. In fact, they are jīvas but as good as the descents. ¹⁰⁵Vyāsa, ¹⁰⁶Gaya, ¹⁰⁷Datta and ¹⁰⁸Kumāra belong to this group.

Lastly, there is a residuary type which partly exhibits the character of god and partly of man. Being a mixture of the two it is termed as ¹⁰⁸amśa-kalāḥ. ¹⁰⁹King Prthu is an illustration on this point.

But the classification noted here is not very rigid with the Bhāgavata. In some context, the Bhāgavata described ¹¹⁰different types of descents simply as kalās.

Types of descents.

(A) Cosmic descents.

The Bhāgavata, with its wealth of descents, has knit the whole structure of the world with different types of descents. It has assigned to them different works relating to the creation, maintenance and dissolution of the world. Thus Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Mahēśvara, the illustrious triad, are conceived to be at the helm of creation, maintenance and dissolution of the world and are called ¹¹¹guṇāvataṛas. It has conceived 'varṣāvataṛas'

to rule over the world, by dividing the latter into a few
¹¹² parts (varṣas). Not only has the whole space of the world
 been divided among a few descents, but there are others also
 to rule over different spans of time. The Bhāgavata divides
 time into yuga, manavantara and kalpa, for this purpose; and
 the descents, ruling the world, during these times, are termed
 to be yugāvatāra, manvantarāvatāra and kalpāvatāra respect-
 ively.

Accordingly, the Bhāgavata conceives four descents
 each of whom rules each of the four yugas and they are held to
 be of different forms and colours, in accordance with the
¹¹³ colours, deemed to belong the respective yugas. Thus, in the
 satya-yuga, the descent is conceived to be white due to the
¹¹⁴ predominance of sattva-guṇa and so on. Further, in every
 yuga, God is conceived to impart knowledge as siddha, teach
 the art of action as ṛṣi (hermit), inculcate yoga and
 yogeśvara, further the cause of progeny as prajāpati, destroy
 the wicked (dasyus) as svarāt (sovereign) and destroy all as
¹¹⁵ kālā (time). This is the story of God as yugāvatāra. Sim-
 ilar is the story of manvantarāvatāra: as Manu and his sons
¹¹⁶ etc, God protects law and order; other functions are assigned
¹¹⁷ to hermits, gods etc; but these are, again, conceived to
 discharge their duties under the supervision of 14 manvantar-
¹¹⁸ ¹¹⁹ ¹²⁰ āvatāras, viz Yajña, Vibhu, Satyasena and eleven others who
 are held to divide among themselves the period of a kalpa.

(B) Saviour descents.

In spite of such huge paraphernalia of different types of descents who are entrusted with the duty of maintaining the law and order in the world, the world sometimes plunges headlong into chaos. Thus, while the wicked thrive, the good suffer, and religion is at stake God descends to destroy the wicked, save the good and restore the decaying religion. These, as distinguished from the cosmic descents, are the special missions that a saviour descent fulfils.

The notion of descents is a direct borrow from the ¹²² Gītā. And the whole concept of descents, whether cosmic or saviour, who are, in some form or other, in charge of maintaining law and order, seems to be the re-statement of the Vedic ¹²¹ ~~concept~~ of ṛta (moral law).

Cosmic and saviour descents distinguished.

The main distinction between cosmic and saviour descents lies in the fact that while the former are invisible, the latter are visible to all. To account for this visibility, the Bhāgavata has conceived saviour descents to possess a body of ¹²³ Maya like that of ordinary beings. But still a saviour descent is free from our limitations because, in addition to that body, a saviour descent is, like the cosmic descents and unlike the individual souls, endowed with a body built up by pure matter (visuddha-sattva). ¹²⁴

Mission of a saviour-descent.

The mission of a saviour descent requires some elucidation. Moved by his natural pity, God does not confine himself to the human form only. His pity is universal and he appears in various forms. Thus he takes not only human but also the ^{form} of various animals, in response to their ¹²⁵ appeal. In human form, he appears as one of us to set an example of ideal life to the fallen. He demonstrates through his life the utility of resorting to scriptures and practising karma-¹²⁶ yoga, ¹²⁷ tapas, samādhi and knowledge. He continues to spread his unstinted fame until he is satisfied that people are ¹²⁸ largely affected by his example. Fully satisfied, he departs from this world, leaving behind the torch of his glory for ¹²⁹ the enlightenment of posterity. All through his earthly career, he behaves like ordinary beings, yet his knowledge ¹³⁰ is never clouded; for, his knowledge remains eternally ablaze. The Bhāgavata has thus compared a saviour descent with wind which pours into various cavities, but is never imprisoned ^{131, 132, 133.} in any of them.

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VOLUME II

BHĀGAVATA DHARMA.

VOLUME II.BHĀGAVATA DHARMA.PART I.Chapter I.Nature of bhāgavata dharma.(A) Enumeration of bhāgavata dharma.

The Bhāgavata describes 'para dharma' as a collection of those methods which bring into play self-less uninterrupted devotion of Adhokṣaja (¹Kṛṣṇa). What are those methods that conduce to the dawning to bhakti? In quite a good number of ²passages, it has provided us with lists of bhāgavata dharmas. No list, taken by itself, is exhaustive; nor have the merits been designated everywhere as bhāgavata dharmas. Somewhere they are mentioned as 'para dharmah', somewhere else as 'mama dharmāḥ', at others as 'bhāgavata dharma' and so on.

It will be seen from these lists, that almost all the moral qualities, that have been traditionally recognised as the processes conducive to emancipation, appear to be included in the category of 'bhāgavata dharma'. But the Bhāgavata seems to have limited the word 'bhāgavata dharma' to mean strictly a few only of those merits indicated above.

This we gather from the contexts of great devotees like Prahlāda and Yama-rāja, the god of death.

(B) Nine-fold bhakti.

(a) Authenticity of Prahlāda.

The Bhāgavata has recognised a few persons to be masters of 'bhāgavata dharma', of whom Prahlāda is one. The Bhāgavata goes the extent of conceiving him to be the representative of all the devotees. Prahlāda, conceived to be thus a great authority, is referred to by Nārada, in the context of propounding his merits, out of thirty, to be the best. Asked by the father to enumerate the best teachings which he has imbibed from a teacher, Prahlāda gave out the nine-fold bhakti as the highest teaching. Śrīdhara explains the phrase 'adhītam uttamam', used in this context, to mean that there is nothing which can supersede the nine-fold bhakti in its being the highest teaching from a teacher. Hence the Bhāgavata voices the view, through the mouth of Prahlāda (manye), that nine-fold bhakti is the essence of the bhāgavata dharma. It may be noted here that the nine-fold bhakti is (a) śravaṇa (listening to the episodes of Bhagavān, etc), (b) kīrtana (chanting of them), (c) smaraṇa (remembrance,) (d) pāda-sevā (service to God), (e) arcana (worship) (f) vandana (applause), (g) dāsya (servitude), (h) sakhya (friendship) and (i) ātma-nivedana (self-surrender).

The teachings of Prahlāda are corroborated by Yama-rāja.

(C) Surrender of action.

Like the nine-fold bhakti, surrender of action is also held by the Bhāgavata, in very high esteem. This is clear from another context. King Nimi asked the group of hermits, described as 'bhāgavatottama' and 'Bhagavan-maya,' about the nature of bhāgavata dharmas. The hermit, Kavi, answered that the surrender of action unto Nārāyaṇa is the best type of Bhāgavata dharma. In another context, the Bhāgavata holds this to be the highest.

(D) All other bhāgavata dharmas subsidiary to these.

Bhāgavata's emphasis on (a) surrender of action and (b) nine-fold bhakti, suggests that all the other items of the bhāgavata dharma, enumerated in different lists (see supra) are subordinated to these two items. The other dharmas may either be manifested in course of the practice of the two items or their practice may ensure their success. To wit, satya (truth) and ahimsā (non-violence) may be spontaneously revealed in a votary engaged in dedicating action to the supreme. In fact, surrender of action is no other than 'īśvara-pranidhāna' of Patañjali. This equation is the view of the Bhāgavata. The author of the Vārtika, the commentary on the aphorisms of Patañjali, holds, in explaining the aphorism 'samādhi-siddhir īśvara-pranidhānāt', that the accessories of yoga (yama, niyama etc) result in samādhi, only through the instrumentality of 'īśvara-pranidhāna.' Śrī-Jīva-gosvāmī, on the other hand, subordinates all moral

qualities to nine-fold devotion. Subordination of yama etc, which the Bhāgavata counts among bhāgavata dharmas, to 'īśvara-praṇidhāna' or to nine-fold bhakti, suggests that the Bhāgavata has indirectly relegated the other moral qualities to the two items of bhakti.

Chapter 11.

Relation among bhāgavata dharmas.

(A) Navadhā bhakti and karma-samarpana.

As to the relation between karma-samarpana and navadhā bhakti, the Bhāgavata lays down :-

tāvāt karmāṇi kurvīta na nirvidyeta yāvata.

mat-kathā-śravaṇāḍau vā yavac-chraddhā na jāyate.. ²¹

"Action should be continued as long as detachment (nirveda) or faith (śraddhā) in the listening to my kathā (episodes) etc does not arise."

This śloka indicates that karma-yoga in the shape of surrender of action reaches its climax when śraddhā dawns in kathā-śravaṇa etc. The kathā-śravaṇa etc, form the part of navadhā bhakti, for, kathā-śravaṇa is one of the types of śravaṇa, the first item of the nine-fold bhakti. This shows that karma-samarpana (surrender of action) is the first stage of bhāgavata dharma while navadhā bhakti (nine-fold devotion) represents the second stage.

(B) The stage of rati.

As śraddhā marks the end of karma-samarpana, i.e.

the first stage of bhāgavata dharma, so the dawning of rati (ardent love) proclaims the climax of the navadhā bhakti. Thence commences the third stage of the bhāgavata dharma. The Bhāgavata has nowhere designated it; but as this stage proceeds from rati, we are inclined to call it ratyāvasthā (the stage of rati). This stage is distinguished from the first two stages in so far as the latter are sādhanāvasthā (the stages of strivings) while the former is siddhāvasthā (the stage of accomplishment.)²²

Thus the first stage of Bhāgavata dharma (karma-samarpaṇa) ends with śraddhā (faith), the second with rati while the third (ratyāvasthā) culminates in bhakti (pure love). In this light, Kapila's remark becomes understandable :-

satam prasāṅgān mama-vīrya-samvido
bhavanti hr̥t-karṇa-rasāyanāḥ kathāḥ.
yaj-yoṣaṇād āsvapavarga-vartmani
śraddhā ratir bhaktir anu-kramiṣyati..²³

(C) Justification of the stages.

The law of action, as conceived by the orthodox schools, contemplates three types of actions viz sañcita, anāgata and prārabdha. Prārabdha is the cause of our present birth. Sañcita is the stored up mass of actions which are undergoing the stage of fermentation. Lastly, anāgata is the stock of future actions. These three types of action are but different stages of the same action and make up the empirical life of man. Emancipation means the destruction of these three types of action.

If the gross body is the only medium through which *sādhana* can progress, then we shall have to keep up this gross body and consequently the *prārabdha* which has brought about this body. Now, in order to check re-inforcement of fresh actions, first the inroad of fresh actions (*anāgata*) is to be closed; then, the existent but not yet mature actions (*sañcita*) are to be destroyed. Lastly, *prārabdha* is to be destroyed.

(D) Co-operation among the stages.

Though the first stage of *bhāgavata* dharma predominantly consists of action, yet it is not action only. It is conceived by the *Bhāgavata*, to be tintured with ²⁴ *raṇv-adhā bhakti*. Similarly, the second stage, though marked by a passion for the deity, is attended by the first stage viz ²⁵ surrender of action. In like manner, the third stage of *rati* is ²⁶ inflamed with the constant fanning of nine-fold devotion. This close co-operation of the stages explains why *bhāgavata* dharma is also called '*pāramahansa-dharma*' (union of action, knowledge and detachment). Every stage of *bhāgavata* dharma unfolds attachment to *para-daivata* (*bhakti*), in exclusion to other objects (*vairāgya*) and illuminated by the creative consciousness (*jñāna*).

Hence surrender of action should be supplemented by the devotion; and devotion should be backed by the surrender of action. Both these stages are superseded at the stage of *rati*, i.e. the stage of accomplishment, where all strivings

cease. That is why this third stage of bhāgavata dharma is also described as the stage of maiṣkarmya (actionlessness).

Chapter III.

Evidence of the Gītā.

The three stages of the bhāgavata dharma may be traced in some standard works of Hinduism. The contribution of the Bhāgavata as to the bhāgavata dharma lies in its emphasis on these three stages, in exclusion to other religious methods.

(a) Karma-samarpana.

At the threshold of classical literature, stands the Gītā which is definitely the forerunner of the Bhāgavata. In its twelfth chapter, surrender of action representing the first stage of the bhāgavata dharma, has been clearly laid down as an easier alternative to jñāna-yoga. So the Gītā declares :-

ye tvakṣaram anirdeśyam avyaktaṁ paryupāsate.

te prāpnuvanti mām eva sarva-bhūta-hite rataḥ..²⁷

kleśōdhikataras teṣāṁ.....²⁸

ye tu sarvāṇi karmāṇi mayi sannyasya mat-parāḥ.

ananyenaiva yogena mām dhyānta upāsate.

teṣāṁ ahaṁ samuddhartā mṛtyu-saṁsāra-sāgarāt.

bhavāmi na cirāt pārtha mayyāveśita-cetasāṁ..²⁹

The Śloka lay down that surrender of action leads to the plunging of the mind into Kṛṣṇa (mayyāveśita-cetasāṁ).

The Gītā calls ^{it} 'vyava-sāyātmikā buddhi'; it is another name for 'rati' of the Bhāgavata, when the mind leaving all restlessnees becomes immersed in God. ³⁰ The Gītā calls the votary, who has attained this state, 'sthita-prajña'.

Nevertheless, the Gītā has adduced several alternatives viz (a) practice (abhyāsa), (b) doing all actions for God (matkarma-paratā) and (c) surrender of the fruit of all actions unto God (sarva-karma-phala-tyāga), each of which is held to conduce to the state of 'sthita-prajña'. ³¹ The Gītā acknowledges surrender of the fruit of all actions unto God, ³² as the best. ³³ The Bhāgavatā has also expressed the same view. The position of the Gītā may be summarised in the words of the Gītā itself :-

yat karoṣi yad aśnāsi yaj juhoṣi dadāsi yat. ³⁴
yat tapasyasi kaunteya tat kuruṣva mad-arpanam..

(b) The second stage (navadhā bhakti).

