THE PHILOSOPHY OF
THE ŚRĪMAD-BHĀGAVATA

With the compliments
of
The Upacharya
(Vice-Chancellor)

Visva-Bharati
Santiniketan P. O.
West Bengal.
THE PHILOSOPHY OF
THE ŚRĪMAD-BHĀGAVATA

VOLUME I
METAPHYSICS

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FOREWORD

Professor Siddheśvara Bhaṭṭācārya has brought out an excellent book on The Philosophy of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavata. Of the eighteen Purāṇas, the Bhāgavata and the Viṣṇu Purāṇa are the most important.

In this book the author discusses the problems of metaphysics, religion and ethics with vast learning and deep insight. The author relates the teaching of the Bhāgavata to its background in the Upaniṣads and points out how it influenced the later developments of the Vedānta system in Nimbārka, Vallabha and Bengal Vaiṣṇavism.

The nature of Ultimate Reality is described with emphasis on the Bhāgavata doctrine which looks upon the Ultimate as Brahman, Parama-ātman and Bhagavān. Without the idea of an Absolute Being, relativity itself becomes meaningless. For every relative is relative to something else. We cannot hold anything to be relative if we do not go beyond it. The Absolute in its transcendent nature is called Brahman, in its immanent nature Parama-ātman, in its transcendent-immanent nature Bhagavān. Kṛṣṇa is for the Bhāgavata, bhagavān svayam. The discussion of avatāra is enlightening.

The essential feature of the Indian tradition which discards nothing of the past but tolerates even outworn forms is brought out. Since the Divine is too vast to be grasped by ordinary minds we use symbols. Even the outworn creeds and rituals are the records of the sincere searchings of fellowmen of the past.

Though knowledge, jñāna, and action, karman, are
paid adequate attention, the main stress of the Bhāgavata is on devotion, bhakti. It is this emphasis that makes the Bhāgavata a very popular work read in its original Sanskrit version or in the renderings in the regional languages by almost all devout Hindus.

I have no doubt that Professor Bhaṭṭācārya’s work on the Śrīmad-Bhāgavata will remain for long a standard treatise on the subject.

New Delhi
9 August 1960

[Signature]
ABBREVIATIONS

AV Atharva-Veda
Ai B Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa
Ai U Aitareya-Upaniṣad
ABORI Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute
BDS Baudhāyana-dharma-sūtra
BS Brahma-sūtra
BU Brhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad
BVP Brahma-Vaivarta-Purāṇa
Ch U Chāndogya-Upaniṣad
HDS History of Dharmaśāstra
IHQ Indian Historical Quarterly
JARS Journal of the Assam Research Society
JB Jaiminiya-Brāhmaṇa
JBORS Journal of the Bihar Oriental Research Society
JBRAS Journal of the Bombay Royal Asiatic Society
KP Kūrma-Purāṇa
KSS Kātyāyana-śrauta-sūtra
Kaṭ U Kaṭha-Upaniṣad
Kau U Kaushitaki-Upaniṣad
MB Mahābhārata
MP Matsya-Purāṇa
Mahā U Trimāṇadvipā-sūtra-mahā-nārāyaṇa-Upaniṣad
Mān U Māṇḍūkyay-Upaniṣad
Mun U Muṇḍaka-Upaniṣad
NIA New Indian Antiquary
PP Padma-Purāṇa
PU Praśna-Upaniṣad
RPVU The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upanishads
RV Rg-Veda
SB Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa
SBE Sacred Books of the East
ŚU Svetāsvatara-Upaniṣad
SV Śāma-Veda
TA Taittiriya-Āranyaka
TB Taittiriya-Brāhmaṇa
TS Taittiriya-Saṃhitā
TU Taittiriya-Upaniṣad
VD Viśnu-dharmottara
VP Viśnu-Purāṇa
VS Vājasaneyi-Saṃhitā
Vā P Vāyu-Purāṇa
VEDĀ́H PURĀṆĀM KĀṆYĀM CA PRABHUR MITRAＭ PRIYEVA CA.
BODHAYANTĪTI HI PRĀHUS TRI-VAD BHĀGAVATAṀ PUNAH...

Vopadeva (Hari-lilā'mṛta, 1.9)
INTRODUCTION

Cultural history of a nation is comprised of sustained chronicle of its tradition. A particular stage of human history is marked by certain achievements, besides the hopes and aspirations which it had sought to realise. Such hopes and aspirations receding to the past imbue the achievements with a halo. As a result, emerges heritage that guides the present with the promise to build up a better future. The chain of achievements and aspirations constitutes tradition. Tradition therefore is woven with fact and fiction; and, as human history goes back to a many millennium, the freeplay of tradition even in the earliest records of a nation is only what can legitimately be expected.

It is no wonder then that even the Rg-Veda would contain references to the bygone days. Knowledge of this ancient (purāṇa) lore (itiḥāsa) was necessary for the proper understanding of the Rg-Veda. The importance as well as the bulk of such narratives necessitated their compilation in a proper form; and, the discerning mind classified them into two categories—the “Itiḥāsa” and the “Purāṇa”—according as they were looked upon to represent history and mythology respectively. The Atharva-Veda which enumerates the Itiḥāsa (history) and the Purāṇa (mythology) besides the Vedas bears the first testimony to such compilation and classification of the ancient lore into separate Books. But the border line between the Itiḥāsa and the Purāṇa remained undefined; for, the Indian mind, engrossed in delineation of thoughts, was, as a rule, unresponsive to historical needs. Both the Itiḥāsa and the Purāṇa were therefore as much history as myth. It was natural then that the first conscious effort to introduce discrimination between history and myth, as evinced in the Atharva-Veda, would

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3 RV 1.112, 116; 10.39
2 The Matsya-Purāṇa defines the “Purāṇa” as “purātanasya kalpasya purāṇānāṁ vidur budhāḥ 53.62
2 tam itiḥāsaī ca purāṇaṁ ca gāthās ca nārāsamiśc cānuvyacalaṁ

AV 15.6.11
fall into disfavour and a collective term “Itihāsa-Purāṇa” to describe the ancient lore in general would gain popularity instead. The Taittirīya-Brāhmaṇa,⁴ the Baudhāyana-dharma-sūtra,⁵ the Chāndogya-Upaniṣad⁶—all have chosen to designate this type of composition by the collective name “Itihāsa-Purāṇa”.

The attempt to recognise distinction between the Itihāsa and the Purāṇa reasserted itself when two big slices—the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata—were taken out as the Itihāsa, of the mass of ancient lore with its ever-growing volume ensured by its recital at the rituals, still practised to this day. The rest was treated as the Purāṇas. But neither the Epics nor the Purāṇas were, as hitherto before, exclusively historical or mythological. Both were equally history and myth. That the Epics as distinguished from the Purāṇas were nevertheless regarded as the Itihāsa is borne out by the evidence of the Brahma-Vaivarta-Purāṇa⁷ and the observation of Śrīdhara.⁸ Among the reasons which had contributed to the separation of the Epics from the main body of the ancient lore was probably the pre-eminence of Rāma and Kṛṣṇa in the galaxy of the revelations of Viṣṇu, that called for independent treatment for each of them, against the general background of solar and lunar dynasties respectively.

The departure of the two Epics from the main body of the ancient lore offers only a glimpse into the panorama of the evolution of the Purāṇa literature. As already indicated, the Purāṇa in its earliest form (as the old tradition) is presupposed even by the Rg-Veda. Winternitz is inclined to think that “similar to the Vedic Samhitās there existed one or several collections of Itihāhas and Purāṇas, made up of myths and legends, legends of gods and tales of demons, snake dieties, old sages (Ṛṣis) and kings of ancient times”.⁹ The earlier view on this

⁴ itihāsa-purāṇān ca TB 3.12.8.2
⁵ itihāsa-purāṇam BDS 2.5.9.14
⁶ itihāsa-purāṇām paścamarhi vedānāṁ vedam Ch U 7.1.7
⁷ itihāso bhārataḥ ca vālmiki-kāvyam eva ca BVP 4.131.22
⁸ While commenting on 1.1.6 Śrīdhara observes:— itihāso mahābhārataḥ di
⁹ A History of Indian Literature Vol. 1, p. 313.
issue is voiced by Pargiter who, on the basis of a Purāṇa like the Matsya,\(^{10}\) contends that there was one original Purāṇa.\(^{11}\) This view however seems to synchronise with the statement in the Atharva-Veda of the “Purāṇa” in singular, beside the three Vedas, as already noted above.

But irrespective of the fact whether the Purāṇa was originally one or many, it is clear that since the days of the Atharva-Veda the Purāṇa literature was growing by leaps and bounds. This was duly noticed by Āpastamba (not later than the third century B.C., and possibly 150-200 years earlier)\(^{12}\) who “quotes from Purāṇas, viz, three doctrines from a Purāṇa and one from the Bhaviṣyat Purāṇa”.\(^{13}\)

The contents of the Purāṇa literature in course of its evolution seem to have been largely determined by the purpose it was called upon to serve from time to time. Originally, as we have already noticed, the Purāṇa would throw light on the Rg-Vedic allusions. During the Brāhmaṇa period “the recital of narrative poems formed a part of the religious ceremonies at the sacrificial and domestic festivals. Thus the daily recitation of legends of gods and heroes belonged to the preliminary celebration, which lasted a whole year, of the great horse-sacrifice”.\(^{14}\) To serve the needs of the sacrifice the Purāṇas would naturally deal with matters which a sacrifice involves. A sacrifice as a rule involves gods to receive oblations, hermits such as those to whom the Vedic Mantras were revealed, and men specially the kings who would put their financial and other resources at the disposal of the priests to make the sacrifice a success. During the Brāhmaṇa period Prajāpati was the highest of the gods. It was he who originally brought the world into existence. Similarly Manu was the first father of men and kings, while hermits were traced to Prajāpati. The assembly of gods, hermits and kings in a particular sacrifice was thought to be a repetition of the same in bygone days. So, a particular assembly such as that falling

\(^{10}\) purāṇam ekam evāsit tadā kalpāntare’nagha. MP 53.4ab

\(^{11}\) Ancient Indian Historical Tradition, Ch. 4.


\(^{13}\) Ancient Indian Historical Tradition, p. 43.

during the Brāhmaṇa period is conceived to have happened in a particular Manu-cycle which in due course will be changed for another Manu-cycle.

Sacrificial milieu promoted such speculations; and, they seem to have determined the contents which a Purāṇa, in order to form significant part of the sacrifice, should include. The emergence of gods and hermits from Prajāpati involved creation (sarga). They continued for a considerable period to receive offerings and propagate knowledge respectively. The chronicle of their continuance (vaṁśa) had therefore to be recognised. Then, there were kings given to the performance of Vedic sacrifices and their unbroken continuity, so necessary for the continuity of sacrifice itself, finds recognition as well (vaṁśā' nucarita). But the chain of Vedic performances comes to a halt when there is a change-over from one Manu to another. Such change-over means a dissolution (pralaya) followed by a new creation (prati-sarga). The new regime of another Manu (Manvantara) gives fresh impetus to the creation of gods, hermits and kings who give themselves to sacrifices as their predecessors in the previous Manvantara did. A Purāṇa to maintain its dignity as a part of the sacrifice would glorify the heroic deeds of gods and kings designed to rule the world for its material and moral prosperity for long long time. Then the time-worn structure of the world is pulled down and a new one is built up in its stead.

Creation (sarga), re-creation (prati-sarga) after dissolution, genealogy of gods and hermits (vaṁśa), history of dynasties (vaṁśa'nucarita) and Manu-periods of time (Manvantara) had therefore constituted the five categories under which diverse old materials were organised, it may be said, during the Brāhmaṇa period. Compilations containing these five were called Purāṇas. The Viṣṇu-Purāṇa defines a Purāṇa in terms of these five categories. It is difficult to state whether Āpas-

\[\text{sarga ca prati-sarga ca vaṁśa-manvantarāni ca.}
\text{svaśveteśu kathyaṁ vaṁśā'nucaritāṁ ca yat. }\]\n\[\text{VP 3.6.25}
\text{The Matsya-Purāṇa defines in the same vein:—}
\text{sarga ca prati-sarga ca vaṁśo manvantarāṇi ca.}
\text{vaṁśā'nucaritāṁ caiva purānaṁ paṇca-lakaṇaṁ. }\]\n\[\text{53.64}
\text{So does the Brahma-Vaiśnava:—}
\text{sarga ca prati-sarga ca vaṁśo manvantarāṇi ca.}
\text{vaṁśā'nucaritāṁ vipra purānaṁ paṇca-lakaṇaṁ. }\]\n\[\text{4.131.6}\]
tamba found the Purāṇas of his time to consist in all the five topics. But as both the extant Purāṇas as well as the Mahābhārata do contain these five topics they may be said with some conviction to have emerged from the Itihāsa-purāṇa consisting in the five topics (pañca-lakṣaṇa). The Viṣṇu-Purāṇa states that having compiled the four Vedas, Vyāsa had effected for Romaharṣaṇa, a bard (sūta) whom he had selected for imparting the teachings on the Itihāsa and the Purāṇa, a compilation (sāṁhitā) of the Purāṇa with Ākhyānas, Upa-khyānas, Gāthās and Kalpas, i.e., stories, anecdotes, ballads and descriptions of vast cosmic periods. According to the evidence of the Matsya-Purāṇa, Vyāsa composed the Mahābhārata after he had finished the compilation of all the Purāṇas. Although the extant Purāṇas are on the whole later than the extant Mahābhārata, the Purāṇas in their earlier form may be construed to have preceded the Mahābhārata. That such Purāṇas did exist is borne out from the citations of Āpastamba, as noticed before.

Both the bulks of compilations—the Itihāsas (represented by the Epics) and the Purāṇas (represented by the eighteen Mahā-Purāṇas and the Upa-Purāṇas of the same number)—originally meant by Vyāsa for his disciple Romaharṣaṇa, now addressed themselves to the task of elucidating the teachings of the Vedas. Already the Chāndogya-Upaniṣad had raised the status of the Itihāsa-Purāṇa by recognising it as the fifth Veda and full implications of this prestige were sought to be realised by the Epics on the one hand and the Purāṇas on the other. As a contrast to the Vedic orthodoxy, the Epics and the Purāṇas threw open their gates to all, irrespective of caste and creed; and, the different waves of human incursion into the Indian soil embraced them as their Vedas. And, they were not mistaken.

16 roma-harsaṇa-nāmāṇam mahā-buddhiṁ mahā-muniḥ. sūtaṁ jaigrāha iṣyaṁ sa itihāsa-purāṇayoh... VP 3.4.10
17 ākhyāniś cā'pyupākhyānair gāthābhīḥ kalpa-suddhiḥbhīḥ. purāṇa-sāṁhitāṁ caśre purāṇaṛtha-viṣayadāḥ... VP 3.6.15
18 aṣṭā-dala purāṇāṁ kṛtvā satyavati-sutaḥ. bhāratā'khyānam akhilaṁ caśre tadbapṛśhitam... MP 53.69
19 itihāsa-purāṇābhyāṁ vedāṁ samupabṛśhitam. bhīteya-paśrutāṁ vedo mām aṣṭam praharṣiyati... MB 1.1.260; VāP 1.1.181
20 itihāsa-purāṇam pañcamaṁ vedānāṁ vedam Ch U 7.1.7
The Epics and the Purāṇas did bring to them the message of the Vedas, their cardinal teachings, in popular assimilable form of myths and fables some of which are their innovations, besides drawing upon the old historical tradition. But it was not a one-way traffic. The populace freely contributed its share of thoughts and feelings which found rightful place in the Epics and the Purāṇas. Thus Tīrtha-stories, temple-worship, indigenous medical science, witchcraft—in fact, whatever was deemed to be of some use to humanity, religious or secular—found entrance in the Purāṇas so that they became in time encyclopaedia of world-knowledge.

The bards—Romaharṣaṇa, his disciples and their disciples and so on—nourished under their loving care the Purāṇa literature to attain a gigantic magnitude in times that followed. Among the materials that contributed to its growth the influence of Vaiṣṇavism is conspicuously felt. Under its auspices the five topics of a Purāṇa underwent further elaboration. Creation (sarga) was viewed under two heads, subtle and gross. The subtle creation stopped with the emergence of the cosmic egg (aṇḍa). Then followed the creation of the fourteen worlds—the gross creation. While the subtle creation was called by the old name “sarga”, gross creation attained the name “visarga” i.e., differentiation. As “pratisarga” presupposes deluge, both physical annihilation (nirodha) as well as salvation (mukti) attainable by total disappearance of the physical world that ensnares the individual soul, came under deluge, the part of pratisarga. The glorious deeds of gods and kings can thrive only in an atmosphere of law and order (sthāna) ensured by God, the supreme being, Who looks after the welfare (poṣaṇa) of the gods and kings (including ordinary men) with the help of His devotees as well as by His incarnations (avatāra). But the performance of ephemeral deeds on the part of gods and kings can only add to their material lust (karma-vāsanā). Emancipation lies beyond creation. Indeed one should go for that to the root of creation, Brahman. The stories of gods, hermits and kings should therefore be understood to further the cause of God when gods, hermits and kings submit themselves to the divine purpose. To discover the hand of God in creation, sustenance and destruction is to prepare the ground
for emancipation. The treatment of different topics in the Purāṇas is therefore significant. It raises the mind to the high metaphysical plane leading to the realisation of the supreme truth (Brahman). The elaboration of the five topics to ten as found in the Bhāgavata²¹ and the Brahma-Vaivarta²² suggests the orientation of the Purāṇa literature from their mundane character to high metaphysics.

It was therefore in fitness of things that the period of the “parama-bhāgavata” Imperial Guptas, marked by the renaissance of Hinduism with its predominantly Vaiṣṇava strain, would be betrothed to the compiling of some four lacs of verses and prose passages out of the medley of myriads of materials²³ deposited in the Purāṇa literature through its growth over centuries.²⁴ These compilations mirrored Hinduism of the period with its undertone of Vaiṣṇavism carefully enthused into them by the Gupta emperors. The eighteen Books into which these compilations were rearranged and which as a special mark of distinction acquired the name “mahā-purāṇa” (the great Purāṇas) bespeak their preference for Vaiṣṇavism. The Viṣṇu-Purāṇa enumerates the Mahā-Purāṇas in an order which it

²¹ atra sargo visargaś ca sthānam poṣaṇam utayaḥ. maṇvantarēśānukathā nirodho muktir ārayaḥ...
dāsamasya viśuddhyarthas navānāṃ iha lakṣaṇam. varaṇyantī mahātmānaḥ śrutiśrīrthena caśīnasā...
bhūtamātrendriyād-dhiyāṁ janma sarga udāḥtaḥ.
brahmaṇo guṇa-vatsamyād visargaḥ pauruṣaḥ śmṛtaḥ...
sthitā vaikuṇṭha-vijayaḥ poṣaṇam tad-anugrahaḥ.
maṇvantaraṃi sad-dharma utayaḥ karma-vāsanāḥ...
avatārāvaśu caivalaḥ kareś cāśāyānutariṇām.
puṁsām iśa-kathāḥ prakṛtā nānāḥ khyānopābhirmhitāḥ...
nirodhośya'nuśayanam atmānaḥ saha śaktibhiḥ.
muktir hitāvanyathā-rūpaṁ śvarūpeṇa vyavasthitāḥ...
ābhāsaḥ ca nirodhaḥ ca yato'śadhyavastiyate. sa ārayaḥ paraṁ brahma paramātmataḥ śabdhyate...

²² BVP 4.131.8-10.
²³ ṃpurāṇam ekam evāsīt ṣata-koti-pravistaram MP 53.4ad
²⁴ evaṁ ṃpurāṇa-sarēḥkhyāṇāṁ catur-lakṣaṁ udāḥtaṁ.
aṣṭā-dāśa-ḥpurāṇāṁ nāma caitad vidur budhāḥ...
BVP 4.131.21
claims to be chronological. The same order and the same names (with slight variations) are noticeable in several other Purāṇas such as the Matsya and the Brahma-Vaivarta. This shows that the special distinction attributed to the eighteen collections was refused to other collections (Upa-Purāṇas) consisting of materials both old and new. At best such other collections, which were also correspondingly held to be eighteen in number, were looked upon as the outgrowths of the eighteen Mahā-Purāṇas. The eighteen Mahā-Purāṇas have since been enjoying their exalted status as the interpreters of the Vedic truths, besides serving as the repositories of diverse materials, religious as well as secular, in response to their needs to feed the popular mind. To accentuate the difference between the Mahā-Purāṇas and the Upa-Purāṇas it was said that while the former dealt with ten topics the latter confined themselves to five only.

The Śrīmad-Bhāgavata is the fifth, according to the order laid down by the Viṣṇu-Purāṇa, among the eighteen Mahā-purāṇas just as the Purāṇa is the fifth among the Vedas. It has freely drawn upon the Mahābhārata, the Viṣṇu-Purāṇa and the Hari-varṇa, for materials. In fact the fire of


26 BVP 4.133.11-20

27 anyanyupapurāṇi munibhiḥ kathitāni tu. aṣṭā-dala purāṇāni śrutvā samśeṣpato doṣaḥ. aṣṭaṁ sanat-kumāroktaṁ nārasinham atāḥ param. triyaṁ skandaṁ uddyātaṁ kumāreṇa tu bhāṣitam. catur-adhi śiva-dharmākhyaṁ sākyan nandīa-bhāṣitam. durvāsaktaṁ āścaryāṁ nārādiyāṁ atāḥ param. kāpiṁaṁ vāmanāṁ caiva tathaiva anāseritam. brahmaṁdaṁ vāruṇaṁ caiva kālikāḥvayaṁ eva ca. māheśvaranāṁ tathā śaṁbāṁ sauraṁ sarvārtha-sāncayaṁ. parāsaroktam māricam tathaiva bhārgavaḥvayaṁ. KP 1.1.16-20

28 BVP beginning with sargaṁ ca prati-sargaṁ ca etc. concludes:— etad upa-purāṇāni lakṣaṇaṁ ca vidur budhāḥ. 4.131.7ab
INTRODUCTION

Vaisnāvismin that was brooding through the Mahābhārata round the figure of Śrī-Kṛṣṇa grew in intensity in the Viṣṇu-Purāṇa and the Hari-vanśa before it burst into flames in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavata. For instance, Kṛṣṇa was just a Descent (āvatāra) of Viṣṇu though he had then grown into an exalted figure in the Mahābhārata. In the Viṣṇu-Purāṇa and more so in the Hari-vanśa, he was absorbing the essence of Viṣṇu in his own self, as Viṣṇu's sportive nature was gradually coming to the forefront. In the Bhāgavata, Śrī-Kṛṣṇa was "Bhagavān", the highest reality, the perennial source of bliss and enchantment. Life sprang from Kṛṣṇa, which by the law of its own distributed itself into infinite dimensions of innumerable physical worlds. All manifestations, whether spiritual or physical, demonstrate the freeplay of divine play of the master artist. This was Kṛṣṇa of the Bhāgavata although the last vestige of his original character as a Descent of Viṣṇu is still echoed in the Bhāgavata.

One might say that Bhagavān Śrī-Kṛṣṇa of the Śrīmad-Bhāga
vata is the highest Vedic truth that incorporated in its all-comprehensive nature Vedic Viṣṇu whose stature had been developing steadily through the Vedas, the Brāhmaṇas and the Upani
dsads, as it embraced the historical Kṛṣṇa, the son of Devaki, mentioned in the Chāndogya-Upaniṣad.

The sublime metaphysical plane of the Bhāgavata explains why the Bhāgavata and in its wake the Brahma-Vaivarta have elaborated the original five constituent topics of a Purāṇa into ten. Śrīdhara has ascribed great distinction to the Bhāgavata on the ground that it was the Bhāgavata where all the ten topics, mentioned above, have received adequate treatment although the extant Purāṇas of distinction (Mahā-Purāṇas) hardly accommodated all the ten topics. The same metaphysical attitude has encouraged the Bhāgavata to propound that the first nine topics are intended merely to bring the Ultimate Reality to clearer perspective. Creation (sarga) and recreation (prati-sarga) of all physical existence from Brahmā down to the clod were therefore held only to expose its transi-

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20 Śrīdhara comments on 12.7.10:—
daśabhīr etair laksanair—arthair yuktam mahā-purāṇam viduḥ
21 daśamasya viṣudhyartham navānām iha laksanam,
sa ādrayah param brahma paramāmeti sabdyate... 2.10.2ab, 7cd
toriness.\textsuperscript{32} The staggering mass of physical planes is just a demonstration of the gross form of God, intended to serve as the first step of the progressively spiritual journey to His subtle essence.\textsuperscript{33} Genealogy (\textit{vamśa} and \textit{vamśa\'nucarita}) is just a peg to hang the stories, anecdotes and narratives of gods, hermits and kings (including men). They need not therefore be taken literally. They are invoked only to enhance the fervour of knowledge and detachment.\textsuperscript{34} Similarly \textit{Manvantara} may be viewed as a milestone to the grand march of time symbolizing the infinitude of God.\textsuperscript{35} So, creation and destruction belong to God who, by His devotees—gods, hermits and men (including kings)—and also by His direct Incarnations, maintains law and order in His creation and thus furthers His divine cause, between creation and destruction. This is God’s sustenance. If the created being realises His divine purpose it enters His eternal abode of bliss and light. If on the other hand it indulges in materialism it has to court the cycles of births and deaths. A rational being has to utilise its power of discrimination in this respect, which is a natural gift from God.

Such revolutionary attitude towards old values, nourished so tenderly in the \textit{Purāṇas}, naturally provoked serious questions. Was the \textit{Bhāgavata} in face of such radical view entitled to the great distinction reserved for the celebrated eighteen? Should not the \textit{Devi-Bhāgavata} with all the five traditional constituents of a \textit{Purāṇa} have claim for that distinction instead? Did not the approach of the \textit{Bhāgavata}, so fundamentally different from that of the other \textit{Mahā-Purāṇas}, apart from the question of its grandiose style, warrant its composition by a hand other than that of Vyāsa, the compiler of the other \textit{Purāṇas}? Could not Vopadeva (12th century), the grammarian and the celebrated author of the \textit{Muktā-phala} and the \textit{Hari-Līlā-mṛta}, the two

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{32} nityadā sarva-bhūtānāṁ brahmādīnāṁ parantarāpa.
\item \textsuperscript{33} utpatti-pralayāvēka sūkṣma-jñāh sampracaksite.\textsuperscript{35} 12.4.35
\item \textsuperscript{34} śrūtvā yathā sthūla-sūkṣma-rūpaṁ bhagavato yatikḥ.
\item \textsuperscript{35} sthūle nirjītam ātmānaṁ śanaiḥ sūkṣmaṁ dhiyā nayed iti.\textsuperscript{35} 5.26.39
\item \textsuperscript{36} kathā imāṁ te kathitā mahiyasāṁ
\item \textsuperscript{37} vityā lokēṣu yathā pareyusām.
\item \textsuperscript{38} vijñāna-vairāgya-vivakṣayā vibho
\item \textsuperscript{39} vaco vibhūtiṁ na tu pāramārthīyaṁ.\textsuperscript{35} 12.3.14
\item \textsuperscript{40} antaḥ puṣṭa-rūpeṇa kāla-rūpeṇa yo bahiḥ.
\item \textsuperscript{41} samanvetyeṣa sattvānāṁ bhagavān ātmā-māyayā.\textsuperscript{35} 3.26.18
\end{itemize}
Vaiṣṇava works, be plausibly credited with the authorship of this work which is admittedly a late composition?

It must be admitted that questions like these have echoed through centuries. The attempt of at least two Purāṇas viz, the Matsya and the Padma to define the Bhāgavata reflects this doubt about the genuineness of the Bhāgavata to be considered as one of the eighteen Mahā-Purāṇas. Śrīdhara (14th century) invokes these definitions to disabuse one’s mind of such doubt. The Bhāgavata, he argues, is completely pledged to the highest knowledge (brahma-vidyā) and so, he concludes, it has every claim to be regarded as a Mahā-Purāṇa, and none else should rob it of this status. Nilakaṇṭha, the commentator on the Devī-Bhāgavata, is also aware of this problem; but, he tries to forge a compromise by admitting the claim of both the Purāṇas. The question still looms large at least in some minds as three polemical writings on the same issue would indicate.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to deny the great distinction of a Mahā-Purāṇa to the Śrīmad-Bhāgavata which by virtue of its “enormous popularity and extraordinary reputation” is acknowledged as the “most famous in India”. The extremely numerous manuscripts and prints of the text itself, as well as of many commentaries on the whole work and of separate explanatory writings on parts of it in addition to the translations into Indian vernaculars bear witness to this. In-

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38 yatraḥ dhikṣyta gāyatrim varṇyate dharma-vistaraḥ. vrtrasura-vadhopetaṁ tad bhāgavatam ucyate... MP 53.20

39 granthoṣṭā-dala-sāhasro dvādāsa-skandha-saṁyutah. parikṣic-chuka-saṁvādaḥ śrīmad-bhāgavataḥ-bhidhaḥ...

PP, Uttara-khaṇḍa 195.29

Śrīdhara comments on 1.1.1. —

gāyatryā prārambhena gāyatryā kho-brahma-vidyā-rūpam etat purāṇam iti darśitam. yathoktaṁ matsya-purāṇe... parāpāntare ca... padma-purāṇe ca... ata eva bhāgavatam nāmaṁ na ityapi nāśaṁ kāṇīyam.

30 Devī-Bhāgavata-Purāṇa—Comm. of Nilakaṇṭha, p. 25.


sprired by "its crude simplicity and grandeur of the style of the Vedas, heroic nobleness of martial epos and great richness of modern poetry", Burnouf introduced it to Europe. It is "the first Purāṇa that has been edited and translated in Europe". If all these speak for its distinction surely the Bhāgavata deserves due cognizance as a "Mahā-Purāṇa", indeed one of the best, if not the best, of the celebrated eighteen. The question of its composition by Vopadeva melts away by Alberuni's (about 1030 A.D.) reference to the Bhāgavata in which, according to his view, Vāsudeva has been extolled. So, the Śrīmad-Bhāgavata had existed at least a couple of centuries before Vopadeva was born.