The second stage of nine-fold devotion (navadhā bhakti) may be glimpsed in :-

satataṁ kīrtayanto mām yatantaś ca dṛḍha-vratāḥ. ³⁵
namasyantaś ca mām bhaktyā nitya-yuktā upāsate..

Here 'kīrtana' (chanting) and 'vandana' have been expressly mentioned; and, the rest are indicated by the word 'yatantaś ca'. The Gītā designates the whole process involving chanting etc, as worship (bhajana):-

mahātmaṇas tu mām pārtha daivīm prakṛtiṁ āśritāḥ. ³⁶
bhajantyananya-manaso jñātvā bhūtādim avyayam..

This sloka suggests that worship (bhajana) consisting of chanting (kīrtana) etc begins when one has resorted to divine nature (daivī prakṛti) marked by the manifestation of several high moral qualities, which are identified with the bhāgavata dharma of the Bhāgavata.

(c) Relation between the two stages.

The worship (bhajana) involving chanting etc has been described by the Gītā, as attended with bhakti (bhaktyā). But the Gītā has nowhere included surrender of actions in the category of worship. This suggests that the Gītā considers chanting (kīrtana) etc (navadhā-bhakti) as more intrinsic (antaraṅga) to bhakti than surrender of action. In other words, it considers surrender of action as the first step and kīrtana etc as subsequent to it.

(d) Inter-relation between the two.

Again, the inter-mingling of the two stages indicated above, may be traced in :-

tasmāt sarveṣu kāleṣu mām anusmara yudhya ca.

mayyarpita-mano-buddhir mām evaiṣyatyasaṁśayaṁ.. 38

Here smaraṇa (constant remembrance), one of the items of nine-fold bhakti, and 'karma-yoga' (yudhya ca) have been jointly recommended for practice. The third stage of rati which the Gītā calls the state of sthita-prajñā, has been shown above.

Chapter IV.Evidence of Patañjala Yoga-darsana.

Not only the teachings of the Gītā fall in line with those of the Bhāgavata as regards the religious discipline, but the Yoga-darsana of Patañjali also corroborates the same view.

(A) Meaning of 'īśvara-praṇidhāna.'

The whole range of bhāgavata dharma is covered by Patañjali's emphasis on 'īśvara-praṇidhāna'. In the aphorisms of Patañjali, the word 'īśvara-praṇidhāna' occurs in four places. They read as follows: (a) ³⁹īśvara-praṇidhānād vā; (b) ⁴⁰tapah-svādhyāye-īśvara-praṇidhānāni kriyā-yogaḥ; (c) ⁴¹śauca-santosa-tapah-svādhyāye-īśvara-praṇidhānāni niyamāḥ; & (d) ⁴²samādhi-siddhir īśvara-praṇidhānād.

The phrase 'īśvara-praṇidhāna' occurring in 'īśvara-praṇidhānād vā' has been explained by Patañjali himself as ⁴³'taj-japas tad-artha-bhāvanam'. Word 'tat' refers to pranava mentioned in the previous aphorism viz 'pranavas tasya ⁴⁴vācakah.'. Hence the whole of 'taj-japas tad-artha-bhāvanam', means 'incantation of pranava and the contemplation of the sense of pranava which Patañjali acknowledges as alternative ⁴⁵to practice and detachment (abhyāsa and vairāgya.) Thus according to Patañjali, either īśvara-praṇidhāna or abhyāsa-vairāgya leads to yoga which the author of the Bhāṣya on the ⁴⁶Yoga-sūtras, indentifies with samādhi. The fact that 'yoga' means 'samādhi' and 'īśvara-praṇidhāna' leads to it, appears

to be corroborated by the aphorism of Patañjali, viz 'samādhi-siddhir īśvara-pranidhānād', (see supra). This 'īśvara-pranidhāna', as it appears from (b) is held by Patañjali as one of the items of 'kriyā-yoga' which, according to Patañjali⁴⁷, emaciates 'kleśas' (afflictions) and conduces to 'samādhi'. Thus here also we find that 'īśvara-pranidhāna' conduces to samādhi. Lastly, the word 'īśvara-pranidhāna' has the same meaning as it has in (d) for it occurs in the same context with (c).

(B) Implication of 'īśvara-pranidhāna'.

But what are the implications of 'pranava-japa' and 'pranavārtha-cintā'? Patañjali does not enlighten us on this point. But the gloss and the commentaries on the aphorisms throw some light on this matter.

(a) Interpretation by the gloss.

The Bhāṣya-kāra explains 'īśvara-pranidhāna' as⁴⁶

(1) a specific type of bhakti under (a) ; as (2) the surrender of all actions or the fruits of all actions unto⁴⁷ Īśvara under (b) ; as (3) surrender of all actions unto⁴⁸ Īśvara under (c) and (4) surrender of all 'bhāvas'⁴⁹ unto Īśvara under (d).

(i) Nāvadhā bhakti.

The sarva-bhāva has been explained by the Vārtika as 'sarva-vyāpāra' (all activities). This obviously corresponds to the 'sarva-dharma' of the Gītā. On the other hand, surrender of all 'bhāvas' unto Īśvara corresponds to the

'ātmā-nivedana', the last item of the nine-fold devotion of the Bhāgavata. And, if 'sarva-bhāva' means 'all activities' then all the other items viz 'śravaṇa, Kīrtana etc may all be included in the category of sarva-bhāva, for, śravaṇa etc ^{are} but activities of ears, mouth etc. Hence nine-fold devotion may be included in the item of 'īśvarārṇpita-sarva-bhāva.' Patañjali has recommended 'praṇava-japa' only, whereas the Bhāṣya-kāra ⁵⁰ has extended the sense of it, by recommending the incantation of praṇava as well as other things which are as holy as praṇava. Hence, according to Bhāṣya-kāra, the nāma-kīrtana, one of the items of none-fold devotion, may be easily admitted to the category of 'japa' of Patañjali. Thus 'praṇava-japa', which Patañjali considers as one of the aspects of 'īśvara-praṇidhāna', is, to the Bhāṣya-kāra 'īśvarārṇpita-sarva-bhāva'. According to the Bhāgavata it incorporates the 'nāma-kīrtana', as well as other items.

(d) Interpretation by the Vārtika.

(ii) Karma-samarpana.

On the other hand, 'praṇavārtha-cintā' of Patañjali has been elaborated by the Bhāṣya to mean (1) surrender of action and (2) surrender of fruits of action, as we have seen above. The Vārtika, in the light of the two mahā-vākyas, viz 'sarvaṁ khalvidam Brahma' and 'aham Brahmāsmi', ^{says} that the ⁵¹ 'praṇavārtha-cintā' consists of two types of thinking; (a) the votary is to conceive all phenomenal existence as identical with Brahman; (b) the votary should realise that

the identification includes himself.

(iii) The stage of rati.

52

The Vārtika remarks:- Of the two types of thinking, the first is called 'upāsana' and the second 'tattva-jñāna'. Elsewhere, the Vārtika identifies this 'tattva-jñāna' with 'prema-lakṣaṇa-bhakti'. :- "The contemplation of the identity between the votary and Brahman is 'prema-lakṣaṇa-bhakti' which will be referred to as 'īśvara-pranidhāna'". This remark is important: it shows that the contemplation of identity between the votary and Brahman 'pranavārtha-cintā' is prema-lakṣaṇa-bhakti, while, on the other hand, it considers the prema-lakṣaṇa-bhakti as another name for 'īśvara-pranidhāna',⁵⁴

Although Patañjali has recommended, for yoga (samādhi), the practice of eight subsidiaries (aṅga) of which niyama is only one, and, though 'īśvara-pranidhāna' is only one of the items of niyama, yet, even according to Patañjali, 'īśvara-pranidhāna' is the most important.

55

The Vārtika also observes :- "The other subsidiaries (yama etc) lead to samādhi, only through the medium of 'īśvara-pranidhāna'; they cannot directly result in samādhi.

It is with this import in mind that Patañjali has primarily held 'īśvara-pranidhāna' as conducive to samādhi".

Chapter V.Evidence of the Bhakti-sūtras.(A) Nārada and Śāṇḍilya.

The bhakti-sūtras by Nārada and Śāṇḍilya throw much light upon the Bhāgavata dharma of the Bhāgavata. In the Nārada-bhakti-sūtra, many traditional teachers of bhakti have been mentioned. But their works, if any, are lost to us. Of the two extant bhakti-sūtras, that by Nārada, ought to bear closer alliance with the Bhāgavata, for, in the Bhāgavata, Nārada is held to have conveyed the Bhāgavata tradition to Vyāsa who transmitted it to his son, Suka, the narrator of the present Bhāgavata. But it cannot be gain-said that Śāṇḍilya was also a great teacher of the cult of devotion; for, the author of the Nārada-bhakti-sūtra mentions him with reverence. This further shows that Śāṇḍilya preceded Nārada who has been nowhere mentioned in the Śāṇḍilya-bhakti-sūtra. We shall however, equally draw upon both the Sūtras.

(B) The stage of rati.

Both Nārada and Śāṇḍilya have accepted the view that bhakti primarily means 'parama-prema' or 'parānurakti' to the supreme. The parama-prema or parānurakti is in the Bhāgavata the stage of rati, which gradually deepens into divine love.

(C) The stage of nine-fold bhakti.

"Bhakti" may also secondarily mean the devotional stages which precede the stage of 'parama-prema' or 'parānura⁵⁹kti'. In fact, Śāṇḍilya has expressly called the stage represented by śravaṇa, kīrtana etc (navadhā bhakti) as secondary bhakti (gaunī). He calls them secondary because they only⁶⁰ purify the empirical self. Nārada calls nowhere the nine-fold bhakti as secondary; but, he has adduced different views as to the nature of the secondary bhakti. Thus Gargācārya,⁶¹ he remarks, defines the secondary bhakti as attachment to kathā etc, while Parāśara holds it to be attachment to wor-⁶²ship etc. Nevertheless, apart from the question whether⁶³ nine-fold bhakti is primary or secondary, Nārada has recognised the devotional stage of navadhā-bhakti.

(D) The stage of karma-samarpana.

Nārada gives his own opinion, as to the nature of secondary bhakti to the effect, that it is the dedication of⁶⁴ 'ācāra' (which the Bhāgavata calls 'varṇāśrama-dharma') i.e. the duties enjoined by the⁶⁵ śāstras. This is nothing but karma-samarpana of the Bhāgavata.

(E) Mutual relation among the stages.

Śāṇḍilya holds that śravaṇa, kīrtana etc are more in-⁶⁶trinsic to rati (the third stage) than performance of action (karmānuṣṭhāna) for one becomes eligible for śravaṇa, kīrtana etc only when one has achieved success in the performance of⁶⁷ action. Nārada supplements Śāṇḍilya on this point. He remarks

that duties enjoined by the śāstras should be stuck to, until the third stage of rati, marked by the stability of intellect, dawns; otherwise the votary runs the risk of downfall. Thus the first stage of karma-samarpana should be continued even at the second stage of nine-fold bhakti, until its last item, viz ātma-nivedana matures into rati. Nārada further opines that all secular activities should be continued to that stage. It is only when the votary transcends the empirical life by the successful performance of the last item of nine-fold bhakti, that action ceases. One surrenders the secular (laukika) and religious (vaidika) actions only at the stage of rati. Śaṇḍilya declares that even at the stage of rati, the bhakti continues, for the selfless devotion (rati) is inflamed by the fanning of the nine-fold bhakti. And so, according to Śaṇḍilya, nine-fold bhakti does not only rouse bhakti (rati) but also accompanies it on its progressive advancement.

Chapter VI.

The doctrine of divine grace.

(A) Grace, the motive force.

Divine grace occupies a very exalted place in the Bhāgavata. In fact, the Bhāgavata contends that sādhanā starts with divine grace. How is it that a man who had been persistently pursuing material pleasure, suddenly turns his back against it and feels inclined towards God? The Bhāgavata answers that the reason behind this change of outlook lies in divine grace.

(B) The nature of divine grace.

75, 76

It belongs, according to the Bhāgavata, to the intrinsic nature of the supreme deity (Bhagavān). It is the self-manifestation of the absolute, with no extrinsic purpose in view. Thus the Bhāgavata goes to the extent of asserting that creation, sustenance and dissolution are all to be traced to divine grace. It is divine grace, again, that the individual soul soars high to the altitude of ethical life. In its operation, it does not follow any law; it is the spontaneous outburst of the indetermination of the absolute. Disregarding all discrimination, it shines on all and fills every detail of pragmatic existence, sentient and insentient.

(C) Need for sādhanā.

The question however, arises: if divine grace is so categorical in its operation, without being dependent upon any condition, then, why does the Bhāgavata advise the cultivation of moral qualities like pity to all beings, worship of God, universal fraternity, tolerance, and conviction as to the all-pervasive nature of God?

To this question, the Bhāgavata has answered as follows:

naivātmanah prabhur ayam nija-lābha-tuṣṭo
 mānaṃ janād aviduṣaḥ karuṇo vṛṇīte.
 yaḍ yaḍ jano Bhagavate vidadhīta mānaṃ
 tac cātmane prati-mukhasya yathā mukha-srīḥ..

"Bhagavān is self-contented. Hence no worship can incur his pleasure, nor does he desire any honour from the votary. Still the worship by the votary does not go in vain.

Oblation offered unto God reverts to the votary and lifts him to a higher plane of moral life."

This answer suggests that though divine grace shines indiscriminately on all, yet our impure mind cannot receive it. Sādhana purifies our mind which, then, reflects the splendour of divine grace. Hence the all-comprehensive nature of divine grace is not inconsistent with the need for sādhanā.

(D) Projection of divine grace.

But if divine grace enjoys its undisturbed isolation by its subsistence in the absolute, it is of no avail to the votary. Hence to uplift to votary, it has to condescend to him. By the touch of divine grace, the sleeping mind is roused. ⁸⁴ Rūpagosvāmī calls this awakening of the mind, at the instigation of divine grace, as 'bhāva'. The awakening of the mind is technically called 'sāttvika vṛtti', and ⁸⁵ 'bhakti' is this 'sāttvika vṛtti' accompanied by divine grace.

(E) Development of devotion.

As this 'sāttvika vṛtti', constantly purged of all impurities by means of sādhanā, becomes more and more assimilated to divine grace, devotion more and more ⁸⁶ develops. The Bhāgavata has conceived divine grace as an active force (yad-
reccā). As this active force operates upon the votary, the mind of the votary improves. Bhakti, in its larger sense, includes śraddhā and rati. The Bhāgavata holds that, by ^{86/} divine grace, ⁸⁷ śraddhā, ⁸⁸ rati and bhakti (in narrower sense) ,

develop consecutively in the votary. So the whole mechanism explaining the development of bhakti in the votary seems to be as follows :-

Divine grace, the intrinsic potency of the absolute, filters down into the mind of the votary and rouses 'sāttvika vṛtti'. As an active force, divine grace impells the votary to the Bhāgavata dharma. The practice of the first stage of Bhāgavata dharma viz surrender of actions, purifies the sāttvika vṛtti. This helps divine grace which, as an active force, assimilates the sāttvika vṛtti to a point which is designated as śraddhā. The Bhāgavata considers this as the first land-mark in the development of 'bhakti'. Similarly, by the practice of nine-fold bhakti, the sāttvika vṛtti becomes further assimilated when it assumes the name rati which, gradually matures into 'bhakti', in its narrower sense.

By this process, the climax is reached when the mind of the votary is perfectly crystallised by its complete assimilation to divine grace. This is bhakti par excellence and in its highest soaring it reaches the absolute. It is perhaps in this sense that bhakti has been conceived, by the Bhāgavata, as a cord which binds together the Bhagavān and the votary. It is the most intimate connection between the votary and his supreme deity. At this stage, we find divine grace to have completed its circuit. Emanating from Bhagavān it penetrates through the votary and ultimately returns to Bhagavān, with the votary hooked to it.

(F) Different connotations of bhakti.

The first manifestation of divine grace has been
 91 conceived as certain hankering for God (ākulatā). This is
 the bhakti in its narrowest sense. The Bhāgavata, has, again,
 92 conceived bhakti as hankering mingled with knowledge. This is
 bhakti in a broader sense. In a still broader sense, it
 means sātṭvika vṛtti subjected to the process of assimilation
 to divine grace. Śraddhā, rati and bhakti (supreme love) are
 all items of bhakti, in this sense. Not only the sātṭvika
 vṛtti is assimilated to divine grace but rājasa and tāmasa
 92/1 vṛttis also are assimilated. This is the widest sense of
 93 bhakti as conceived by the Bhāgavata.

(G) Operation of divine grace.

According to the Bhāgavata, when divine grace dawns
 upon the votary, its external symptom is that the votary is
 94 deprived of his near and dear ones. But the votary, with un-
 95 daunted spirit, confronts this disaster with a smiling face.
 He does not submit to anguish, for, he has dedicated all unto
 God. On the contrary, he feels pleasure in view of divine
 96 grace sparkling through this material disaster. Indeed, the
 operation of divine grace is curious. It begins to cut at
 the root of the empirical life which binds the individual to
 pragmatic existence. While the barrier of empirical life is
 removed, the individual soul stands face to face to the supreme.

P A R T I I.THE FIRST STAGE OF THE BHĀGAVATA DHARMA.Chapter I.Surrender of action.(a) What is karma-yoga ?

The ordinary daily life of man means action. Man, as a social creature, has to perform certain duties and obligations and in consideration of those, he is entitled to enforce certain rights over his fellow beings. This action may be switched off to another direction which is conceived to liberate our soul. The Gītā⁹⁷ calls the art of switching off of our pragmatic duties and obligations as 'karma-yoga'; an equilibrium of the mind, marked by an indifferent attitude towards failure and success, characterises the art of performing⁹⁸ action. The Bhāgavata harps on the same idea as the Bhāgavata has put it: by action action is removed (karmanā⁹⁹ karma-nirhārah).

In fact, the art of action, is, according to the Bhāgavata, surrender of action unto the supreme deity. It is this surrender which bars the import of fresh actions from polluting the mind. Purification of the mind¹⁰⁰ may be deemed to be better reflection of divine^{101, 102.} grace.

(b) Karma-yoga stated.

In order to bring home the art of karma, in its depth, the Bhāgavata has conceived a picturesque atmosphere

in which the art of action has been described to have been inculcated. At the sacrifice of king Nimi, there suddenly (yadr̥cchayā) appeared seven hermits, whom the Bhāgavata has conceived to be traditional exponents of the bhāgavata
 103
 dharma, and who are held to have realised the truth of this
 104
 dharma. The king seized this opportunity and asked them to describe the nature of the bhāgavata dharma. Kavi, one of the seven, finding the king, immersed in action, gave out as follows:-

kāyena vācā manasendriyair vā
 buddhyātmanā vānusr̥ta-svabhāvāt.
 karoti yat yat sakalam parasmai
 105
 Nārāyaṇāyeti nivedayet tat ..

"Whatever you perform by means of your body, speech, mind, sense and conative organs, intellect (i.e. volitional actions) or involuntary nature (instinct), dedicate all unto the supreme deity, Nārāyaṇa."

(c) Does 'karma-yoga' mean surrender of all actions?

(i) Two interpretations.

Srīdhara interprets the phrase 'anusr̥ta-svabhāvāt'

in two different ways:- (1) 'according to the specific duties enjoined upon the different castes by the Śāstras' and (2) 'according to the urge of instinct'. In the light of the first interpretation, the bhāgavata dharma means the surrender of those actions which are enjoined to respective castes and states (āśramas). Thus, the dedication of the 'varnāśrama-dharma' is the first stage of the bhāgavata dharma.

The second interpretation throws more light upon bhāgavata dharma. It covers the most extensive field of action. According to this interpretation, the bhāgavata dharma consists in the dedication of all actions, unto the supreme deity, voluntary as well as involuntary. This takes into consideration human frailties which drag the individual souls into the pit of gross materiality, in defiance of the injunctions of the Śāstras.

(ii) Eligibility for karma-yoga.

The Bhāgavata declares that the bhāgavata dharma is specially meant for people who are steeped in ignorance:-

ye vai Bhagavatā proktā upāyā hyātma-labdhaye.
 añjah pumsām aviduṣām viddhi bhāgavatān hi tām..¹⁰⁶

In another context, the Bhāgavata has laid down the conditions for a person who aspires to ascend the path of bhakti (bhakti-yoga): He should somehow be awakened to the fact that the world is too much for him; he should have some faith in religious striving and should feel uncomfortable with his present state of life; he may see through the defects of pragmatic life, even if he cannot overcome its alluring attractions.¹⁰⁷
¹⁰⁸

(iii) Jñāna-yoga and bhakti-yoga compared.

A person, labouring under the pressure of material desires, cannot be expected to abstain strictly from prohibited actions. And here lies the distinction between jñāna-yoga and bhakti-yoga. Of the three types of action viz karma (enjoined

action), vikarma (omission of karma) and akarma (committing prohibited action)¹⁰⁹ jñāna-yoga recommends karma, nay, the nitya (daily) and naimittika (occasional) duties only, in exclusion of kāmya-karma (action with pragmatic pleasure in view). This shows that jñāna-yoga is in favour of adopting a rigid stoicism in the performance of action. This attitude cannot be expected to inquire into the faults and foibles, doubts and weaknesses of the struggling votary. The Bhāgavata makes certain allowance for prohibited action and secular action, with the only qualification that they must be performed with a spirit of dedication to the supreme deity.

(iv) Connotation of 'karma'.

¹¹⁰

The Bhāgavata contends that all actions, whether karma, akarma or vikarma, are transformed into divine, the moment they are dedicated. Even akarma and vikarma are elevated to the status of karma, by means of this process of dedication. Thus to accommodate these into the category of karma, the Bhāgavata has revised the definition of karma which¹¹¹ traditionally meant enjoined action only. It defines 'karma' as 'any action done for the satisfaction of the supreme deity.¹¹² It further asserts that any action, dedicated unto the supreme deity, assumes the status of 'yama', 'niyama' etc i.e. the traditional ways of religious advance. The moment any action¹¹³ is dedicated, it at once becomes crowned with success. Hence,¹¹⁴ it is that Śrīdhara concludes: All actions, dedicated unto the supreme deity, Nārāyaṇa, becomes the bhāgavata dharma.

(v) Outlook on the varnāśrama-dharma.

The Bhāgavata seems to triumph over this art of karma:-

esa buddhimatām buddhir manīṣā ca manīṣinām.
yat satyam anrteṇa martyeṇāpnoti māmṛtam.. 114/1

"This ^{is} the ^{e-}hight of intelligence and wisdom that one attains the supreme truth by means of evanescent and pragmatic actions".

The Bhāgavata submits to the violation of the varnāśrama 115
dharma, under the urge of the spirit of dedication. It considers customary morality (varnāśrama-dharma) as a mere discipline for the advance of religious life; with the advent of śraddhā, further practice of customary morality loses its significance. 116
Seen in this light, the remark of the Bhāgavata, that there is no fall for a person proceeding to the path of the bhāgavata dharma, with his eyes closed and overlapping steps, becomes understandable. But it must not be understood to mean that the Bhāgavata has, under the cloak of the Bhāgavata dharma, imported immorality, by breaking away from traditional religion; for, the Bhāgavata, by toning down the rigour of traditional morality, has only extended its protection to bona fide quest for truth, but has not given practical suggestions for perpetuating fraud on religious life.

Chapter 11.

Surrender of action and its stages.

(A) Nature of the surrender of action.

The action which the individual performs, really belongs to reality. If that is so, then how can the votary surrender actions, unto reality, as they are already subsisting in reality? *The answer is This: Though all actions are subsisting in reality,* yet the individual soul, under the delusion of 'abhimāna' (egoity), thinks them to be its own. Thus, 'abhimāna' is conceived by the Bhāgavata to be at the root of all troubles. 117

It relates to the pragmatic self which may be briefly described to be the combination of 'I' and 'Mine' (aham and mama). In order to brush aside the troubles, we have to eradicate 'abhimāna' in respect of 'aham' and 'mama' i.e. the empirical self. Hence according to the Bhāgavata, the dedication of the empirical self unto the supreme deity is the best method for eliminating afflictions.

But unless the empirical self is sanctified it cannot be dedicated. Action, therefore, must be eliminated, but elimination cannot be done all on a sudden. So the first step towards this direction is closing the import of fresh action into the individual soul. This is done by the surrender of action. Surrender of action means the surrender of 'abhimāna' relating to action. The votary no longer thinks that he is the agent of action and should therefore reap the benefit of it, but he considers himself as the agent of God, in performing all actions.

The surrender of action is purely contemplative (bhavanā-maya). This may be evidenced from the description of the life of Bharata who is said to have been contemplating all fruits of action subsisting in God. The Bhāgavata calls this contemplation as purification of action (karma-viśuddhi). The Gītā holds the same view.

How action, which is conceived to lead to bondage, can bring emancipation? The Bhāgavata has drawn upon a popular example to illustrate this truth. A person, falling ill by overconsumption of 'ghṛta' (clarified butter) approaches a doctor who administers a remedy prepared with 'ghṛta', as one of its ingredients. The man is cured. As the same 'ghṛta' by some method of preparation cures the disease which it has produced, so the action which leads to bondage, may uplift, under special circumstances, the individual soul.

(B) Strata of the surrender of action.

(a) The first stratum.

As surrender of action involves contemplation, different strata of knowledge are unfolded. The Vārtika, quoting an un-named Smṛti, lays down that the first stratum as follows:-

kāmatōkāmato vāpi yat karomi śubhāśubham.

kāmatōkāmato vāpi yat karomi śubhāśubham. ktaḥ karomyaḥam..

The author of the Vārtika recommends 'karma-sannyāsa' to be contemplated to the effect: Whatever I do, right or wrong, I do it as one engaged by you.

The Gītā also says :-

īśvaraḥ sarva-bhūtānāṃ hṛd-deśerjuna tiṣṭhati.
bhrāmayan sarva-bhūtāni yantrārūḍhāni māyayā..¹²³

The Bhāgavata echoes the same view:-

paro madānyo jagatas tasthusaś ca
otam protam natavād yatra viśvam.
yad-amsatośya sthiti-janma-nāśā
nasyotavād yasya vāśe ca lokah..¹²⁴

(i) Justification of the contemplation.

If God goads the individual soul to all actions,
^{not} then he and the individual soul, should also reap the benefit
of it. In explaining this view, Śrīdhara has quoted Jaimini
who says that the fruits of the action, which the Śāstras en-
join to do, go to the person who motivates the action. God
being the original impeller, (prayojaka) the result of all
actions should devolve on him.¹²⁵ It may be noted here that the
contemplation regarding God as the original agent of all
action is valid knowledge (satya-dṛṣṭi) for God is actually
the original agent. Similarly, the other strata of knowledge,
which attend the/surrender of action, in its progressive
journey, are types of valid knowledge. The lives of Ambarīṣa
and Prṛthu illustrate this stratum.¹²⁶

(b) The second stratum.

When the votary is convinced of the agency of God,
he begins to contemplate that God is then the consumer of the
fruits of action. This contemplation is an advancement upon
the first stratum.

The Vārtika has quoted the Kūrma-purāṇa to depict this stage:-

yad vā phalānāṃ sannyāsaṃ prakuryāt paramesvare.

karmāṇāṃ apyetaḍ āhur Brahmārpanam anuttamam..¹²⁷

The Vārtika explains it: The contemplation that God is the final consumer of fruits of all actions is 'karma-phala-sannyāsa.'¹²⁸ The Gītā also holds the same view.¹²⁹

(i) Justification of the second stratum.

The above conception shows the development of philosophic thoughts. In the Vedas and the Brāhmaṇas, we find that sacrifice is performed for the/satisfaction of particular deities. Gradually these particular deities became integrated into the cosmic concept of God who represents all different deities. This thought found a definite pronouncement in the Upaniṣads and later on in the Gītā. The Bhāgavata has adopted this view. The life of Bharata and Gaya demonstrates this¹³⁰ stratum.

(c) The third stratum.

Subsequently, the votary not only conceives that God is the inner-controller and representative of all deities, but it begins to dawn upon him that God's being embraces all, including the sacrifice (action) and the/sacrificer (doer). At this state, all-comprehensive nature of God soaks into the sub-soil of the votary's mind. God is viewed as one who incorporates all. He is conceived as the supreme deity, the substratum of all results and lastly the final goal, viz bliss.

The Gītā designates this stage as 'Brahma-karma-
131 samādhī'. The Bhāgavata has indicated this stage as follows:-

tvam kratus tvam havis tvam hutāsah svayam
tvam hi mantrah samid darbha-patrāni ca.
tvam sadasyartviijo dāmpatī devatā
agni-hotram svadhā soma ājyam paśuh.. 132

It has conceived karma as three-fold viz Vedic, Tāntric
133 and mixed. Surrender of action means not only the surrender of
Vedic actions, but also the Tāntric and mixed actions. This is
then the meaning of 'karma-nivedana' in its narrower sense, as
indicated by Śrīdhara. On the other hand, 'karma-nivedana',
in its larger sense, means the surrender of all actions, vol-
untary or involuntary, prescribed or prohibited.