Nevertheless it has been admitted, as it has been admitted by the Bhāgavata itself, that the work does contain materials which are of late origin. It is therefore relevant now to enquire into the date of its composition. The different suggestions on this score are as follows:—

(i) Burnouf, Wilson, Colebrooke 1300 A.D.
(ii) Bhāṇḍārkar 200 years before Ānandatīrtha.
(iii) Vāidya, Winternitz 1000 A.D.
(iv) Farquhar 900 A.D.
(v) Eliot 800 or 900 A.D.
(vi) D. S. Śāstri 825 — 850 A.D.

Burnouf's Précifce
Sachau, Alberuni's India, p. 131
"tvayā khalu purāṇāni setihāsāni caṅagha. ākhyaṭānyappadhitāni dharma-sāstrāni yānyuta... pumśām ekāntataḥ śreyas tin naḥ samśītum arhasi... 1.1.6, 9cd
Winternitz, A History of Indian Literature Vol. I, p. 556
R. G. Bhāṇḍārkar, Vaiśṇavism, Śaivism and other Minor Religious Systems, p. 49
Vāidya, 1925, JBRAS, pp. 144-48; Winternitz op. cit., p. 556
Farquhar, An Outline of the Religious Literature of India, p. 233
Eliot, Hinduism and Buddhism, Intro.
D. S. Śāstri, The Concise History of Vaiśṇava Religion (Marāṭhī), p. 119
(vii) Kṛṣṇamūrti Śarmā  800 A.D.  
(viii) A. N. Roy  550 — 650 A.D.  
(ix) Hazra  600 A.D.  

Reference to the Vaiṣṇava Bhāgavata by Alberuni fixes the upper limit to 1030 A.D. The Bhāgavata pays high tribute to the Tamil saints who in South India had fostered emotional devotion during the first millennium of the Christian era. It also refers to the Hūnas (about 500 A.D.) embracing Vaiṣṇavism. The materials that augmented the structure of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavata may therefore be said to fall between 500 A.D. and 1030 A.D. That the Bhāgavata received accretion of materials from South India especially from the Tamil region is corroborated by an episode from the Padma-Purāṇa: Devotion (bhakti) with her twin sons, knowledge (jñāna) and detachment (vairāgya), once travelled through different regions of South India until she together with her sons reached Vṛndāvana. Blooming youth surged upon her figure the moment she entered Vṛndāvana; but, her sons fainted away, shattered by long journey. Overwhelmed with grief she called upon the assistance of Nārada, the great devotee, who by the recitation

52 Kṛṣṇamūrti Śarmā, ABORI XIV, Parts I-II, 1932-33, pp. 190-207
53 Roy, JARS II, p. 79
54 Hazra, NIA I, pp. 523-524
55 kalau khala bhaviṣyante nārāyaṇa-paṇḍyaṇaḥ. kvacit kvacit mahāraja draviḍeṣu ca bhūrīlaḥ. tāmraparṇi nadi yatra kṛtamālā payarvini. kāverī ca mahā-puṇyā pratikī ca mahā-nadi. ye pīvanti jalarām tāsām manujā manujelvara. praśo bhaktā bhagavati vāsudeve‘malāśayāḥ. 11.5.39ed, 40
56 Winternitz, op. cit., p. 525
57 kīrata-hūṇa‘ndha-pulinda-pukkaraḥ ābhīra-sukma yavanaḥ khalā‘dayāḥ. ye‘nye ca pāpā yad-upāśraya‘śrayāḥ sudhyaṁ tasmā prabhaviṣṇave namaḥ. 2.4.18 vide also 2.7.46
of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavata brought about their rejuvenation. ⁵⁸

The above story is highly suggestive. There is evidence⁵⁹ to show that as early as the first century B.C.⁶⁰ Vaiṣṇavism had travelled from North to South. It is also said⁶¹ that some of the Purāṇas were imported from North to South in the early Christian era. It can therefore be legitimately presumed that the Śrīmad-Bhāgavata was one of them to receive early attention of South. So, devotion practised by the Tamil saints might have been adumbrated by the Bhāgavata climate. The development of devotion on amorous basis (in which God was conceived as the eternal lover and the devotees His beloved) naturally laid emphasis on the emotional aspect of devotion in which knowledge and detachment fell into insignificance. Perhaps, more than this could not be expected from the Tamil saints either, the bulk of whom comprised illiterate persons. The story of the Padma-Purāṇa suggests the amalgam of the boisterous devotion of the Tamil saints with that of the North Indian tradition of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavata. Such tradition therefore

⁵⁸ ṣṛṣṭaṁ vṛṇḍāvanam tatra yatra lilā harer abhūt 193.38
ekā tu taruṇī tatra niṣaṅṇā khinna-mānasā.
dvau vṛddhau patitau pāśuve niḥśvasantāvacetanau,
śuṣrūṣantī prabodhantī rudati ca tayoḥ pūrah.
193.39cd, 40
nārada uvāca
kā tvam etau ca kau bhadre 193.45a
bālovaça
aham bhaktir iti khyātā etau me tanau varau.
jjāna-vairāgya-nāmānau kāla-yogena jārjārav.
193.47
upanā vṛdeṣe cāhaṁ karṇāte vṛddhim āgatā.
sthitā kiñcin mahārāṣṭre gurijāre jīrṇātāṁ gatā.
193.51
vṛṇḍāvanam idam praptā daiṣa-yogena nārada.
jātāhaṁ tu punar bāla navineva surūpiṇī.
193.53
imau tu layilāvatra sutaṁ me kliṣṭa-mānasau.
ati vṛddhau ārthajya gaṁtum nāhaṁ kṣamādhunā.
193.54
nārada uvāca
upekṣātāḥ kalau manau vṛddhua jātāu sutaṁ tava.
tathāpi cintāṁ muica tvam upāyaṁ cintayamyaham.
194.12cd, 13ab
kumāraṁ ucūḥ
vedopaniṣadāṁ sārāj jātā bhāgavati kathā.
194.63
śrīmad-bhāgavataṁ nāma purāṇam rasam eva hi.
bhakti-jñāna-vīraṅgāṁ saukhyāyaiva prakāśitam.
194.67
nāradaḥ suprasannatmā kumārān abhyavādayat.
198.65cd
bhaktiḥ sutābhyaṁ sahitā nāradeṇa pravaritā,
bhū-maṇḍale samastēṁ tadā prabhṛtī śānamaka.
198.67

⁵⁹ Bhāṇḍārkar, Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism etc., p. 4.
⁶⁰ Dīkṣitar, IHQ VIII, pp. 764-767
must be said to have pre-existed the amalgam resulting in the enrichment of the structure of the Bhāgavata by a dominant tone of amorous devotion.

It has therefore to be presumed that the North Indian tradition of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavata which maintained a unique balance between bhakti on the one hand and jñāna as well as vairāgya on the other, (i.e., between emotion and reason) did exist before the particular development of emotion of the Tamil saints came to meet it. This fact tends to offer additional weight to the view that the Purāṇas in their essentials did exist before 500 A.D. to be overhauled into eighteen Mahā-Purāṇas during the Gupta period. One may add to this the fact that the Purāṇas did exist also before Āpastamba. The conclusion therefore seems to emerge that the Śrīmad-Bhāgavata has three phases of development: Its earliest form consists of very old materials; it was given the shape of a Mahā-Purāṇa—and this is the second phase—in early Christian era; and, its last and final phase represents the contribution of the Tamil saints. Viewed from this point of view the extant Śrīmad-Bhāgavata may be said to be contemporaneous with Tamil saints. Being a composition of growth it can hardly be assigned to a particular date. The three phases of development suggest, on the contrary, that the Bhāgavata was “at least thrice revised”.

The Hari-tīlā’myta, the tradition in the Bhāgavata itself and Burnouf all support this point of view.

But in spite of its manifold revisions, the Śrīmad-Bhāgavata “bears the stamp of a unified composition”. And this character, it is humbly submitted, has encouraged the author to make an attempt to discover the metaphysical perspective, “the wood behind the trees”. The author has no fascination for particular doctrines and has chosen to be guided by Śrīdhara, the earliest and universally accepted commentator on the Bhāgavata, in understanding the literal meanings of the passages of the text; and, as a rule, the same word has been expected to

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63 1.1.2, 2.2.8, 2.9.43, 2.1.8, 3.4.3, 3.8.7-9, 8.13.7, 12.4.41-42.
64 Burnouf, p. 105
65 Winternitz, op. cit., p. 556
66 Farquhar, op. cit., p. 257.
yield the same meaning although it might have been scattered throughout the work. The author is alive to the fact that opinions are liable to differ both with regard to the principles of interpretation adopted here and also to the exposition given here of the basic tenets of the Bhāgavata. To err is also human and the author is only too conscious of his limitations. The author has tried to express his loyalty to the spirit of this great work that unravels consummation of sublime metaphysics and spiritual practice which had undergone dynamic growth from the Rg-Veda onwards. Indeed the Bhāgavata has enshrined Indian religious thought. If the present attempt succeeds in touching upon the fringe of this cultural heritage of India, all pains will be amply rewarded.

The author's mind goes back to 1940 when sitting at the feet of the late Mm. Pramathanātha Tarkabhūṣaṇa, the then Director of Sanskrit Studies, Benares Hindu University, the author imbibed inspiration for this work, together with mellow light of the morning sun. The author respectfully remembers how Mm. Gopinātha Kavirāja, the fountain of Oriental scholarship of the present century, initiated the author to the field of research and nursed his steps in the groping of his way into this treasure island. The same field has since been exploited for Ph.D. of the University of London, in which the guidance of Dr A. V. Kunst was always available, and for D.Litt. of the University of Lille (France) under the guidance of Professor O. Lacombe.

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S. BHATTACHARYA
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CHAPTER I

THE STRUCTURE OF REALITY

The Śrīmad-Bhāgavata opens with spiritual contemplation of Supreme Truth—satyaṁ paraṁ dhīmahī.\(^3\) It is the pledge of allegiance on the part of the Bhāgavata to a precious tradition. "May we contemplate the essence (bhārgas) of the luminous Deity (Savītr)"—is the anxious yearning of the ancient seer of the Rg-Vedic hymn\(^2\) for "His sovereign (vareṇya) essence motivates our psychic being (dhiyāḥ)". The Sāma-Veda,\(^3\) the Vājasaneyi-Samhitā,\(^4\) the Taittirīya-Samhitā,\(^5\) the Taittirīya-Āranyaka,\(^6\) the Brhadāranyaka-Upaniṣad\(^7\)—in short, the Vedic tradition—have held fast to this eternal craving. It is no wonder then that the Bhāgavata which professes to be the "mature fruit" (galitāṁ phalam) of the Vedas,\(^8\) should duly catch the same flame. Indeed, the philosophy of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavata is fed and nourished with the wealth of ideas, that has made its way into the mind of man, as the luminous Deity—Savītr or Viṣṇu—gradually unfolded His divine nature in his intellect and religious imagination.

The Bhāgavata method of approach to Reality is characteristically Upaniṣadic. In the wake of the Śvetāsvatara-Upaniṣad,\(^0\) for example, the Bhāgavata starts metaphysical enquiry from the self within (Jīva); and, as its answer, reaches the all-

\(^1\) satyaṁ paraṁ dhīmahī. 1.1.1.
\(^2\) tat savitur vareṇyaṁ bhargo devasya dhīmahi dhiyo yo naḥ pracodayāt. RV 3.62.10.
\(^3\) SV 1462.
\(^4\) VS 3.35; 22.9; 30.2; 36.3.
\(^5\) TS 1.5.4.6; 4.1.11.1.
\(^6\) TA 1.11.2.
\(^7\) saisā gāyatrīyastamīṁs turiye darśate pade paro-rajasī pratiṣṭhitā. BU 5.14.4.
\(^8\) nigama-kalpa-taror galitaṁ phalam pīvata bhāgavataṁ rasam ā-layam. 1.1.3 ac.
\(^9\) yadātma-tattvena tu brahma-tattvāṁ dipopameneha yuktāḥ prapaśyet Sve U 2.15 ab.
comprehensive Supreme Self (Brahman). “What is the essence (tattva) of the limited soul?”—this is the question. And, the answer is: “The essence (of the limited soul) is non-dual consciousness—so declare those who have realised Truth”. This is apparently a plain statement of Truth without any string of factional denomination although the Bhāgavata admits that Truth is variously described as Brahman, Paramātman and Bhagavat.

Indeed the Bhāgavata statement of Truth as non-dual consciousness is the affirmation of the Vedic position summed up in the Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa before it was submitted to the Brhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad. The Brāhmaṇa pays adoration to the self-luminous (darśata) state of existence (pada), that stands supreme—the fourth state (turiya) beyond worldliness (pararajas). The Upaniṣad throws light upon this fourth state by taking into consideration the other three states of lower degree but having mutual hierarchy. The first state consists, according to the Upaniṣad, of the three worlds, the second state, of wisdom incorporated in the Vedas, the third state, of Life (prāṇa) distributed in five vital airs and the fourth state, of that which glows over all. The Upaniṣad identifies the four metrical feet of the Sāvitrī-Mantra (quoted above)—so called because it consists of the invocation of Savitṛ—with the four padas (states of existence) brought in by the Upaniṣad for the purpose of the exposition of the supreme, the fourth state of existence. As the Brhadāraṇyaka is a direct descendant of the Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa, the trend of thought, glimpsed both in the Brāhmaṇa and in the Upaniṣad, is highly suggestive. It suggests, for instance, that philosophical speculations had a long and important course of development through the Vedic literature round the concept

10 jivasya tattva-jiñāsā. 1.2.10 c.
   vadantī tat tattva-vidas tatvaṁ yaj jñānam advayam. 1.2.11 ab.
11 brahmaṁ paramātmeti bhagavān iti sabdyate. 1.2.11 cd.
12 namas te turiyāya darśatāya padāya paro-rajase asau ado mā prāpat.
SB 14.8.15.10.

18 BU 5.14.1-7 especially the following:—sa ya imāṁ trīṁ lokāṁ pūrṇāṁ
   prati-grhnyāt so 'syā prathamān padam āpnyāt. atha yatīyāṁ trayi
   vidyā yas tāvat prati-grhnyāt so 'syā etad diviyāṁ padam āpnyāt. atha
   āyav idaṁ prāṇi yas tāvat prati-grhnyāt so 'syā etat tṛitiyāṁ padam āp-
   nuyāt. athāśya etad eva turiyāṁ darśatāṁ padam paro-rajā ya esa tapatī,
   naiva kenacanaṁ 'pyam kuta u etāvat prati-grhnyāt. ibid. 6.
of Savitṛ or Viṣṇu considered as the supreme state of existence (turīya pada), allowing, for the clear perspective of this fourth state of existence, the consideration of the other three padas as well. From such philosophical speculations finally emerged Reality as non-dual consciousness described, as the Bhāgavata says, by different terms—Brahman, Paramātman and Bhagavat. It is worthwhile therefore to trace the landmarks of this ontological evolution recorded in the Bhāgavata in its finished form. For this purpose, we now know where to go. We have to look beyond the Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa to the earliest available source, the Rg-Veda. We shall then follow up the steps through the Upaniṣads before the final stage found entrance in the Bhāgavata.

The riddle of creation has always engaged the attention of man. Whence had the world come? As early as the Rg-Veda this question has found expression in what is known as the Nāsadīya-Sūkta14 believed to be “the most important in the history of the philosophy of India”,15 “the finest effort of the imagination of the Vedic poet” and “nothing else equals it”.16 The intellectual enquiry discards the possibility of any worldly object to pre-exist creation, because that apparently involves an inherent contradiction. How could a phenomenon pre-exist its own self? The enquiry then comes upon One that, endowed with its own power (Sva-dhā), breathed (ānīt) without breath (a-vātam).17 But scepticism has no resting place. It admits that intuitive vision (manīśā) can definitely realise the ground (bandhu) of all truths (sat) in the heart of man (hṛdī).18 Nevertheless scepticism by itself ends in dispair, losing its way in the labyrinth of contradictions. It wonders at last if the Master (Viṣṇu) of creation (asya adhyakṣaḥ) who lives in “high heaven” (parame vyoman) knows the secret of it.19

14 RV 10.129.
15 Keith RPVU, p. 435.
16 ibid. p. 437.
17 ānīt a-vālan svadhayā tad ekaṁ
tasmād dhānany na paraḥ kimcaṁ sa RV 10.129.2cd.
18 sato bandhum asati nir-avindan
hṛdī praśīyā kavayo maniśā. ibid. 4ab.
19 yo aśya adhyakṣaḥ parame vyoman
i-so aṅga veda yadi vā na veda. ibid. 7cd.
But this Sākta need not be interpreted as inconclusive. It merely suggests the inadequacy of intellectual enquiry as it advocates spiritual vision on the ground of its freedom from the shadow of doubt. The conclusions that such an enquiry yields are however unmistakable: (1) Reality is pure being (sato bandhum) revealed in the heart of man; (2) It is One; (3) It is the living reality; (4) It is reposed on its own power (Sva-dhā) and (5) the Master in high heaven knows the mystery of creation.

The non-dual nature of Truth that pulsates beyond creation made Viṣṇu identical with such Truth because non-duality cannot allow the duality of the knower and the known. If Viṣṇu knew the truth He was no other than Truth itself. In later literature e.g., in the Muṇḍaka-Upaniṣad it is therefore stated that he who knows Brahman becomes Brahman. For the same reason i.e., uncompromising non-duality, the high heaven of Viṣṇu, leaving its literal sense of “abode” came to mean the very nature of Viṣṇu. The elaboration of the concept of Truth thus clung to the evolution of the Viṣṇu concept, with special reference to the “parama pada” of Viṣṇu. In the Rg-Veda the development of the concept is as follows:—The seers can visualise all the time the “parama pada” of Viṣṇu, appearing like an eye in heaven. It is glowing with lustre (ava-bhāti) infinitely (bhūri) and it possesses the perennial source of honey. It can also be viewed as three (trī padāni), all full of honey, eternal (a-kṣiyamānā) and thriving with native power (Sva-dhā).

The combination of the ideas of the cosmogonic hymn, stated above, together with these Viṣṇu hymns would yield the following results:—(1) Truth is pure being, (2) It is One but can be viewed as three and (3) whether viewed as One or three, it is eternal, self-luminous and all bliss. Such a position has naturally paved the way to the concept of Truth as sat

**sa yo ha vai tat paramam brahma veda brahmaiva bhavati.**

Mun U 3.2.9.

**tat viṣṇoḥ paramam padaṁ sadā pāyanti sūravyah diviva caṅsura ātataṁ** RV 1.22.20.

**paramam padaṁ avabhāti bhūri viṣṇoḥ parame pade madhva utsaḥ yasya trī pūrñā madhunā padaṁ aksiyamānā svadhaya madanti** RV 1.154. 6, 5, 4.
(eternal), *cit* (consciousness) and *ānanda* (bliss).

But Truth exposed so far is unrelated to creation. In fact, we have so far glimpsed the elaboration of the great Viṣṇu in terms of his three strides (*pada*), who is left to the mere witnessing of creation. The great sun, from three well-marked positions in the sky—the eastern horizon, the centre and the western horizon—is here found to watch creation below. From the philosophical point of view, Reality is presented in three forms, all of which have transcended creation. But Reality cannot be left thus to its isolation. Being the primordial principle of life and eternally charged with its innate power, as the cosmogonic hymn would lead us to believe, it must saturate the universe with its being. This completing nature of Reality is visualized in the Puruṣa-Sūkta of the *Ṛg-Veda*. "The universe is Puruṣa," declares the Sūkta, "but He is not exhausted herein. He has transcended the universe as well. Creation in its entirety is but His one *pāda*; His other three *pādas*—all of them eternal—are in heaven, transcending creation". The Puruṣa-Sūkta thus envisages four *pādas* of Reality—one immanent and three transcendent. This provides the highest possible expansion of Viṣṇu, the all-embracing and all-pervasive Reality. At the time of the *Ṛg-Veda*, then, Reality was conceived to consist in four *pādas* of which one is immanent and the others transcendent. But the notion of immanence and transcendence carried with it the germ of hierarchy in spite of the non-dual character of Truth.

The Doctrine of the four "*padas*" of Viṣṇu continued unabated during the whole period of sacrifice (*yajña-yuga*). The three strides (*padas*) of Viṣṇu overarched the milieu of sacrifice. They pervaded the three worlds—earth, air and heaven—and the sacrificer imitated them in the ritual to ensure heaven for himself. As sacrifice, duly performed, branched off into the creation of the three worlds for the enjoyment of the sacrificer,

23 Puruṣa evedaṁ sarvam
to jñāyāṁ ca pūruṣah
pādoṣya vilvā bhūtāni
tri-pād asyaśīṁṛtām divi
tripād ārāva udait puṣrṣah
pādoṣyaḥ bhavat punah. RV 10.90.2, 3, 4.
sacrifice itself could be regarded as the condensed form of the three worlds. And, as Viṣṇu was already identified with the universe (so we have noticed in the Puruṣa-Sūkta), He was naturally looked upon as sacrifice itself. In the concept of sacrifice the immanent form of Viṣṇu, consisting in the three worlds, may be said to have attained for the first time a unity of thought. Viṣṇu now stood for the whole universe with its bewildering multiplicity in so far as He was sacrifice itself that provided for the germ of the universe. This was then the immanent “pada” of Viṣṇu besides the three others, already referred to, as overarchin the sacrifice. In this way Viṣṇu with four “padas” ruled the domain of sacrificial cult incorporated in the Brāhmaṇa literature.

The individuality of this immanent form of Viṣṇu was firmly established in the Upaniṣads. The question of the origin of the universe, that had originally troubled Prajāpati-Parameṣṭhin, the seer of the Nāsadiya-Sūkta referred to before, appears again and again in the Brhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad. The first principle of the Nāsadiya-Sūkta, that breathed without breath, gradually assumed the name of “Ātman” which also is derived from the root “an” (to breathe). As early as the Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa, Ātman was conceived to fly into all for shelter and was thus called “Puruṣa”. And, in so far as the first principle with the aid of its native power (Sva-dhā) burst, as it were, into the details of creation like a spider bringing forth its cobweb or fire bursting into sparks, it also acquired the designation of Brahman. The Brhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad proposes in turn all the three terms—Ātman, Puruṣa and Brahman—to describe the first principle before creation. But the doubt raised in the Nāsadiya-Sūkta as to the exact nature of the first principle does still seem to linger in this Upaniṣad. The Upaniṣad, for instance,

25 yajño vai viṣṇuḥ SB 1.4.1.3.
26 puraś cakre ādi-padaḥ
puraś cakre catus-padaḥ
puraḥ sa pakṣi bhūtvā
puraḥ puruṣa aśiṣat SB 14.5.5.18, quoted in BU 2.5.18.
27 sa yathornābhis tantunoccared yathā'gnek kṣudrā visphulingā vyuccaraṇyevam evā'śmaṁ ātmanah sarve prāṇāḥ sarve lokāḥ sarve devā saruśi bhūtāni vyuccaranti BU 2.1.20.
28 atmaivedam agra āśit puruṣa-vidhaḥ. brahma vā idam agra āśit
BU 1.4.1, 10.
echoes the view of the Sūkta when it says that at the outset there was nothing.  

But it also posits the existence of Brahma before creation.  

It further tries to resolve the contradiction between these two views by saying that being One at the outset Brahma felt itself to be non-existent.  

The Chāndogya-Upaniṣad takes a much bolder stand on this issue. It rules out the possibility of the negative character of the first principle and affirms once for all that Reality is positive, One without a second.  

In the Sūkta, Reality was pure being in the inner consciousness of man; it was now established to be so even in intellectual apprehension. The Upaniṣad asserts Reality as positive and thus finally puts an end to the doubt as to its nature. But the Chāndogya’s assertion of being in Reality marks an important departure from the same concept in the Sūkta. It is the being of Reality intimately related to creation, as distinguished from the being of Reality before creation. In other words, we have now both the immanent and transcendent being of Reality, if the view of the Sūkta and that of the Chāndogya are allowed to converge.  

Besides the being or existence which is now sought to be established on logical basis, the other aspects of Reality viz, consciousness and bliss, obtained as a heritage from the Rg-Veda, find the same type of confirmation. The Brhadāraṇyaka asserts that Brahma is consciousness and bliss.  

The Upaniṣad adduces arguments to establish these two aspects but they are too long to be reproduced in this context. The Chāndogya also argues in the same vein.  

The result of such speculations is to assert the nature of Truth in definite categories: Truth is being (sat), consciousness (cit) and bliss (ānanda). If, on the other hand, we take into consideration the innate power (Sva-dhā) of Reality, due to which Brahma bursts into in-

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29 naiveha kimcana'gra āsīt. ibid. 1.2.1.  
30 brahma va idam agra āsīt. ibid. 1.4.10  
31 tad ekaṁ san na vyabhavat. ibid. 1.4.11.  
32 sad eva somyedam agra āsid ekam eva'dvitiyam. taddhaika ākhar asad evedam agra āsid ekam eva'dvitiyam; tasmād asataḥ saj jāyata. kutas tu khalu somyayam syād iti hovāca. kathām asataḥ saj jāyettī. sattva eva somyedam agra āsid ekam eva'dvitiyam ChU 6.2.1-2.  
33 viśṇūnāṁ ānandam brahma BU 3.9.18.7.  
34 vide BU 4.3.23-30, 4.3.32-33; ChU 7.13.1 etc.
finite details, Reality with such power may legitimately be described as “ananta” (infinite). This gives rise to another description of Reality, recorded in the Taittirīya-Upaniṣad:\textsuperscript{35} Brahman is truth, consciousness and infinite.

We have seen that Ātman is called “Puruṣa” because it entered “pūra”, the composite body. Although the Chāndogya, for instance, is aware that Ātman is the all-embracing reality,\textsuperscript{36} yet the association of Ātman with the composite body gradually resulted in the usage of the term in relation to the body. The Nāsadiya-Sūkta’s discovery of the first principle in the heart of man had thus acquired a new significance in relation to the physical body\textsuperscript{37} that encased mind as well. Ātman and Puruṣa being confined to the individual body, Brahman—the only one left of the three terms—signified Reality behind the physical universe. In this way arose the view that the Upaniṣads preached the doctrine of Brahman. Nevertheless the Upaniṣads reasserted the fundamental unity between Ātman, encased in a particular body, and Brahman. But in so far as Ātman was now a definite particular such unity found expression in the statement—ayam ātmā Brahma—this soul is Brahman.\textsuperscript{38} The Bṛhadāraṇyaka equates the knowledge of Brahman with that of “I” (Ātman) and this “I” is a particular because whoever among the gods had obtained this realisation—‘I am Brahman’—became Brahman.\textsuperscript{39}

The fundamental unity between the individual soul and Brahman was now sought to be reached by a different method—the process of intellectual analysis of the nature of the individual soul. The individual soul, according to the Bṛhadāraṇyaka, has two states of existence (sthāna)—this world and the other world. It may also have a third state intermediate between the two. This is the world of dream.\textsuperscript{40} But this world of dream

\textsuperscript{35} satyaṁ jñānam anantarṁ brahma \quad TU 2.1.1.
\textsuperscript{36} ātmaiva dhiṣṭāt atmopariṣṭāt etc. \quad ChU 7.25.2.
\textsuperscript{37} sa vā esa ātmā hṛdi \quad ChU 8.3.3.
\textsuperscript{38} ayam ātmā brahma \quad MānU 2.
\textsuperscript{39} aham brahmaṁ śāyate. tasmāt tat sarvam abhavat. tad yo yo devaṁ ātmāṁ śṛṅgava yo bhūhatā sa eva tad abhavat tathāṁ sarvāṁ tathā maṇḍyaṁ
\quad BU 1.4.10.
\textsuperscript{40} etasya vā puruṣasya deve eva sthāne bhavata, idaṁ ca para-loka-sthānam ca. sandhyāṁ триयाम svapna-sthānam \quad BU 4.3.9.
need not be taken separately. It is but the representation of the world of waking. As the individual soul travels through this world and the world beyond, it must be taken as unrelated to both. The Chāndogya points out that the unrelated nature of the individual soul is definitely apprehended in the state of "samprajasā"—dreamless sleep—when the individual soul transcends its physical limitation and realises its identity with Brahman. The term "satya" (truth) embodies this identity because it literally signifies the existence of the individual soul in Brahman (sati ayam iti).

The analysis of the nature of the individual soul reaches a high degree of perfection in the Māndūkya-Upaniṣad. The Māndūkya begins with a couple of equations:—(1) The entire universe is Brahman and (2) This soul is Brahman. These equations suggest that by the time of the Māndūkyya the usage of the term "Brahman" in relation to the physical universe and that of the term "Ātman" in relation to the individual soul had become well established. The Māndūkyya then launches upon an enquiry into the nature of the individual soul in order to realise the implication of the identity between the individual soul and Brahman. The Upaniṣad propounds for the first time the theory of the four states of existence (catus-pāda) for the individual soul—the waking state, dream, dreamless sleep and the fourth state. The waking state is characterised by external knowledge of this world (bahiḥ-prajña). Marked by this state, the individual soul is called the first "pāda". Dream is the state of mere consciousness having no correspondence to any objective reality (antaḥ-prajña). The soul in dream is the second "pāda". Dreamless sleep resolves plurality into the consciousness of happiness. That makes the individual soul the third "pāda". But the individual soul transcends all these three states to the fourth state where the turmoils of worldliness are silenced (prapañcopaśama). It is the state of sublime tranquillity (śanta) and auspicious (śiva) non-duality (advaita),

"atho khalvāhur jāgarita-deśa evāsyaiṣa iti. ibid. 4.3.14.

"atha ya esa samprasādośmāc charirāt samutthāya param jyotir upasampadya svena rūpeṇa abhinispadyate esa ātmeti hovāca etad amṛtam abhayam etad brahma iti ChU 8.3.4.

"tāni ha vā etāni triṇyakṣaraṇi satiyam iti. ChU 8.3.5."
perpetually reposed on self-realisation (ātmā-pratyaya-sāra). This fourth state consists in the true nature of the soul. The analysis of the individual soul thus ends in self-realisation—the knowledge of identity between the individual and the cosmic soul, finally resolving into the consciousness of the soul per se, unsoiled by any worldly reference, individualistic or cosmic.

The contributions of the Māṇḍūkya may be summed up as follows:—(1) “ayam ātmā” i.e., the empirical soul consists in four “pādas”; (2) these “pādas” are jāgrat (waking state), svāpna (dream), susūpti (dreamless sleep) and turiya (the fourth, transcendental state); (3) these “pādas” are to be conceived in hierarchical order and (4) consciousness is common to all the “pādas”; yet, they vary from one another in that the first “pāda” is given to the physical world, the second “pāda” is marked by the predominance of knowledge, the third “pāda” is conspicuously blissful, while the fourth “pāda” is non-dual.