The realisation of the all-comprehensive nature of
God, which is represented by the third stratum, is what Śrīdhara
134, 135 calls intrinsic devotion (antarāṅgā bhakti)

(d) The nature of realisation.

The three stages are not direct vision of God. They
are only contemplative (bhavanā-maya). The Bhāgavata calls them
136 summarily as indirect knowledge i.e. unshakable belief only.

137 In fact, the Bhāgavata recommends the practice of surrender of
action until the conviction of the all-comprehensive nature of
God is firmly fixed in the mind. It is only when this con-
viction is achieved that the vision of truth dawns at the stage
138 of rati.

But as the surrender of action conduces to that
stage of direct vision, the Bhāgavata sings the praise of the
former as follows:-

ayam hi sarva-kāṣṭhānām sadhrīcīno mato mama.

139

mad-bhāvaḥ sarva-bhūteṣu mano-vāk-kāya-vṛttibhiḥ..

(C) Achievements of the first stage of the bhāgavata-dharma.

At the colophon of each chapter, the Bhāgavata has been designated as 'pārama-haṁsya-saṁhitā' (a collection of the religion of parama-haṁs^s i.e. great devotees). Hence the bhāgavata dharma and the pārama-haṁsya-dharma may be held to be identical. The Bhāgavata contends that pārama-haṁsya-dharma consists in the compromise of knowledge, devotion and detachment. Of these, detachment is the necessary counterpart of devotion; for, attachment to God (bhakti) involves abandonment of all other objects (vairāgya). Hence broadly speaking the growth of pārama-haṁsya-dharma of the Bhāgavata means the development of jñāna and bhakti; Śraddhā coupled with the knowledge in the all-comprehensive nature of God, shows the development of devotion and knowledge at the first stage of the Bhāgavata dharma.

The second stage of the bhāgavata dharma.

Chapter I.

The nature of the second stage.

At the threshold of the second stage of the Bhāg-
avata dharma, the mind centres upon the supreme deity, as may be
glimpsed by the awakening of śraddhā in the votary. The sec-
ond stage of the bhāgavata dharma marks the further progress
of concentration when the mind along with all the senses be-
comes immersed in the supreme deity. The triumph of the stage
under consideration lies in purging the mind of all subliminal
tendencies (saṃskāra).

(a) Nine-fold devotion.

The Bhāgavata lays down the nine-fold devotion as
follows:-

śravaṇam kīrtanam Viṣṇoḥ smaraṇam pāda-sevanam.
arcanaṃ vandanam dāsyam sakhyam ātma-nivedanam..
iti puṃsārpitā Viṣṇau bhaktiś cen nava-lakṣaṇā.
kriyeta Bhagavatyaaddhā tan manyēdhītam uttamam..

As śravaṇa, kīrtana and smaraṇa are all methods
for the kindling of śraddhā into flames, śraddhā has been con-
ceived by Rūpa-gosvāmī, to develop successively into 'niṣṭhā',
'ruci' and 'āsakti' by the practice of śravaṇa, kīrtana and
smaraṇa respectively.

But 'āsakti' (urge) for the supreme deity requires

further development, before one can bring oneself to the point of surrendering all unto the supreme deity. This state cannot be attained all on a sudden. One has to comprehend the supreme deity in himself. Thereafter, the depth of love for the deity prepares the ground for self-surrender. It may be noted here that self-surrender in its philosophic bearing, means a state when the votary breaks away from pragmatic bindings to make his identification with the supreme deity complete.

150

Jīva-goṣāṁī, asserts, that each of the items of the nine-fold devotion may be independently conducive to rati.

He quotes a traditional śloka to support this view:-

śrī-Viṣṇoḥ śravane Parīkṣid abhavat Vaiyāsakiḥ kīrtane
 Prahlādaḥ smarane tad-āngri-bhajane Lakṣmīḥ Prthuḥ pūjane.
 -vāndane
 Akrūras tvabhiḥ Kapi-patir dāsyētha sakhyerjunah
 sarveṣvātma-nivedane Balir abhūt Kṛṣṇāptir eṣaṁ param.. 151

152

The Bhāgavata does not seem to be disinclined to this view. In fact, according to the Bhāgavata, a votary can attain rati simply by the practice of śravana; in this way, he can also attain rati with the help of other items practised independently. Still we are inclined to deal with the items of the nine-fold devotion, in successive order; for, this is the general method of progressive advancement in the path of devotion; resorting to a single item, in preference to other, is due to some extra-ordinary circumstances and thus may be regarded as an exception to the general rule.

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Chapter 11.

Śravaṇa, Kīrtana and Smaraṇa.

(A)

Śravaṇa.

(a) The subject-matter of śravaṇa.

Śravaṇa is the first item of nine-fold devotion.

In order to determine the subject-matter of śravaṇa, we have to ascertain the object of śraddhā, for, śraddhā further advances through the methods like śravaṇa, etc. The Bhāgavata, 154 has laid down in several contexts the subject-matter of śravaṇa. Pinned together, those contexts would mean: Śraddhā should be directed towards Bhagavān and, in order to attain him, śraddhā should be harnessed to the second stage of the bhāgavata dharma beginning with śravaṇa.

155

To the devotees, Bhagavān is the supreme deity. He 156 is the dearest soul, and captures their heart, by coming down, 157 in the midst of them, as different descents. As descents, he sets up ideal character through his earthly life for the 158 uplift of the fallen. The first step towards this direction is śravaṇa. ~~is~~.

(b) Variety of śravaṇa.

Accordingly, śravaṇa may be classified into (1) 159 nāma-śravaṇa, (2) rūpa-śravaṇa, 160 (3) guṇa-śravaṇa, 161 (4) līlā-śravaṇa. 162 A sequence among these four types of śravaṇa may be suggested as follows:- The first expression of awakening of interest for somebody is a desire for knowing the name of that person. This gives place to the desire for knowing his gen-

eral feature. Stimulated by these, the interested person hankers after listening to his merits and thus becomes engrossed with his personality.

Jīva-gosvāmī has suggested also a fifth type of ¹⁶³śravaṇa viz listening to the Bhāgavata. He contends that the former types of śravaṇa attack only individual aspects of the supreme deity, whereas listening to the Bhāgavata comprehends the supreme deity in all his details, as the Bhāgavata ¹⁶⁴itself has pointed out at the very outset.

(c) Nāma-śravaṇa.

Listening to various names of the supreme deity occupies a very high place in the Bhāgavata. The Bhāgavata ¹⁶⁵calls this pure bhāgavata dharma. Śaṇḍilya, in his Bhakti-sūtra, ¹⁶⁶mentions Jaimini as the propounder of the doctrine that chanting of the names of Bhagavān leads to 'parā bhakti.' The Bhāgavata has elaborated the importance of nāma by the story of Ajāmila who, terrified ^{at} with the sight of the messengers of Death, called out the name of his son, Nārāyaṇa. But though he had in mind, the thoughts of his son, yet the very name, 'nārāyaṇa' secured for him a high place in the heaven.

In this context, the Bhāgavata has unfolded the mysteries of nāma. It lays down that even unconscious utterance of God's name purifies the mind as the administration of an efficacious medicine shows its strength whether the patient believes in its efficacy or not. ^{167, 169}Even names, defective grammatically, are equally effective. ¹⁶⁸

The Bhāgavata has recognised the resorting to God's

name as highly expiatory. It finds fault with the traditional methods of expiation ('prāyascitta) which vary in quantity and quality in proportion to the nature of the moral crime; moreover, the traditional methods leave the inherent tendency, the root of all crimes, untouched; by listening to God's names etc, the primordial cause of all moral sins is eradicated.

This position of the Bhāgavata echoes the view of the ancient school of the grammarians. Bhartrhari, in his Vākya-padīya, has dealt, at length, with the identification between the name (nāma) and the named (nāmī). In the light of this view, listening to God's name is feeling God, in tangible form. That is why the Bhāgavata contends that through the medium of name, God, the named, enters into the mind of the votary and dispells the condensed gloom brought about by subliminal tendencies (karma-saṃskāra) in the mind, just as the morning sun disperses nocturnal darkness.

Śravaṇa is held to enhance knowledge, devotion and detachment. As the element of devotion affects the emotional side of man, śravaṇa which improves devotion, rouses a sense of satisfaction in the votary. The sense of satisfaction is heightened, if again name is listened to from the mouth of a devotee, who speaks of God, from the vital spring of his living experience. Similarly, śravaṇa enhances knowledge, for, by listening to his gross form, the votary gains insight into the subtle form of God. Lastly, śravaṇa instigates detachment in so far as it inhibits the gliding of

the mind into material objects.

(B)

Kīrtana

Kīrtana is the chanting of God. Stimulated by listening to the name, form, episodes of God, the votary feels a desire for giving vent to his feelings for God. Now Kīrtana closely corresponds to śravaṇa, for the votary wants to speak out what he has heard. Consequently, like śravaṇa, kīrtana is also of five types, of which Jīva-gosvāmī would like to hold chanting of the Bhāgavata as the highest.

By kīrtana the mind is further purified.¹⁷⁷ The Bhāgavata contends that loud chanting about God not only soothes the mind of the audience, but it also generates a pleasant sensation of peace in the mind of the chanter.

The votary forgets, at least for the time being, all afflictions¹⁷⁸ and feels himself drowned in the ocean of bliss.¹⁷⁹ Thus the devotional fervour, roused by śravaṇa, is further accentuated by kīrtana.

Kīrtana occupies a very high place in the Bhāgavata. It holds that, of the four yugas, kali-yuga is distinguished from other three yugas only by the fact that it is dominated¹⁸⁰ by chanting of Hari.

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(C)

Smaraṇa.

During śravaṇa and kīrtana, the supreme deity was a mere theory to the votary. It is by the deep contemplation

of the supreme deity, which smarana represents, that the votary directly vision him for the first time. Rāmānuja calls this state of deep contemplation

as 'dhruvānusr̥ti'. Everybody, irrespective of caste and creed, is eligible for this contemplation of God. Seen from another angle, smarana corresponds to manana and nididhyāsana of the Upaniṣads, for, it starts with contemplation but ultimately culminates in the vision of God.

The Bhāgavata holds that at the stage of smarana, the accumulated action (sañcita karma) is destroyed. This remark is understandable in the light of the fact that the direct vision of God, brought about by smarana, purges the mind of all material impurities.

Chapter 111.

Pāda-sevā, arcana, vandana and dāsya.

Mere vision of the supreme deity, achieved by smarana, is not the goal of devotion of the Bhāgavata. The votary is not satisfied with the sight of God, but he desires to make him his own. Pāda-sevā, arcana, vandana and dāsya help him for the satisfaction of this desire.

(A)

Pāda-sevā.

(i) Pāda-sevā, the ultimate goal.

The Bhāgavata declares that all sādhanā ceases when the votary achieves what is called 'Mukunda-pāda-sevā'. This 'pāda' is held to be 'abhaya', 'āsoka' and 'amṛta'. We have shown in Part I, that Brahman of the Upaniṣads consists of four grades. The votary may be said to have his highest goal

when he realises one by one all these grades and finally reposes upon the fourth grade, the non-dual consciousness. Now, if *pāda-sevā* is held by the Bhāgavata to be highest of religious attainment, then, '*pāda-sevā*', in its highest sense, may mean the realisation of all the four grades of reality. Perhaps in this sense, the Bhāgavata holds '*pāda-sevā*' to be the highest object. Further, the Bhāgavata holds that the apprehension of '*pāda*' ensures '*Brahma-kaivalya*' i.e. realisation of the first grade of reality. Thus it appears that the Bhāgavata may have used '*pāda-sevā*' in the meaning of realisation of all the four grades of reality. We shall deal with this, further on while discussing the third stage of the bhāgavata dharma.

(ii) Pāda-sevā - service to God.

Though from metaphysical standpoint, '*pāda*' means grades of reality, yet the devotional fervour has conceived '*pāda*' in the ordinary sense of 'foot'. Naturally, at the stage when the votary has merely attained the vision of God by the clearance of accumulated action, '*pāda-sevā*' is conceived to mean the 'divine feet' of the personal God who has presented himself before the votary, in response to his wishes and hankerings. These feet are deemed to be divine in so far as they are conceived to inspire bhakti, jñāna and vairāgya in the votary.

The devout spirit of the votary has painted these feet in a picturesque fashion. They are held to be perfumed

with the fragrance of sandal paste and the little leaves of
 'tulasī' plants are shining on them. They are marked with
 the signs of 'dvaja' (flag), vajra (thunder bolt) etc, that
 are specific emblems of Nārāyaṇa.¹⁹⁴
¹⁹⁵ The votary resorts to
 the divine feet of the personal God by virtue of the prac-
 tice of smarana.

(B)

Arcana.

The first expression of resorting to the feet of
 desired deity (iṣṭa devatā), is worship (arcana). ~~As to~~
~~worship~~, The Bhāgavata recognises two types of worship viz
 external and internal.¹⁹⁶ External worship is done upon an
 idol, while internal worship is performed upon a conceptual
 form. The Bhāgavata recognises eight types of form for
 worship, of which the mental form is one.¹⁹⁷

Srīdhara points out that the Bhāgavata attaches
 greater importance to devotion only in preference to other
 methods: God looks into the heart and not at the pomp of the
 worship.¹⁹⁸

The secrets of idol-worship are disclosed by the
 Bhāgavata as follows:-

tayātma-bhūtayā piṇḍe vyāpte sampūjya tan-mayaḥ.
 āvāhyārcādiṣu sthāpya nyastāṅgaṁ mām pra-pūjayet..¹⁹⁹

"First of all, the votary should become, in con-
 templation, a God-filled soul. Thus inspired, he should
 breathe life into the idol. While the idol becomes sur-
 charged with life, then the votary should worship it,

thinking it as my concrete form".

This obviously shows that idol-worship is not the propitiation of a dead mass, but the worship of the supreme deity conceived to be concretised in the shape of an idol. This type of worship closely corresponds to the symbolic worship of the Upaniṣads (pratīkopāsanā). The Bhāgavata views the whole thing from a broad outlook. It contends that God is all-pervasive and is the cosmic soul; therefore, worship in any form which appeals to the votary, is nothing but the worship of God. ^{200,201} The worship of the supreme deity, physically or mentally, makes for the further development of devotion. ²⁰²

(C)

Vandana.

Worship is naturally followed by vandana i.e. singing in ~~the~~ praise of the supreme deity. As the Bhāgavata is primarily concerned with instigation of devotion, it gives equal value to the hymns old as well as modern. The Bhāgavata lays down :-

stavair uccāvacaiḥ stotraiḥ purāṇaiḥ prakṛtair api.
stutvā prasīda Bhagavan niti vandeta dāṇḍa-vat..
²⁰³

Though vandana forms a part of worship, yet the Bhāgavata may have counted it independently as one of the items of nine-fold devotion, in view of the fact that vandana is, by itself, capable of bringing about the final emancipation of the votary.