The value of these contributions may be appreciated if we recall the ideas that were in the making, round the concept of Reality, in the Vedas, the Brāhmaṇas and the early Upaniṣads. The Vedas had given the concept of Reality as consisting in four “pādas”, one immanent and three transcendent. The Brāhmaṇas accepted the three “pādas” to supervene sacrifice and identified the immanent “pāda” with sacrifice itself. While importing Ātman, Puruṣa and Brahman to explain the origin of creation, the early Upaniṣads gradually expressed the trend of relegating Ātman and Puruṣa to the status of the individual soul confined to a particular body and of holding up Brahman as the world principle. It was, as it were, a bifurcation of the same principle into Jīva and Brahman in the mind of the Upaniṣadic thinkers, in their desire to explain certain

“sarvam hyetad brhmā’yaṃ ātmā brahma, so’yam ātmā catuspād, jāgarita-sthāno bahiḥ-prajñāḥ saptaṅga ekaṇa-vināśati-mukhaḥ sthūla-bhug vaisāṇārāḥ prathamaḥ pādaḥ. svāpna-sthāno’nthaḥ-prajñāḥ saptaṅga ekaṇa-vināśati-mukhaḥ pravīcikta-bhuk tājjaso divitiyaḥ pādaḥ. yatra sūpī on kaṇčana kāmam kāmayate na kaṇčana svāpanam paśyati tat susūptam. susūpta-sthāna ekābhūtaḥ prajñāna-ghana eva’nandamayo hyānanda-bhuk cetomukhaḥ prajñās triyāḥ pādaḥ. nāntaḥ-prajñām na bahiḥ-prajñām nobhaya’taḥ-prajñām na prajñā-ghanam na prajñām nā’prajñām. adhyām avyāvahāryam agrāhyam a-lakṣaṇam a-cintyam a-vyapadeṣyam ekātma-pratyaya-sāram prapāṇcopāsamam śūntam śivam advaitam caturthaṁ nanyante; sa ātmā sa vijñeyah” MānU 2-5, 6, 7.
practical problems connected with creation, such as bondage and liberation. Nevertheless the basic identity between Jīva and Brahman was never lost sight of. This the Upaniṣads have asserted whenever they have the opportunity to do so. With the rise of Brahman as the world principle in the Upaniṣads, the four pādas which were originally associated with Viṣṇu, became linked up with Brahman although Brahman itself could still be recognizable as the sun, the prototype of Viṣṇu.

The Māṇḍūkya preached a novel theory by assigning four pādas to the individual soul (Jīva). And, when it asserted the identity between Jīva and Brahman it provided the clue to rehabilitation of ideas associated both with the first principle and the individual soul, resulting in a grand synthesis represented in the concept of catus-pāda Brahman of the Tri-pād-vibhūti-mahā-nārāyaṇa-Upaniṣad. The philosophy of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavata may be said to have been laid against the bed-rock of the wealth of ideas incorporated in this Upaniṣad.

The Tri-pād-vibhūti-mahā-nārāyaṇa-Upaniṣad begins with a sum up of the old position before exposing its own view: Brahman is the Reality, ineffable in all the three times—past, present and future. It embodies the world and yet it transcends all phenomenal existence. It is being, consciousness, all-bliss and self-luminous. It is free from all conditions, self-contented, one, non-dual and the fourth state. Though inscrutable per se it is symbolised by praṇava. The Upaniṣad then gives its own view: Brahman (as described above) consists in four pādas. But the Upaniṣad offers the admonition that the mention of pādas i.e., grades of Reality should not be construed as referring to internal differences in Brahman because Brahman by itself is non-dual and so it does not allow any kind of difference. The mention of grades is really intended to probe into the depths of Brahman. So the treatment of

45 tad etad catus-pāda brahma ChU 3.18.2.
46 adityo brahmaṇyaśeṣaḥ. ibid. 3.19.1.
47 kathāṁ brahma? kala-trayāḥbādhitaṁ brahma.... sac-cid-ānanda-svapakāśaṁ brahma .... turiyaṁ nirākāraṁ ekaṁ brahma. a-dvaitam a-nirvācyam brahma. praṇavaṁtāmakāṁ brahma ... pāda-catusaṁtāmakāṁ brahma MahāU 1.5.
48 brahma-bheda na kathitaḥ. brahma-vyatiriktaṁ na kīṁcid asti. pāda-bheḍa-dī-kathanaṁ tu brahma-svarūpa-kathanaṁ eva. ibid. 4.3.
Brahman by the Upaniṣad aims at a more thorough exposition of the nature of Brahman, the supreme reality of the Vedas and the Upaniṣads.

The four grades of Brahman are Avidyā-pāda, Vidyā-pāda, Ānanda-pāda and Turīya-pāda, in hierarchical order. Of these, Mūlā-vidyā that accounts for pragmatic existence belongs exclusively to the first grade, the Avidyā-pāda. But consciousness, bliss and transcendence which predominantly belong to Vidyā-pāda, Ānanda-pāda and Turīya-pāda respectively are common to all the grades. This is so because all the four grades are in fact one Reality and the conception of its division into grades is just to emphasise a specific aspect—existence, consciousness, bliss or transcendence. Being associated with Avidyā, Reality as marked by bare existence, stands lowest in the order. The upper grades of pure knowledge and pure bliss are said to be immortal (amṛta). In other words, the first grade is phenomenal while the other three are noumenal. Evidently the Upaniṣad is invoking here the idea of immanence and transcendent of the Puruṣa-Sūkta. While Reality characterised by existence is now being confined to represent the immanent aspect, the threefold transcendent of the said Sūkta is reorganised here as consciousness, bliss and the transcendental, the last of which seems to be a borrow from the turīya-concept of the Māndūkya. But as even the first grade is transcendental, the fourth grade has to be recognised, as has been done by the Upaniṣad, as the transcendental of the transcendental (turīya-turīya) or supra-transcendental (turīya-tīta). Similarly the definition of the second grade as consciousness and of the third grade as bliss and their mutual hierarchy are based upon the Māndūkya conception of the second pāda and the third pāda—the state of consciousness in dream and the state of happiness in dreamless sleep—of which the latter supersedes the former as evinced in the ordinary life of the empirical soul.

In the exposition of the hierarchical grades of Brahman the Upaniṣad has brilliantly exploited the concept of Svā-dhā,
the innate power of the first principle. We have seen that the Rg-Veda has attributed the grandeur of ecstasy present in the three transcendental pādas of Viṣṇu to this innate power (svadhyā madanti). The second grade of Brahman, characterised by pure consciousness, is said to possess its innate power under the name Mahā-māyā. Similary, the innate power corresponding to the third grade of Brahman, marked by pure bliss, is called Mahā-yoga-māyā. Lastly, the innate power of Brahman, the first grade of Reality presented as pure existence, is called Māyā or Mūlā'vidyā. Mahā-māyā is stated to be a vilāsa (manifestation) of Mahā-yoga-māyā as Māyā is stated to be so of Mahā-māyā. This means that all the three powers are one in substance; but, in response to the first three grades of Reality, it is conceived to be threefold as an explanation for variation among the grades.

It is the nature of the innate power of Reality to give rise to plurality (prapaṇca) whether it works as a transcendental power as in the case of Mahā-māyā or Mahā-yoga-māyā, or as the immanent power i.e., Māyā. But there is a fundamental difference between the two types of plurality. The plurality unfolded by a transcendental power partakes of the character of eternal bliss and eternal consciousness while the plurality brought about by Māyā is only transitory. In fact, the world of Māyā, being just a vilāsa of Mahā-māyā, is without substance; and so, one has to fall back upon the transcendental aspect of Reality, marked by non-duality.

Mahā-māyā provides body for Ādi-Viṣṇu, the second grade of Reality, as it creates a wonderful noumenal world called Vaikuṇṭha. Vaikuṇṭha shines like a continuous glide

50 tat (ādi-nārāyaṇa)-saṅkalpānusāriṇī vividhānanta-mahāmāyā etāṁ mahā-māyāṁ tarantyeva ye viṣṇum eva bhajanti ibid. 4.13.
51 paścāt mahā-yoga-māyā mūrtimadbhir ananta-mahā-māyā-jāla-viśeṣaiḥ pariṣevitā. tasyaḥ puram ati-kautukam atyāścaryāsāgarā'ṇanda-lakṣaṇam amṛtaṁ bhavati ibid. 6.16.
52 saṅkoca-vidāśātmaka-mahā-māyā-vilāśātmaka eva sarvo'pyavidyā-prapaṇcaḥ. ibid. 3.2.
53 pranānco'pi dvīdhaḥ: vidyā-prapaṇcā ca vidyā-prapaṇcaḥ ca iti. vidyā-prapaṇcasya nityatvam siddham eva nityānanda-cid-vilāśātmakatvāt; ātma ca Buddhā-buddha-mukta-satyānanda-svarūpatvāt ca. avidyā-prapaṇcasya a-nityatvam vadanti ... paramārthativo na kiṃcid asti kṣaṇa-lūnyā'ṇādir-mūlā'vidyā-vilāśatvāt. ibid. 3.2.
(pravāha) of lustre (tejas) with Ādi-Viṣṇu at its centre. The body, lustre and Viṣṇu are all one—the parama pada of Viṣṇu. Similar is the case with Mahā-yoga-māyā. It unfolds itself as the body of the third grade, Mahā-Viṣṇu, and also, as his abode—the Mahā-Vaikuṇṭha. Yet all the three are one. The plurality of forms (ākāras) thus exhibited in the cases of the second and the third grades of Reality are not opposed to formlessness of Reality because such forms, being of noumenal nature, are in no way contradictory to non-duality. As the oneness of pure gold remains unaffected in spite of its transformation into various ornaments, or as water of the ocean maintains its original character although it is distributed into waves, ripples, foams and the like, or as earth remains one in spite of its diversification into mountains, trees, creepers and so on, so Brahman remains permanently settled on its non-duality in spite of the diversity brought about by Mahā-māyā and Mahā-yoga-māyā.

The Upaniṣad describes the process of the emergence of plurality from Mūlā-vidyā as follows:—By the sweet will (svecchā) of Ādi-Nārāyaṇa, i.e., the second grade of Reality, appears His unmesa, a conscious tendency of externalisation. This unmesa stimulates the rise of Aavyakta (the unmanifest) in the first grade of Reality, the primordial source of all creations. Gradually this Aavyakta solidifies itself into Māyā (mūla) and its effects (Avidyā). Characterised by Mūlā-vidyā, Brahman—the pure existence (i.e., the first grade of Reality)—is ripe for creation. Then the categories, Mahat etc., appear one after and from


45vidyā-prādhaneyenena vidyā-sākāraḥ. ānanda-prādhaneyenānanda-sākāraḥ...prādhaneyen'aḥ bheda eva bhedaḥ. vastutas tu abheda eva... yathā sarva-gatasya nir-ākārasya mahā-vāyos, ca tad-ātmakasya tvak-patitvena prasiddhasya sākārasya mahā-vāyu-devasya cābheda eva śrūyate sarvatva ... tad-vat parabrahmaṇaḥ sārvātmikasya sākāra-nir-ākāra-bhedavirodho nāt yeva. ibid. 2.10.12.

46 yathā suddha-svarṇasya kaṭaka-makautāṅgadādi-bhedāḥ; yathā samu-dra-salisatyā sthūla-sākṣyā-taranā-ga-phena-budbudā ... dyanantavastubhedāḥ, tathāvāvāvata-paramānandakātra-kāraṇa-bhramaṇa māma sarvād-vaitam upapannam bhavatyeva. ... ibid. 8.2.

47 pārag-dṛṣṭir unmesaḥ. pratyaq-dṛṣṭir nimesaḥ. ibid. 4.12.
the other. From the five gross elements emerges, then, a cosmic mass (anda) out of which eventually the physical world is brought into being.  

The conception of Reality, presented by the Tri-pād-vibhūti-mahā-nārāyana-Upaniṣad is a great development of Viṣṇu from His naturalistic origin, the sun. The sun gradually assumed the status of Viṣṇu because it pervades the vast expanse of the sky. From the farthest end of the eastern horizon it steadily rises to the top and then declines to the west until it reaches the farthest end of the western horizon. The sun with its three conspicuous positions had naturally pervaded the mental sky of the Rg-Vedic seers, as Viṣṇu with his three strides (pada). Away from the earth Viṣṇu shone in high heaven with his three strides. The Vājasaneyi-Samhitā had discovered the great Personality (mahāntam puruṣam) glowing as the sun beyond the realm of darkness.  

The Tri-pād-vibhūti-mahā-nārāyana-Upaniṣad allows freely the play of its religious imagination against this new conception of the Samhitā. The great Personality in order for to be Puruṣa has to have a pura (abode). The solar character of the Personality has also to be maintained. All this was made possible by elaboration of the Sva-dhā-concept. The metaphysical demands of non-duality were also met by resolving the plurality of Sva-dhā into the non-duality of the Absolute. But in spite of this unique development, the Upaniṣad chose to adhere to the past. Puruṣa was Viṣṇu or Ādi-Viṣṇu or Ādi-Nārāyana, the second grade of Reality. The third grade, being higher than the second, was Mahā-Viṣṇu. Similarly abode of Ādi-Nārāyana was Vaikuṇṭha, being free from all pragmatic limitations (kuṇṭha). So the abode of Mahā-Viṣṇu, the third grade, was to be Mahā-Vaikuṇṭha. The Upaniṣad thus unravels a very important chapter of the evolution of Vaiṣṇavism under the aegis of the Vedas and the Upaniṣads.
bliss, the supreme Puruṣa. Creation started when that existence became associated with Avyakta. Avyakta was first manifested as Mahat, that gave rise to Manas, that to the organs. Out of Mahat emerged the five elements as well. Or, we might say, on the basis of the Kaṭha-Upaniṣad,68 that the organs were born of the five elements. Heaven and earth together with the intermediate space (antarikṣa) are the outcome of the five elements.

The Tri-pād-vibhūti-mahā-nārāyaṇa-Upaniṣad recognises Avyakta to be the first material impetus for creation. Avyakta, according to the Upaniṣad, evolves into Māyā and that into its effects. Among the effects the first to rise is Mahat. But the Upaniṣad introduces a variation from the older Upaniṣads by recognizing Ahamkāra to emerge from Mahat, instead of Manas. From Ahamkāra five subtle elements are said to have been born and out of the latter the five gross elements. The cosmic egg is said to be the product of these five gross elements. The Upaniṣad therefore is not only important in respect of its contribution in the field of noumenal elaboration, but it deserves our attention regarding the details of the phenomenal existence as well.

We now propose to conclude the brief survey of ideas that went into the formation of the philosophy of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavata with a notice of the Śvetāsvatara-Upaniṣad that appears to be important next only to the Tri-pād-vibhūti-mahā-nārāyaṇa-Upaniṣad. As usual, the Upaniṣad opens with the cosmogonic question. But it goes further. It wishes to know from the seers of Brahman (brahma-vidaḥ) as to what has enlivened us all, has served as the universal substratum and controls all.69 The answer received is the Luminous (deva) endowed with His native power (ātma-sakti).70 The Deity is no other than the Great

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68 indriyebhyah parā kyarthāh. ibid. 3.10.
69 kim kāraṇān brahma kutah sma jātā jivāma kena kva ca sampratiṣṭhāh. adhiśṭhītāh kena sukhetareṣu varāmahe brahma-vido vyavasthām. ŚU 1.1.
70 te dhyāna-yogānugatā apanayan devātmalaktīṁ svagunāir nigūḍhām. yaḥ kāraṇāṁ nikhilāni tāni kālātmaya-vaktānim adhitīḥvātyekāḥ. ibid. 1.3.
Person\textsuperscript{71} of the Vājasaneyi-Saṁhitā, referred to before. As the infinite being (Brahman) He is the substratum of all.\textsuperscript{72} As the integral unity (eka) the Deity has penetrated all beings\textsuperscript{73} and has given them life.\textsuperscript{74} The Deity further controls all beings, being unfailingly present in the heart of man.\textsuperscript{75} Within the body, often compared with a tree, dwell a couple of Purusās like a pair of birds (Jīva and Brahman) of whom one suffers from delusion\textsuperscript{76} while the other merely looks on.\textsuperscript{77} Here the Upaniṣad invokes the Rg-Veda. The witnessing Self lives in the heart of man and controls all his activities\textsuperscript{78} The other self becomes associated with three guṇas—sattva, rajas and tamas—and enjoys the fruits of its own action.\textsuperscript{79} Though self-luminous like the sun, this soul (Jīva) appears like the pointed tip of iron (ārā'gra) because of its identification with heart of very small size.\textsuperscript{80} Being thus circumscribed by the size of the heart, such soul is described as “āṁśa”, the hundredth of the hundredth fraction of the Infinite, although per se it is none else than the Infinite.\textsuperscript{81} Though one in substance, Jīva suffers due to Māyā

\textsuperscript{71} vedā'ham etāṁ puruṣam mahāntam
dīitya-varṇam tamasāṁ parastat. ibid. 3.8.

\textsuperscript{72} udgitam etat paramam tu brahma
tasmāṁ tryam supraśīthā'kṣaram ca. ibid. 1.7.

\textsuperscript{73} eko devaḥ sarva-bhūteṣu gūḍhaḥ. ibid. 6.11.

\textsuperscript{74} nityo nityānāṁ cetanaṁ cetanānāṁ. ibid. 6.13.

\textsuperscript{75} eko vāśi nis-kriyānāṁ bahūnām
ekaṁ bijāṁ bahudhā yaḥ karoti.
tam ātma-sthaṁ ye'nupāiyanti dhīrās
tesāṁ sukhaṁ śāsvataṁ netareṣām... ibid. 6.12.

\textsuperscript{76} samāne vrksaṁ puruṣo nimagno'
nīlayaṁ sotaṁ muhyamānaṁ. ibid. 4.7.

\textsuperscript{77} dvā suṣaṁ sa-yujā sakāyā
samānaṁ vrksam pariṣasvajāte.
tayar anyaḥ piplam svādvattaṁ
tānaṁ anyo abhicākaśī... ibid. 4.6 quoted from RV 1.164.20.

\textsuperscript{78} aṅgustha-mātraḥ puruṣo'ntar-ātmā
saddā janānāṁ hydaye saṁnivitaḥ. ŚU 3.13.

\textsuperscript{79} guṇānaya yaḥ phala-karma-kartā
dṛṣṭasya tasyaiva ca copābhokta. ibid. 5.7.

\textsuperscript{80} aṅgustha-mātro ravi-tulya-rūpaḥ
samkalpa'harākāra-samanvito yaḥ.
buddher guṇena'tma-guṇena caiva
ārāgra-mātro hyapar'pi dṛśaḥ... ibid. 5.8.

\textsuperscript{81} vāla'gra-sata-bhāgasya satadha kalpitasya ca.
bhāgo jivaḥ sa viṣṇeyah sa cānantuṣya kalpate... ibid. 5.9.
while God controls because He is the master of it.\textsuperscript{82} Realisation of this oneness with the Supreme ensures salvation marked by the perpetual disappearance of Māyā.\textsuperscript{83}

One may notice here that the Aতma-śakti is but a paraphrasing of Sva-dhā, “ātman” standing for “sva” and “śakti” for “dhā”. Being the natural power of the Deity, it is “ajā” (unborn) and as consisting in three guṇas—the principle of light, the principle of attachment and the principle of darkness—it is white, red and black.\textsuperscript{84} As the immediate material cause of creation it is “prakṛti”.\textsuperscript{85} It is a tremendous force (परा śaktī) working upon the individual souls and clinging by nature (svabhāviki) to the Supreme. As consisting of the three guṇas, Prakṛti may be described as the conglomeration of the element of knowledge (jñāna), the element of activity (kriyā) and the element of inertia (bala).\textsuperscript{86}

It is no wonder that such a dynamic concept of Prakṛti which exhibits the majesty (mahimā) of the Deity\textsuperscript{87} in immanent form, should absorb the other Theories on creation which had made their rise by this time. Time (Kāla), nature (Svabhāva), destiny (Niyati), chance (Yadrecha), the elements (bhūtāni) and the cosmic soul (Jiva=Hiranya-garbha) were being adduced alternatively as the cause of creation.\textsuperscript{88} But the Upaniṣad contends that neither individually nor collectively can they explain creation.\textsuperscript{89} The conjunction of Puruṣa and Prakṛti brings about the cosmic evolution. How

\textsuperscript{82} asmān māyī sṛjate viśvam etat
tasmīni cā'nyo māyayā sam-niruddhaḥ... ibid. 4.9.

\textsuperscript{83} kṣaraṁ pradhānam amṛta'ksaraṁ haraḥ.
kṣarātmānāvīsate deva ekaḥ.
tsatyābhidhyanād yojanāt tattva-bhāvād
bhūyaḥ ca'nte viśva-māyā-nirvarttiḥ... ibid. 1.10.

\textsuperscript{84} ajām ekāṁ lohitā-sukla-kṛṣṇām. ibid. 4.5.

\textsuperscript{85} māyaṁ tu prakṛtinī vidyāṁ māyinām tu mahaśvaram. ibid. 4.10.

\textsuperscript{86} parā'śya śaktir vividhaiva śṛuyate
svabhāviki jñāna-bala-kriyā ca... ibid. 6.8.

\textsuperscript{87} svabhāvam eke kavayo vadanti
kālam tathā'nye parimuyamānāḥ.
devasyaīya mahimā tu loka
yenedaṁ bhrāmyate brahma-cakram... ibid. 6.1.

\textsuperscript{88} kālaḥ svabhāvo niyairi yadrecha
bhūtāni yoniḥ puruṣa iti cintyā. ibid 1.2.

\textsuperscript{89} sam-yoga esāṁ na tvāma-bhāvād
ātmā panyaśaḥ sukha-duḥkha-hetoḥ... ibid. 1.3.
can such conjunction happen without the intervention of a conscious agent? Even the cosmic soul is unable to do it. After all, even the cosmic soul is a creation although it might have the dignity of being the first product and also the first to receive the gift of knowledge from God. Out of Hiraṇya-garbha came Rudra, the former being the first to be born; and then, Rudra was the source of all the gods, His "Kala". Therefore, the Deity in the company of His natural power must be recognised to be the origin of creation. Kāla, Svabhāva and so on are but the different forms of His natural power.

Wisdom (Vidyā) and ignorance (Avidyā) lead to salvation and worldliness respectively. But both are powers that inhere in the Deity who is other than both. Wisdom consists in the discovery that creation, the individual soul (Jīva) and the inner controller (God)—all the three—merge into the essence of Brahman, the Infinite.

The wealth of ideas, glistening through the Vedas, the Brāhmaṇas and the Upaniṣads may be brought to bear upon the philosophy of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavata. The supreme Truth of the Bhāgavata, as we have already noticed, is non-dual consciousness. It can now be identified as the transcendental state of existence (turīya pada) of the Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa, the supra-transcendental (turīya-turīya) of the Tri-pād-vibhūti-mahā-nārāyaṇa-Upaniṣad, the auspicious (śiva) non-duality (advaita) consisting in the grand consciousness of the supreme

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90 ādiḥ sa sam-yoga-nimitta-hetuḥ ibid. 6.5.
91 hiraṇya-garbhaṁ paśyata jāyamānām ibid. 4.12.
92 hiraṇya-garbhaṁ janayāmāsa pūrvam ibid. 5.4 vide also 6.18.
93 īśaḥ prasūtāṁ kapilaṁ yas tam agre jñānair bibharti jāyamānāṁ ca paśyet. ibid. 5.2.
94 yo devānāṁ prabhavaḥ codbhavaḥ ca viśvādhipo rudro maharṣiḥ. ibid. 4.12.
95 bhāva-grāhīyaṁ a-nidākhyam bhavāḥbhāva-karaṇāṁ śivam. kāla-sarga-karaṇāṁ devaṁ ye vidus te jahus tanum. ibid. 5.14.
96 dvē aske brahma-parā tevanaṁ vidyāvidye nihīte yatra gūḍhe. ksaraṁ tvavidyāh hyamṛtam tu vidyā vidyāvidye iṣate yas tu so'nyaḥ ibid. 5.1.
97 jñā'jñau dvāvajāviśāniiśavajā hyekā bhoṅkṛ-bhoṅyārtha-yuktā. anantaś cātmā viśva-rūpo hyakartā trayāṁ yadā vindate brahman etat. ibid. 1.9.
"I" (atma-pratyaya-sara), of the Mandukya. The supreme "I" (aham), declares the Bhagavata, is the presupposition of all differentiations; it stays on when the complex of differentiations consisting of cause and effect (sad-asat) operates; and, It will continue to exist as the only residuum when that complex will draw to its close. It is the inscrutable power (Maya) of this supreme "I" that plurality appears but it does not affect in the least the intrinsic nature of the supreme "I" because Maya is but a mere appearance without substance. The Bhagavata further describes it as "tranquil (prasanta), eternal (saasvat), free from all fears, bare consciousness, pure, the grand equipoise (sama), transcendental, supreme, beyond all description, not attainable by any amount of activity, free from all afflictions, infinite bliss (ajasra sukha). This is "Brahman". The Bhagavata admits that the Absolute does evade all attempts of delineation and therefore the safest way is to leave the Absolute to itself, by asserting that Reality is what it is.

The supra-transcendental being thus beyond all description the Bhagavata has chosen to fall back upon three concepts—Brahman, Paramatman and Bhagavat—because they can be adequately described (sahdyate). Brahman, defines the Bhagavata, is the supreme light (param jyotiik) indicated by the Vedas and is realised in intuitive vision as bare existence like ether (akasa). Brahman provides for the origin, sustenance and destruction of the world. Paramatman is the great "I"
(aham) left in the state of consciousness and marked by unconscious (avyakta) impulse for creation. This transcendental Reality that eventually results in the creation, sustenance and destruction of the world, is legitimately called "parama ātman" because it is the original source of life. Paramātman is Brahman in so far as it becomes involved in creation consisting in cause and effect; yet, it is the transcendental Reality left to its native consciousness. But Paramātman, the all-pervasive principle of Life, is none else than Bhagavat, defined by the Bhāgavata, as pure bliss (ānanda-mātra) characterised by the convergence of all powers (upapanna-samasta-śakti).

The Bhāgavata, in its delineation of Brahman, Paramātman and Bhagavat, is evidently confirming the Upaniṣadic position of holding Reality as sat, cit and ānanda—existence, knowledge and bliss. The Bhāgavata chooses to reiterate this nature of Reality in invoking direct experience of a cosmic progenitor, Kardama. Kardama is said to have employed his mind first to Brahman, the transcendental being. Then he came upon Vāsudeva (Paramātman), the all-knowledge (sarvajña) all-embracing Soul (life). Lastly he apprehended Bhagavat, the supreme being, the be-all and end-all of all beings. Beyond that he went (bhāgavatī gati) that defies all description.

The basic metaphysical question that has confronted philosophers is: "What am I?". The questioner is aware of the com-

103 ahām evā'sam eva'gre nā'nyat kiñcā'ntaraṁ bahiḥ. saṁ-jñāna-mātraṁ avyaktaṁ prasūptam iha viśvataḥ... 6.4.47.
104 sthit-yuddhava-pralaya-hetur a-hetur aśya yat svapna-jāgara-suṣuptiṣu sad bahiṣ ca. dehendriya-su-hṛdayāni caranti yena saṁjñīvānī tad avehi parama narendra... 11.3.35.
105 sat turnāj has tama iti tri-āyā ekam ādau sutraṁ mahān ahām iti pravadanti jītām. jñāna-kriyārtha-phala-rūpatayorā-lakti brahmaiva bhārti sad asac ca tayoḥ parama yat... 11.3.37.
106 tvam pratyag-ātmani tadā bhagavatyanante ānanda-mātra upapanna-samasta-śaktau 4.11.30 ab.
plexity as well as unity of his experience in ordinary life. In the parade of his experiences—in waking state, dream and dreamless sleep—he feels his association with the world and yet his dissociation from all. The nature of such experience suggests that the questioner (the pragmatic “I” or the finite being) includes as well as excludes his environment. Such observation expanded to its farthest limit would land us to the pure being that incorporates and yet transcends all. This is what the Upaniṣads call Brahman, the bare existence. It is the ideal “I” in the sense that it is the meeting point of both the subjective view and the objective view. Brahman is the fulfilment of my Self (myself) as it is the essence of the objective world. But the finite self which thus finds its fulfilment in the Infinite (Brahman) has to discover that the Infinite is not merely a light but is the Great Person, the questioner’s ideal Self; and, if “self” means vitality and life, that Great Person must be the source from which all life flows. In other words, He must be Paramātman. But life must be grounded in happiness. Life is extinguished from an unhappy person. The gloom of sorrow instigates one to put an end to one’s life. So the Taittirīya declares: Who will live and breathe if he is not immersed in happiness all the time? Thus the quest of “I” leads us to the basis of original Life. This basis is Bhagavat, the all-bliss, in which all powers have found their summit. As the highest fulfilment of my Self (myself) it has to be the supreme Puruśa (parama puruṣa), the most dynamic personality that realises all possible developments. Brahman, Paramātman and Bhagavat thus stand for three successive and hierarchical stages of fulfilment of the finite soul. The question “What am I?” is satisfied with Bhagavat. Beyond that is nondual consciousness—the melting point of the questioner, his question and his goal.

According to the Bhāgavata, Truth may also be designated as “purañ-jana” because it manifests different states of existence (pura). In its supra-transcendental form, it defies the possibility of description and therefore it need not

\[108 \text{ ko hyeva'nyāt kaḥ prāṇyāt yad esa ṛkāia ānando na syāt } \text{ TU } 2.7.7.\]

\[109 \text{ puruṣaṁ purañ-janaṁ vidyād yad vyanaktyā'tmanāḥ puram. eka-dvi-tri-catus-pādam bahu-pādam a-pādam } . . 4.29.2.\]
have a “pura” (a-pāda). Conceived as a grand unity, shining above all like the sun, it may be conceived to have a “pura” comparable to the solar disc (eka-pāda). Similarly, Reality may be looked upon as two if we take into consideration the immanent and transcendent aspects, three if the emphasis be laid upon its transcendental nature and four if the three transcendental grades are combined with the immanent grade. Reality may also be taken to have many many “pādas” if we keep in mind the thousand-footed Puruṣa of the Puruṣa-Sūkta. To the Bhāgavata all these views are acceptable as far as they go but none of them is allowed to cloud the fact that truth is one and indivisible. One may take the four grades of Reality as the norm of its description but they refer to the same Truth. Bhagavat, the third grade, is nothing but the non-dual consciousness, Paramātman is Bhagavat110 and Brahman is Paramātman.112 Not only the lower grade is included in the higher but the higher grade has to include the lower. Thus the non-dual is Bhagavat,113 Bhagavat is Paramātman (ādi-puruṣa)114 and Bhagavat is Puruṣa, immanent form of Brahman, the first grade.115

One needs a note of caution at this stage. The Bhāgavata seems to have employed the term “Brahman” to mean three things:—(1) The supra-transcendental or the Absolute, (2) all the four grades of Reality, taken as a unity and (3) the first grade of Reality. Primarily the grand unity of the four grades deserves the designation of Brahman. But as the Absolute includes the three other grades it should as well be described by the

110 tatrodvahat pāsupa-vāṁśa-liṣutva-nāśyam brahmādavyām 10.13.61 ab.
111 nātāḥ paraṁ paramaḥ yad bhavatāḥ svarūpam ānanda-mātram a-vikālam a-biddha-varcaḥ. pāsūṇī niśva-sṛjam ekam a-vīśvam ātman bhutendriyaṭ-tmakam adas ta upāśrito'śmi. 3.9.3.
112 tad āhur aksaram brahmaṁ sarva-kāraṇaṁ-kāraṇam. viṣṇor dhāma paraṁ sākṣāt puruṣasya mahātmanaḥ. 3.11.42.
113 jñānaṁ viṣuddhaṁ paramārtham ekam anantar-antar-bahir brahmaṁ satyam. pratyak praśāntaṁ bhagavac-chabda-samjñāṁ yad vāśudevaṁ kavayo vadanti. 5.12.11.
114 tvam ādyāḥ puruṣaḥ sākṣāt 1.7.23a.
115 jagrhe puruṣaṁ rūpaṁ bhagavān mahad-ādibhiḥ. sam-bhūtaṁ soḍaśa-kalam ādau loka-sīrṣayā. 1.3.1.
same term. The first grade of Reality might also have the same name because it is the transcendental being out of which creation bursts into existence. But Brahman of the Upaniṣads does mean all the four grades and should not be understood to have been confined to the first grade only. The observation of the author of Caitanya-caritāmṛta that Brahman of the Upaniṣads is only the external splendour (tanu-bhā) of the third grade of Reality (Bhagavat) is an instance of the confusion between Brahman of the Upaniṣads, consisting in all the four grades including the third grade, and the first grade of Reality.

The most outstanding contribution of the Bhāgavata in the sphere of the philosophy of religion is its conception of Bhagavān Śrī-Kṛṣṇa. The Bhāgavata equates Him with Bhagavat, the third grade of Reality. In the Tri-pād-vibhūti-mahā-nārāyaṇa-Upaniṣad, the third grade is Māhā-Viṣṇu; and, Kṛṣṇa as well as Rāma are but Avatāras (Incarnations) in spite of all their dignity. In the Bhāgavata as well we have traces that Kṛṣṇa was a Descent. Yet, in the same context the Bhāgavata has stressed upon Kṛṣṇa being the third grade of Reality, the summum bonum of all human aspirations. We shall show that Kṛṣṇa, the Descent, was the historical Kṛṣṇa mentioned in the Chāndogya-Upaniṣad as the disciple of Ghorā Āṅgirasa and the son of Devakī, while Kṛṣṇa, the third grade, is a unique development of the Viṣṇu concept in the process of its fusion with the historical Kṛṣṇa. This metaphysical Kṛṣṇa as distinguished from the historical Kṛṣṇa can legitimately be regarded as Mahā-Viṣṇu, an important development of the Viṣṇu concept.

As early as the Bhādāranyaka-Upaniṣad the metaphysical problem stirred the mind of man as to how the non-dual Reality could become dual. The Upaniṣad offers a psychological explanation thereof. Reality was One and it was not happy. Hence no one pleases to be left alone. So it desired for a second and bifurcated itself into two. So it thought in terms of

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116 kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam 1.3.27 b.
117 atha ca rāma-kṛṣṇādyavatāreṣu...parama-tattva-paramā-vibhavānu-sandhānam MahāU 2.13.
118 ekona-viṁśe viṁśatime rāma-kṛṣṇau iti 1.3.23 ac.
the male and the female, the husband and the wife. Such an explanation involves a couple of facts—a second and the purpose of realising pleasure. In consonance with the idea of non-duality, both of them have to be conceived as pertaining to the very essence of Reality. In other words, Reality as bliss unfolded its innate nature in the company of its native power which, in the light of the Brhadāranyaka-Upaniṣad, may be conceived as a female. As no purpose extraneous to Reality can possibly be ascribed to it, the divine activity involved in the process of unfoldment of its own pleasure can be compared to the purposeless frivolity of a child playing with its own shadow.

The first expression of the non-dual is therefore pure bliss (ānanda-maya). In the Bhāgavata, pure bliss is the third grade of Reality and it is no other than Śrī-Kṛṣṇa who, as the Great Puruṣa, indulged in play with cowherd girls, His own powers. It was a play with His own shadows, childlike mirth that demonstrates the purposeless sport (līlayā) of the third grade of Reality.

If the unfoldment of divine ecstasy is compared with the play of a child the development of the process of unfoldment may be conceived in terms of the growth of a child as well. The child gradually matures into a youth. At this stage his pure joy is replaced by knowledge. The youth marries and that gives rise to progeny. This is exhibited in the life of Kṛṣṇa. His life is distributed successively at three places—Vṛndāvana, Mathurā and Dvārakā—symbolizing the residence of the third grade of Reality in Goloka (the realm of light), that of the second grade of Reality (Viṣṇu, the Vaikuṇṭha-pati) in Vaikuṇṭha (the land of freedom from limitations) and that of the first grade of Reality in the material universe respectively. In other words, joy develops into knowledge and that into the state of becoming the material universe. These three are Bhagavat, Paramātman and Brahman respectively. Bhagavat is con-

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119 sa vai naiva reme. tasmād ekāki na ramate. sa dvitiyam aičchat. sa ha etāvān āsa yathā śrī-puruṣaṁ samāraṣṭvaktau. sa imam evaśmānaṁ dvedhā'pātayaṁ tataḥ patti ca pātī ca abhavatām. BU 1.4.3.
120 tābhīr vidhūta-lokābhīr bhagavān acyuto vrtaḥ. vyārocañādhikam tataḥ puruṣah śaktibhir yathā... 10.32.10.
121 reme remeśo vṛaja-sundaribhir yathā'rghakaṁ svu-pratibimba-vibhramaḥ... 10.33.16 cd.
122 reme sa bhagavāṁs tābhīr ātmā'rāmo'pi līlayā... 10.33.19 cd.
ceived to indulge in pleasure in Goloka, Paramātman as knowledge is taken to live in Vaikuntha. Brahman is being, pure and simple, a sort of lull before the cosmic storm. It is therefore not conceived in terms of a spiritual abode excepting when it enters the material universe. At the end of the universe Reality dissolves into its original state of transcendental non-duality. All these have been exhibited by the Bhāgavata through the life of Kṛṣṇa—his enjoyment at Vṛndāvana, vigilance as a king at Mathurā, leading the life of a householder at Dvārakā and finally receding back to His own self, the state of non-duality. Divine ecstasy thus completes its own circle.

As in the Tri-pād-vibhūti-mahā-nārāyaṇa-Upaniṣad, the elaboration of Reality into four grades is due to the enlargement of Sva-dhā (innate power) concept. To the Bhāgavata this Sva-dhā is Māyā. The Bhāgavata shows preference for this term out of host of other terms—Prakṛti, Pradhāna, Ajā and so on—all to be found in the Śvetāsvatara-Upaniṣad. Like the Mahā-nārāyaṇa-Upaniṣad, the Bhāgavata enlarges the Māyā concept into several other powers all bearing “māyā” as a part of their names; but the Bhāgavata does it more thoroughly. Corresponding to the third grade of Reality (Śrī-Kṛṣṇa) is Yoga-māyā;128 to the second grade of Reality (Viṣṇu) belongs Śrī, Viṣṇu-māyā or Mahā-māyā;124 and, the first grade (Brahman) has Ātma-māyā.125 Ātma-māyā differentiates itself into Māyā and -Cit-śakti,126 two mutually contradictory powers.127 Characterised by these two powers, Brahman becomes God (Puruṣa), immanent in creation. Māyā evolves into Kāla (time), Karman (totality of actions performed by the Jīvas) and Svabhāva (nature) on the one hand128

128 bhagavān api tāḥ rātriḥ saradotpulla-mallikāḥ. vikṣya rantuṁ manaiḥ sakre yoga-māyāṁ upāśrītaḥ... 10.29.1.

124 viṣṇu-patni mahā-māyē mahā-puruṣa-lakṣaṇe. priyethā me mahā-bhāge loka-mātār namo’stu te... śriyāṁ viṣṇuḥ ca varadāvāśīṁ prabhavāvubhau... 6.19.6, 9ab.

125 ātma-māyāṁ rite rājan parasya’vibhāvātmanaḥ. na ghaṭetā’rtha-sambandhāḥ svapna-dṛṣṭā tvā’vājaśa... 2.9.1.

126 yathā’tma-tantro bhagavān vikriḍatyā’tma-māyayā. visṛṣja vā yathā māyāṁ udāste sākṣi-vad vibhuk... 2.8.23.

127 māyāṁ vyudasya cic-chaktyā kaiyalye shītā ātmani... 1.7.23. cd.

128 kālaṁ karma svabhāvaṁ ca māyeśo māyāya svayā. ātman yad-ṛcchayā prāptam vibhibhūṣur upādade... 2.5.21.
and Vidyā, Avidyā and Guṇa-maṇi Ātma-māyā or Prakṛti on the other. Out of Guṇa-maṇi Ātma-māyā the world is eventually brought into existence.

The Bhāgavata has re-stated the position of the Bhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad, referred to above, in the following way:—At the outset Bhagavat, the third grade of Reality, was in the state of non-duality, reposed on the desire of being left alone (ātmecchā’nugatau). This is evidently an explanation of the Svadhā concept in its original form. In course of His enjoyment of the pleasure of isolation, He discovered that He was alone. With the power of plurality dormant in Him and the power of consciousness wide awake, He was possessed by the sense of isolation to the extent that He felt Himself as if non-existent (a-sat). So, out of Him emerged Māyā by which all this was created. According to the Bhāgavata, the first expression of the non-dual is in the form of pure bliss intended to display Divine Sport with the aid of Yoga-māyā. Yoga-māyā, then, is the power of bliss and, as indicated by the Bhadāraṇyaka, is related to Śri-Kṛṣṇa, the third grade of Reality, as a female to the male but not as His wife. The cowherd girls who are but the expansion (upabṛhīhana) of this Yoga-māyā concept, are therefore not described in the Bhāgavata as the wives of Kṛṣṇa. As the child of the Non-dual, Kṛṣṇa could not possibly have wives. His association with the cowherd girls was thus a pure sport without any string of worldliness. The divine will of isolation further developed into three phases: (1) I am alone, (2) I wish to be many and (3) I wish to be born many. The consciousness of isolation is Śrī, Viṣṇu-māyā or Mahā-māyā. That consciousness or speculation (īkṣṇa) re-

129 vidyā vidye mama tanu viddhyuddhava saririnām. bandha-mokṣa-kari ādye māyāyā me vinirmita... 11.11.3.
130 mamāṅga māyā guṇa-mayyaneka-dhā vikalpa-buddhiḥ ca guñyar vidhatte... 11.22.30.
131 bhagavān eka āsedam agra ātmātmanān prabhuḥ. ātmecchā’nugatauātmā’nānā-matyupalakṣaṇāḥ... sa vā eja tadā draṣṭā nā’palyad dhrayam eka-rāt. menes’vantam ivātmāman supta-saktir a-suṣṭa-dyā... sa vā elasya sam-draṣṭāḥ saktih sad-asadātmikāḥ. māyā nāma mahā-bhāga yayedam nir-mame vibhuḥ... 3.5.23-25.
132 atha te bhagaval-lilā yoga-māyojābhṛhitāḥ. 3.5.22 ab.
133 tad ikṣṇata bahu syāṁ prajāyeya Ch U 6.1.3.
sulted in a definite will to be many. This will is Ātma-māyā. As the sense of plurality involves the germ of contradiction between one and the other (A and not-A) Ātma-māyā as the principle of plurality should evolve into Cit-śakti, the principle of spirituality, and Māyā, the principle of materiality. Cit-śakti and Māyā correspond respectively to the “nimeṣa” and “unmeṣa” described by the Mahā-narāyaṇa-Upaniṣad as belonging to Adi-Viṣṇu or Adi-Nārāyaṇa. The Bhāgavata has knit them into the structure of Ātma-māyā traced ultimately to Mahā-māyā, the consciousness of unity that belongs to the very essence of Paramātman, the second grade of Reality. Cit-śakti maintains its original character of “īkṣaṇa” throughout the cosmic process. It is this spiritual strength (vīrya) of God, that drives creation through each step to its successful conclusion.

In the wake of the Mahā-narāyaṇa-Upaniṣad, the Bhāgavata deals with the third and the second grades of Reality in terms of powers (śaktis) and abodes (pada, pāda, dhāman or loka). Śrī-Kṛṣṇa, the third grade of Reality, has His loka, eternal and luminous. As constituting the very essence of Reality, it is infinite (ananta), real and all-knowledge. Persons who can escape complete dissolution of their own selves into the first grade of Reality are eligible for entering into this realm. Similarly the abode of Viṣṇu, the second grade of Reality, is Vaikuṇṭha. Residing in the land of light (go-loka) Bhagavat (Śrī-Kṛṣṇa) is the Supreme Self (Uttama-Puruṣa) and the corresponding power, His playmate, is Yoga-māyā, mentioned before. The child (Śrī-Kṛṣṇa) grows into a personality of beauty and consciousness and is wedded

134 ātma-māyām rte rājan parasyā'nuḥbhavātmanah. na ghaṣṭā'rtha-sambandāhāḥ svapna-drāṣṭur ivā'ñjasā... bahu-rupā ivā'bhāti māyayā bahu-rūpayā. 2.9.1, 2ab
135 iti samcintya bhagavān mahā-kāruṇiko hariḥ. darśayāmāsa lokām svāṁ gopānāṁ tamasaḥ param. satyaṁ jñānam antanāṁ yad brahma jyotiḥ sanātānam. yad dhi pāyanti munayo guṇā'pāye samāhītah... te tu brahma-kṛdāṁ nītā magnāḥ kṛṣṇena coddhiyāt. dadṛśu brahmaśca lokāṁ yatrā'kṛūro'dhyāgat puṣā... nandādayas tu tam dṛśvā paramā'nanda-nirvṛtyāḥ. kṛṣṇā ca tatra chandobhīḥ stūyamānaṁ suvīrāṁ... 10.28.14-17.
136 ta ekadā bhagavato vaikuṇṭhasya'malā'śamanah. yayur vaikuṇṭha-nilayaṁ sarva-loka-namaskṛtam... 3.15.13.
137 yasyāṁ vai śrīyamānāyāṁ kṛṣṇe parama-pūruse. bhaktir utpadyate puṁsāḥ soka-moha-bhāyā'pahā... 1.7.7.
to Śrī or Mahā-māyā. The conception of power as wife, envisaged by the Bhādāranyaka, finds its fulfilment in the concept of Śrī. As marriage is the dawn of creation, Viṣṇu, the second grade wedded to Śrī, is conceived as “Ādi-Puruṣa”\(^{138}\). Finally Brahman, the first grade of Reality, is called “Puruṣa” (God) because He lives in the material world, His abode (pura), in the company of Ātma-Māyā bifurcating itself into Ciṭ-śakti and Māyā. We have thus three Puruṣas—Puruṣa, Ādi-Puruṣa and Uttama-Puruṣa (or Mahā-Puruṣa)—with their corresponding powers, Ātma-māyā, Mahā-māyā and Yoga-māyā. This is indeed a great development on the concept of Puruṣa propounded by the Vājasaneyi-Samhitā.

The Bhāgavata evolution of the concept of Māyā, the principle of materiality, is interesting. The Śvetāśvatara had included Kāla, Svabhāva etc., adduced by different authorities as their views on the origin of creation, in the “mahiman” of the Deity. The Bhāgavata not only does the same\(^{139}\) but assigns to them specific functions in the cosmic process. Kāla breaks the inertia in the three guṇas, flow of the guṇas towards a transformation takes place by Svabhāva while the actual creation of a category is the function of the totality of action (Karman)\(^{140}\) “Yadyṛcchā”, one of these views, has been sublimated to the status of the original impulse, Svadhiṣṭhāna\(^{141}\) that works even behind Divine Sport. Vidyā and Avidyā were left by the Śvetāśvatara as powers of the Deity, unconnected with Māyā. The Bhāgavata takes them as the forms of Māyā. Māyā of the Bhāgavata being thus impregnated with infinite possibilities of development could hardly be identified with Prakṛti, the primordial matter, as has been done by the Śvetāśvatara. At best Prakṛti could just be one among many other forms of Māyā. Kāla, Svabhāva and Karman operate on Prakṛti (guṇa-mayī Ātma-māyā) under the overall superinten-

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\(^{138}\) yatra cāḍyāḥ pumān āste bhagavān labda-gocaraḥ.

\(^{139}\) kecit karma vadaṇyenaṁ svabhāvam aparē naṁ

\(^{140}\) kālād guṇa-vyatikaraḥ pariṇāmaḥ svabhāvataḥ.

\(^{141}\) kālaṁ karma svabhāvāṁ ca māyeśo mayāya svayā.

ātman yadṛcchayā prāptaṁ vibhūṣaṁ upādade.
dence of God. When Prākṛti has created the world, the individual soul becomes bound up with it by the influence of Avidyā. Its empirical life continues until Cit-śakti kindles Vidyā. The Bhāgavata has thus conceived Māyā to fall into Prakṛti and Avidyā, to explain the physical universe and the subjective reaction of the individual soul thereto. But both belong to Māyā as does Vidyā and all the three including Vidyā vanish when Vidyā kindled by Cit-śakti burns Māyā in its totality. Divested of its material costume, the soul then retires to pure being, the infinity, pure knowledge, pure bliss, the non-dual.

The evolution of Prākṛti into categories deserves consideration at this place. Prakṛti, Pradhāna or Avyakta is said to evolve into twentyfour categories—Citta, Ahaṁkāra, Manas Buddhī (collectively called antah-karana, the inner mechanism), five sense organs, five action organs, five subtle elements and five gross elements.²⁴² The Bhāgavata considers them to be the embodiment of sa-guṇa-Brahman and Time is the twentyfifth principle²⁴³. Time is taken here to be the external representation of the Spirit which is revealed in the mind as Puruṣa.²⁴⁴ The recognition of twentyfive categories—twentyfour material and one spiritual—seems to be the view of the Bhāgavata.

Of these Citta or Mahat is the first evolute of Prakṛti. From Mahat, Ahaṁkāra of tripartite nature is brought into existence. From Sāttvika Ahaṁkāra is born the mind and from Rājasa Ahaṁkāra, Buddhī (the determinate and indeterminate knowledge of external objects). Buddhī is further differentiated into five sense organs. From Rājasa Ahaṁkāra the second set to emerge consists of five action organs. From Tāmasa Ahaṁkāra the five subtle elements are produced and they in turn generate the five gross elements.²⁴⁵ The five gross elements are integrated into a cosmic egg (aṇḍa) which Brahmā, charged with

²⁴² pañcabhiḥ pañcabhir brahma caturbhīr databhis tathā. etac catur-viṁśatikāṃ gaṇam prādhānikam viduḥ... 3.26.11.
²⁴³ etavān eva saṁkhyāto brahmaṇaḥ sa-guṇasya ca. sanniveśo mayā proktō yah kālā pañca-viṁśatikāḥ... 3.26.15.
²⁴⁴ antah puruṣa-rūpeṇa kāla-rūpeṇa yo bahiḥ. samaveteyesa sattvānāṁ bhagavān ātma-māyāyā... 3.26.18.
²⁴⁵ daivāt kṣubhīta-darmīnyāṁ svasyāṁ yonau paraḥ pumān. ādhatā viryāṁ sāśūta mahat-tattvān hi raś-mayam... mahat-tattvāḥ vikurvānāḥ bhagavad-virya-sambhavāt. kriyā-śaktir ahaṁkāras tri-vidhaḥ sama-padyata.
the strength of God, gradually manifests into the fourteen planes of existence, seven higher and seven lower.\textsuperscript{345} Prakṛti evolves in its substratum, the cosmic Puruṣa (God) and it receives impetus for evolution from Kāla. But all the three ultimate principles—Prakṛti, Puruṣa and Kāla—are merged in the essence of Brahman.\textsuperscript{248} Creation is contemporaneous with the "īkṣaṇa" (superintendence) of God. So the merger takes place the moment this "īkṣaṇa" is withdrawn.\textsuperscript{147} The above statement of categories may not seem to be exhaustive. For instance, while it takes note of Kāla, it seems to have left out Svabhāva and Karman, besides its silence over Vidyā and Avidyā. Further, it appears to accept Prakṛti as identical with Māyā which, as we have indicated above, should be taken as a much wider concept than Prakṛti. Similarly in its other version of cosmic evolution the Bhāgavata identifies Buddhī with Mahat, which (Buddhī) then does not find recognition as a separate category.\textsuperscript{148} There is also variation in details as regards the creations from Ahamkāra.\textsuperscript{149} Does this suggest that the Bhāgavata is just a medley of accretions of materials through different centuries, thus lacking a unity of thought? Or, does it reveal, as it has once more exposed in the case of the number of the

145 mayā sāṁcoidītā bhāvāḥ sarve samhatya-kāriṇaḥ.
aḍām utpādayāmāsūr mamā’yatanam uttamam.
tasmin aham samabhavam aḍā saśila-saṁśhitaḥ.
mama nābhyām abhūt padmaṁ viśvā’kyhaṁ tatra cā’tma-bhūḥ.
so’srjat taṇaṣā yukto rajasa mad-anugrahā.
lokān sa-pālān viśvā’tmaḥ bhūr bhuvah svar iti tri-dhā.
devanām oka asīt svar bhūtānā ca bhuvah padam.
marthyādānā ca bhūr-lokaṁ siddhānāṁ tri-tayāt āram.
adho’ṣurāṇām nāgānāṁ bhūmer ek’o’srjat prabhūḥ.
11.24.9-12, 13ab.

146 prakṛtir yasyopādānam adhāraṁ puruṣaṁ paraḥ.
sato’bhivyaṁjakaḥ kālo brahma tait-tritayan tvaham...
11.24.19.

147 sarGaḥ pravartate tāvāt paurvāpyeṣa nityaṁaḥ.
mahaṁ guṇa-visargaṁbhāṁ sthīyanto yavadd-ikṣaṇam...
11.24.20.

148 vaikārikas tajjasā ca tāmasya cetyaṁ tri-ūrt.
tanḍārendriya-manasāṁ kāraṇaṁ cid-acin-mayaṁ...
11.24.7.

149 ārthas tanḍārikāj jajñe tamasad indriyaṁ ca.
taijasād devatā āsann ekādaśa ca vaikṛtāt...
11.24.8.
transcendental “padas” of Reality, that its highly monistic trend of thought makes it comparatively indifferent to paying much of attention to details though the latter may suit the temperament of rigid scholasticism? The Bhāgavata refers to different views that had made their rise as to the number of categories: twenty-six, twenty-five, seven, nine, six, four, eleven, seventeen, sixteen, thirteen, five and three. The Bhāgavata observes with a note of appreciable reconciliation that all these views are tenable. Views, in fact, are bound to differ because the delusive power of Māyā has silently crept into them. They will flourish as long as Māyā holds its ground but will disappear when discursive thinking will give place to spiritual tranquillity. It can be said from the logical plane, however, that the categories generally differ in number according as the cause and the effect are treated as one or as two. Therefore, an enumeration of categories deserves approval at its face value if a case can be made out for it. For instance, God may be recognised as a reality distinct from the individual soul, to provide for the saving knowledge for the individual soul labouring under delusion from time immemorial. Alternatively, God and the individual soul need not be taken as two different realities because both are one in substance. Similarly, knowledge (Vidya), action (Karman) and ignorance (Avidyā) can safely be included in sattva, rajas and tamas of Prakṛti respectively. Likewise, Time is just the


151 yuṅtaḥ ca santi sarvaih bhāṣante brāhmaṇaḥ yathā. māyāṁ madiyāṁ udghya vadatāṁ kīṁ nu dur-gaḥāṣam. naitad evam yathā’tha tvam yad aham vacmi tat tathā. evam vibadatāṁ hetum śaktayo me dur-ātayāḥ. yāsāṁ vyatikarad āṣid vikaḥpo vadatāṁ param. prāpte samā-dame’yetyi vādās tam anu śāmyati. 11.22.4-6.

152 paraśparā’nupraveteḥ tattvānāṁ puruṣa-rāhbha. pauruṣāṁ-vaḥ-prasaṅkhyānaṁ yathā vaktur vivakṣitam. ekasmin api dṛṣṭyante praviṣṭanitarāṇi ca. pūrvasmin vā paraśmin vā tatte tattvānāṁ sarvaih. puruṣaḥ-pauryam ato’miśaḥ prasaṅkhyānaṁ abhiṣaṭaṁ. yathā viśvikmaṁ yad vaktam gṛhṇo yuktī-sambhavat. 11.22.7-9.

153 anādyāvidyā-yuktasya puruṣasya’tma-vedanam. svato na sambhavād anyas tatva-ṇīo jñāna-do bhavat. 11.22.10.

154 puruṣa-vivarayor atra na vaiākṣaṇyam anuṣṭapi tad-anvya-kalpanā’pārthā. 11.22.11. abc.
disturbance of the three guṇas and Nature (Śvabhāva) is but the transformation of Prakṛti into Mahat and so on. The categories may be (1) nine: Puruṣa, Prakṛti, Mahat, Ahaṁkāra and the five elements, (2) eleven: five sense organs, five action organs and the mind, (3) five: the five gross elements, (4) three: the three guṇas of Prakṛti, (5) twentysix: Prakṛti consisting of twentyfour evolutes (indicated above), the individual soul and God, (6) twentyfive: twentyfour evolutes of Prakṛti, and Puruṣa, (7) seven: the five elements, Jīva and Īśvara, (8) six: the five elements and Puruṣa, (9) four: the three elements, fire, water and earth, and the soul, (10) seventeen: five gross elements, five subtle elements, five organs, mind and the soul, (11) sixteen: the same as in (10), mind and the soul being regarded as one, (12) thirteen: five elements, five organs, the mind, Jīva and Īśvara and (13) eleven: the same as in (12), the mind, Jīva and Īśvara being taken as one. It is interesting to note that all these thirteen views fall within the pattern of categories recognized by the Bhāgavata. They range between uncompromising materialism resulting in the denial of the soul distinct from matter, and bald theism that recognizes God to save the individual soul. These views may be presumed to have been formulated on the basis of different statements in the different Upaniṣads. The Bhāgavata seems to have drawn upon the Praśna-Upaniṣad in this respect.

153 sattvāṁ jñānaṁ rajah karma tamo'jñānam ihocyte. guṇa-uyatikaraṁ kālaḥ svabhāvaṁ śūtram eva ca...
154 puruṣaḥ prakṛtir vyaktam ahaṁkāro nabhōnīlaṁ. jyotir āpaḥ kṣitir iti tattvānyuktāṁ me nava. śrotāṁ tvag darśanāṁ ghrāno jihveti jñāna-laktayā. vak-pāṇyapasthā-pāyvaṅghriḥ karmāṇyaṅgobhayaṁ manaḥ...
155 sadaḥ spārśo raso gandho rūpaṁ cetyartha-jātayā. sargādau prakṛtir hyasya kāraṇa-kāraṇa-rūpini. sattvādibhir guṇāṁ dhatte. saptaiṇa dhatava iti tatrārthaḥ paṇca khaḍayaḥ. jñānam atmabhāyāddhāras tato dehendriyāsvaṁ...
156 paṅgaṁ ityatraṁ pi bhūtāṁ paṇca saśṭhaṁ paurāṁ pumāṁ. tair yukta ātma-sambhūtaṁ sṛṣṭvedam samupāvitaṁ. catvāryeṣu tatra teja āpo'nnaṁ ātmanaḥ. sankhyāne saptaiṇa-dalake bhūta-matrendriyāṁ ca...
157 paṇca paṇcaikā-µanasaṁ ātmā saptaiṇa-dalaśmṛtaḥ...
158 tadvaṁ sotaṁ-saṅkhyaṁ ātmava mana ucyate. bhūtendriyāṁ paṇcarva mana ātmā traya-dala. ekādaśatva ātmā-sau mahā-bhūtendriyāṁ ca.

131 prthivī ca prthivi-mātrā ca, āpaḥ ca āpo-mātrā ca, tejaḥ ca tejomātrā ca, vāyuḥ ca vāyu-mātrā ca, ākāṣa ca akāṣa-mātrā ca, caṅku ca
From the logical plane of enumeration of categories the Bhāgavata rises to the metaphysical plane and reduces the whole cosmic evolution to two categories, Puruṣa and Prakṛti. Finally it dissolves the subject-object duality into the non-duality of the Absolute.

From the practical point of view, Prakṛti has three stages—the unmanifest (avyaktā), the subtle (śūkṣma) consisting of the categories from Mahat to the five subtle elements, and the gross (sthūla), the cosmic egg manifesting itself into the fourteen worlds. Through all these stages, God, the immanent form of Brahman (the first grade of Reality), pursues creation. With the aid of His powers—Māyā and Citt-ṣakti—He endures through creation in dual forms, Isvara and Īśva. But creation is nothing but Brahman. Bondage and release are therefore a couple of dreams. Metaphysical enquiry viz, “what am I?” is also a part of this dream. Awakening to the non-dual nature of Reality puts an end to them. What remains is Reality. It is what it is; yet, Reality is described by the Bhāgavata, following the time-honoured tradition, as non-dual consciousness marked by three features—pure being, pure knowledge and pure bliss (Brahman, Paramātman and Bhāgavat).