Dāśya.

By vandana, the devotional fervour is further stimulated and the votary, filled with the spirit of humility and submission, stoops down to the feet of the supreme deity; he anxiously beseeches his deity to rescue him from the afflictions of material life, in the following strain:—

prapannam pāhi mām īśa bhītam mṛtyu-mahāṇavāt.. 204

Like vandana, dāśya forms a necessary part of worship (arcana). Yet, for the same reason for which vandana might have been considered an independent item of nine-fold devotion, dāśya also might have been treated by the Bhāgavata as a separate item.

Chapter IV.Sakhya and Ātma-nivedana.

So long the votary was, with a holy humility, submitting himself to the feet of his desired deity, but he could not know the response from the other side. With an uncertain mind, swinging between moments of assurance and doubt, the votary had been appealing to the good sense of his desired deity: he can no longer carry on as before; he has become over-sensitive towards the limitations of the world. At this juncture, the hazy atmosphere clears up with the mellow light of divine grace shining upon the votary. Sak^yha and Ātma-nivedana mark the further progress of devotional fervour of the votary who has come to know that God is favourably disposed to him.

(A)

Sakhya.

Sakhya is friendship. At this stage, the votary feels that not only he loves God, but God also loves him.

(B)

Ātma-nivedana.

This is the final stratum of the second stage of the bhāgavata dharma. The votary becomes so sanguine about his intimacy with God, that he now can depend upon it. He wistfully longs to get rid of the pragmatic life and all its afflictions. Counting upon the love of God, the votary unflinchingly surrenders all, that he so long claimed to be his, unto the supreme deity. To get relief from the burden of afflictions which pragmatic life involves, the votary dedicates, unto the supreme deity, both 'I' and 'mine'. The Bhāgavata defines the subject-matter of ātma-nivedana as follows:-

īṣṭam dattam tapo japtam vṛttam yac cātmanah priyam.
205
dārān sūtān grhān prāṇān yat paraśmai nevedanam..

P A R T I V

THE THIRD STAGE OF BHĀGAVATA DHARMA

Introduction

The first two stages of Bhāgavata dharma are mainly the stages of strivings (sādhana-vasthā). The third stage is the state of accomplishment (siddhāvasthā) of the votary. Rati, which is the name of devotion at this stage, still develops in the votary as he advances to realise perfection which the Bhāgavata calls amṛtatva. The following chapters are devoted to the further delineation of rati.

CHAPTER I

Naisthikī rati

(A) Attainment of puruṣa-kaivalya

Ātma-nivedana (self-surrender), the last item of the nine-fold devotion, means, according to the Bhāgavata, surrender of 'abhimāna' with regard to the empirical self (aham and mama).²⁰⁷ 'Abhimāna' which Patañjali calls 'asmitā', is, according to the Vārtika,²⁰⁸ a condensed form of 'avidyā'. Hence shaking off 'abhimāna' is dispelling 'avidyā'. Naturally, after ātma-nivedana, the individual soul becomes absolutely free from the trammels of pragmatic life by the dawning of self-realisation. The Bhāgavata describes this state of the votary as 'puruṣa-²⁰⁹kaivalya'. Though the votary had first visioned God at the stage of 'smarana' and his relationship with God developed through 'sakhya' etc., yet it is only at this stage, that he could be completely free from the pragmatic life.

(B) The state of jīvan-mukta

But even at this stage, the body continues to exist; and this makes the further development of rati possible. That the body exists at this stage suggests that self-knowledge is not antagonistic to 'prārabdha karma' which had built up the present body. The Bhāgavata expressly supports this view by its description of the life of Bharata. The Bhāgavata says^{209/1} that Bharata had attained the stage of rati, yet the prārabdha karma has been described to have been still persisting in him.²¹⁰

This state of the enlightened soul, still pursuing its earthly career in the present body, is called by the Bhāgavata the life of a jīvan-mukta. ²¹¹ And the Bhāgavata recommends such a person as spiritual teacher. ²¹²

(C) The state of divinity

With the disappearance of 'abhimāna' which the Vārtika holds to be the root of all troubles, ²¹³ pragmatic afflictions (kleśas) cease. Of the three types of karma, only prārabdha still continues, but without its sting. The enjoyment of earthly pleasure and pain (vipāka) does not any more appeal to the votary. Lastly, dedication of all unto the supreme deity closes the door for merits and demerits (āśaya). Hence at this stage, the votary being free from kleśa, karma, vipāka and āśaya becomes as pure as God; for, Patañjali describes that puruṣa to be God, who is immune from ²¹⁴ these four types of limitations.

(D) The state of naiṣṭhikī rati

It is conceived that the individual soul possesses a subtle body (sūkṣma-sarīra) in addition to the gross one (sthūla-sarīra). These two bodies, taken together, make up the pragmatic life of the votary. Of these two, the gross body has been said to be persisting in the votary in order to help him in the further progress of rati. But what happens to the subtle body, at this stage? The Bhāgavata holds that at this stage the subtle body becomes assimilated to devotion

i.e. the whole inner mechanism of the votary becomes tuned up
 215
 to the cause of his growing devotion. The devotion which
 thus overhauls the inner constitution of the votary is called
 by the Bhāgavata 'naiṣṭhiki rati.'

The Bhāgavata defines 'naiṣṭhikī rati' as follows:-
 devānāṃ guṇa-līṅgānāṃ āṅśravika-karmanām.
 sattva evaika-manaso vṛttih svābhāvikī tu yā..
 animittā bhāgavatī bhaktih siddher garīyasī.
 216
 jarayatyaśu yā koṣaṃ nigīrṇaṃ analo yathā..

'Bhakti is the natural flow of the mind, in unbroken
 continuity, towards divinity. This self-less devotion
 directed to Bhagavān quickly assimilates the subtle body as
 217
 the digestive power assimilates food'.

The Bhāgavata throws further light upon this process
 of assimilation. It puts into Bhagavān's mouth :-

yathāgninā hema malaṃ jahāti
 dhmātaṃ punaḥ svaṃ bhajate ca rūpaṃ.
 ātmā ca karmanuśayaṃ vidhūya
 218
 mad-bhakti-yogena bhajatyatho mām..

"As gold-ore, blown in fire, turns into pure gold by
 the elimination of impure matter sticking to it, so the mind
 quits the tangle of action by the process of my bhakti-yoga,
 and, being pure, it resorts to me".

To illustrate this point, the Bhāgavata gives the
 popular example of a kind of worm (peśaskṛt) which, caught by
 another insect, turns into the form of that insect, by the

deep contemplation of that insect, inspired by the fear of
219
imminent death. Similarly, according to the Bhāgavata, the
deep contemplation of God, turns the mind into divine. The
220
Gītā supports this view.

The Bhāgavata seems to be so much engrossed in the
process of assimilation of the mind, that it does not mind,
which particular feeling inspired the mind to contemplation.
Thus the Bhāgavata says :-

kāmaṁ krodhaṁ bhayaṁ snehaṁ aikyaṁ sauhṛdam eva ca.
221
nityaṁ Harau vidadhato yānti tan-mayatāṁ hi te..

The presence of various types of feeling for the
222
instigation of bhakti determines the quality of the latter.
Though according to the Bhāgavata, all motives, whether good
223
or bad, are equally efficient to lead to the same goal, yet
the Bhāgavata has broadly classified bhakti (saguna-bhakti)
into 'tāmasa', 'rājasa' and 'sāttvika', according to the nature
of the feeling inspiring it. Śrīdhara has carried this point
further, and, by permutation and combination of various motives
224
of man, has classified saguna bhakti into 81 types. It may be
noted here that the bhāgavata dharma, according to the defini-
tion of 'sāttvika bhakti', falls with⁻ⁱⁿ this specific category,
for, 'sattvika bhakti' is permeated by the spirit of dedication,
and, the bhāgavata dharma is all through permeated by the same.

(E) The nature of the devotee

At the state of 'naisthiki rati', as described above, the votary becomes 'a-kiñcana' i.e. deprived of all possessions. He has dedicated all unto the supreme deity; hence, he cannot but be poor. For the same reason, the votary cannot but be self-less. ²²⁵ How can one be selfish who has no personal axe to grind? He becomes so much disinterested that even divine pleasure (sālokyā etc) falls short of his hankering. ²²⁶ The Bhāgavata holds that the votary has to pass through different types of divine pleasure, yet he cares little for them. ²²⁷ We have seen before, that the votary, according to the Bhāgavata, should strive for amṛtatva; nothing short of that can entice him. Hence in one sense, the votary is selfish per excellence ²²⁸ for he is after the highest achievement; yet he is self-less for he had dedicated the empirical self and all that relates to it. His mind is settled in God and God only. The Bhāgavata ²²⁹ thus calls him 'ekāntī' i.e. having one goal.

The Nārada-bhakti-sūtra notes the surrender of the Vedic and secular duties with regard to such a man. ²³⁰ The Bhāgavata describes him as one who is beyond the duties of ordinary man (loka-bāhya). ²³¹ The Gītā also holds the same view. ²³² This is the state of 'naiṣkarmya' of the Gītā, and the state of 'karmanā karma-nirhārah' of the Bhāgavata. ²³³

With the surrender of all duties, the devotional mind of the votary, being free from the burden of duties, marches on, with renewed vigour, towards perfection. Thus the stage of

'naisthikī rati' gives place to ~~'naisthikī rati'~~ gives place to 'naisargikī rati'.

CHAPTER II

Naisargikī rati

Up to the stage of naisthikī rati, the mind of the votary had been to some extent obsessed by the burden of pragmatic duties. Now that he has soared higher, his mind makes an unimpeded sally towards the absolute. This is naisargikī rati i.e. natural flow of the mind towards the supreme deity. The Bhāgavata illustrates this type of rati with examples from the life of Prahlāda whom the Bhāgavata describes to have attained ²³⁴ naisargikī rati; as follows :-

yathā bhrāmyatyayo brahman svayam ākarṣa-sannidhau.
tathā me bhidyate cetah cakrapāner yadr̥cchayā.. ²³⁵

'My mind drifts towards the supreme deity just as iron moves towards the direction of the magnet.'

The Bhāgavata has conceived the mind of the votary to be possessed by Kṛṣṇa, (Kṛṣṇa-graha-grhitātma), at this stage, when the votary, leaving all pragmatic attractions, ²³⁶ plunges headlong into the supreme deity. He forgets all about ²³⁷ the world and rests in the close embrace of Govinda (Kṛṣṇa).

The expression of naisargikī rati

Naisargikī rati, marked by the absence of all pragmatic restrictions, completely over-hauls the mental constitu-

tion of the votary. A peculiar sense of bliss, in all its exuberance, wells forth from the vital spring of the living experience of the votary. The Bhāgavata describes its exhilarating influence on the votary as follows :-

evam-vrataḥ sva-priya-nāma-kīrtiṃ
jātānuraḡo druta-citta uccaiḥ.
hasatyatho roditi rauti gāya-
tyunmāda-van nr̥tyati loka-bāhyah.. 238

'By the chanting of the name of his dearest, the mind of the votary melts with divine fervour (anurāga) and possessed by its maddening effect, the votary, who is now beyond the duties of ordinary man, begins to laugh, cry, wail, sing and dance.'

Śrīdhara explains this śloka as follows:- "The votary breaks forth into uproarious laughter by the thought of God, to have been vanquished and won over to his side; he begins to shed tears due to a sense of grudge against God; he sings because of ecstasy; he cries aloud, out of intense curiosity; and gives vent to dancing, inspired with the sense of his final triumph." This is the first experience of naisargikī rati as the life of 239
Prahlaḡa illustrates.

This state of madness does not last long. Gradually, the votary becomes accustomed to this type of experience. Ultimately, he calms down to sublime tranquillity, as his divine 240
fervour (naisargikī rati) begins to flow through deeper channels. 241
The Bhāgavata calls this state 'upaśama' (tranquillity) and the 242
living vision of the supreme deity makes him absolutely harmless.

The practice of Bhāgavata dharma, as the Bhāgavata tells us, begins with these two qualities in the votary; but they are realised in their perfection only at the stage of naisargikī rati. These two qualities are the external manifestation of 'pāramahamsya-dharma'.²⁴⁴

The manifestation of pāramahamsya dharma

The exuberance of the votary, according to the Bhāgavata at the stage of naisargikī rati, is not to be understood as unreasoned ecstasy:-

bhaktiḥ pareśānubhavo viraktir
 anyatra ca iṣa trika eka-kālāḥ.
 prapadyamānasya yathāśnataḥ syuh
 tuṣṭiḥ puṣṭiḥ kṣudapāyohughāsam..²⁴⁵

'Devotion, knowledge of the supreme and detachment from all other objects, all these three happen/simultaneously as food brings about satisfaction, nutrition and quenching hunger, in the eater'.

The Bhāgavata has also given us a glimpse into the two types of knowledge as follows :-

sarvaṁ Brahmātmakam tasya vidyāyātma-manīṣayā.
 pari-pāśyan nuparamet sarvato mukta-saṁśayah..²⁴⁶

'By means of knowledge (vidyā), the votary visions all as identified with Brahman and abandoning all specks of doubt, he lives in peace'. This stands for the first type.

About the second type of knowledge the Bhāgavata says:-

khaṁvāyūṁ agniṁ salilam mahiṁ ca
jyotīṁśi sattvāni diśo drumādīn.
sarit-samudrāṁś ca Hareḥ śarīraṁ
yat kiṁ ca bhūtaṁ prāṇamed ananyaḥ.. 247

'All the elements and luminaries, beings and directions, trees, rivers and seas constitute the body of Hari. Hence, being one of these, the votary visions himself identified with Brahman, and then he should bow down to that supreme lord.'

Īśvara-praṇidhāna

The attainment of these two types of knowledge makes the 'Īśvara-praṇidhāna' of Patañjali complete. At the completion of the first stage of the Bhāgavata dharma, the notion of God, pervading all, becomes fixed in the votary; at the stage of smarana, the third item of nine-fold devotion, he visions God as his desired deity; but, the all-comprehensive nature of the supreme deity and lastly the identity of the votary with him, are comprehended in direct realisation of the votary, only at the stage of naisargikī rati. This is the final success of 'Īśvara-praṇidhāna' of Patañjali.