128 prakṛtiḥ puruṣaś cobbhau yadyapyātma-vilakṣaṇau. anonyāpāśrayat kṛṣṇa dṛṣṭaye na bhidā tayoḥ. 11.22.26.
129 āśīj jñānam atho artha ekam eva'vikalpitam. vaṁ-manogocaram satyāṁ dvidhā samabhavad bhūhat. tayor ekatara hyarthah prakṛtiḥ sōbhayātmikā. jñānam tvanyatamo bhāvah puruṣaḥ so'bhidiyate. 11.24.2ab, 3cd, 4
CHAPTER II

THE FOURTH GRADE OF REALITY

REALITY—IMMANENT AND TRANSCENDENT

The Śrīmad-Bhāgavata, then, propounds Reality both as immanent and transcendent. The universe originates from Reality, is sustained therein and finally dissolves into the same Reality. But during all this world-process Reality is eternally established in its native grandeur without the least reference to the world-process which may then be traced to cosmic illusion.\(^1\)

Immanence of Reality as a precondition to the world-process is first traceable in the form of God. Without offending its non-dual nature, Reality can still concern itself with the world-process as God, the personal being.\(^2\) God can dress Himself into manifold realities—Brahmā, the creator, Maheśvara, the god of destruction, and many other deities—all entrusted with different departments of the cosmic evolution.\(^3\) To enhance the cause of cosmic evolution, Reality expresses itself as different deities by resorting to potentiality which forms the core of its essence.\(^4\) But the universe created by Reality, as personal God, does not belong to an order other than God. The universe is manifested in God. God is the substratum of which the entire creation is the substrate. The presence of God

\(^1\) janmā'ḍyasya yato'nvayād itaratai cārtheṣvabhijñāḥ sva-rāṣ
tenē brahma hṛdā ya ādi-kavaye muhyanti yat suraṇāḥ.
etjo-vāri-mrdāṁ yathā vinimayo yatra tri-sargo mṛṣā
dhāmnā svena sadā nirasta-kuhakam satyaṁ param dhīmahi. 1.1.1.

\(^2\) tvam brahma pūrṇam aṁśtaṁ vi-guṇaṁ vi-lokaṁ
ānanda-mātram a-vikāram ananyaṁ anyat.
vīvāya hetur udāya-sthitī-saṁyamānāṁ
ātmēṣvaraṁ ca tad-apekṣatayā naṁpekṣaḥ. 8.12.7.

\(^3\) aham brahma a sarvaḥ ca jagataḥ kāraṇam ķam.
ātmēṣvara upadraṣṭā svayam-dr̥g a-vileṣaḥ. 4.7.50.

\(^4\) namaḥ śivāya rudrāya namaḥ śakti-dhāraya ca.
sarva-vidyādhipataye bhiṣṭānam pataye namaḥ
nāma hiranya-garbhāya praṇāya jagad-ātmane.
yogasvārayā-sarirāya namas te joga-hetave. 8.16.32-33.
at the centre explains the convergence of the bewildering multiplicity of the universe to the harmony of a cosmic design. This means that God suffused creation with His presence as the inner controller. Thus while creation was in God, God was in creation. The relationship between God and the universe was not confined to the creator and the created or to the controller and the controlled; for all times the universe belongs to the essence of God. The Bhāgavata understands the immanence of Reality in terms of such intimate relationship.

Not only in the creation of the physical world God intimately co-operates, but He permeates also the bare existence of man. As man in his routine existence experiences the three states—the waking, dream and dreamless sleep—the details of his experience are recorded in God who serves as the witness (sākṣī). Memory of man draws upon the impressions buried in the witness to fill in its content. Empirical life of man exposes disintegration of personality, a part of which is caught up in the stream of phenomenal forms, while the other part persists unpolluted to maintain uniformity and concord in the midst of distraction and chaos. This static aspect of man is God serving as the witness. Memory then points to the immanence of God in man.

So, the life of man continues to flow parallel to the flow of his environment. Out of interaction between man and his environment the world changes and inevitably, bringing in its train sometimes violent disruption of law and order. This necessitates God's direct intervention to restore peace in the world. God who has all along been working behind the cosmic process becomes immanent in a tangible form called "Descent”
(avatāra) to restore the equilibrium lost temporarily. But a God’s “Descent” may be as good a cosmic phenomenon observable by all, as it may be a strictly individual business. An individual, overburdened with phenomenal multiplicity, may, with all the strength at his command, withdraw from the world at large and pent himself up to the vital core of his being, and, then, in the profound depth of his vision, obtain the benign revelation of God. The Divine may thus stoop to the individual being of man.

This is in short the story of Reality immanent in the universe. But the universe, although it may be looked upon as the cosmic form of God, does not and cannot exhaust Reality. Far away from the gross, Reality—the subtle, unmanifest, beginningless, endless and hence eternal presence—shines in its native glory that defies all attempts on the part of mind and speech to define it. The transcendental presence is confirmed by the Bhāgavata when it says that Reality is something other than the universe. The Transcendent is free from the turmoil of material existence, which are lulled into perfect repose and self-complacency ensured by the realisation of its native spiritual sovereignty (svārājya). Free from the limitations of tripartite energies brought into play by Māyā with the aid of modal consciousness, Reality transcends the barriers of cause and effect and is settled in its infinitude (bhūman).

Transcendence and immanence—unity and multiplicity—existing side by side to form the essence of Reality are bound

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8 praśānta-māyā-guṇa-karma-līṅgam
a-nāma-rūpāṁ sad-asad-vimuktaṁ.
janapadesāya grhita-dehaṁ
namāma he tvāṁ puruṣāṁ purāṇaṁ...

9 sa tvam kathaṁ mama vibho'ksā-pathāḥ parāmāṁ
yogesvaraiḥ śrutī-ḍīśāmalakṛś-vibhāvyah. 10.64.26 ab.

10 ataḥ paramaṁ sūkṣma-tamam avyaktaṁ nir-viśeṣaṇam.
anādi-madhye-nidhanāṁ nityaṁ vāṁ-manasaḥ param...
10.2.42 ab.

11 ityabhīṣṭāya puruṣāṁ yad-rūpam anidaṁ yathā. 10.2.42 ab.

12 namo'stu tasmā upalānta-laktaye
svārājya-lābha-pratipūritāṁ mane.
guṇesu māyā-raciteṣu vṛttibhir
na sajgamāṇya navasvad-ūtaye... 8.5.44.

13 tat tasya te sad-asatoḥ paraṁ parasya
nāṁjñā svārūpa-gamane prabhavantī bhūmah.
brhmā'dayaṁ kum āta samstavane vayaṁ tu
tat-sarga-sarga-viṣayā api lakti-mātram...
8.7.34.
to offend the law of contradiction. Reality may either be transcendent or immanent; but how can it be both? The Bhāgavata claims Reality, the transcendental, to be more fundamental to reason. An analysis of man brings this out. The soul of man endures through different bodies and fleeting panorama of experiences taking place in the waking state and dream. But in dreamless sleep the soul casts off multiplicity and all that it means, and reposes upon its isolated nature of unity. This shows that unity forms the hard core of the soul while multiplicity is the crust of it—somewhat outside its own nature. The Bhāgavata therefore traces diversity to Māyā, the limited vision of truth. In fact, unity and diversity are reconciled to the supra-logical nature of Reality. The experience of those who know the Truth has been able to find a consistency between the two. The Bhāgavata records four situations in which the duality between the knower and the known is integrated into absolute monism. The situations are:—(1) The beginning of creation when Reality was the only entity, (2) spiritual existence unapproachable by time (a-yuga), achieved in liberation, (3) the golden era (satya-yuga) when men are supposed to have had the natural vision of unity and (4) the dawning, at any time, of the spiritual insight on the part of an individual. As the ground of consistency between immanence and transcendence Reality is the supreme truth. The validity of the Scriptures and their impelling authority are derived from Reality which per se is then independent of all proofs. As a laudable attempt of deciphering the nature of this supreme truth the

14 nā’tmā jējāna na marīyati naiddkate’sau
na kṛīyate savana-vid vyabhicārināṁ hi.
sarvatra śāvad anapāyyupaladbhi-mātram.
prāṇo yathendriya-balena vikalpitaṁ sat.. 11.3.38.

15 tvāṁ vā idam sad-asad iśa bhavāṁs tato’ṇyo
māyā yad ātma-para-buddhir iṣyaṁ hyapārthā.
yad yasya janna nidhanam sthitir iṣkanaṁ ca
 tad vai tad eva vasu-kāla-vad aṣṭi-tarvoh.. 7.9.31.

16 āṣij jīnaṁ atho artha ekam eva’vikalpitam.
yadda viveka-mipūṇā ādau kyta-yuge’yuge.. 11.24.2.
17 tat uṣuddhāṁ vimalam viśokam amṛtaṁ satyaṁ. paraṁ dhimahi.
12.13.19 d.

18 nāmaḥ pramāṇa-mūlāya kāvaye śāstra-yonaye.
pravṛttāya niyeṛttāya nigamāya namo nāmaḥ.. 10.16.44.
THE FOURTH GRADE OF REALITY

Bhāgavata can rightly claim to be the quintessence of the Vedas, the fountains of wisdom.\textsuperscript{19}

THE ABSOLUTE

The ultimate nature of the supreme truth is described as immutable pure being, absolutely impersonal and actionless. These are, in fact, a few epithets indicative of the nature of Reality. As there is nothing beyond the supreme truth one might call it the Absolute.\textsuperscript{20} The supreme truth has been defined by those who have got at the core of its being as non-dual consciousness.\textsuperscript{21} It is consciousness, pure and simple, established in its sovereign nature, perfectly immune from mental modes of varying patterns. It is one that has transcended limited vision (Māyā) and is beyond the shadow of fear.\textsuperscript{22} Before the inception of creation when neither internal nor external pronounced itself, consciousness was left to its lonely existence. An undifferentiated lull of profound passivity—the cosmic slumber—prevailed as the only reality and nothing else was possible.\textsuperscript{23} Being without a second, consciousness had to fall back upon its own self, a state of absolute isolation.\textsuperscript{24} Consciousness being the very core of the supreme truth it held on to its own even after creation was brought into existence. Thus after creation Reality retired to the ocean of its infinite nature as if to avoid pollution by tripartite energies (tri-guṇa).\textsuperscript{25} But such consciousness has to be carefully distinguished from modal knowledge. While modal knowledge is conventional, impure, variegated, subjected to in-

\textsuperscript{19} nigama-kalpa-taror galitam phalam
ṣuka-mukhād amśta-draṇa-śamhyutam.
piṇata bhāgavataṁ rasam ā-layam
muhur aho rasikā bhuvī bhāvukāḥ. . . 1.1.3.

\textsuperscript{20} vinā'cyutād vastu-tārāṁ na vācyam
sa eva sarvaṁ paramā'ṁma-bhūtaḥ. . . 10.46.43 cd.

\textsuperscript{21} vādanti tat tattva-vidas tattvam yad jñānam advayam. . . 1.2.11 ab.

\textsuperscript{22} sūddham sva-dhāman-yparāto kha-ḥila-buddhyavasthāṁ
cin-mātram ekam abhayam pratiṣidhya māyāṁ.
tiṣṭham tayaiva puruṣatvam upetya tasyāṁ
āste bhavāṁ a-pariṣuddha ivā'tma-tantraḥ. . . 4.7.26.

\textsuperscript{23} aham evā'sam evā'gre nā'nyat kiṃcā'ntaram bāhik.
sanījānā-mātram āyaktam prasuptam iva viśvataḥ. . . 6.4.47.

\textsuperscript{24} mama aham evā'bhirūpaḥ kaivalyāt. . . 5.3.17.

\textsuperscript{25} satyaṁ bhayād iva guṇebhya ury-kramā'ntaḥ
śete samudra upalambhama-mātra ātma.
nityaṁ kad-indriya-gaṇaiḥ kṛta-vigrahas tvam. . . 10.60.35 abc.
ternality and externality, limited, coloured by objects and is liable to change, absolute consciousness is true, pure, non-dual, without ins and outs, self-complete, unconditioned by any object and immutable. Ultimate consciousness is pure because it is not defiled by the saturation of objects—the embodiments of distracting forces which pale into nothingness before the native splendour of Reality. Thus the Absolute embraces perfect serenity, transcends all and cannot be associated with a name or form.

The Absolute, as the perfect state of self-complacency, is marked by the total absence of wistfulness. It is a state of absolute calm free from all attachments because it represents the gratification of all longings. The Absolute is all gratified because it is the state of attainment of its true nature. It has attained its true nature because it has extricated itself from all distracting limitations. But under the impulse of creation the Absolute, being the all-comprehensive Reality, splits itself, as it were, into the forms of the knower and the known, and thus appears as the objective world to persons labouring under the partial vision of Reality. With the pronouncement of duality between the knower and the known, the Absolute, as God, regulates the universe on the one hand, and assumes the form of Pradhāna, the primordial matter, that serves as the material cause for the evolution of creation on the other. Thus unity and diversity both pertain to the very nature of the Absolute. As the principle of unity, the Absolute is called para-Brahman while manifesting itself

28 jñānam viśuddham paramārtham ekam
antarantar antar-bahir brahma satyam
pratyak praśāntaṁ bhagavac-chabda-saṁjñāṁ
yad vāsudevaṁ kavayo vadanti... 5.12.11.
27 yat tad viśuddhā'nubhava-mātram ekāṁ
sva-tejasā dhvasta-guṇa-vyavastham.
pratyak praśāntaṁ sudhiyopalambhanāṁ
hyānāma-rūpaṁ nir-ahāṁ prapadye... 5.19.4.
26 nityā'nubhūta-nīja-lābha-nivṛtta-tṛṣṇāḥ... 5.6.19 a.
29 a-vismitaṁ taṁ paripūrṇa-kānaṁ
svenaiva lābheṇa samaṁ praśāntaṁ... 6.9.22 ab.
30 jñāna-mātraṁ param brahma paramātmivaḥ pumāṁ.
dṛśyādibhiḥ pṛthag-bhāvaṁ bhagavān eka iyate... 3.32.26
vide also 2.10.36.
31 jñānam ekāṁ parācinair indriyair brahma nir-guṇam
avabhātyartha-rūpeṇa bhrāntyā sabdādi-dharmāṇā... 3.32.28.
through creation it is called ananta-śakti. The primordial matter (Pradhāna) and its evolutes that bring the creation into existence, are all derived from and fed by the infinite energies (ananta-śaktis) of the Absolute. But despite the presence of those energies the nature of pure consciousness remains totally unaffected in the Absolute.

As the ultimate cause of the universe the Absolute was at work at the beginning of creation; it sustained the universe as long as it continued to exist; and finally, when the world-drama terminated the Absolute remained as the only residuum. In so far as the Absolute endures through the three stages of the world-process it can be discerned as existence pure and simple against the fleeting changes of phenomenal existence. The universe owes its origin to the Absolute, is sustained by it and finally dissolves into the Absolute. So the relationship between the Absolute and the universe is that of earth and earthen wares. In fact the universe is an externalisation of the Absolute. Objects are unreal in so far they do not reveal the all-comprehensive nature of the Absolute. Thus they are mere shadows (chāyā) of Truth though they unmistakably point to the real substance, the very core of all existence. The Absolute is universal (viśva-mūrti) as it has distributed itself through every detail of the universe though, at the same time, it has transcended the limitations of the conventional world. Like subtle elements (tanmātra) of gross matter (bhūtas) the Absolute is existent at all the three stages of the universe and so it is not

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32 nama vijnāna-mātrāya sarva-pratyaya-hetave.
   puruṣesa-pradhānāya brahmaṇe'nanta-śaktaye.. 10.40.29.
33 upacita-nava-śaktibhiḥ svā ātma-
   nyuparacita-sthira-javaṅgamālayāya.
   bhagavata upalabdhi-mātra-dhāmme
   sure-ṛṣabhāya namaḥ sanātanāya.. 12.12.68.
34 ādavante ca madhye ca sṛjyāt sṛjyaṁ yad anviyat.
   punas tat-pratisamkrāme yac chiṣyeta tad eva sat.. 11.19.16.
35 yasminn idam yataḥ cedam tiṣṭhataṃpyeti jāyate.
   mrṇ-mayeyeiva mṛj-jātis tasmāi te brahmaṇe namaḥ.. 6.16.22.
36 a-satya-echāyahoyktāya sad-ābhāyiya te namaḥ.. 8.3.14.
37 tvayyagra āsīt tvayi madhya āsīt
   tvayyanāta āsīd idam ātma-tantre.
   tvam ādir anto jagato'ya madhyam
ghaṭasya mṛṣiseva paraḥ paraśmāt.. 8.6.10.
38 aham hi sarva-bhūtanām ādir anto'ntaram bahih.
bhautikānām yathā kham vār bhūr vāyur jyotir aṅganāḥ.. 10.82.45.
only true (satya) but it is true in three different ways (tri-satya). SATYA

The infallible existence of the Absolute in all the three stages of the universe gives rise to the concept of its perfection. An imperfect being changes and modifies itself to reach perfection. But this self-mortification is alien to pure existence which persists for all times without change and variation. So the Absolute is perfect. The Absolute is perfect also because it has realised itself in all possibilities, the multifarious forms of creation, though its innate unity has remained undisturbed all the time. And perfection lies at the basis of its immutable nature. The universe is caught up in the six stages of becoming viz., origination, sustenance, development, transformation, decay and death. Man, posed against the universe, is perpetually reacting, in the process of self-improvement, against those stages of becoming. But distinguished from man and his world, the Absolute is unrelated to becoming and all that it means. The Absolute knows no origin (anadi) and end (ananta). It is the divine equilibrium (sama) having no development. Being eternal (nitya), immutable (aksara) and indestructible (amrta), it is beyond transformation, decay and death. The Bhagavata therefore chooses to call it aksara-Brahman.

The pure existence of the Absolute is not a logical abstraction but it is the perpetual revelation of its blissful nature.

39 satya-vrataṁ satya-paraṁ tri-satyaṁ
satyasya yoniṁ niḥitaṁ ca satye.
satyasya satyam yta-satya-netram
satyaṁmakam tvāṁ laraṁ śrāpanaḥ... 10.2.26.
40 aham evaśam eva'gre nān'ya da yat sad-asat-param.
paścād aham yad etac ca yo'vālaiṣya sa'īsvayamaḥ... 2.9.32.
41 ekas tvam ātmā puruṣaṁ purāṇaṁ
satyaḥ svayam-jyotir ananta ādyāṁ.
nityo'kṣaro'ajasra-sukho nir-aṁjanaṁ
puruṣ̄dvayo mukta upādhitō'mṛtaḥ... 10.14.23.
42 viśuddhaṁ kevalaṁ jñānaṁ pratyak samyag avasthitam
satyaṁ pūrṇaṁ anādyantaṁ nīr-guṇaṁ nītīyam a-divyaṁ... 2.6.40.
43 tam aksaram brahma paraṁ pareśam
avyaktam ādhyātmika-yoga-gamyam.
atindriyam śīkṣamā ināsidūram
anantaṁ ādyam paripurṇam iḍē... 8.3.21 vide also 3.11.42.
44 asyā'pi deva vāpuṣo mad-anugrahasya
svacchāmayasya na tu bhūta-mayasya ko'pi.
neše mahī tavavasītuṁ maṇasaṁ niṣāreṇa
sākṣīt tavaiva kim uṇāśma-sukhānubhūteḥ... 10.14.2.
Material pleasure requires an occasion for its unfoldment; but bliss is always an established fact with the Absolute. In fact, existence and bliss coalesce to form the very core of its being.\(^{45}\) It is in fact the "ecstasy of the Absolute" to realise its native sweetness and charm by throwing itself open to all types of ideal manifestations. Creation satisfies a vital need of the Absolute; the world is as indispensable to God as God is to the world. Intrinsic majesty (\textit{nija-mahiman}) of the Absolute is best described in its conception of perfect bliss. Distinct from blind happiness it is the state of self-luminous and tranquil jubilation of the Absolute. One transcends the limited vision (\textit{Māyā}) by the employment of the method of exclusion and, then, with the treasure-trove of wisdom at one's command, touches upon that eternal source of bliss, the Absolute at the height of its glory, the consummation of man's spiritual strivings.\(^{46}\)

\textbf{THE DOCTRINE OF DIVINE SPORT.}

The Absolute is the meeting ground of unity and diversity. But the logical mind with its unshakeable faith in the law of contradiction will always find this position alarmingly disquieting. The concept of the Absolute is an antithesis to the world of relativity. The Absolute then is actionless and immutable. The idea that the Absolute should be many is a surrender of its immutable nature. Any kind of activity will necessarily imply dualism and that is bound to mean the effacement of its non-dual nature. So why should the Absolute be many and how?

The \textit{Bhāgavata} answers the logical mind by resorting to a position which is primarily alogical. According to the \textit{Bhāgavata}, the perpetual realisation of its blissful nature makes the Absolute perpetually charged with free creativity. It is the spontaneous overflow of the Absolute to realise itself in all kinds of ideal possibilities although it is too subtle to allow pene-

\textsuperscript{45} satya-jñānā'nantā'nanda-mātraika-rasa-mūrtayah. a-svasti-bhūri-māhātmyā api hy upaniyad-dyām... 10.13.54.

\textsuperscript{46} itūreś'tarīye niīa-mahimani svā-praṁite ke parātra'jato'rtan-nirasana-mukha-brāhmaṁa-mītu. anīśe'pi draśṭum kim idam iti vā mukhyaṁ satī cacchāda'jo jñāvā sapādi paramo'jā-javanikām... 10.13.57.
tration by logic.\textsuperscript{47} Human intellect is too feeble to unveil the mysteries of Divine Sport.\textsuperscript{48} Even spiritual stalwarts who have crystallized their minds through saintly ways fail to visualize the nature of the Absolute unravelling through Divine Sport. Yet the Absolute does assume different forms.\textsuperscript{49} Indeed Divine Sport is the expression of the majestic independence of the Absolute, and so, it refuses to be conditioned by time and space or to be cast into a specific pattern. It bristles with infinite variety that baffles prediction or description of any kind. "Why and How" are completely irrelevant to the unfoldment of Divine Sport.\textsuperscript{50} The Doctrine of Divine Sport is taken as an explanation as to why the Absolute should continue to remain in its pristine isolation in spite of the expression of diversity. The divine rapture brought about by the vital urge eternally inherent in the Absolute is perfectly compatible with concord that weaves all disintegrations into an indivisible whole.\textsuperscript{51}

Without offending the nature of the Absolute the divine urge proceeds. When it takes a definite direction and to that extent becomes selective, the Bhāgavata calls it Yoga-māyā. The very name suggests that it is the principle of plurality (Māyā) but at the same time charged with divine majesty (yoga). Yoga-māyā then is the first and primary means through which the Absolute plays with its own self.\textsuperscript{52} Yoga-māyā re-

\textsuperscript{47} a-vyākṛta-viśāraṇa sarva-vyākṛta-siddhaye. hrṣikēśa namas teṣtu munaye mauna-śiline. 10.16.47.

\textsuperscript{48} nūnam bhagavato brahman harer adbhuta-karmāṇaḥ. dur-vibhāvyam ivā'bhāti kavibhiṣ ca'pi cesītam... 2.4.8

\textsuperscript{49} na vidyate yasya ca janma karma vā na nāma-rūpe guṇa-doja eva vā. tathāpi lokāpyaya-sambhāavya yah svamāyāya tāṇyanu-kālam rechati... 8.3.8.

\textsuperscript{50} ko vetti bhūman bhagavan parātman yogēvarotīr bhavatas tri-lokyām. kva vā katham vā kati vā kadeti vistarayān kriḍasi yoga-māyām... 10.14.21.

\textsuperscript{51} tāvat svarūpa-mahāsāvī nipita-bhedamohāya bodha-dhiṣṇīya namah parasmai. niśvodbha-thitī-layeṣu nimitta-kīrūrāāya te nama idam cakyemśvarāya... 3.9.14.

\textsuperscript{52} iti maitir upakalpiṭā viśrṣṇā bhagavati sātvata-puṁgane vibhümi. svu-sukham upagate kuacid vihartum prakṛtim upeyaṣi yad bhava-pravāhaḥ... 1.9.32.
veals the spiritual regions—Goloka and Vaikuṇṭha—out of pure matter which also builds up the body of God.\textsuperscript{58} Down the spiritual regions it stimulates God and matter to physical creation.\textsuperscript{54} Thus the universe is brought into existence as a concrete representation of Divine Sport.\textsuperscript{35}

\textsuperscript{58} mūrtiṁ naḥ puru-kṛpayā vabhāra sattvam saṁsuddhaṁ sad-asad idaṁ vibhāti yatre. 5.25.10 ab.

\textsuperscript{54} tvam eva bhagavann etac chiva-laktyoh sarūpayoh. viśvaṁ śrjasī pāyah kriḍam uṛpa-paṭo yathā. 4.6.43.

\textsuperscript{35} saḍ ime prākṛtāḥ sargā vaikṛtān api me śṛṇu. rajo-bhājo bhagavato līlayāṁ hari-medhaśaṁ. 3.10.18.
Chapter III
THE STRUCTURE OF THE THIRD GRADE
BHAGAVAT

When spontaneous divine creativity assumes definiteness, the Absolute is pronounced as all-bliss characterised by all powers. This is Bhagavân of the Bhāgavata.¹ Analogous to the child indulging in sports with his own shadows merely for the sake of his own pleasure,² Bhagavân Kṛṣṇa of the Bhāgavata indulges in sports with the cowherd women (gopīs) to satisfy his mirthful nature (reme). The Bhāgavata equates Śrī-Kṛṣṇa with Bhagavān, the third grade of Reality³ and the cowherd women with its infinite powers.⁴ The climax of Divine Sport is reached when the all-blissful nature of Bhagavān finds its consummation in what the Bhāgavata calls "rāsa-līlā". The sport is the expression of divine love (preman) because the Kṛṣṇa-concept, as we shall see, emerged to accentuate the aspect of love between Viṣṇu and Ramā. The privilege of special favour which Ramā enjoyed in relation to Vaikunṭha-pati in the midst of other women of Vaikunṭha is maintained in the Bhāgavata. For, the Bhāgavata describes how Kṛṣṇa suddenly disappears in the company of one woman who thus became an object of envy when the searching party of girls traced her foot-step mingled with that of Kṛṣṇa.⁵ But though privileged, she was still "a cowherd girl" (yā gopī),⁶ one among other cowherd girls. Her recognition as "Śrī-Rādhā" in the central stream of the Bhāga-

¹ tvam pratyag-ātmani tadā bhagavaty-anante.
   ānanda-mātra upapanna-samasta-tāktau... 4.11.30 ab.
² reme vrajeo vraja-sundiribhiḥ.
   yathārbhakaḥ sva-partibimba-vibhraṃaḥ... 10.33.16 ed.
³ kṛṣṇa tu bhagavān svayam. 1.3.28 b.
⁴ tābhir vidhūta-sokābhīr bhagavān acyuto uryaḥ.
   vyarocatādhiham tātā puruṣaḥ saktibhir yathā... 10.32.10.
⁵ anayārādhiḥo nūnaṁ bhagavān harir iśvaraḥ.
   yan no vihāya govindah prito yām anayad rahaḥ... 10.30.28.
⁶ yāṁ gopīṁ anayat kṛṣṇo vihāyaṁyāḥ striyo vane... 10.30.36 ed.
vata cult was an innovation later than the Bhāgavata although the Bengal School of Vaiṣṇavism is at pains to elicit the “Śrī-Rādhā”-concept from the verse “anayā rādhīto nūnaṁ bhagavān harir īsvaraḥ.” So, in the Bhāgavata the infinite powers of Bhagavān are represented in their origina-

lity in the form of cowherd girls who could claim equal share of Kṛṣṇa’s love; and, Kṛṣṇa had to assume as many forms as there were cowherd girls in the “rāsa-līlā” so that each one of them could have Kṛṣṇa as her own. 7 That all these infinite powers in the garb of the cowherd girls were but the manifes-
tations of one spiritual principle (Yoga-māya) is suggested by the Bhāgavata when it opens the five chapters on Divine Sport (rāsa-paṇcā’dhyaśī) with the remark that Bhagavān resorted to Yoga-māya with a view to indulging in sports. 8 Thus while Kṛṣṇa was the third grade of Reality, the cowherd girls were Yoga-māya. Lastly, the spiritual abode in which Divine Sport unfolded itself is, to the Bhāgavata, “go-kula” (cow-
stall) or “vraja” (cow-pen) reminiscent of the mysterious cows and their stall of the Rg-Veda, to be mentioned later on as re-
lated to Viṣṇu.

The Vedic elements of the Viṣṇu cult which was fast moving to the evolution of the Kṛṣṇa concept found their fulfilment in the formulation of a sublime philosophy, incorporated in the first nine skandhas (books) of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavata. The funda-
mentals of such philosophy were then converted by the Bhāga-
vata in its tenth skandha (book) into a biography—the full-
fledged life of Kṛṣṇa—the threads of which can still be traced to their originals. For example, Viṣṇu’s form with a sacrificial thread was responsible for Kṛṣṇa’s birth at the Kṣatriya family of Vasudeva. But Viṣṇu’s original association with the cows was too fundamental to leave him with Vasudeva for long. So, in the very night of birth Kṛṣṇa was transferred to “Vraja” where he was brought up as a cowherd boy. To the world at large, then, Kṛṣṇa was known to be a native of “Vraja” and from this point of view his birth as the son of Vasudeva was just an acci-

7 rāsamūrame sampravṛtya gopi-maṇḍala-maṇḍitaḥ. yogesvarerṇa kṛṣṇaṁ tābhāṁ madhye dvayor dvayo∂ . . 10.33.3 ab.
8 bhagavān api tā rātriḥ śaradotpulla-maṇḍikāḥ. vikṣya rantum manaś cakre yoga-māyaṁ upāsrīlaḥ . . 10.29.1.
dent. It is the mere recognition of the association of Kṛṣṇa-concept with the revival of Brāhmaṇism. Nanda, Devaki, the associates of Kṛṣṇa, the cowherd girls are all but the forms of Kṛṣṇa¹⁰ brought about by Yoga-māyā. They are all brought into existence in the process of the elaboration of the “Vraja”-concept. To complete the story, the exploits of Viṣṇu are represented by the slaughter of a host of demons by Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu’s three abodes by Kṛṣṇa’s residence at Mathurā and Dvārakā also. Viṣṇu’s simultaneity of residence at all the three abodes is kept alive in the idea that Kṛṣṇa had never left “Vraja” even when he went to Mathurā to curb the power of Kaṁsa, his maternal uncle.

Seen in this light one can solve the enigma: Why should Kṛṣṇa be established as the supreme Reality though the Bhāgavata extols Viṣṇu to be the goal of all the Vedas? The answer is that Kṛṣṇa is none else than Viṣṇu with certain refinements. Viṣṇu, in his earlier phase, stood both for creation and love. He is later on left with his creative activity while his other aspect viz, love is represented by Kṛṣṇa. In the Bhāgavata love occupies the highest rank although the other sentiments like servitude and paternal affection are not altogether absent.

YOGA-MĀYĀ

The power of Kṛṣṇa is Yoga-māyā which is always at his command.¹¹ In terms of metaphysics, Yoga-māyā is innate with the Absolute, the third grade of Reality.¹² It provides for the expression of the free creativity of the Absolute, the enjoyment of its own ecstasy. In other words, it is the principle that makes for the sports of the Divine.¹³ Now this sportive instinct of Bhagavān is realised in the eye of the enlightened in the concept of the manifestation of all-bliss or “rāsa-līlā” and Yoga-

¹¹ iti prabhāṣya tam devi māyā bhagavati bhūvi. bahūnām aniketeṣu bahu-nāma vabhūva ha.. 10.4.13.
¹² tam tathā-tyasanaṁ dṛṣṭvā bhagavān vijñārādānaṁ. dūrāḥ pratyudhiyād bhūtvā vātuko yoga-māyayā.. 10.88.27.
¹³ vedāhāṁ aṁga paramasya hi yoga-māyāṁ.. 2.7.43 a.
¹⁴ aṁya te bhagavāl-līlā yoga-māyopābhūtāḥ.. 3.5.22 ab.
māyā is materialised into that type of sport. In the eye of the empirical man Yoga-māyā appears as the physical world and man's bondage therein. But Yoga-māyā does not exhaust itself in the physical world and man's bondage. On the one hand it is identified with the principle of creation and the principle of bondage while on the other it provides for the supernatural power that defies the natural laws, the laws of the mind and even transcends the realm of empiricism into the sphere of spiritual existence.

Thus Yoga-māyā is the meeting ground of two opposite forces. On the one hand it helps to maintain the social discipline while on the other it reveals divine majesties by the elimination of worldly pleasures. As the compromise of both yoga or pārameśṭhya (majesty) and Māyā i.e., the principle which, according to the Bhāgavata, is responsible both for the physical world and the bondage of the soul, the Bhāgavata calls this principle legitimately as Yoga-māyā.

Herein lies the genius of the Bhāgavata to conceive Yoga-māyā in all its wealth, distinguished from the Prakṛti of the Sāmkhya School. While Prakṛti of the latter explains merely the physical world, concept of Yoga-māyā is forged to interpret both the physical world as well as the bondage of the individual
souls, and also the spiritual world of eternal bliss that satisfies the demand of religion and ethics. In the light of the Bhāgavata, Yoga-māyā from the ultimate point of view provides for the highest good—the realisation of perfect bliss. From the empirical point of view, on the other hand, it includes the concepts of Cit-śakti (the principle of liberation) and Māyā which manifests itself, according to the Bhāgavata, into Guṇa-mayā Ātma-māyā or Prakṛti (responsible for creation) and Avidyā (the principle of bondage). That Yoga-māyā developed out of the concept of Prakṛti adopted by the Sāṁkhya is also borne out by the Bhāgavata which actually designates the principle providing for Divine Sport as Prakṛti.  

Logical categories presuppose certain postulates. For example, an effect is dependent upon some conditions. It is brought into existence in a definite manner and in certain numbers. It is also confined to a specific period of time and a particular space. Yoga-māyā which incorporates the freedom of the Absolute does not suffer from these limitations. It defies space-time scheme. Of its own it expresses itself in numberless manners and forms, untrammelled by any logical considerations. It is not illogical because it makes the operation of logic possible. It is thus allogical. The concept of spontaneous transformation, present in Prakṛti of the Sāṁkhya School, is also the key-note of Yoga-māyā of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavata.  

The Śaiva, Śākta and the Vaiṣṇava Schools are at one to explain creation by recognising power in Reality. The Bhāgavata has tried to explain both creation and emancipation by the concept of Yoga-māyā. Even in this the Vaiṣṇavism of the Bhāgavata is supported by Śāktaism and Śaivism. So, in the conception of Yoga-māyā the Bhāgavata was drawing upon a common tradition. This is borne out by the fact that Vaiṣṇavi, Nārāyaṇi, Kṛṣṇa or Mādhavi of the Vaiṣṇavas is held by the Bhāgavata to be identical with Durgā, Bhadrakālī, Vijayā, Kumudā, Caṇḍikā, Kanyakā or Māyā of the Śāktas, and with Iśāni, Śāradā, Ambikā of the Śaivas; all these are, according

23 svauṣukham upagate kvacid vihartuṁ práktīṁ upyuṣya yad bhava-pravāhaḥ... 1.9.32.
24 kva vā kathāṁ vā kati vā kadeśi vistārayan kriṣṇaṁ yoga-māyāṁ... 10.14.21 ed.
to the Bhāgavata, synonyms of Yoga-māyā. This recogni-
tion shows on the one hand the synthetic approach of the Bhā-
gavata as well as the sanction of the concept of Yoga-māyā by
all the three Schools.

GOLOKA

As the biography of Kṛṣṇa will be examined in some details
in the wider context of metaphysical perspective, the concept of
Goloka requires a word here. In so far as the Bhāgavata has
lavished its imageries on the description of “Vraja” which is
nothing but the pictorial representation of Goloka, it has chosen
to remain almost silent over the latter as such excepting its
casual reference. The descriptions of Goloka as such are
found in the Brahma-Samhitā, Bhāt-Bhāgavatā’myata, Sāṭ-
sandarbha, Uttara-khaṇḍa of the Padma-Purāṇa, the Hari-
vamśa, the Gautamīya-Tantra and other works.

35 nāmadheyaṁi kurvanti sthānāṁi ca narā bhuvī.
durgeti bhadra-kālīti vijayā vaiśṇavītī ca...
kumudā caṇḍikā kṛṣṇā mādhavi kanyaketi ca.
māyā nārāyaṇīlāṁ lāradetyambiketi ca... 10.2.11-12.
36 ācchidaṁ kirtiṁ so-iloṁ vitya hyaṁjasā nu kau.
tamo’nayā tarṣyaṁtityagāṁ svāṁ padam iśvaraḥ... 11.1.7 vide also
11.31.6.
Chapter IV

KRŚNA, THE MAHĀ-VIŚNU

THE ISSUE

The excellence of the Bhāgavata-Purāṇa, as the Purāṇa itself declares, lies in its exclusive concern with Śrī-Bhagavān to whom the work owes its designation, "Śrīmad-Bhāgavata". "Krśna is no other than Bhagavān Himself"—is the dictum which the Bhāgavata has propounded, with all emphasis at its command, at the beginning. This proclamation is important; for, the Bhāgavata-Purāṇa, the most notable of all the eighteen Mahā-Purāṇas, is the practical demonstration of a sublime philosophy of religion, incorporated in the rather pithy statement:—"Krṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam".1 So, to examine the processes which eventually led to the affirmation of this truth is to probe into the evolution of thought which, gradually but inevitably solidifies itself into what we now call the high metaphysics of the Bhāgavata cult which has, so widely and for so many centuries, captured the religious imagination of Indian humanity.

Although a logical analysis of the dictum is not intended here but one cannot ignore the suggestive value of the logical form in which it is presented: Krṣṇa is Bhagavān. If it is not a case of tautology then "Krṣṇa" has to be different from "Bhagavān". Yet "is" indicates a very close link, in fact, identity between the two. It therefore suggests a story how Krṣṇa outlives himself, or rather, transcends himself to attain the lofty status of Bhagavān. But was Krṣṇa a historical fact at all? The question has raged in the mind of modern scholars. Barth,2 Hopkins3 and Keith4 who early probed into the question gave their verdict in the negative. Barth found Krṣṇa as a popular

1 krṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam 1.3.28 b.
3 Hopkins, The Religions of India, Boston, 1908, pp. 388, 467.
4 Keith RPVU p. 262.
solar deity, Hopkins as the patron god of the Paṇḍavas while Keith as a deity of vegetation. But later research has challenged this position. Hill, Ray Chowdhury and others have, on the weighty evidences of the Chāndogya-Upaniṣad, Ghaṭa-jātaka and Uttarādhyayana-sūtra, recognised Kṛṣṇa as a historical reality, who had flourished not later than 900 B.C., perhaps a little earlier. It is now more or less accepted that in the Vṛṣṇi branch of the Sātvata family, Kṛṣṇa, the son of Devaki, was born; that he had acquired Brahma-vidyā (the teachings of the Upaniṣads) from Ghora Āṅgirasa; and that he had played a vital role in the great Mahābhārata war, to mention a few of the cardinal points of Kṛṣṇa’s biography.

On the other hand, Bhagavān of the Bhāgavata is the highest metaphysical reality. As the definition goes, Bhagavān is all-bliss (ānanda-mātra) and is the perennial source of all powers (upapanna-samasta-sakti); further, Bhagavān is non-dual consciousness, tranquil (prāśānta) and pure (suddha), the being that has transcended the pragmatism of cause and effect (sad-asataḥ param). In short, Bhagavān is the highest metaphysical reality, who also embodies the highest fulfilment of all spiritual aspirations, the sumnum bonum revealed by the successful performance of what the Bhāgavata calls “paramadharma” (supreme religion).

How could the historical Kṛṣṇa be elevated to this sublime status of Bhagavān, the perfect synthesis of the highest of philosophy and the highest of religion? By what stages were data, connected with the life of the historical Kṛṣṇa, absorbed in and also superseded by the totality of the ideal Kṛṣṇa? What main

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5 Hill, The Bhagavad-Gītā, p. 5.
7 Ch U 3.17.6.
8 Uttarādhyayana-sūtra, Lecture XXII.
9 Pargiter, Ancient Indian Historical Tradition, pp. 175-182.
10 ...pratyag-ātmani tada bhagavatyānante ānanda-mātra upapanna-samasta-saktau... 4.11.30ab.
11 Saivat prāśāntam abhayaṁ partibodha-mātram suddham samaṁ sad-asataḥ param ātma-tattvam sabdo na yatra puru-kāraka-vān kriyārtho māyā pariṣṭayabhimukhe ca vilajjamāna tad vai paraṁ bhagavataḥ paramasya puṁso brahmaṁ yad vidur ajasra-sukham vi-lokaṁ... 2.7.47.
tributaries of facts, myths and ideas had fed the mundane career of the historical Kṛṣṇa and thus had assisted the process of his ideal metamorphosis? To put all these questions in a condensed form, how could the historical be converted into the ideal? The present chapter is addressed to the task of suggesting the lines along which the study of the evolution of the Kṛṣṇa-Bhagavān concept could develop into an interesting and profitable pursuit.

THE FIRST PHASE

Fortunately, some passages\(^\text{12}\) of the Bhagavata throw useful light on this issue. It is stated therein that Bhagavān assumes different colours, names and forms in different ages, and the method of worship changes accordingly. Thus in the Kṛṣṇa (golden age) Bhagavān is white, four-handed and has the appearance of a Brahma-cārin with a sacrificial thread. He is

\(^{12}\) rājovāca
kasmin kāle sa bhagavān kim-varṇaḥ kīḍām kṣebhiḥ.
nāmnā vā kena vidhinā piṣaya tad ihocytām.
śrī-kara-bhājana uvāca
kṛṣṇaḥ tretā dvāparaṁ ca kalir itiṣeṣu keśavaḥ.
nānā-varṇaḥ bhidhākāro nānaiva vidhinijayate...
kṛṣṇaḥ svakalas catur-bāhur jaṭṭilo vālkalaṁ mbaraḥ.
kṛṣṇaṁ jino-paṭiṣeṇ bibhrad daṇḍa-kamaṇḍalā...
manuṣyaṁ tu tadā sāntā nir-vairāṁ suhrdaṁ samāḥ.
yajanti tapasā devaṁ lamen ca damena ca.
hāṁsaḥ suparṇo vaikunṭhavo dharmo yogesvaro malaḥ.
iliyāḥ puruṣo vyaktakā paramātmeti gyate...
tretāyāṁ raktā-varṇo sau catuṛ-bāhur tri-mekhalāḥ.
hiṁcāya keśaṁ trayātmā sruk-sruvaṁ dvaye lakaṁṣaṁ...
tam tadā manuṣyā devaṁ sarva-deva-mayaṁ karim.
yajanti vidyāya trayāya dharmiṣṭhā brahma-vādināḥ.
viṣṇur yajñāḥ pṛiṇi-garbhaṁ sarva-deva uru-krāmaṁ
urvākapīr jayaṁ ca uru-gāya itiṁyte...
dvāpare bhagavāna śyāmaṁ piṭa-vśā niţāyudhaṁ.
śrīvacāḥ dībhīr anaiṣaṁ ca lakaṇḍair upalakṣitaṁ...
tam tadā puruṣoṁ martaṁ mahārajo-palaṇḍaṁ.
yajanti veda-tantraḥyāṁ paraṁ jijnāsavo nṛpa...
namās te vāsudevaṁ namaḥ sāmkaraṇaṁ ca.
pradhyumnāṁ niruddhaṁ tūbhyaṁ bhagavate namaḥ...
nārāyaṇaṁ ca ṣaye puruṣoṁ mahātmane.
viṣṇe-viṣṇaṁ viśvāya sarva-bhūtaṁ mane namaḥ...
iti dvāpara urviśa stuvanti jagad-īśvaram.
nānā-tantra-vidhānena kalāvapi yathā śṛṇu...
kṛṣṇa-varṇaṁ tvaiśkaṁṣaṁ sāngopāṅgāstra-pāṛadamaṁ.
yajñāḥ samākṛṣṭaṁ prāyair yajanti hi sumedhaśaṁ...
dhreyaṁ sadā parihavaṁ-gnaṁ abhiṣta-doham
śrīcāle pāṭaṁ śiva-virinīcī-nutanī śraṇyanam.
ḥṛtyāṁ ātmaṁ praṇataṁ-gaṁ bhavaṁ dhhi-potam
vande mahā-puruṣa te caraṇaṁ raviṇḍam...
11.5.19-33
vide also 10.8.13-19.
then called “haṁsa”, “supaṁsa”, “Īśvara”, “Puruṣa”, “Avyakta”, “Paramātman” and so on. People are then harmless by nature and they worship Him with Tapaś, having restrained their mind and body. In the Tretā (silver age) Bhagavān is red, four-handed and has three girdles. He embodies the three Vedas and is marked by the various ceremonial articles like śruc, śrūvā etc. People worship Him with the help of the three Vedas. Bhagavān is then the embodiment of all gods. “Viśnu”, “Pajña” “Pṛśni-garbha” are some of His different appellations. But Bhagavān changes His colour into dark (śyāma) in the next age, Dvāpara (copper age). He then wears a yellow garment, put on arms and is marked by jewels like Kaustubha and other tokens. People worship His grand person of the sovereign (mahārāja) with the help of the Vedas and the Tantras. He is then designated “Vāsudeva”, “Nārāyaṇa Śrī”, “Puruṣa” and so on. Lastly, in Kali (iron age) Bhagavān assumes the designation “Kṛṣṇa” because of His black colour. He is then found with proportionate limbs (āṅga), different ornaments on His body (upāṅga), weapons (astra) and companions (pāṛṣada). People call Him “Mahā-Puruṣa”—the Great Person—a designation which includes also Rāmacandra. He is worshipped by a different kind of sacrifice (yajña) with emphasis on invocations and recitals of names (saṁkīrtana).

Now, let us read the implications of the passages from the Śrīmad-Bhāgavata. They take us, at the outset, to a period of history, called “Kṛta” which might originally mean a “winning throw”, as suggested by Macdonell, but which, for all practical purposes, was the golden age of the Rg-Veda. The oppositions from the aborigines have now ceased and a new era of peace and prosperity has dawned upon the Aryans. After the nightmare of struggles and strifes, so palpably reflected in the Indra hymns, new hopes and brilliant prospective future have opened up before the eyes of a young race. The Rg-Veda is the mature fruit of the imaginative mind which took wings in such encouraging atmosphere. The young Aryans found a replica of their blooming mental horizon in the beauty and charm unfolded by the physical sky (dyau) with the aid of the sun which arose in the eastern horizon, came gradually to the top and then steadily reclined to the west. The eye of the sky—the sun—sees all in-
cluding the deeds of men.\textsuperscript{13} As the tangible symbol of a new era radiating with heat and brilliance, the sun was readily transformed into the sun-god. In his physical aspect the sun-god (Sūrya) dispelled darkness and declared his triumph over the ‘dark evils’, while as the creative power the golden god (Savitṛ) drove men to action. The assimilative process, tending towards monotheism on the one hand and pantheism on the other, soon moulded Sūrya and Savitṛ into one as they represented two facets of the same reality viz., the blazing sun. It is conceivable that “Puruṣa” of the Puruṣa-Sūkta\textsuperscript{14} is a personification of the sun-god. The sun with thousand rays might have plausibly gone into the composition of the thousand-headed Puruṣa, with addition of new materials not to be found in the sun-god. That the thousand-headed Puruṣa was still an unfinished product is brought home by the fact that being man he has two hands while being the sun-god he has one thousand heads. So, Puruṣa is man in the making. In this evolution of the sun-god towards the direction of Puruṣa, Viṣṇu’s solar personality acquires a special value. The concept of Viṣṇu responds to the aspirations of man. He is the god of prosperity, the protector of man,\textsuperscript{15} sustainer of moral order and bestower of auspicious will in man.\textsuperscript{16} Viṣṇu is the last limit of majesty.\textsuperscript{17} But Viṣṇu is not only the god of peace but he is also the god of war. He is a venerable friend of Indra and had helped him in many an exploit.\textsuperscript{18} A valiant person vast in body, Viṣṇu is no longer a child\textsuperscript{19} and possesses an exquisitely beautiful body. As a result of fusion, Sūrya and Savitṛ became one;\textsuperscript{20} and Savitṛ who had already

\textsuperscript{13} ud u tyāṁ jāta-vedasāṁ devaṁ vahanti ketavaḥ
dṛśe viśvāya sūryam. RV 1.50.1.
\textsuperscript{14} Puruṣa-Sūkta, RV 10.90.
\textsuperscript{15} ato devā avantu no yato viṣṇur vicakrame. ibid. 1.22.16.
\textsuperscript{16} haṁ sa vaṁ samāntaṁ bhajāmahe. ibid. 1.156.3ad.
\textsuperscript{17} na te viṣṇo jāyamāno na jāto
deva mahimnaḥ param antam āpa. ibid. 7.99.2ab.
\textsuperscript{18} indrasya yujyaḥ sakḥā. ibid. 1.22.19c.
\textsuperscript{19} bṛha-c-ariro vimimāna ṭkkaḥ
juvā kumāraḥ pratetyāhavam. ibid. 1.155.6cd.
\textsuperscript{20} sūrya-raśmir harikeśaḥ purastāt
savitṛ jyotīr udayan ajasram. ibid. 10.139.1ab.
two golden hands merged with Puruṣa. Puruṣa and Viṣṇu had much in common. Viṣṇu had three strides by which he would cover the three worlds which are also incorporated in the being of Puruṣa. Viṣṇu had his transcendental existence (parama pada); so had Puruṣa (atyaṭiṣṭhat daśāṅgulam) and so on. So the four deities fused into one, resulting in the emergence of Viṣṇu with a much richer personality. As the triumphant god of the fair-looking Aryans, he was white (śukla). He was now “hamṣa”, the white swan, “suparna”, the golden bird, “dharma” in his own right, “puṣṭa”, the radiant (amala), all-powerful (iśvara) and great soul (paramātman) that creates all, sees all and protects all raising aloft his strong golden hands with which he blesses and rouses all beings.

A problem arises at this point regarding the feature of Viṣṇu with four hands. As far as we could see Viṣṇu as Puruṣa did have two hands. We come across four-handed Viṣṇu in the Khila, which is a late accretion to the Rg-Veda. Did the Bhāgavata take this Khila under consideration and recognise the four-handed Viṣṇu to be the standard Viṣṇu form? Of course, in the Bhāgavata itself three forms of Viṣṇu—two-handed, four-handed and eight-handed—are mentioned. Of these, definite preference is shown for the four-handed Viṣṇu whom the Bhāgavata describes whenever it has opportunity to do so. Does the Bhāgavata generalise this form even with regard to the earlier concept of Viṣṇu, which is now being discussed? In fact, in all the phases of the evolution of the Viṣṇu-concept under consideration, this four-handed form has been taken by the Bhāgavata to be the norm. Although the four-handed is expressly mentioned by the Bhāgavata only with regard to the concept of Viṣṇu in “Kṛta” and “Tretā” yet one might plausibly say from the trend of description concerning “Dvāpara” and

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21 advēsa hastayor dadhe. ibid. 1.24.4c.
hiranya-paññih savita. ibid. 1.35.9a.
22 hamśa śuci-sat. ibid. 4.40.5a.
23 divyaṁ suparṇan vayasaṁ bhāvant. ibid. 1.164.52a.
24 vāta-jūto yo abhirakṣati tmanā praṣṭā puṣṭa puṣṭa-dhā vi rājati. ibid. 10.170.1d.
25 visvavatya hi śruṣṭaye deva iva dhvāḥ pra bāhavaḥ pṛthu-paññiḥ sīriṣ. RV 2.38.2ab.
26 onkāram catur-bhujam loka-nātham nārāyaṇam. ibid. Khila 33.22ab.
27 after RV 10.166.
“Kali” that the four-handed is presumed in these cases as well. For example, weapons are mentioned both in “Dvāpara” and “Kali”. How can a god have weapons unless he has hands? That the number of hands in such cases were four is borne out by the fact, among others, that the historical Kṛṣṇa whom we propose to equate with this form of Viṣṇu of “Dvāpara” and “Kali” was born four-handed and also died four-handed.

In that golden age life was simple and this simplicity is reflected in the method of worship of Viṣṇu. According to the Bhāgavata—and this is confirmed by Vedic evidences—Tapas which, according to the commentator Śrṅdhara, means meditation (dhyāna), was the method of propitiating Viṣṇu. If we take “Tapas” as a simple case of reflection as suggested by V. Bhattacharya, worship of Viṣṇu at that period was an unadulterated mental phenomenon—meditation leading to knowledge—to which apparently everybody was entitled. All that was required by way of equipment was the restraint of mind and body (śama and dama).

Thus at the first epoch Viṣṇu, the native god of India, was raised, by the process of assimilation, to the status of supreme godhood, that not only included the three worlds but also maintained existence of his own, side by side with other gods still holding their own grounds.

THE SECOND PHASE

The word “fusion” requires some explanation at this stage. As indicated before, the dynamic mind of the Hindus, reflected in the Rg-Veda, has moved in two definite directions which may be described as monotheistic and pantheistic. Under the monotheistic direction the Rg-Vedic gods were steadily merging their individualistic differences if their characters could logically be harmonised under the same reality. The pantheistic trend, on the other hand, became more and more pronounced in the identification of God with the world—God in whom the world could find a secure shelter. As a natural result of monotheistic operation, Sūrya and Savitṛ—representing the material and the

26 tapasā = dhyānena—Śrṅdhara on 11.5.22.
28 yasṛya jñāna-mayaṁ tapaḥ. Mun U 1.1.9.
spiritual aspects respectively—resolved into one being viz, the sun-god, because both were, at their basis, nothing but the sun. Similarly, the Cosmic Man and Viṣṇu were coherently united under the concept, “Puruṣa”. But such grouping seems to have taken another turn in response to the emphasis laid on the physical or the spiritual aspect. Thus, as physical realities Śūrya and Cosmic Man (Puruṣa) came together while on the basis of morality and spiritualism Savitṛ and Viṣṇu coalesced. As a result, Śūrya-Puruṣa and Savitṛ-Viṣṇu came into existence; and, as they represented the physical and the spiritual respectively the further fusion of Śūrya-Puruṣa and Savitṛ-Viṣṇu gave rise to the concept of reality as being both immanent and transcendental. But fusion has been an unending process; it has never been able to achieve complete identity between the emergent and its prototype, resulting in the radical effacement of the latter. Thus when the Viṣṇu concept evolved almost to the point of losing its original identity, the sun-god—or rather, the physical sun which was the primordial basis of Śūrya-Puruṣa-Savitṛ-Viṣṇu—came to the help of Viṣṇu by impinging on him the special mark like “Śrīvatsa”—the circular mole—reminiscent of his solar origin. Fusion is thus a complex process—both introspective and retrospective—which has moulded Śūrya-Puruṣa-Savitṛ-Viṣṇu into a supreme being—the four-handed Viṣṇu of the Bhāgavata that responds, in its immanent aspect, to cosmological enquiries and religious cravings for a personal god, and, in its transcendent aspect, to sublime philosophy.

When Viṣṇu had risen to the high altitude of personal eminence the golden age of the Rg-Veda was gradually replaced by hieratical ritualism, prescribed by a separate set of literature—the Brāhmaṇas. An important god in the Vedic pantheon, Agni with its three births occupied the central place on the sacrificial altar, distributed in three forms—Gāṛhapatya, Āhavaniya and Daksīṇa. Agni became the representatives of other gods and his previous eminence was thus retained. But above all reigned “yajña” (sacrifice) to which everything including the gods became subordinated. On the other hand, in the field of speculations, Viṣṇu was too high to escape the attention of the priests. So, sacrifice as a physical act and Viṣṇu as the object of contem-

\[ agne devān ihā vaha sādayā yoniṣu triṣu. \text{ RV 1.15.4ab. } \]
plation challenged the status of each other and such conflict was eventually resolved in the recognition of identity between the two. The *Taittirīya-Saṃhitā* records such identity. By the time of the *Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa* such identity is an established fact. Already in the first epoch Viṣṇu, because of his intimate association with Puruṣa-Sūkta which is the earliest evidence of the caste system, had become a Brahmacārin and, as a Brāhmanic god, the holder of sacrificial thread, as the *Bhāgavata* tells us. So the next step is to find him as the sacrificer. Gods frequently take his help to fight against the Asuras and the feature which still plays a very important part in increasing Viṣṇu’s power and eminence is his three steps. By the time of the *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa* Viṣṇu is the highest god who embodies in himself all the other gods (sarva-deva), fire-god being no exception to it. Naturally Viṣṇu is red (rakta or kapiṣa), marked by the three sacrificial girdles (tri-mekhala) symbolising the three fires, and is indicated by the sacrificial articles like (sṛuc, sruvā etc.). It may be conceived that the germ of identification between Puruṣa and yajña, to be found in the *Puruṣa-Sūkta*, became clearly pronounced and re-affirmed when Viṣṇu not only became the sacrifice but also Yajña-puruṣa, who still retained his old characteristics—two hands, golden body, the appellations like uṛu-krama, vṛṣa-kapi, prśi-garbha etc.,—although the *Bhāgavata* describes, in the passages under consideration, the form of Viṣṇu as four-handed.

Apparently, during this second epoch the authenticity of the three Vedas—Yajus and Śaṃan, besides the Ṛc—was at its zenith. And the period marked by the supremacy of the three Vedas should naturally be designated as “Tretā”—the period of

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30 yajño vai viṣṇuḥ. TS 1.7.4.19.
31 yajño vai viṣṇuḥ. SB 1.4.1.3.
32 viṣṇuḥ sarvā devatāḥ tīr hidām viṣṇur vyakramata. AiB. 1.1.
33 om agnir vai devatānām avamo viṣṇuḥ paramāḥ. AiB. 1.1.
the three fires and the three *Vedas*. Besides the *Ṛc*, the *Yajus* and the *Sāman* were also accepted in the *Brāhmaṇical* fold in so far as they substantially incorporated the *Ṛc* with certain innovations which were more or less adaptations to suit the cause of sacrifice. But the *Atharva-Veda* abounding in contents of a different character was refused admission to this "holy trinity" (*Trayī*).

Sacrifice was then the order of the period and *Viṣṇu* by his identification with sacrifice not only saved himself from total eclipse but emerged in a richer form as the only god of worship before whom all the other gods including the great *Varuṇa* and *Indra* pale into insignificance. They had now to content themselves by being the god of waters and the god of thunderbolt respectively.

**THE THIRD PHASE**

But the exclusive character of *Vedic* ritualism could not survive for long. Dry materialism which denied the demands of man's emotional nature and was pent up in privileged confines had to come to terms with life in the wider sphere. The non-Aryan wealth of ideas, that now voiced the feeling and thinking of the bulk of the Indian people, was too strong and insistent to be discarded. On the contrary, the weakness of *Vedic* ritualism could be removed if such new life was embraced. So not only the *Atharva-Veda* but the *Tantras* (so called, because they regulated the conduct of the common mass) or *Āgamas* (innovations) as distinguished from *Nigamas* (already existent *Vedas*) were duly recognised as equally authentic and this period was accordingly designated as "Dvā-para", paying equal respect and validity to the *Vedas* as well as the *Tantras*.