CHAPTER III

Nirguna-bhakti

(A) Nature of nirguna-bhakti

Naisargikī rati, marked by the obliteration of the sense of distinction (bheda-darsana), is, according to the

Bhāgavata, called 'nirguṇa-bhakti' (unstinted bhakti). While
 'rati' whether naiṣṭhiki or naisargikī is merely self-less
 248
 (animittā), nirguṇa bhakti is not only self-less but is also
 249
 marked by the absence of the sense of plurality. And this
 latter type of devotion is attained only when the individual
 250
 soul realises its identity with Brahman, for, Brahma-kaivalya
 is the stage when the sense of plurality is replaced by the all-
 comprehensive sense of unity.

The Bhāgavata defines the nature of this nirguṇa-
 bhakti as follows:-

mad-guṇa-śruti-mātreṇa mayi sarva-guṇaśāye.

mano-gatir avicchinṇā yathā gaṅgāmbhasombudhau..

lakṣaṇam bhakti-yogasya nir-guṇasya hyudāhṛtam.
 251

ahaitukyavyavahitā yā bhaktiḥ puruṣottame..

"The definition of nirguṇa bhakti-yoga is: uninter-
 rupted flow of the mind towards Bhagavān, at the hearing of his
 merits, just as the water of the Ganges flows, in un-broken
 continuity, towards the ocean; it is self-less devotion and is
 marked by the absence of pluralistic knowledge."

Śrīdhara explains the word 'avyavahitā' as meaning
 divested of differential knowledge' (bheda-darśana-rahitā).
 Thus the gist of the definition is that nirguṇa-bhakti is self-
 less devotion deprived of differential knowledge.

(B) Exploits of nirguna-bhakti

We have mentioned it more than once that the Bhāgavata holds 'Mukunda-pāda-sevā' to be the highest goal of the votary. It has been mentioned above (p. 202-4) that 'pāda-sevā' means 'service to the feet of the personal God', and in its widest sense, it includes 'realisation of the four grades of reality viz Brahman, Paramātmā, Bhagavān and advaya jñāna'. Nirguna bhakti provides for the realisation of the first grade of reality viz Brahman.

Votary - the spiritual teacher

The sense of identification with all, sentient and insentient, rouses, in the votary, pity for suffering beings. They are no longer strangers to him but are felt to be his integral part. The Bhāgavata has cited Prahlāda and Ranti-²⁵²deva as examples. Roused by pity for the suffering beings, Prahlāda is described to have been wailing for the sorrows of others: he does not wish to be emancipated as long as a single creature in this world remains un-emancipated. Similar is the story of Ranti-deva. Thus the Bhāgavata has described how votaries who have attained the stage of Brahma-kaivalya, have sacrificed their life for the mitigation of the sorrows of the afflicted. Accomplished hermits like Kavi etc. are described to have been wandering throughout the world in order to show ²⁵³pity to the fallen.

In fact, the attainment of Brahma-kaivalya, is the right moment for showing pity for others. Brahma-kaivalya is

the stage when the votary becomes master of 'cit-sakti' and 'māyā' which, as we have seen before, have emerged from Brahman. The votary being identified with Brahman gains mastery over these potencies. These being the potencies controlling the world, the votary naturally becomes armed with these sovereign potencies. Hence only at the stage of Brahma-kaivalya, he can give effect to his sympathies for others: otherwise, simple pity, if unattended with the power of putting ^{it} into practice, is of no avail as Jīva-gosvāmī remarks:-

krpālor asamarthasya dukkhāyaiva krpālutā.
254
 samarthasya tu tasyaiva sukhāyaiva krpālutā..

The description of the votary

Naturally, the Bhāgavata has, on very many occasions, spoken of the votaries, in very high terms. The Bhāgavata conceives them to be sovereign teachers (parama guru) like ²⁵⁵Īsvara of Patañjali. They are self-less and claim nothing ²⁵⁶to be their own. Pity is spontaneous with them. ²⁵⁷They are ²⁵⁸calm and filled with a sense of all-comprehensive unity, ²⁵⁹they are always happy. ²⁶⁰They have established an intimate connection with their supreme deity which has given itself unto ²⁶¹them, in return for the self-surrender of the votaries. ²⁶²The Bhāgavata has drawn upon various concepts to illustrate ²⁶³their love for the supreme deity.

Such holy beings are naturally held to sanctify by ²⁶⁴their mere sight, for, they are blessed with the benign

presence of God. Their association brings about release from

pragmatic life. They inspire knowledge, devotion and detach-

ment in people steeped in ignorance. Their very association

does this wonder. The cow-herd women are examples on this

point.

Nirguna bhakti turns the votary into what the Bhāgavata calls 'bhāgavata-pradhāna'. Nirguna bhakti reaches its climax when the sense of all-comprehensive unity reaches its perfection. But this is not achieved in a single moment. Hence the Bhāgavata has classified the devotees into three types viz 'bhāgavatādhama', 'bhāgavata-madhyama' and 'bhāgavatottama', in accordance with the development of the process leading to the disappearance of differentiating knowledge. In this hierarchical ladder, the 'bhāgavatottama' occupies the highest place, for, differentiating knowledge is completely

absent in him.

The doctrine of pity

Brahma-kaivalya of Śāṅkara is attained when the plurality of the world is discarded in favour of non-duality of Brahman. Brahman-kaivalya of the Bhāgavata is the integration of all plurality into the non-dual structure of Brahman; and as the votary becomes Brahman, he becomes integrated with the rest of the world which then becomes a part of his being. One feels affection for his near and dear ones. The world being near and dear to the votary at the stage of Brahma-kaivalya, the votary naturally feels for it. According to Śāṅkara, the

individual soul becomes completely divested of his bodies, gross, subtle and nescience (kāraṇa-sarīra). Hence the soul becomes 'nirmama' i.e. without any affection; for, the soul has lost its inner mechanism which so long generated affections. The Bhāgavata on the other hand, recognises the presence of the subtle body even at Brahma-kaivalya. In fact, the state of a jīvan-mukta with subtle as well as gross bodies still persisting, is held by the Bhāgavata to continue even in Brahma-kaivalya.

Being still possessed of the subtle body, the votary can feel for others. His affection comprehends the whole world which, at the stage of Brahma-kaivalya, has become part and parcel of his being. Thus the doctrine of pity is one of the outstanding features of the Bhāgavata Vaiṣṇavism. It has afforded a more sublime tone to the concept of Brahma-kaivalya.

CHAPTER IV

Parā-bhakti.

Backed by affection (mamatā), nirguṇa bhakti culminates in parā-bhakti. It is suggested by the Gītā that parā-bhakti follows Brahma-kaivalya, the stage brought out by nirguṇa bhakti. It reads :-

Brahma-bhūtaḥ prasannātmā na śocati na kāṅkṣati.
 samah sarvesu bhūteṣu mad-bhaktim labhate param..

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"Being one with Brahman, the votary attains peace and all his desires and afflictions cease; he becomes impartial to all beings and thus attains 'parā-bhakti.'

(A) Parā-sānti

The symptom of the advent of parā-bhakti is conceived by the Bhāgavata to consist of a divine peace (parā-sānti). Thus the Bhāgavata reads :-

ityacyutāṅghrīm bhajatoṇuvṛtyā
bhaktir vi-raktir Bhagavat-prabodhaḥ.
bhavanti vai bhāgavatasya rājan
tataḥ parāṁ sāntim upaiti sāksāt..²⁷¹

"A bhāgavata, through the development of knowledge, devotion and detachment, attains the direct realisation of parā-sānti".

We have seen that one becomes a 'bhāgavata' only after the attainment of the nirguṇa-bhakti. Parā-sānti which follows nirguṇa-bhakti may be taken to have been the direct result of parā-bhakti in which nirguṇa-bhakti culminates. This parā-sānti is distinguished from other types of sānti. At the stage of Brahma-kaivalya, positive peace begins to grow in the votary. This sense of peace culminates in parā-sānti.

(B) Nature of parā-bhakti

The concept of parā-bhakti is a substantial contribution of Bhāgavata Vaiṣṇavism. Philosophy of Śāṅkara stops at Brahma-kaivalya; all plurality ceases when the votary attains this state. Brahma-kaivalya of Śāṅkara is the non-dual existence of reality, marked by the melting away of the pragmatic world of plurality. The Bhāgavata develops

upon Śaṅkara by acknowledging another world beyond the pragmatic world, which is revealed to the votary only after the attainment of Brahma-kaivalya. This world is, of course, non-phenomenal (cin-maya) and divine happiness is realised, in all its finest shades, when the votary enters this world.

Parā-bhakti opens the gate of this promised land. That is why parā-bhakti is held by the Bhāgavata to be higher than mokṣa which is nothing more than Brahma-kaivalya. It gives the votary a glimpse, for the first time, of this infinite world which extends beyond all creation. Thus parā-bhakti gives an impetus for the exploration of the transcendental nature of the reality, above its immanent aspect realised at Brahma-kaivalya. The votary discovers, to his dismay, that the world beyond is limitless in comparison with the world, realised at Brahma-kaivalya, which is but finite. He feels an all-embracing void (mahā-śūnya) attended with an ever-increasing sense of separation from reality. The vague sense of an all-embracing void is gradually condensed into the concrete concept of 'parama-vyoma' the Vaikunṭha-dhāma of the Bhāgavata.

(C) The end of the jīvan-mukti

The Vaikunṭha-dhāma is conceived to be the region where all pragmatic limitations are banned. Naturally, a jīvan-mukta, with his gross body still persisting, cannot enter this region until he has cast off that body which has been brought about by his prārabdha karma. Hence the

Bhāgavata tells about Nārada, who is about to enter this region, as follows :-

prayujyamāne mayi tām suddhām bhāgavatīm tanuṁ.
277
prārabdha-karma-nirvāṇo nyapatat pāñca-bhautikāḥ..

"Before the acceptance of 'bhāgavatī tanu', the gross body fell off with the exhaustion of prārabdha karma".

It is to be remembered that, as the concept of a jīvan-mukta involves the presence of the gross body, the state of jīvan-mukta ceases before the votary enters the portals of the Vaikunṭha-dhāma. Therefore, according to the Bhāgavata, the state of a jīvan-mukta starts with puruṣa-kaivalya at the successful conclusion of ātma-nivedana, the last item of nine-fold devotion, and it continues even after Brahma-kaivalya until the moment comes for the votary to enter the Vaikunṭha-dhāma.

But what becomes of the subtle body? The Bhāgavata does not expressly explain. But to provide for the realisation of the mysteries of transcendental reality, the Bhāgavata seems to be in favour of retention of this body which may serve as the ground for the generation of different psychological reactions at the vision of the reality. The Bhāgavata seems to suggest the theory of transformation by which the subtle body may be held to have been transformed into divine, by the tempering of bhakti.

(D) The state after jīvan-mukta

After the gross body of the votary has fallen off, he is provided with a non-phenomenal body built up by pure

substance (visuddha sattva). Its luminosity makes him
279
dazzling like the sun (arka-varṇa). With this body, he enters
the portals of the non-phenomenal region, the Vaikunṭha dhāma.

(E) Concept of the Vaikunṭha-dhāma

'Vaikunṭha-dhāma' literally means 'a region divested
of all limitations! It has been conceived by the Bhāgavata
as follows:-

satyaṃ jñānam anantaṃ yat Brahma jyotiḥ sanātanaṃ.
280
yad dhi paśyanti munayo guṇāpāye samāhitāḥ..

"It is eternal, consisting in knowledge, infinite,
all-pervasive, luminous, immortal. The wise visualise it,
at the eradication of the guṇas."

It may be noted here that the description of the
Vaikunṭha dhāma is not to be conceived to be a country or a
world like that of ours. In fact, it is no world at all,
if understood in its material sense. It is identical with
Brahman; Śrīdhara also interprets the word 'sva-loka' in
281
another context, 'a region identical with Brahman.

(F) Paramātmā-kaivalya

In order to appeal to laity, the Bhāgavata, has
pictorially described the Vaikunṭha-dhāma which the votary
282
enters after Brahma-kaivalya. As this region is marked by
the absence of all limitations it is also described by the
283
Bhāgavata as 'nirvāṇa'. At this region reigns, the Lord of
the Vaikunṭha, the Paramātmā of the Bhāgavata. The
traditional designations of sālōkya etc. refer to the life

of the votary in this region. Identity is the most intimate connection that may be conceived to subsist in two objects. At Brahma-kaivalya, the votary had attained identity with Brahman, the first grade of reality i.e. reality in its immanent form. Now the further progress of the religious life of the votary is concerned with the identification with reality, in its transcendental aspect. The first achievement, in this direction, happens in the Vaikunṭha-dhāma. Here the votary ultimately secures identity with Paramātmā, the second grade of reality. This is the first step towards the identification with reality, in its transcendental aspect.

Tradition has broadly traced five stages of the votary in the course of his identification with Paramātmā, after his achievement of Brahma-kaivalya. Entrance into the Vaikunṭha-dhāma is 'sālokyā-mukti', for here the votary stays in the same region with Paramātmā. Gradually, he acquires a form like that of Paramātmā; this is 'sarūpya-mukti'. Further on, divine majesties such as inhering in Paramātmā, are manifested in the votary; this is 'sārṣṭi'. With similar form and majesty, the votary thus approximates the identity of Paramātmā; this is 'sāmīpya-mukti'. Lastly, the votary becomes absorbed in the essence of Paramātmā. This is 'sāyujya-mukti'. The Bhāgavata does not specifically mention all these, but summarily calls all these as 'nirvāṇa'. In accordance with the Brahma-kaivalya we have preferred to call these collectively as 'Paramātmā-kaivalya'. Paramātmā-

kaivalya is the 'Mukunda-carana-sevā' in so far as it is the realisation of identity with Paramātmā, i.e. the second grade of reality.

CHAPTER V

Parā-bhakti (contd.) (Bhagavat-Kaivalya)

The ultimate goal of the Bhāgavata devotion is the attainment of amṛta, which, we have seen before, is equal to 'ānanda! The embrace of Paramātmā, who is a manifestation of Bhagavān, stimulates all the more the pangs of separation in the votary. The votary craves for the full embrace of the infinite of which Paramātmā is only a manifestation. The votary is thus dissatisfied and longs for Bhagavān, as the Bhāgavata declares :-

naikātmataṁ me sprhayanti kecin

mat-pāda-sevābhiratā mad-īhāḥ

yenyon-ato bhāgavataḥ prasajya

sabhājayante mama pauruṣaṇi..

"The devotees of Bhagavān do not care even for sāyujya (ekātmata) for they are after the realisation of the third grade of reality; they always indulge in the discussion of merits which the third grade of reality manifests."

Thus the votary moves further on from the Vaikunṭha-dhāma.

(A) The philosophy of love

It has been mentioned before, that the sense of pangs

of separation, which the votary begins to feel after Brahma-
 kaivalya, instigates his devotion. It is by this process
 that the votary had attained the Vaikuntha-dhāma. With the
 embrace of Paramātmā, the centre of all-comprehensive void
 (parama-vyoma), his devotion is further inflamed until it
 reaches a point when he cannot stand anymore the separation
 from Bhagavān, for even a single moment. ²⁸⁶ Maddened with the
 pangs of separation, the votary embraces Bhagavān, the third
 grade of reality. Hence parā-bhakti marked by the most acute
 sense of separation brings about the identity of the votary
 with Bhagavān.

That the accentuation of the sense of separation
 gratifies all cravings of the votary, is nicely pictured by
 the Bhāgavata. In 'rāsotsava', the sudden disappearance of
 Kṛṣṇa drowned the gopīs in the ocean of sorrow. ²⁸⁷ Moved by
 their wailings, he at last appeared before them. ²⁸⁸ Disappointed
 by his long absence, the gopīs charged him with callousness.
 The gopīs asked him :-

bhajatoṇu bhajantyeke eka etad viparyayam.

nobhayāms' ca bhajantyeke etān no brūhi sādhu bhoḥ.. ^{288/1}

"Some people respond to others' love; others love,
 of their own accord, without waiting for the love of the other
 party; but there are some creatures who are always indifferent
 to others' appeal to love. Tell us about the people who
 represent these types."

The answer of Kṛṣṇa was this: as to the first type of love, the reciprocal nature of it is based upon give-and-²⁸⁹ take policy; the question of affection does not arise here; it is simply businessmanlike.²⁹⁰ As regards the second type, people may be sub-divided into two classes:- (a) the pitiful and (b) fathers etc: the former do it with a view to earn dharma while the latter are led to love by natural affection.²⁹¹ Lastly, the third type fall under four heads:- (a) self-contented, (b) āptā-kāma whose pleasures are satisfied, (c) ungrateful and (d) cruel to the backbone.

Conceiving the charge of ingratitude, Kṛṣṇa further goes on :-

nāhan tu sakhyo bhajatōpi jantūn
bhajāmyamīśām anu-vṛtti-labdhaye.
yathādhano labdh-dhane vinaṣṭe
tac cintayānyan ni-bhrto na veda..²⁹²

"I put on deliberately an appearance of indifference in order to intensify your love, just as a miser becomes drowned in the thoughts of his wealth when he loses it."

Thus Kṛṣṇa concludes :-

evam madarthojjhita-loka-veda-
svānām hi vo mayyanuvṛttā^ayevalāh
mayā parokṣam bhajatā tirohitam..²⁹³
māsūyitum mārhattha priyam priyāh..

Finally, Bhagavān shows the appreciation of the love of the gopīs by plain admission that he is permanently indebted to

the gopīs for their love which cannot be compensated by any
294
return.

This episode exemplifies the truth that highest love which the Bhāgavata calls parā-bhakti, can be achieved only when anguish for separation from Bhagavān rises to its zenith.

(B) Realisation of the third grade of reality

Actuated by a most poignant sense of separation, the votary enters the region of Bhagavān. It has been mentioned before that Kṛṣṇa is the Bhagavān of the Bhāgavata, and the region where Kṛṣṇa eternally lives is called Vṛndāvana. The concept of Bhagavān is conceived as pure and most perfect bliss. In the rigour of profound love, the votary embraces Kṛṣṇa. This is rāsa-līlā. It is the realisation of perfect bliss which the Upaniṣads call 'rāsa'. Seen from another angle, bhakti of the votary reaches its climax as 'rāsa'. Jīvagosvāmī has traced several stages of the development of parā-bhakti in the region of Bhagavān. He considers 'prema', 'pranaya', 'māna', 'sneha', 'rāga', 'anurāga', 'mahābhāva', 'mohana' and 'mādana', as stages
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of parā-bhakti, in their hierarchical order. Jīvagosvāmī has
296
drawn upon Rūpagosvāmī on several points, in this respect.

Kṛṣṇa being the third grade of reality, the embrace of Kṛṣṇa is no doubt, 'Mukunda-carana-sevā'. The Bhāgavata has depicted the state of the votary at this stage as follows:-

ta nāvidan mayyanusaṅga-baddha-
dhiyah svam ātmānam adas tathedam.

yathā samādhū munayo'v dhi-toye
297
nadyaḥ pravistā iva nāma-rūpe..

"They lost all sense of distinction when their mind plunged headlong in me as the hermits lose all sense of plurality during the course of contemplation; or, as the rivers lose their names and forms when they merge into the water of the sea."

The realisation of the third grade of reality is then the realisation of the identity between the votary and Bhagavān. As distinguished from identity arrived at the stage of Brahma-kaivalya and Paramātmā-kaivalya, this identity has been described by the Bhāgavata as supreme (paramādvaita).²⁹⁸ The identity of the votary with Bhagavān is what the Bhāgavata calls 'ātma-dāna'.²⁹⁹ The votary had surrendered his lower self to gain his higher self. This is the perfection of humanity. This fact is suggested by the conception of Kṛṣṇa as a human being.

CHAPTER VI

Climax of parā-bhakti

The realisation of the third grade of reality makes the identity between the votary and his supreme deity complete. There is nothing more to be attained. Hence the necessity of parā-bhakti ceases here. We have shown that bhakti of the Bhāgavata is not simple emotionalism divorced from knowledge

and detachment, but it is a harmonious combination of all these three elements. Of these three elements, bhakti attracts as emotion, reveals as knowledge, and excludes as detachment. Now, at the stage of identity with Bhagavān, the highest point of attainment, the votary has nothing else which may imprison his attraction, and nothing else against which the element of detachment may work. Naturally, of the three elements of bhakti, the aspect of emotion and the aspect of detachment merge into the remaining aspect, knowledge. Hence after the identification of the votary with Bhagavān, what remains of the bhakti is simply consciousness. Ultimately, bhagavān and, bhakti as consciousness, coalesce into one indivisible whole. This is, in fact, the integration of śakti and śaktimān. The result is non-dual consciousness. Thus we have reached the climax of parā-bhakti in non-dual consciousness. This is the realisation of the fourth and ultimate grade of reality.

The fourth grade is 'acyuta', for, in spite of its infinite manifestations, non-dual nature of reality eternally
 300
 remains immutable; and the realisation of this fourth grade is the highest type of 'acyuta-pāda-sevā'. Bhakti leads to this climax when it itself becomes the climax viz non-dual consciousness. Bhakti standing for the climax is naturally called by the Bhāgavata as the highest achievement (parama-
 301
 puruṣārtha).

Conclusion

From the metaphysical standpoint, the Bhāgavata has started from non-dual consciousness (advaya jñāna), and has brought it down to the state of the desired deity (iṣṭa-devatā). Between these limits, there are described Bhagavān, Paramātmā, Brahman & Puruṣa, the creator and inner-controller, in descending scale.

From religious standpoint, the first stage of Bhāgavata dharma comprehends Puruṣa, the inner-controller. But this comprehension is nothing but a conviction. Reality is realised as the desired deity, at the stage of smaraṇa, the third item of the second stage of Bhāgavata dharma. At the successful conclusion of the second stage of the Bhāgavata dharma, reality is revealed as the inner-controller and creator and this realisation culminates in the vision of Brahman, in whose non-dual structure the universe and the votary become integrated. Then comes in hierarchical order the realisation of Paramātmā and Bhagavān. Starting from the revelation of the inner-controller up to the vision of Bhagavān, extends the field of the third stage of the Bhāgavata dharma. Ultimately, what remains, after this hard religious struggle, is non-dual consciousness. For this highest achievement, Bhakti-³⁰²yoga is called by the Bhāgavata a precious rarity.

Thus religion and the metaphysics of the Bhāgavata has converged at the same point viz non-dual consciousness.

The whole philosophy of the Bhāgavata has been summarised by the Bhāgavata itself which declares :-

Śrī-mad-Bhāgavatam purāṇam amalam yad vaiṣṇavāṇāṃ priyam
yasmin pārama-haṃsyam ekam amalam jñānam param giyate.
tatra jñāna-virāga-bhakti-sahitāṃ naiṣkarmyam-āviṣkṛtam
tac chṛṇvan su-paṭhan vi-cārana-paro bhaktyā vi-mucyen
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narah..

"The Śrīmad Bhāgavata is an un-stinted Purāṇa; it is dear to the Vaiṣṇavas; in it is described the highest type of consciousness attainable by the practice of 'pārama-haṃsya dharma'; it makes an exposition of actionlessness attended with jñāna, bhakti and vairāgya; a person, listening to, meditating of and reading the contents of the Bhāgavata, attains release by means of bhakti."

1. Wilson, p. IX.
2. Atha. Veda, XV, 6, 11f.
3. ibid; also Rg. Veda, I, 112, 116; X, 39; also Winternitz p. 311.
4. Sa. Br. XI.V.7,1; XIV. V. 4-10; Tai. Ār. II. 9-10; Jai. Ū. Br. I.53.
5. Atha. Veda, IV.6.11f.
6. Atha. Veda, XI.7.24; V.19.9.
7. Mazumdar, p. 13.
8. Pargiter AIHT pp. 36-7.
9. Keith, JRAS, 1914 pp. 1021-31; ibid, 1915, pp. 516-21 and pp. 141-7.
10. Winternitz, p. 313.
11. Mazumdar, p. 14.
12. Atha. Veda, XV. 6. 4 f.
13. Gau. D. Sū. VIII. 6; XI. 19.
14. Āpa. D. Sū. II.9. 24.5, & 6.
15. Winternitz, p. 519.
16. Pargiter, AIHT p. 36.
17. (a) The tale of Ātharvan finding Agni is an 'itihāsa-purātana' v. Atha. Veda, III.217, 222.
(b) Ch. Upa. VII. 9.29; III.45, 8.
18. Ch. Upa. VII.1,7.
19. Amarakoṣa and Kirfel, Das Purana Panca-Laksana.
20. Masumdar p. 11.
21. Pargiter, AIHT p. 36.
22. Rapson, p. 302.
23. Pargiter, AIHT p. 36.

24. Farquhar, p. 137.
25. Pargiter, ~~Ency.~~ ^{ERE} p. 450.
26. Rapson, p. 229.
27. Macdonell, p. 138.
28. Wilson, p. VII.
29. Pargiter, AIHT p. 334.
30. Rapson, Cam. H. In. p. 305.
31. Rapson, ibid, p. 304-5.
32. Vans. Kennedy, introduction.
33. Ch. Upa. VI. 2.
34. Manu. XII. 106.
35. The Vāja-saneyī Samhitā of the Yajur-Veda, XVI.
36. Gau. D. Sū. VIII. 6; XI. 19.
37. Hopkins, pp. 397-8.
38. Hopkins, p. 398.
39. Bh. P. 2/10/1-7.
40. BV. P. IV. 131.6-10.
41. Bh. P. 2/10/1-7.
42. Mazumdar, p. 29.
43. Pargiter, ~~Ency.~~ ^{ERE} p. 455.
44. ~~Mh.~~ XVIII. 5. 46; 6.97.
45. Āpa. D. Sū. II. 9.24.5-6.
46. Farquhar, p. 138; Smith, p. 20; Pargiter JRAS 1912, p. 255.
47. ^{*}Sam. S. Sū. XVI. 2. 27; Tai. Ār. II. 8; Manu, III. 232; Yaj. III. 189.
48. 'Mahā-purāṇa' used in Bh. P. 12/7/- and BV. P. IV. 131.
49. Bh. P. 12/13/9.
50. Bh. P. 12/13/4.
51. Rapson, p. 396.

52. Vāyu, Matsya, Viṣṇu, Brahmaṇḍa and Bhāgavata, V. Smith pp. 910 and Rapson, p. 296.
53. Bh. P. V.P. etc.
54. Bh. P. 12/1/- and also Pargiter, DKA.
55. Lassen, Ind. Alter, Vol. I., p. 499.
56. Kirfel, Das Purana Panca-laksana.
57. H.P. Sastri, p. 329.
58. Mat. P. ch. 63.
59. H.P. Sastri, p. 369-70.
60. 'Roma-harsana' as a class name in Vāyu P. 1.16.
61. Artha-śāstra of Kauṭilya, III. 7. p. 165.
62. The six disciples are Ātreya Sumati, Kāśyapa Akṛta-vraṇa, Bharad-vāja Agni-varcāḥ, Vāsistha Mitrayu, Sāvarni Somadatti and Suśarman Sāṃsapāyana.
63. Bh. P. 1/1/4.
64. Bh. P. 1/19/37, 38, 40.
65. Bh. P. 2/10/1; 12/7/11.
66. " 2/10/3-7; 12/7/11-19.
67. " 2-10-2.
- 67/1. " 12/4/35-38.
68. " 5/16/3; 5/26/39.
69. " 12/3/14.
70. " "
71. " 5/14/1-46; 10-20/-.
72. " 6/1/1-5.
73. " 9/10/23,30,32; 9/11/1-15; 10/77/23-32.
74. " 9/8/12-13.
75. Holtzmann, Vol. IV.
- 75/1. Abbott. IA, March 1892.
76. The eleventh skandha of the Bhāgavata closely corresponds to the Gītā; v. also JORM 1939, Vo. XIII, Part I, by V. Raghavan.

77. The Padma Purāṇa goes on as follows :-

Vedāntāni ca Vedās ca mantrās tantrāṇi saṁhitāḥ.
daśa sapta Purāṇāni sat - chāstrāṇi samāyayuh.
daśa sapta Purāṇāni Kṛtvā Satya-vatī-sutah.
Naptavān manasā tosam Bhāratenaṁ bhāmini.
Cakāra saṁhitām etām Śrī-mad - Bhāgavatīm parām.

78. H.P. Sastri, p. 335.

79. Bh. P. 1/5/9; 12/12/3.

80. " 1/1/2.

81. " 1/1/2.

82. " 1/1/3.

83. " 1/1/11.

84. " 1/3/45.

85. " 12/13/16-7.

86. " 12/13/15.

87. Hari. p. 4.

88. Bh. P. 10/20/-; 10/35/1-25.

89. " 4/4/16; 6/14/53; 8/12/21; 10/30/1-44; 10/31/1-19;
10/39/19-30; 10/41/25.

90. Winternitz, p. 556.

91. Pargiter, p. 451.

92. Vaidya, JBRAS, 1925, p. 145.

93. Roy, IHQ VIII, p. 253.

94. Hazra, NIA, p. 526.

95. Vaidya, JBRAS, 1925, p. 154.

96. Hari. p. 13.

97. " p. 25.

98. Farquhar, p. 257.

99. H. P. Sastri, p. 329.

100. " p. 335.