In the realm of ideas, *Viṣṇu* was constantly mustering strength. His identification with sacrifice and incorporation of all gods gave him unique opportunity to assimilate whatever came under his way. In the *Nāsadiya-Sūkta* of the *Ṛg-Veda*, one of the finest specimens of early philosophical speculations, the hermit wondered as to what was there before creation. He imagined that, before all, there was

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*Nāsadiya-Sūkta. RV 10.129.*
moving water (apráketam salilam), enveloped by darkness (tamas) and there was the first principle of life (ānīt a-vātam) encased in a shell (tucchyena abhyapihitam). Then, by the power of Tapas, that life took a concrete shape, had a mind wherefrom emerged the desire to create. But the hermit fumbles over the identity of the primordial creator who produced and moved water itself. He wonders whether that great Lord (adhyakṣa) at the highest heaven (parame vyoman), who witnesses all, knows the secret. The idea of life concretized within the shell is further developed in another Sūkta. The shell is the golden egg (hiranya-garbha) wherein stayed the creator of the three worlds (Prajāpati). But the mystery about the primordial creator remained still unsolved. The clue suggested in the Nāsaḍīya-Sūkta was gradually taken to mean that Viṣṇu himself was that unique reality. These cosmological speculations gave rise to the following mythology: Before creation, Viṣṇu floated on the surface of the cosmic waters (kāraṇārṇava); from his naval region arose a golden lotus in which Brahmā (Prajāpati) was seated. He found none and resorted to penance (Tapas). He mustered strength thereby and then found Viṣṇu and with his permission created the universe. What concerns us here is that Viṣṇu was primordial man (nara) who created all including Brahmā; then he entered his creation (nāra), and also he rested on the cosmic waters (nāra). On these grounds, Viṣṇu acquired the name “Nārāyaṇa”. On the other hand, the hermit Nārāyaṇa to whom was revealed “Puruṣa” of the Puruṣa-Sūkta was, in this process of assimilation, deified i.e., he became Puruṣa. This means that he became Viṣṇu. This is how Nārāyaṇa, the hermit, became Nārāyaṇa-Viṣṇu. So Viṣṇu became Nārāyaṇa in more than one sense. In the meantime, Prajāpati, who acquired a great status during the Brāhmaṇa period, was gradually relegated to a position subordinate to Viṣṇu. Puruṣa-Nārāyaṇa during the Brāhmaṇa period had beheld the world and the gods in him and also his own self in all the world38 and this vision

38 nārāyaṇas tvam nahi sarva-dehinām
ātmā-syadhiśa'khila-loka-sākṣi
nārāyaṇo'ṇgaṁ nara-bhū-jalā'yanāt

39 SB 12.3.4. 11.
he left for Viṣṇu while merging into his essence. For the Gītā this vision is the summit of knowledge and for the Bhāgavata the possessor of such knowledge is no other than a "Bhāgavatottama".

Promotion of a spiritual stalwart to the exalted status of Viṣṇu had thus begun. As referred to before, it was the age of great fusion when two parallel streams of thoughts and feelings had united in the life of Indian population. Kṛṣṇa who, by his mixed birth and mixed culture and above all by his unique personality, could create a new world of his own, was soon deified. From identification with the sun-god, his family deity, he passed on to Viṣṇu and was absorbed in His essence. The first symptom of this absorption is found in the dark colour of Viṣṇu. He was originally white because he was the sun-god. Then, he was red because that was the colour of the god of fire (Agni) and now his colour is changed into black (ghana-śyāma). But fusion of Kṛṣṇa into Viṣṇu was the indication of a great movement and its impact on the evolution of Viṣṇu concept cannot be overestimated. The non-Aryan especially the Dravidian grandeur of conception brought about complete orientation of Viṣṇu. Viṣṇu now had a body well-proportioned, dark and supple, the paragon of beauty and charm, with an enchanting smile on his face. He wears yellow garment with ornaments of pure gold all over his body. He holds in his hands the conch-shell, the wheel, the club and the lotus. As he has now appropriated the characteristics of Indra his feet are marked by "dhvaja", "vajra" etc. and he has to double his hands to wear the additional weapons bow, arrows etc. which, also, are inherited from Indra. Sometimes instead of lotus he is found to hold a noose—a characteristic he must have acquired from Varuṇa. He wears further a beautiful garland (Vana-mālā) and the invaluable jewel (Kaustubha) and, above all, possesses Śrī, his permanent consort. Further, as emblems of his sovereignty he has fans and the royal umbrella and is surrounded by eight

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38 yo māṁ paśyati sarvatra sarvaṁ ca mayi paśyati. tasya'ham na praṇālayami sa ca me na praṇālayati... Gītā 6.30.
39 sarva-bhūteṣu yaḥ paśyed bhāgavat-bhāvam atmanāḥ. bhūtāni bhāgavaty ātmasya bhāgavatottamaḥ... 11.2.45.
40 tāntrikāḥ paricaryāyāṁ kevalasya śīryah pateḥ. aṅgopāṅgā yuddha kalpaṁ kalpyantī yathā ca yaṁ... 12.11.2.
beautiful girls viz, Puṣṭi (nourishment), Gir (speech), Kānti (sweetness), Kīrti (fame), Tuṣṭi (satisfaction), Ilā (lustre), Urjā (power) and Māyā. He is also being praised by hermits and gods.

An analysis of this attractive anthropomorphism gives us a glimpse of the nature of cultural fusion. Kṛṣṇa has now entered into the inner being of Viṣṇu and so Viṣṇu’s Aryan character has to fall upon the externals—garments, ornaments, weapons and so on. But nevertheless his Aryan character is too deep-rooted to be ousted and it returns in different forms. The two basic motifs of Viṣṇu—war-godhood and lovable nature—still permeate the transfiguration indicated above. The sun-god returns in the conchshell, the lotus and the wheel. Perhaps the club was the original weapon of Viṣṇu. The Savitṛ returns in the ornaments of molten gold. Viṣṇu was already powerful with an admixture of sovereignty of Varuṇa. But such sovereignty was re-asserted in terms of Dravidian grandeur. Viṣṇu was thus the ideal of religious emotion. That was to his credit and also to his disadvantage; for, his devotees would enjoy the benefit of possessing the same feature as that of himself. So he had to have, as a mark of distinction, the jewel Kaustubha, again the miniature sun-god, and Śrī. Śrī is earliest mentioned in the Śrī-Sūkta. In the Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa she is the goddess

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41 tasyotsaṁge ghanasyāmaṁ pīta-kauśeya-vāsasam.ḥ
   puṟuṣaṁ catu-rhuijam śāntam padma-patraṁ-rūnekaṣaṇam...
   căru-prasanna-vadanaṁ căru-hāsa-nirikaṣaṇam...
   su-bhṛūnasam căru-karṇam su-kapolarāṇādham...
   pralamba-pivara-bhujam tuṅgāṁsoraḥ-sthala-śrīyam...
   kambu-kaṇṭham nimna-nābhiṁ valimat-pallavodaram...
   bhṛhat-kaṭi-taṭa-irṇi-karabhurudvāyāṁvītam.
   căru-jānu-yugaṁ căru-jangha-yugala-saṁyutam...
   tuṅga-gulpḥā runa-nakha-ṛāta-didhibhir vyātaṁ.
   navāṅgalyaṅga-stha-dalair vilisa-ṇaṁ-paṅkojam...
   su-mahārā-naṁ-ṛāta-kirṣa-kaṭakaṁ-gadā-dhāram.
   kaṭi-sūtra-brāhma-sūtra-kāra-nāpta-kuṇḍalaiḥ.
   bhrājāmanāṁ padma-karaṁ śāṅkha-cakra-gadā-dhāram.
   śrī-nāltsa-vakṣaṁ bhrājat-kauśtam vana-mālinaṁ.
   sunanda-nanda-ramukhairḥ pāṟsaṁ-dahāṁ sanakādibhiḥ.
   sureśār brāhma-rudrā-dyair navabhiḥ ca dvijottamaiḥ.
   prahlāda-nārada-vasu-ramukhaṁ bhāga-vambottamaṁ.
   stūyāmanāṁ pṛthag bhāvair vocobhir amalātmanabhī.
   śrīyā puṣṭyā gīrā kāntyā kirtyā tuṣṭyelavorjayā.
   vidyāyā vidyāyā śakyāyā māyāyā ca niṁstībatim... 10.39.46-55.

42 Śrī-Sūkta, Khila 11 after Maṇḍala 5.
43 SB 11.4.3.18.
of prosperity and is the daughter of Prajāpati and in the Bau-
dhāyana-dharma-sūtra she is a goddess of worship. But her
universal motherhood and beauty as found in the Khila coalesce
with creativity and beauty of Viṣṇu; and so, Śrī enters the heart
of Viṣṇu.

By the third epoch Viṣṇu acquires further names: "Vāsudeva", "Nārāyaṇa rśi", the lord of the universe (viśveśvara) yet the universe itself (viśva). In this fusion of Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu some of the contributions from Kṛṣṇa are:—(a) name (b) dark colour (c) two hands that rule out other possibilities (d) birth from Devakī, (e) studentship of Ghora Aṅgirasa; while from Viṣṇu are: (a) beauty, (b) blooming youth, (c) the priceless garland (Vana-mālā), (d) the jewel (Kaustubha), (e) status of all the four castes of Puruṣa, (f) Śrī, (h) girl attendants and (i) tri-vikrama which meant the three abodes and also his
prowess. To all these contributions of Viṣṇu were added the
mysterious cows with which Viṣṇu is associated in the Rg-Veda.

Of this grand fusion emerged the sublime Reality in which both
the historical Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu find their highest fulfilment.

THE FINAL PHASE

The communion of the historical Kṛṣṇa with the great
wealth of ideas called Viṣṇu is indeed a colossal event. Kṛṣṇa's
triumpth suggested the free influx of non-Aryan thoughts and
ideas, which created a grand confluence with the Aryan stream
of thoughts and ideas. Viṣṇu of the Rg-Veda, who had already
developed into an institution and had, inspite of all sorts of
appellations, grown almost amorphous to cope with the hetero-
genous materials heaped on him through centuries, was now
transformed, by the black magic of the historical Kṛṣṇa, into a
coherent anthropomorphic unity and this ideal was soon idolised
into a unique idyllic personality. Such personality as the whole
truth of the Indian population required a name. And, Kṛṣṇa
was such a name appended to it. As the ideal of unity amidst
strifes—personal, social and racial—this Kṛṣṇa was the universal
ground of solace and so the Bhāgavata suggests that hard iron

"Śrīyāṁ devīḥ ca (tarşayāmi). BDS 2.5.23."
age (Kali) began on the day Kṛṣṇa departed from this world. The ideal Kṛṣṇa was then the central truth (bhānu) in the community of ideas called Viṣṇu. Thus Viṣṇu who had been undergoing steady and most eventful development with his wonderful power of assimilation was now embraced and transcended by this new concept, the ideal Kṛṣṇa. So as a part of this totality, Viṣṇu began to be considered as an emanation (Avatāra) of Kṛṣṇa, just as the historical Kṛṣṇa was considered the same in relation to Viṣṇu when he merged his identity into the being of the latter.

In the field of religion the rise of the personal God who could touch upon the vital chords of man inevitably changed ceremonial holiness into “morality touched with emotion”. Inner purity which symbolized man’s desire to come to the deepest relationship with the Lord was now to be achieved through another kind of sacrifice abounding in chanting His names (which were now many) and invocations (saṅkīrtana). Such change of attitude on the part of the worshipper declared the final triumph of the Tantras over the sacramental Scriptures which had so far held the ground. This does not mean that the Vedas were expelled; but only, that the Vedas had to adjust themselves to the needs of man who now believed more in the direct appeal to the Supernatural than to take recourse to the meanderings of ceremonial complexity.

In this new climate, the war-god and lovable god—the two radical aspects of Viṣṇu—underwent revolutionary changes. The war-god was reduced to his minimum—traceable only in the supernatural exploits of child Kṛṣṇa and later on in the diplomacy and the charioteer’s role in the Kurukṣetra war—while the lovable god rose to the maximum of expression in what is known as the Bhāgavata cult. In this transfiguration of Kṛṣṇa into an idyllic god of love, the evolution of Śrī concept had a lot to do. The Vedic concept of Śrī, referred to before, involved a conflict of ideas. The universal mother and the goddess of beauty with blooming youth meant two opposite attitudes which the same worshipper can ill afford to possess.

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45 yasmin kṛṣṇo divaṁ yātāṁ tasminn eva tadāḥhāni. pratipannam kali-yugam iti prāhuḥ purā-vidaḥ... 12.2.33.
46 viṣṇor bhagavato bhānuḥ kṛṣṇaḥ khyo’sau. 12.2.29ab.
emotional conflict led to the disintegration of Śrī’s personality, and, when Viṣṇu was being converted into a pastoral god of love, Śrī, marked by her eternal youth and beauty, was overhauled into a “gopi”, a cowherd girl, together with the other girl attendants of Viṣṇu whose number, limited to eight originally, now considerably increased. Śrī in the Bhāgavata, is just a gopi though her original privileged position in relation to Viṣṇu is maintained in the Bhāgavata. It was with this gopi, in exclusion of others, that Bhagavān suddenly disappeared while they had all come to meet Him at the call of His lute. Similarly, the special distinction of the eight girl attendants is recognised in the concept of “aṣṭa-sakhīs” of later Vaiṣṇavism. The three steps of Viṣṇu find expression in the unfoldment of Kṛṣṇa’s activities in the three regions—Vrndāvana, Mathurā and Dvārakā. Of these Vrndāvana is of unique importance in that the ancient association of Viṣṇu with the mysterious cows in Vṛṣṇi is reasserted here in the modern context of extravagances of love. As Śrī and the girl attendants of Viṣṇu are but his powers so their later representives viz, the gopīs cannot be other people’s wives. The description of the Bhāgavata in that vein must not therefore be taken too literally. The Bhāgavata also warns us against that pitfall because it solemnly declares that the exuberance of erotic description usually associated with autumnal effusion is merely a plea for the indescribable ecstasy which is brought into full play when the Supreme indulges in His ownself, Yoga-māyā.“ In other words, Bhāgavata Kṛṣṇa is found here as all-bliss with full manifestation of all his powers i.e., according to the definition mentioned at the beginning, Kṛṣṇa is here Bhagavān (kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svyam).

In this ideal Kṛṣṇa, the Puruṣa of the Sāṁkhya, the Paramātman of the Yoga, the Brahman of the Upaniṣads have all met in the grand company of the Vedic solar deity with the Sātvatas contributing their own share. He is thus the “parama-Puruṣa”, “Paramātman” and “para-Brahman”, “Vāsudeva

“evaṁ taśānāṁ-svā-varājitāṁ niśāḥ sa satya-kāmo’nurātā-balā-gañāḥ... siṣeṣva ātmānāyavārūḍha-saurataḥ sarvāḥ karat-kāvyā-kathāḥ rasā’śrayāḥ... 10.33.25.
Bhagavān”. Alliance of Kṛṣṇa with Yoga-māyā⁴⁸ (which is expressly stated by the Bhāgavata to belong to the Śakti cult) and also with Rāmacandra,⁴⁹ the great hero of the Rāmāyaṇa, further shows the all-embracing character of the ideal Kṛṣṇa. Thus the highest of religion and the highest of philosophy have found a unity in the concept of the ideal Kṛṣṇa. Through the Vedas and the Upaniṣads, through the Śaṅkhyā and the Yoga, through the vast body of contributions modelled under the Śātvatas and, last but not the least, through the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata, Indian mind has found most beautiful and universal expression in Kṛṣṇa, the ideal god of the Hindus.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ bhagavān api viśvātmā viditvā kaṁsa-jāṁ bhayam. yādānāṁ niṣa-nāṭhānāṁ yoga-māyāṁ samādhistat... 10.2.6.
⁴⁹ tyaktvā. suduṣṭyāja-surepsita-rājya-lakṣmim dharmiṣṭha ārya-vacasā yad agād arāyam. māya-mṛgam dayitayępsitam anvadhāvad vande mahā-puruṣa te caraṇāravindam... 11.5.34.
⁵⁰ trayyā copaniṣadbhii ca sāṅkhyā-yogai ca śātvataiḥ. upagiyaṁāna-māḥūtmyāṁ hariṁ sāmānyatāṁma-jam... 10.8.45.
CHAPTER V

BHAGAVĀN ŚRĪ-KṚṢṆA*

BHAGAVĀN KṚṢṆA, THE PIVOT OF THE
BHAGAVATA PHILOSOPHY

Non-dual consciousness being indescribable, description starts with Bhagavān, the third grade of Reality, which, as we have seen, is Bhagavān Śrī-Kṛṣṇa. So, the philosophy of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavata is hinged on this Kṛṣṇa-concept. Indeed the Śrīmad-Bhāgavata is so called because it is concerned with Śrīmad-Bhagavān i.e., Śrī-Kṛṣṇa. It is no wonder therefore that at the beginning of the Bhāgavata, the episode of Nārada and Vyāsa introduces the importance of the Bhāgavata-Purāṇa above the other Purāṇas in the following way:—Vyāsa had no peace of mind though he had composed the Mahābhārata, the encyclopaedia of different departments of knowledge. He longed for peace of mind and met the wise Nārada therefore. Vyāsa described his own contributions even in the field of religion. But Nārada replied that Vyāsa had obviously touched upon various subjects including religion but he had not expatiated so far exclusively upon Vāsudeva (i.e., Śrī-Kṛṣṇa). "That expression is indeed the panacea of all sins in which at every

* The fusion of the historical Kṛṣṇa with the ever-expanding stream of the Vedic Viṣṇu has led to an integration, as we have been in the previous chapter, into what we have called the metaphysical Kṛṣṇa, the third grade of Reality, or simply, Bhagavān Śrī-Kṛṣṇa. But there are always some irreducible elements of history which refuse to be fused by the thought process. Philosophy cannot assume them to begin with and can only follow persistently the plan of trying to think things out. The test is to maintain a consistency between metaphysical demands and historical realities. This means thinking of a different order in which things both in their individuality and their connections should receive their due in the metaphysical interpretation which is put upon them. The present chapter is an humble attempt to offer such a mode of thinking, a perspective to bear upon this complicated situation.

1 yathā dharmādayai cārthā muni-varyānukṛtītatiḥ.
na tathā vāsudevaśya mahīmā kyanuvarṣitēḥ... 15.9
step the glorious deeds of Ananta (i.e., Kṛṣṇa) are clothed".2 "Austerity and scholarship, sacrifice and hymns, wisdom and gift—all lead, according to the wise, to that unfaltering goal viz, the appraisal of Lord Kṛṣṇa".3 So, the Bhāgavata concludes at its end: "In other works Hari, who annihilates all impurities in this dark age (Kali), has not been extolled continuously. But in the present work viz, the Bhāgavata, all-comprehensive Bhagavān has been sung at every step on the occasions of various episodes".4

The episode then describes that the instruction of Nārada inspired Vyāsa to compose the present work. The lesson of the episode boils down to this: The accredited author of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavata composed it exclusively for the purpose of delineating the concept of Bhagavān Śrī-Kṛṣṇa. The author desired to actualise this original motive through the present work. It may be pointed out, by the way, that the episode of Nārada and Vyāsa reminds one of a similar story of Nārada and Sanatkumāra, described in the seventh chapter of the Chāndogya-Upaniṣad. One might therefore say that the traditional stock of stories was invoked by the Bhāgavata to show, once again, its allegiance to the Upaniṣadic heritage.

The Bhāgavata not only deals with the life of Kṛṣṇa but it also describes what he preached through his life, deeds and statements. This is brought home by another episode. In Naimiśāraṇya—that holy forest where the hermits used to meet for spiritual discussions around the sacrificial fire—the hermits asked Śūta as to what happened to “dharma” (religion) that Kṛṣṇa represented, after he had departed from the

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2 tat-vāg-visargo janatā'gha-viplavo
yasmin prati-ślokaṃ a-baddhavatya-pi.
nāmānyanantasya yaśo'nikitānī yat
śṛṇvanti gāyanti grāṇanti sādhavaḥ... 1.5.11

3 naijkarmyam āpyācyuta-bhāva-varjitaṁ
na sōbhaτe jñānam alaṁ nir-arjanim.
kutaḥ punaḥ śaśvad a-bhadram īvare
na cā'ṛpitam karma yad āpyākāraṇam... 1.5.12

4 kalī-malā-samhati-kālano'khileśo
harir itaratra na gīyate hyabhikṛṣṇam.
iha tu punar bhagavāṇ a-śesa-mūrtiḥ
paripāṭhito'nupadām kathā-prasaṅgaiḥ... 12.12.66
material world at the end of the Dvāpara era. Sūta answered: “Kṛṣṇa having departed, the present Purāṇa, the Bhāgavata, arose for helping out the people of Kali, steeped in ignorance”. It is apparent from this episode that the Bhāgavata incorporates the life of Kṛṣṇa as it clothes the “dharma” that Kṛṣṇa stood for. One might say that the Bhāgavata has drawn upon the Kṛṣṇa-concept in order to preach, through his life and beliefs, a unique religion which emerging from Kṛṣṇa Bhāgavān acquires the designation, “Bhāgavata-dharma”. One might even go to the extent of asserting that the Bhāgavata is so called not only because it deals with Bhāgavān but also because it presents “Bhāgavata-dharma,” a new religion most appropriate for the ignorant people of this dark iron age.

Since the Bhāgavata incorporates the life and teachings of Kṛṣṇa, the listening to the Bhāgavata with loving care contributes to the origination of devotion for Kṛṣṇa, the “Uttama-Puruṣa”, by which affliction, delusion and fear are warded off.” The Bhāgavata describes the process as follows: “If one listens with loving faith to the deeds of Kṛṣṇa and describes them constantly, Bhagavān enters one’s mind in no time. Having penetrated the mind through the pores of ears, Bhagavān crystallises the impure mind into holy feelings (bhāva), just like the autumn purifying the profaned waters of the rains. Blessed with a purified mind the devotee holds firm to the feet of the Lord, just as a traveller reaches his home and thus feels happy after the troubles of his journey are over”.

The auditory knowledge of the Bhāgavata passages is here said to conduct to the entrance of Bhagavān into the mind of

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5 brāhi yo geśvare kṛṣṇe brahmaṇye dharma-varmaṇi. svāṁ kāṣṭhāṁ adhunopete dharmāḥ kam laraṇaṁ gataḥ... 1.1.23
6 kṛṣṇe sva-dhāmopagate dharma-jñānādibhiḥ sahas. kalau naṣṭa-dṛṣṭāṁ ēva purāṇārko’dhunoditaḥ... 1.3.45
7 lokayā’jānato vidvāṁśi ca kāre sāvata-saṁhitāṁ... yasyāṁ vai irūyamāṇāyāṁ kṛṣṇe parama-pūruse... bhaktir utpadyate puṁsaḥ soka-moha-bhayaṁ paḥ... 1.7.6cd, 7
8 śṛṇuataḥ shraddhayā niyamaṁ grṇataṁ ca sva-ceṣṭitam... nātīdirghena kālena bhagavān viśate hṛdi... praviśaṁ kāraṇa-randhreṇa svaṁ sāva bhāva-saro-ruham... dhunoti śamalam kṛṣṇaḥ salilasya yathā sarat... dhautāṁṇa puṣuṣaṁ kṛṣṇa-pāda-mūlaṁ na muciṣṭi... mukta-sarva-parikleśaṁ pāṇthāḥ svā-laraṇaṁ yathā... 2.8.4-6
vide also 1.2.17-18
the votary. Entrance is direct realization of Bhagavān. It may be asked as to how verbal testimony can lead to intuitive knowledge, for the former is generally confined to the production of verbal knowledge (sābda-bodha) which is indirect in nature. Indeed the same question has been raised against the Vivaraṇa School of Ācārya Śāṁkara, which recognises the direct realisation of Brahman even from verbal testimony. For it, great statements like "That art thou" directly lead to the perceptual knowledge of Brahman, as the statement like "You are the tenth man" directly awakens a confused person to the perceptual identification of his own self. The above process adopted by the Bhāgavata as regards the origination of devotion for Kṛṣṇa confirms the standpoint held out by the Vivaraṇa School.

The Bhāgavata cites the case of Nārada to affirm the process: "Thus day in and day out—through the seasons of the year—I listened attentively to the crystal fame of Hari when it was sung by the great hermits. This persistent hearing eventually gave rise to devotion leading to the destruction of all impurities". The Bhāgavata admits Nārada to be the propounder of the Sātvata doctrine of which the Bhāgavata professes to be a collection. So, the evidence from the personal experience of Nārada as to the listening of the Bhāgavata leading to the direct vision of the Lord, carries an additional weight. Though listening to the Bhāgavata is stated here to rouse devotion yet the Bhāgavata-concept of devotion, it may be indicated, is not blind emotionalism but it includes knowledge.

It may be mentioned here that the devotees put a different construction upon the passages describing the above process leading to the revelation of the Lord. It will be discussed later that a "Descent" (Avatāra) accepts two bodies—one physical and the other spiritual—when he comes down to live with us. After his mission has been realised he quits his physical form at the time of his departure while the spiritual form continues to exist. But where can Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa go after the cessation of his

\[\text{iithāṁ sārat-prāyaśkāvyrtā harer}\
\text{vīṣṇuato me'nusavaṁ yaśo'malam.}\
\text{sāmkirtāmanāṁ munībhir mahā'ṁabhir}\
\text{bhaktikāḥ pravṛttā'ṁrajas-tamo'paḥ... 1.5.28}\
\[\text{tṛṣṭi-yam ṛṣi-sargaṁ vai devaṁcitavm upetya saḥ.}\
\text{tantraṁ sātvam ācaṣṭa vaiskarman ānakarmanāṁ yataḥ... 1.3.8}\]
sports at the end of the \textit{Dvāpara} era? He being the divine light his total absence will blind the universe. So the devotees conceive that his departure can at best mean changing the physical form i.e., accepting a new form instead of the old. This new form is the \textit{Śrimad-Bhāgavata}. Herein lives Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa. When a devotee listens faithfully to the passages of the \textit{Bhāgavata}, Bhagavān enters the heart of the devotee in the shape of those passages and brushes aside all impurities accumulated in his mind from time immemorial. Thus Bhagavān out of pity for his devotee undertakes the scavenger’s job to save his soul.

\textit{Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa} being the pivot of the \textit{Bhāgavata} philosophy all the questions put to Sūta by the hermits, which may be considered as the prologue to the \textit{Bhāgavata}, are concerned with Kṛṣṇa, excepting the first and the last questions that relate to the unique religion (\textit{parama-dharma}).\textsuperscript{11} As the rest of the \textit{Bhāgavata} are the answers to these questions all the \textit{skandhas} of the \textit{Bhāgavata} refer to Kṛṣṇa wherever it has been possible to do so. For example, the second \textit{skandha} refers to Kṛṣṇa in the episode of Brahmā and Nārada. The third \textit{skandha} centres round Kṛṣṇa in the dialogue between Vidura and Uddhava, and so on. In fact all the \textit{skandhas} are woven in the texture of the Kṛṣṇa-concept.

Although every \textit{skandha} bears the indelible stamp of Kṛṣṇa, the tenth \textit{skandha} is exclusively concerned with his life and activities. Indeed this \textit{skandha} occupies a unique position in the field of devotion, as a full-fledged biography of Kṛṣṇa. The \textit{Bhāgavata} also has laid emphasis on this \textit{skandha}. It enumerates the ten characters of a “\textit{Purāṇa}” of which the first nine are held to be useful in so far as they throw light on the tenth and the last characteristic. The \textit{Bhāgavata} then proceeds to define the tenth as follows: “‘Aśraya’ is the source and the last resort of the universe. It is called the supreme Brahma,

\textsuperscript{11} tatra tatrāṇjasāyusman bhavatā yad viṇīcitaṃ.
puruṣām ekāntataḥ śreyas tan naḥ śāntisum arhaḥ.\ldots
prāyaṇālpāyusah sahāya kalāvasmin yuge janāḥ.\ldots
mandāḥ sumanda-matayo manda-bhūgyā hyupadrutāḥ.\ldots
bhūriṇī bhūri-karmāni śrotavyāni sibhāgalah.\ldots
ataḥ sādhoṭra yat sāram samuddhṛtya maniṣyāḥ.\ldots
brūhi bhadrāya bhūtānāṃ yenātmā suprasidati. 1.19.11
Paramātman”.

While the other skandhas frequently refer to Kṛṣṇa, the tenth skandha embodies his complete personality. This is borne out by Śrīdhara. At the introduction of the tenth skandha Śrīdhara salutes Kṛṣṇa, the supreme Reality. He then asserts: “In this tenth skandha the highest is being considered. He is the final resort of the helpless devotees. Born in the family of the Yadus the infinite bliss displays here the magic of Divine Sport”.

**A METAPHYSICAL APPROACH TO THE BIOGRAPHY OF BHAGAVAN KṚṢṆA**

The biography of Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa stated in the Purāṇas in general and the Bhāgavata in particular may be summarised as follows: Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa was born at Mathurā. His parents were Vasudeva and Devakī. He took to birth in a prison cell on a moonless night. He was then taken to Vṛndāvana where he played many a sport with the cowherd girls, the climax of which was “rāsa-līlā”. He then went to Mathurā and killing the tyrant king Kaṁsa, his own uncle, he installed himself on the throne. While Vṛndāvana experienced his sweetness and beauty, Mathurā witnessed his majesty. Finally, he was at Dvārakā where he raised a huge family. Ultimately, before departing from this world he himself destroyed his entire lineage.

It has been stated before that Bhagavān, the all-bliss, the third grade of Reality, is no other than Kṛṣṇa of the Bhāgavata.

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12. atra sargo visargaś ca sthānaṁ poṣaṇam utayaḥ. manvantarēśā’nukathā nirodho muktir ārayaḥ. daśamasya viśuddhyarthaṁ navānāṁ iha lakaṇāṁ. varṇayantī mahātmānaḥ śrutena’rthena ca’jnasā. bhūtanātrendriya-dhiyāṁ janma sarga udāhṛtaḥ. brahmaṇo guṇa-vaiśamyād visarga pauruṣaṁ smṛtaḥ. sthitir vaiṣṇava-vijayaḥ poṣaṇam tad-anugrahāḥ. manvantarāṇi sad-dharma utayaḥ karma-vāsanāḥ. avaṭārā’nucaritāṁ hareś cā’syā’nuvartināṁ. puṁśaṁ iṣa-kathāḥ praktaṁ nānākhyānopabhyāhitrāḥ. nirodhōṣya’nulayanām atamanāḥ saha iaktibhīḥ. muktir hitaṁśyathā-rūpaṁ sva-rūpeṇa vyavasthitāḥ. ābhāsaṁ ca nirodhā ca yaṭo’ṣṭyadhyāvaisyate. sa ārayaḥ param brahma paramātmeti saḥdyate. 2.10.1-7

13. Śrīdhara introduces the 10th skandha as follows:— viśva-sarga-visarga’di-nava-lakṣaṇa-lakṣitiḥ. śrī-kṛṣṇa-khyam param dhāma jagad-dhāma namāma tai. dalame daśaṁṇaṁ lakṣyaṁ āśrita śraya-vigraham. kriḍad yadu-kulāmbhodhau paramāṇandam udīryate. etc.
Now, all-bliss has to reveal itself in a limited form in order to be comprehensible to the ordinary people. The luminous spiritual matter (viśuddha-sattva) is called "vasudeva" and Bhagavān expressing himself through it, is therefore called Vāsudeva. So Kṛṣṇa has been conceived as the son of Vasudeva. As the abode of Vasudeva is Mathurā (Vaikuṇṭha) Kṛṣṇa was born at Mathurā. Again, in the form of Vāsudeva (or Paramātman) he was revealed as four-handed, that being the typical form of Paramātman. The moonless night and the prison cell indicate the bloom of ignorance and the bondage of man. In that prison cell Kṛṣṇa reveals himself as four-handed Viṣṇu in the desolate isolation before the awe-striken eyes of Devakī—his mother and his devotee.