101. Hari. p. 4.

102. Bh. P. 1/1/2; 2/2/8; 3/4/3; 12/4/41-42; 2/9/43;
2/1/8; 8/13/7; 3/8/4; 3/8/7-9.
103. Burnouf, p. 105.
104. Sukthankar, pp. 108-128.
105. Gode, p. 249-251.
106. Pargiter, DKA.
107. Winternitz, p. 556.
108. J. Meier, Der Archaismus in der Sprache des Bhagavata-Purana, Leipzig, 1931.
109. Diksitar, IHQ VIII, pp. 764-767. (Puranas - a study).
110. Svargārohaṇa-parva of Mch. 5.46 & 6.97.
111. Das Gupta, Vol. III, p. 77.
112. Farquhar, p. 233.
113. Radhakrsnan, p. 706.
114. Bh. P. 5/5/28.
115. Burnouf, p. 109; Wilson, p. XXXI.
116. Bhandārkar, 'Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism' etc.
117. Vaidya, 1925, JBRAS, pp. 144.48; Winternitz, p. 556.
118. Farquhar, p. 233.
119. Eliot, Hinduism and Buddhism, Introduction.
120. D. S. Śāstrī, p. 119.
121. B. N. Sharma, pp. 190-207.
122. Roy, JARS II, p. 74.
123. Hazra, NIA I, p. 523-524.
124. Roy. JARS II, p. 79.
125. Gauda-pāda in his commentary on II. 46 refers to Bh. P. 10/14/4.
126. Māthara-vṛtti under kārīkā 2 corresponds to Bh. P. 1/8/52.
" " " 51 " " " 1/6/35.
127. V. P. III. 6.2.

128. This view is traditional; but cf. also durjana-mukha-capetikā of Rāma-kṛṣṇa Bhaṭṭa.
129. Farquhar, p. 231-2.
130. Sachau, Alberuni's India, p. 131.
131. Bh. P. 11/5/38-40.
132. " 2/4/18 & 2/7/46.
133. Vaidya, JBRAS, 1925, pp. 157-158; Roy, IHQ, pp. 49-53.
134. Bh. P. 1/4/20-31.
135. Matsya Purāṇa, 53 ch. describes the Bhāgavata as follows :-
 Ambarīṣa Śuka-proktam nityam Bhāgavatam śṛṇu.
 pathasva sva-mukhenāpi yadiśchasi bhava-kṣāyam.
 Gaṇḍa Purāṇa describes it thus :-
 grantho'stādaśa-sāhasro dvādaśa-skandha-sammitah.
 hayagrīva-Brahma-vidyā yatra Vrtra-badhas tathā.
 gāyatrī ca samārambhah tad vai Bhāgavatam viduh.
136. Wilson, p. XXIX.
137. Durjana-mukha-capetikā- by Rāma-kṛṣṇa Bhaṭṭa; durjana-mukha-mahā-capetikā by Kāśī-nātha Bhaṭṭa and durjana-mukha-padma-pādukā by an un-known disputant.
138. Burnouf, pp. 63-104; Wilson, p. XXXI, Colebrooke, As.Res. Vol. VII, p. 467.
139. Vaidya, JBRAS p. 145.
140. (a) Farquhar, p. 231; (b) B.N. Sharma, ABORI pp. 183-6;
 (c) K. Śāstrī C.H.I. p. 174.
141. Mādhva-vijaya, IV. 49-52.
142. Hari. pp. 2-3.
143. Bh. P. 2/10/3-7.
144. Hari. p. 3.
145. " p. 28.
146. Bh. P. 1/3/28.
147. Hari. p. 30.
148. Hari. p. 31.
149. " p. 52.

150. Hari p. 39.
151. Bh. P. 1/1/2.
152. Hari. p. 53.
153. " p. 56.
154. " p. 56.
155. " p. 56-7.
156. D. Bh. P. p. 25.
157. S. Śāstrī, ABORI, pp. 241-249.
- 157/1. Farquhar, p. 269.
158. Wilson, p. XXXI.
159. Hazra, NIA, pp. 522-23.
160. D. Bh. P. 1/1/15.
161. Bh. P. 1/4/25.
162. D. Bh. P. 1/3/17.
163. " 3/6/77; 3/9/28.
164. " 3/9/-.
165. Jones, Colebrooke, Weber, Lorinser, Lassen, Muir, Bühler, Hopkins, Grierson, Garbe, Bhāṇḍārkar etc.
166. Grierson, Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. II, Bhakti-mārga, 1909.
167. ibid, p. 535-36.
168. Chanda, p. 165.
169. ibid, pp. 165-6.
170. Vide IHQ, 1930, pp. 315 ff & 437 ff; VII, 1931, pp. 93 ff & 343 ff and 735 ff and VIII, 1932, pp. 64 ff.
171. Sa. Br. XII. 3. 4. 1.
172. Mch. XII. 335, 276-290; also, XII. 335. 39.
173. Gita. 5.4.
174. Mch. XII. 352.22.
175. D.S. Śāstrī, pp. 94-5.

176. Vide S. Krishnasvami Aiyanger, Ancient India, p. 407.
177. Besnagar Inscription B, JRAS, Vol. 2, 1909.
178. Tusam Rock Inscription (400 A.D.)
179. Vide Udaya-giri Cave Inscription of the year 82 of the Gupta Era; also Khoh Copper-plate Inscription of Parivrajaka Maharaja Sanksobha (525 A.D.)
180. The Padma-tantra says :-
 Sūriḥ suhrd Bhāgavataḥ sātṭvataḥ pañca-kāla-vit.
 aikantikah tan-mayaś ca pañca-rātrika ityapi..
 JRAS 1911, p. 935.
 Śaṅkara also calls the Bhāgavatas as Pāñca-rātrins: v. Śaṅkara under II. ii. 42-45. (Brahma-sūtras).
181. Vide Roy Chowdhury, pp. 52-53; and also, Hill, pp. 5-6.
182. Mch. XII. 335.276-90; also, 335. 39.
183. Vide Gītā, 9/32.
184. ibid, 16/24.
185. Bh. P. 1/2/23.
186. Besnagar Inscription (Lüder's Ins. No. 669, ^{Epigraphia} ~~Encyclopaedia~~ Indica, Vol. X, appendix), Ghusundi Inscription (Lüder's Ins. No. 6), Nanaghat Ins. (Lüder's Ins. No. 112).
187. Vide Mo. Crindle, p. 201 & 140.
188. Pāṇini, IV.3.98; and, II.2.34.
189. Pargiter, AIHT p.p. 175-182.
190. Macnicol, Indian Theism, p. 65.
191. Keith JRAS 1915, pp. 842-43; Macnicol, Indian Theism, p.63.
192. Roy Chowdhury, pp. 76-97.
193. Vide Gītā, 4/1-2.
194. " 4/1-2.
195. Hill, p. 9.
196. D. S. Śāstrī, p. 51.
197. Vide Mc. Crindle, p. 201.

198. In the Upaniṣads, 'Bhagavān' means spiritual teacher, vide Ch.Upa. VII th. In the Gītā, the word has been used in the same sense.
199. Mch. XII. 346.11; and, 348.8.
200. Mch. XII. 1.
201. XII. (Śānti-parva).
202. XIII. 1.
203. Doubtful location.
204. Mch. V. 40-45.
205. XII. 174-367.
206. III. 1.
207. D. S. Śāstri, pp. 94-5.
208. XII. 336.9-10. (Mch).
209. XII. 343-75. "
210. XII. 349-80. "
211. Mch. XII. 342-23.
212. Mch. XII. 352.24.
213. v. Nanaghat Cave Inscription (Lüder's Ins. No. 112, Epigraphia Indica, Vol. X, App. p. 121).
214. v. Mc. Crindle, p. 201. This proves that Heracles was worshipped by Saurasonai of Methora; Heracles was Kṛṣṇa; v. Vans Kennedy JRAS 1907, p. 967-8. The country of Surasenakas included Kuru-kṣetra and the land of Matsyas and Pāṇcālas; for this, v. Manu. II.19.
215. Ghusandi Inscription. (v. Re : 186 above)
216. Besnagar Column Inscription. "
217. Nanaghat Inscription. "
218. v. Tusam Rock Inscription (400 A.D.), Gangdhara Inscription of the time of Visva-varma, Udaya-giri Cave Inscription of the 82 year of the Gupta era; Bhitari Pillar Inscription of Skanda-gupta, Junagadh Inscription and so-on.
219. The Khoh Copper-plate Inscription of the Parivrajaka Maharaja Sanksobha; the Khoh Copper-plate Inscription of Jaya-natha etc.
220. Vide Śaṅkara's gloss under II. ii. 42-45. (Brahma-sūtras).

221. Barth, Religions of India, p. 166.
222. Hopkins, the Religions of India, pp. 388, 467.
223. Keith JRAS 1915, p. 841.
224. Keith has discarded the theory of Barth; v. JRAS 1908, p. 171. Hill has also refuted this theory; v. p. 5.
225. (a) Hill, p. 5; (b) Roy Chowdhury, pp. 30-31;
(c) K. Sāstri, p. 181.
226. (a) Ch. Upa. III.17.6. mentions Kṛṣṇa as the son of Devakī
(b) Uttarādhyāyana-Sūtra Lecture XXII.
227. Macdonell, in his 'A History of Sanskrit Literature', says that the earliest of the Upaniṣads can hardly be later than 600 B.C. The Ch. Upa., according to his view, belongs to this period. Hence mention of Kṛṣṇa in the Ch. Upa. makes him earlier than 600 B.C.
228. Roy Chowdhury, p. 39; Pargiter, AIHT pp. 175-182.
229. Bhāṇḍārkar, Seal, Bulher, Grierson, Garbe etc; v. Ind. Ant. 1889, p. 189; Comparative Studies in Vaiṣṇavism and Christianity p. 10; IA 1894, p. 248; IA 1908, p. 253; Garbe, Philosophy of Ancient India, pp. 83-85.
230. (a) Roy Chowdhury, pp. 52-53; (b) Hill, pp. 5-6.
231. (a) Barth, p. 168, p. 181.
(b) Hopkins, The Religions of India, pp. 465, 466.
232. Tadapatrikar, pp. 332-3.
233. The Ind. Ant. 1908, p. 253.
234. Roy Chowdhury, pp. 34-5.
235. " p. 16.
236. Pāṇini, IV.3.98; II.2.34.
237. Mch. I.228.8.
238. Pāṇini, IV.1.99 mentions Nārāyaṇa; Śa. Br. describes him, v. 12.3. 4.1. Nārāyaṇa is the seer of the Rg.Veda, X.90. Hence Nārāyaṇa is older than Vāsudeva.
239. Śa. Br. 12.3.4.1.
240. Mc. Crindle, p. 201.

241. (a) Tai. Ār. X.1.6.
 (b) Date of the Tai. Ār. is probably 300 B.C. v. JRAS, 1915, p. 840, Keith.
242. MCh. I.228.8.
243. Hill, p. 13.
244. (a) Bau. D. Sū. II.5.24.
 (b) Tai. Ār. X.1.6.
245. Hill, pp. 11-12.
246. v. Āpa. D. Sū. and Pāraskara Dharma Sūtra.
247. (a) Anu-gītā, 43-44.
 (b) MCh. XII.43.
248. Hill, p. 1.
249. Vana-parva, 189; Bhīṣma-stava-rāja, 93-94.
250. Tusam Rock Inscription (400 A.D.)
251. Gītā, 4/5-8.
252. Roy Chowdhury, pp. 104-5.
253. go-vala Vārṣṇa is mentioned in Tai. Samhitā II.11.9.3. and Jai. U. Br. I.61 'Sāttvata' is to be found in Sa.Br. XIII.5.4.21.
254. (a) Ch. Upa. III.17.6; (b) MCh. I.109.33;
 (c) Bhitari Pillar Inscription of Skanda-gupta.
255. JRAS, 1915, p. 840.
256. Roy Chowdhury, p. 49.
257. MCh. II.79.23.
258. (a) Roy Chowdhury, pp.39-40; (b) Hill, p.1. f-k.
259. Ruben, p. 188.
260. (a) Kirfel, pp. 298-316; (b) Tadapatrikar, pp. 269-341;
 (c) Katre, AUS, VIII, pp. 194-216.
261. Ch. Upa. III. 17. 6.
262. Pāṇini, IV.1.99.
263. Roy Chowdhury, p. 45.
264. " p. 28.
265. Diksitar, Indian Culture, p. 268.

266. Bh. P. 10/30/35.
267. Sve. Upa. 6.23; 'yasya deve parā bhakti' etc.
268. (a) Vide Yāska ~~while~~ interpreting the word 'indra-bhakti' VII.8. and the comm. of Durgācārya on this.
(b) Pāṇini, 4.3.94.
269. Br. Upa. opening chapter.
270. Atha. Veda, 13.4.
271. (a) Hill, p. 51-52.
(b) Farquhar, p. 230.
(c) Rādhākṛṣṇan, p. 706.
(d) Das Gupta, p. 62 fn.
272. Rg. Veda, III.5; III.8; III. 53. 8.
273. (a) Sa. Br.
(b) Tai. Ar.
274. Rāmāyana.
(a) MCh. XII.340.101-104; XII.349.37.
(b) MCh. XII.349.37.
275. Vide Varāha, Agni, Kūrma, Vāyu and Matsya Purāṇas.
276. Sāttvata Samhitā, IX. 77-83.
- 276/1. Vopadeva, Muktaṭhala p. 48.
277. Katre, AUS, X, p. 58.
278. B. Bhattacharya, p. 31.
279. H.P. Śāstrī, p. 337.
280. Katre, AUS, X, pp. 37-42.
281. Bh. P. 1/3/-; 2/7/-; 6/8/-; 10/40/- and 11/4/-.
282. Bh. P. 11/16/32.
283. v. ABORI, XIV, 1932-3, pp. 186 ff.
284. v. Vedārtha-saṅgraha of Rāmānuja.
285. v. Vedānta-tattva-sāra (Pandit reprints pp.29,37,50 and 54) also B. Sharma, p. 187.
286. Vide Hazra, NIA, pp. 527-8; v. also, catalogue of the library of the India Office Vol. II, Part. I, (Revised edition) sec. I on the Bhāgavata between pp. 356-80.

1. 1/1/1.
2. 1/1/2.
- 2/1. 1/2/11
3. Sat. San. p. 213.
4. Vide Comm. of Bala-deva
Vidyā-bhūṣaṇa on Sat. San. p. 197.
5. Lag. Bh. p. 194.
6. Sat. San. p. 162.
7. Muk. Upa. 18th Śloka.
8. ibid 26th śloka.
9. ibid 27th śloka.
10. Mān. Upa. 2nd stanza.
11. ibid 3rd stanza.
12. ibid 4th stanza.
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