Thence at Vṛndāvana his life was nothing but a continuous series of sports. Here Kṛṣṇa was nothing but all pleasure. And in fitness of things it should be so, for Vṛndāvana is the representation of Goloka. The word "go" literally means 'the lustre'. Because of this innate lustre Bhagavān is called self-luminous (sva-prakāśa). But "go" also means the cow. It is in this latter sense that the Bhāgavata conceives Kṛṣṇa dwelling in a cowherd hamlet. As the conception of Bhagavān is all-bliss endowed with all potencies, this is taken by the Bhāgavata to represent Kṛṣṇa dallying with the gopīs, the cowherd girls. At every step we visualise the miracles of Kṛṣṇa because Vṛndāvana or Goloka is the abode where his potencies are in full play. But all plays were woven in the texture of joy and merrymaking because through the Divine Sport the Lord was realising his own ecstasy, which reaches its climax in "rāsa-līlā".

From Vṛndāvana Kṛṣṇa proceeds to Mathurā. The gopīs wail the absence of Kṛṣṇa but they did not go to Mathurā to meet or join him. In the further exposition of Divine Sport Bhagavān, becomes Paramātman or Vāsudeva but Lākṣmi serves him there and not Yoga-māyā. The gopīs being the different shades of Yoga-māyā are therefore absent in Mathurā. On the contrary, his queens like Rukmīni who is conceived to be the incarnation of Lākṣmi, serve Kṛṣṇa at Mathurā. Now, if we conceive Bhagavān to be the Reality endowed with all potencies and conceive Paramātman to possess Lākṣmi then the personality at Mathurā is Śrī-Kṛṣṇa himself in so far as there is
-consubstantiality between Vāsudeva, the second grade, and Bhagavān, the third grade; but reality living in Mathurā and reality living in Vṛndāvana may be deemed two different persons in view of the absence of the display of all potencies at Mathurā. Instead, Reality in Mathurā reveals majesty as symbolised in the concept of Kṛṣṇa being the king. This explains a theory current among the Vaiṣṇavas that Kṛṣṇa had promised to the gopīs that he would never leave Vṛndāvana and that he has perpetually stuck to that promise. Mathurā being the abode of majesty the wives of Kṛṣṇa respected him as a faithful and devoted wife would behave towards her husband but the sweetness and charm that characterised the association of the gopīs with Kṛṣṇa are conspicuously absent in Mathurā.

Kṛṣṇa lived the last part of his life as a householder in Dvārakā. He raised a very large family therein. Paramātmān’s further unfoldment as Brahman, the first grade of Reality, explains this phenomenon. Brahman as the source of creation is charged with the potency viz, Ātma-māyā which is the principle of multiplicity. The concept of multiplicity is represented in having a large family, all eventually tracing their origin to Kṛṣṇa, as Brahman is the ultimate source of the physical universe. In the form of Brahman he created his huge family and ultimately he destroyed them all, as Brahman destroys the entire creation. And as Brahman exists even after dissolution, so Kṛṣṇa existed and enjoyed his divine isolation even after his entire family was annihilated.

Subsequently Kṛṣṇa suffered death by injury at the hand of a hunter. His death, of course, was not like that of an ordinary mortal. It might be called death in so far as his physical form was dismembered from his being but it was in fact disappearance with his spiritual form. He died of injury because Bhagavān and injury are incompatible. The sublime religion that Kṛṣṇa preaches may therefore be taken to be marked by non-injury.

The unfoldment of Divine Sport terminates, from the spiritual point of view, at the stage of Brahman, the first grade of Reality. Then there is a regressive movement towards the original state of the third grade of Reality. From the esoteric point of view one might describe this phenomenon as the re-
union of the gopis with Krṣṇa at Goloka; for, Goloka is the region where Bhagavān is endowed with his potencies. Starting from the departure of Krṣṇa from Vṛndāvana till reunion, this long period may be treated as a period of intolerable separation, the acute sense of which is necessary before Krṣṇa can be embraced in the heart of hearts.

The deduction of Krṣṇa’s biography from the Bhāgavata metaphysics in the lines suggested above is also corroborated in the concept of Krṣṇa as black. The word “krṣṇa” literally means black; and, Bhagavān, the third grade of Reality, cannot be other than black. Bhagavān being the suṣupti-pāda, the melting crucible of all diversity, may be conceived as black which swallows up all objects around like the moonless night. Secondly, the starting point of creation has been taken as black in the Upaniṣads. Before creation there is said to be no effect or cause. Mere darkness (tamas) reigned supreme. Bhagavān as the starting point of creation may have similarly been conceived as dark. Thirdly, this imagery has actually been adopted by the Dhyāna-bindu-Upaniṣad. It describes the colour of the three syllables constituting “aum” in the following strain: “A-kāra is yellow because that is the colour of activity. U-kāra is calm and therefore white. M-kāra is “Krṣṇa-tāmasa” i.e., dark as the gloom.” Here the Upaniṣad directly uses the term “Krṣṇa” with reference to “m” syllable which the Māndūkya takes to stand for the third grade of Reality, Bhagavān Krṣṇa of the Bhāgavata.

We may therefore conclude that originally Bhagavān was called, for example in the Dhyāna-bindu-Upaniṣad, ‘Krṣṇa’ because he was conceived to be black on the grounds suggested above. With the development of Vaiṣṇavism, “Krṣṇa” stood for a definite personality distinguished from the other types of anthropomorphosis of Reality. So what was intended as an adjective became a proper noun.

The original sense of “Krṣṇa” can be traced in several Upaniṣads. For example, the Brahma-Upaniṣad describes the four regions as follows:—“Now, Puruṣa has four regions, the

14 a-kāraḥ pīta-varṇaḥ svād rajo-guṇaḥ udīritaḥ. u-kāraḥ sāttvikaḥ suklo ma-kāraḥ krṣṇa-tāmasaḥ. Dhyāna-bindu-Upaniṣad
Brahman consisting of four grades. In the waking state stays Brahmā, in sleep Viṣṇu, in dreamless sleep Rudra and in the fourth state the immutable”. If one synchronises the concept of Brahmā, described here, with that described in the Māṇḍūkya, the concept of Rudra would appear to correspond to the third grade of Reality (i.e., Bhagavān). This concurrence between Kṛṣṇa and Rudra can easily be explained in the light of the original sense of the term “kṛṣṇa” i.e., black. The Skanda-Upaniṣad makes this identity further explicit when it says: “I bow to Śiva who is Viṣṇu and to Viṣṇu who is Śiva. Viṣṇu is the essence of Śiva. So is Śiva of Viṣṇu.” If we remember the basic meanings of both “Śiva” and “Viṣṇu” as referring to the same Reality much of the squabble would naturally disappear.

Like the name “Kṛṣṇa” the possession of two hands is also explicable with regard to Kṛṣṇa Bhagavān. Bhagavān, the third grade of Reality, is the final goal of the spiritual aspirants. Standing for the perfection of the ideals of man, Kṛṣṇa may legitimately be taken as two-handed.

Lastly as the sports of Kṛṣṇa are exuberant in Vṛndāvana and as “rāsa-līlā” is the culmination of all sports, we may make some comments on the lute of Kṛṣṇa, gopīs, Vṛndāvana and the “rāsa-līlā”.

The lute of Kṛṣṇa has attained notoriety due to its power to unfetter the shackles of empirical existence. At its call the gopīs meet Kṛṣṇa casting aside all their near and dear ones. The doctrine of Divine Sport involves an ambivalence in the creative activity of the Absolute. Diversity is as necessary to Divine Sport as unity. While the individual souls fulfil the direction of diversity the innate unity between them and Brahmā is symbolised in the concept of the lute of Kṛṣṇa. This ingrained unity is also recognised by the Bhāgavata in the con-

15 

16
cept of *Vidyā* conceived to have been co-existent with *Avidyā*, the principle of bondage. The lute is eternally in action. It has been calling the individual souls which from time immemorial had lost their inner soul, the *Brahman*, to re-unite with it, to be gratified with the embrace of the Absolute. But its call has been falling flat on our material ears. One has only to listen to it and the lute does the rest of the job.

And the *gopīs* are the individual souls eternally lusting for happiness. As *Kṛṣṇa* stands for bliss, pure and simple, the *gopīs* are eternally in search of *Kṛṣṇa*. The alluring nature of bliss is attributed to *Kṛṣṇa*’s lute. The *gopīs* were busy with their household duties and they were happy with their sons and husbands until they listened to the alluring music of the lute. Souls have been undergoing the beginningless cycles of birth and death until are awakened to spirituality. Then they develop a divine discontent which finds its highest fulfilment in their total identification with the Absolute, as the *gopīs* had achieved the deepest embrace of *Kṛṣṇa*.

*Vṛndāvana* is blessed with the perpetual presence of *Kṛṣṇa*. So one can define *Vṛndāvana* as the region where *Kṛṣṇa* lives for ever. Now, the *Īṣa-Upaniṣad* proclaims that the Lord has penetrated everything. Hence all existence whether cosmic or super-cosmic is endowed with the presence of the Supreme. So everything may be viewed from this standpoint to be a part of *Vṛndāvana* and all souls living in it to be *gopīs*. Only one has to realise it in actual experience.

Though we are all inhabitants of *Vṛndāvana*, unfortunately for us we are sleeping over this truth. The *Vaiṣṇavas* attribute this sleep to *Bhagavān* and say that the sports of *Kṛṣṇa* begin with “*kuṅja-bhaṅga*” i.e., from the moment *Kṛṣṇa*, so long sleeping in the embrace of his beloved (i.e. *Śrī-Rādhā*), is awakened by the *gopīs*. In metaphysical terms this means that we are to awaken the highest in us by wisdom so that the sports of the Lord *Kṛṣṇa*, the third grade of Reality, may be revealed to us. This revelation followed by our participation in the sports is achieved when the barriers of pragmatic existence are broken. Then the individual soul is locked in the embrace of the Absolute. This achievement is the highest triumph of “*rāsa-līlā*”.
THE DOCTRINE OF THE ETERNAL KṚṣṇA AND
THE HISTORICAL KṚṣṇA

Now if the Kṛṣṇa-concept of the Bhāgavata is a metaphysical deduction how can this be reconciled with the historical Kṛṣṇa who is believed to have flourished some three thousand years ago at the family of the Yadus? How can a historical personality be taken to have been culled from metaphysical data? How can Kṛṣṇa which thus belongs to the world of thought be clothed in flesh and blood? How to bridge this gap between metaphysics and history?

The Bhāgavata seems to have propounded the doctrine of the eternal Kṛṣṇa whose activities are reflected in the life of the historical Kṛṣṇa. It seems to believe in the eternity of Kṛṣṇa's activity, his abodes and his form. Eternality of Kṛṣṇa's activities explains how Nārada whose vision penetrates everything could predict the activities that Kṛṣṇa was to perform while he would be at Mathurā. As to the externality of Vṛndāvana the Bhāgavata puts the following in the mouth of Nārada addressing Maitreya: —“So, my son, do proceed to the holy bank of Yamunā and to the holy forest of Vṛndāvana which is blessed with the eternal presence of Hari”. This suggests the externality of Vṛndāvana. Similarly a passage like “Eternally flourishes the great Kṛṣṇa with his Yadu family, destroying immorality with his own prowess” indicates the permanence of Dvārakā where Kṛṣṇa lived as a householder. Vṛndāvana and Dvārakā referred to in these passages cannot be identified with the historical places which are liable to destruction in time to come. They are therefore to be conceived to possess spiritual existence which is never perished. As regards

17 cāṇūrāṁ muṣṭikāṁ caiva mallān anyāṁ ca hastināṁ.
kanśaṁ ca niḥataṁ drakṣye paraśvo'hani te vibho...
tasyāṅu saṅkha-yavana-murūrṇāṁ narakasya ca.
pārijāta'paḥaraṇam indrasya ca parājayaṃ...
yāṁ cāṁyāṁ virāyāṁ dvārakāṁ ā-vasan bhavaṁ.
kartā drakṣyāmyaham tāṁ geśāṁi kaviṁbh bhui...
10.37. 15, 16, 20

18 tat īta gaccha bhadraṁ te yamunāyās taṭaṁ śuci.
pañyaṁ madhu-vaṇama yatra sannidhyaṁ nityadā hareḥ...
4.8.42

19 jayati jana-nīvāso devakī-janma-vādo
yadu-vara-paraśat sair dorbhīr asyann adharmam.
sthira-cara-urjaṁghnāṁ su-smitra-sri-mukhena
vraja-pura-vanitānāṁ vardhayan kāma-devam...
10.90.48
Krṣṇa's form the great devotee Akrūra exclaims on his way to Vṛndāvana to fetch Krṣṇa to Mathurā: "I shall have the pleasure to behold the feet of Hari that are constantly worshipped by various gods of high stature, by the hermits and devotees and by Lakṣmī". If the same feet are being seen by all who hail from different times and places, the form of God cannot but be eternal.

It is in fitness with this belief in the eternality of Krṣṇa's abodes, that the mysteries of Goloka were revealed to the cowherd men as a flash on one occasion and to Akrūra on another. Thus the biography of the historical Krṣṇa has its prototype in eternal existence. From this standpoint historicity of Krṣṇa is just a projection of his spiritual life from the eternal abode, Goloka.

That the historical Krṣṇa was a manifestation of the eternal Krṣṇa is exemplified by two episodes depicted in the tenth skandha of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavata. The cowherd women of Vṛndāvana complained against Śrī-Krṣṇa for playing all sorts of tricks in stealing butter from their households. The angry mother Yaśodā brought a rope to bind Krṣṇa. The more rope she brought in for the purpose, the shorter it was to bind Krṣṇa. Yaśodā thus experienced her inability to confine the Infinite to finite roping. On another occasion Yaśodā asked Krṣṇa to open his mouth so that she could inspect whether Krṣṇa had any stolen lump of butter in his mouth. In the gaping mouth of Krṣṇa Yaśodā visualized the entire universe lying as an atom in the infinite expanse of heaven. Episodes like these indicate that though Krṣṇa had become middle-sized like an ordinary mortal he was in essence none other that the third grade of

20 yad arcitam brahma-bhavā dibhiḥ suraiḥ
śriyā ca devyā munibhiḥ sa-sāvataiḥ.
go-cāraṇyānu-caraītīr ca rād vane
yad gopikānāṁ kuca-kunkumāṅkitam.. 10.38.8
21 iti samcitya bhagavān mahā-kāruṇiko hariḥ.
darśayāmāsa lokāṁ svam gopānāṁ tamasāḥ param.. 10.28.14
22 nīmājyā tasmin salile japaṁ brahma sañātanam.
tāveva dadvēśkūrō rāma-krṣṇau samanvitaṁ.. 10.39.41
23 yad āsīt tad api nyānaṁ tenānād api sandahhe.
tad api duvāngulaṁ nyānaṁ yad ādatta bandhanam.. 10.9.16
24 yadyevaṁ tarhi vyādehityuktaḥ sa bhagavān hariḥ.
vyaḍatāavyāhataśvaryaḥ kriḍā-manuja-bālakahḥ..
sā tatra dadrī visaiṁ jagat sthāṇu ca khaṁ dīsāḥ.
sādri-dvipābdhī-bhū-golam sa-vāyavindutārakam.. 10.8.36-37
Reality. If there was a logical contradiction in the all-pervasive being middle-sized it displayed all the more the majesty of Bhagavān. For, according to the Bhāgavata, the nature of Bhagavān is inscrutable and it baffles all attempts of definition in precise terms.\textsuperscript{25}

As to the exact relation between the eternal Kṛṣṇa and the historical Kṛṣṇa the Bhāgavata takes it to be of perfect identity. The historical Kṛṣṇa is absolutely identical with the eternal Kṛṣṇa. This is stated on more than one occasion. The gopīs, for instance, had practised the vow of Kātyāyanī (Kātyāyanī-vrata) at the conclusion of which each of them prayed: “O Kātyāyanī, O great goddess of astounding powers, O ruling princess, I salute to you. Pray, let the son of Nanda (i.e., Kṛṣṇa) be my husband”.\textsuperscript{26} In consonance with this prayer by each of them to have Kṛṣṇa as her husband and not theirs, Kṛṣṇa had to manifest himself as many as there were gopīs on the occasion of “rāsa-līlā”. The Bhāgavata says: “Kṛṣṇa rendered himself into as many selves (ātman) as there were gopīs. Thus he enjoyed their company though per se he was settled in self-ecstasy”.\textsuperscript{27} The “selves” were not shadows but as original as their prototype. This is indicated by the statement that he played and not they.

The same story is repeated elsewhere. Nārada wondered as to how Kṛṣṇa could cope with a fabulous number of wives at Dvārakā.\textsuperscript{28} He once peeped into the places assigned separately to Kṛṣṇa’s wives and could not believe his own eyes. He found Kṛṣṇa discharging different functions in each of them. Nārada found him “sacrificing the gods in some room, making wells, guest-houses and monasteries at another place, hunting at another, somewhere riding a noble horse, killing animals else-

\textsuperscript{25} etāḥ kuru-sreṣṭha jagad-vidhātur
nārāyaṇasyā’khila-sattva-dhāmnaḥ.
līlā-kathās te kathitāḥ samāṣataḥ
kārtiyena nā’jo’pyābhidhātum iśāḥ... 12.4.39

\textsuperscript{26} kātyāyani mahā-māye mahā-yogīnayadhīvari.
nanda-gopa-sutaṁ devi patiṁ me kuru te namaḥ... 10.22.4

\textsuperscript{27} kṛtvā tāvantam ātmānaṁ yāvatir gopa-yojitaḥ.
remeva bhagavāṁs tābhīr ātmā’rāmo’pi līlaya... 10.33.19

\textsuperscript{28} citratam vataitad ekena vaṣuṣñā yugapat pṛthak.
gṛheṣu duṣyaṣa-sāhasram striyā eka udāvahat... 10.69.2
where in the association of his relatives”.

The Bhāgavata concludes: He found the same Kṛṣṇa existing simultaneously in all the residences.

The episodes of the historical Kṛṣṇa indicate that the same reality can not only be simultaneously many and those manifestations as original as their prototype but also those manifestations may discharge simultaneously different functions. This doctrine may suitably be applied to explain the relation between the historical Kṛṣṇa and the eternal Kṛṣṇa. One might say that the historical Kṛṣṇa is a perfect manifestation of the eternal Kṛṣṇa just as so many Kṛṣṇas at Vṛndāvana and Dvārakā in the episodes referred to above were absolutely the same as the original historical Kṛṣṇa. The historical Kṛṣṇa may also vary from the eternal Kṛṣṇa in some details just as one Kṛṣṇa in Dvārakā varied greatly from another Kṛṣṇa in so far as each discharged different functions. This explains how the historical Kṛṣṇa differed in some details from the eternal Kṛṣṇa. For example, while the eternal Kṛṣṇa transcends space-time limitations the historical Kṛṣṇa was middle-sized. Or, the gopīs of the eternal Kṛṣṇa being his potencies are his own but they were represented as others’ wives in the biography of the historical Kṛṣṇa. And so on.

Such a conception of Reality being many may be traced in the Upaniṣads. For example, the Chāndogya-Upaniṣad observes: “He takes one form, two, five, nine, eleven forms. Ten forms become hundred or one becomes thousands or twenty”.

The description by reversing the order of the numbers suggests absolute freedom of Reality to assume as many forms as it wishes to. This absolute freedom to be many is incorporated in the doctrine of Divine Sport. The Bhāgavata has used two analogies to illustrate this Divine Sport. Kṛṣṇa played with the cowherd girls just as “Bhagavān indulges in sport with

29 yajantam sakālaṁ devān kuṭāpi kratubhir āujitaṁ.
pūrttayantam kvacid dharmam kūpārāma-maṭhā dibhiṁ.
caranantam mṛgayāṁ kuṭāpi hayam āruhya saindhavam.
ghnantam tatra paśūn medhyāṁ paśitaṁ yadu-puṅgavaiṁ.

10.69.34-35

30 tam eva sārvageheṣu santām ekāṁ dadarśa ha...

10.69.41cd

31 sa ekadhā bhavatī, trīdhā bhavatī, paścādāh saaptadhā navadhā caiva
punās caikādasyām smṛtaḥ, lataṁ ca daśa caikāśa ca sahaśrāṇi ca vīṁśatiḥ.
his potencies";

or just as "a child plays with his own shadows". Though the Bhāgavata describes these as potencies and shadows yet from the metaphysical point of view they may also be taken as perfect manifestations of the Absolute as the Brhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad holds when it exclaims: "The Absolute is perfect and so is the visible world. Because, what emanates from the perfect is also perfect. And when the perfect emerges from the perfect the Absolute still remains perfect." From this standpoint everything is perfect. But, for the purpose of extolling the majesty of Bhagavān against the rest of the world, the historical Kṛṣṇa is being held as the perfect manifestation of the eternal Kṛṣṇa. Rūpa Gosvāmin in his Laghu-bhāgavatāmya calls the different selves of the historical Kṛṣṇa, revealed, for example, in Vṛndāvana at "rāsa-līlā," to be "prakāśa" i.e., perfect manifestations. The same term may be used to express the relation of the historical Kṛṣṇa with the eternal Kṛṣṇa. Thus the historical Kṛṣṇa may be designated as the "prakāśa" of the eternal Kṛṣṇa. The historical Kṛṣṇa or the "prakāśa" Kṛṣṇa stays for some time on this earth till his mission is fulfilled. Then the "prakāśa" Kṛṣṇa merges into the eternal Kṛṣṇa.

IS KṛṣṇA 'ĀMṢA' OR 'PŪRNA'?

It is now proposed to resort to the textual criticism for the purpose of confirming the conclusions mentioned before that Śrī-Kṛṣṇa is the fountain-head of all emergents and the historical Kṛṣṇa is the perfect manifestation of the eternal Kṛṣṇa.

At the preamble of the Bhāgavata-Purāṇa the assembly of hermits at Naimiśāraṇyā asked five questions of which the first

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32 tābhīr vidhūta-śokābhīr bhagavān acyuto yṛtaḥ.  
vyarocādhikaṁ tāta puruṣaḥ saktibhir yathā...  10.32.10.

33 reme rameśo vraja-sundarībhīr  
yathā'rdbhakaṁ svapratibimba-vibhramaḥ...  10.33.16 cd.

34 om pūrṇam adaḥ pūrṇam idāṁ pūrṇat pūrṇam udacyate.  
pūrṇasya pūrṇam adāya pūrṇam eva vasīṣyate...  5.1.1.

35 anekasya prakāṣāta rūpasyaikasya yaikādā.  
sarvathā tat-svarūpaiva sa prakāśa itīryate...  

36 bhagavān pitāmahāṁ viśya vibhūtir ātmano vibhuh.  
sanvijyā'lmāni ca'lmānaṁ padma-netre nyamilayā...  
lakśābhirāmāṁ svataṁ dhāraṇā-dhyāna-maṅgalam.  
yoga-dhāraṇayā'gneyyā dagdhvā dhāma'viṣat svayam...  11.31.5-6.
four questions are as follows:—(1) Sūta, could you tell us why Bhagavān was born to Vasudeva and Devakī? (2) Please narrate to us his activities so loudly sung by the wise (3) Then, tell us about the stories of the “Descents” (Avatāra) of Hari (4) We would very much like to hear the deeds of Keśava (i.e., Hari), which he had performed along with Bala-rāma. The second and the third questions refer to the activities of Hari which he had undertaken from time to time, as different Descents. The fourth question is concerning Kṛṣṇa while the first enquires about the purpose for which Kṛṣṇa took a physical form. 57 Whether Hari is taken to be a manifestation of Bhagavān as shown above or whether he is taken to be the same as Śrī-Kṛṣṇa, in either case all the questions relate to Kṛṣṇa and therefore the stories of adopting different forms from time to time are all about Kṛṣṇa. In other words, the eternal Kṛṣṇa has been taken by the hermits to be the perpetual source of all Descents. Further, while the stories of other Descents are proposed in the second and third questions, the biography of the Kṛṣṇa Descent is asked by the hermits separately. This indicates that the Kṛṣṇa Descent or the historical Kṛṣṇa is distinct in nature from other Descents. The distinctness, as we shall presently see, lies in the historical Kṛṣṇa being the perfect manifestation of Bhagavān, the eternal Kṛṣṇa.

That the eternal Kṛṣṇa is the source of different types of Descents is illustrated by the Bhāgavata in different contexts. Thus Kṛṣṇa is said to have “descended as Fish, Horse, Tortoise, Lion-Man, Boar and the Swan”. 58 Kṛṣṇa is here stated to be the source of Descents like Fish and Tortoise which will be shown to be a special type of Descents called “the saviour Descents”
Again the Bhāgavata declares: “The supreme Puruṣa takes to the guṇa-reals of Prakṛti and thus assumes the names Hari, Brahmā and Hara i.e., the holy trinity”.30 “Supreme Puruṣa” has been used by the Bhāgavata as an epithet of Kṛṣṇa.40 This description of Śuka brings home the fact that Kṛṣṇa is the source of the holy trinity. Again the verse, quoted above, says “parama-Puruṣa” to be the source of the same trinity. Therefore Kṛṣṇa and “parama-Puruṣa” are one and the same person. While the Bhāgavata narrates stories about different Descents they resolve into the episodes of Kṛṣṇa; for, the Descents are none else than the different forms of Kṛṣṇa.

As regards the Kṛṣṇa Descent the Bhāgavata concludes after giving a long list of different Descents that while the Descents described so far are “Amśa-kalās”, Kṛṣṇa is none else than Bhagavān himself.41 The comments of Śrīdharma on this verse bring out the uniqueness of Kṛṣṇa. “Kṛṣṇa is perfect (pūrṇa)”, he says, “because all potencies are seen to be in full swing in this Descent. Though the other Descents like Fish and Tortoise do emanate from the same Reality i.e., Bhagavān yet all the potencies are not brought into play in the case of other Descents.”42

It may be mentioned in this context that the Bengal School of Vaiṣṇavism calls42a Kṛṣṇa to be perfect because of his majesty, play, lute43 and exquisite form.44 Thus according to the express

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30 sattvam rajas tama iti prakṛter guṇas tair yuktah paraḥ puruṣa eka ihā sya dhatte.
31 sthitādaye hari-viriviśi-hareti-saṁjñāḥ 1.2.23 abc
32 yasyāṁ vai śrīyamāṇāyāṁ kṛṣṇe parama-puruṣe 1.7.7 ab
33 ete caṁśa-kalāḥ puṁsāḥ kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam 1.3.28 ab
34 Śrīdharma comments on this verse (1.3.28) as follows:—
tatra matsyādīnām avatāratvena sarva-jñatve sarva-saktimattevi’pi yathopayogam eva jñāna-kriyā śakyāvīśkaraṇam ... kṛṣṇas tu sāksāt bhagavān nārāyaṇa eva aviśkṛtī-sarva-sakti-mattavāt.
35 Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta pp. 297-99
36 vividha-gopa-caraneṣu vidagdho venu-vādyā urudhā niṣa-sikṣāḥ.
37 tava suta sati yadādhara-bimbē datta-vēnur anayat svara-jātiḥ...
38 savanasās tad upadhārya sureśāḥ śakra-sarva-parameshti-puruṣāḥ.
39 kavaya ṛṇāta-kandra-cittāḥ kaśmalaṁ yayur a-nilcita-tattvāḥ...
40 10.35.14-15
41 “kā stryāṅga te kala-padāyata-mūrṣchitena sammohitāḥ rya-caritān na calet tri-lokām...
42 trailokyasaubhagam idaṁ ca nirikṣya rūpam yad go-dvija-druma-mṛgāḥ pulakānyavibhran...
43 10.29.40
view of the Bhāgavata, Kṛṣṇa Descent is a perfect manifestation of Reality while the other Descents are only partial revelations of it.

The observations of Śrīdhara are suggestive. They indicate, for example, that all Descents are consubstantial because they are all traced to the same reality viz, Bhagavān, the third grade of Reality. Though basically they are all one and the same yet they differ from one another in so far as all potencies are in full play in some while some of the potencies are active others passive in others. Thus a Descent is called a partial revelation when specific potencies are in action while another is called perfect or full revelation when all the potencies are operative. Whether a Descent will express all potencies or not depends upon Bhagavān who descends in different forms. So, the dormant state of some of the potencies in a particular Descent does not imply limitation. A self-imposed restraint on the part of Bhagavān indicates, on the contrary, his sovereignty.

Though the hermits in their questions put to Sūta suggest a different status for the Kṛṣṇa Descent and that status has hitherto been taken to mean perfect manifestation of Bhagavān, the eternal Kṛṣṇa, yet other passages of the Bhāgavata seem to be opposed to this view. At several places, the Bhāgavata appears to have described Kṛṣṇa to be a partial (Amśa or Kalā) manifestation of Bhagavān. So, the passages under consideration have to be reconciled to the view expressed above that Kṛṣṇa was the perfect manifestation, before Kṛṣṇa’s highest status can be accepted.

In answer to the question raised here the following may be suggested: Though the Bhāgavata has sometimes described Kṛṣṇa as partial manifestation yet this description is compatible with the view that Kṛṣṇa was a perfect manifestation on the following grounds:—Firstly, it has been stated before that the eternal Kṛṣṇa as well as the historical Kṛṣṇa may simultaneously be many though remaining one and only one at the same time. If

bhagavān api visvātmā bhaktānām a-bhayānkarah.  10.2.16
āviveśāṁśabhāṣena mana ānaka-dundubhēḥ...
dvijātma-jā me yuwayor didṛśyangā
mayopanitā bhūvi dharma-guptaye.
kalāvatirṇāvavane bharaśurāṁ
hatveha bhūyas tvarayetam anti me...  10.89.58 etc.
we take into consideration the infinite manifestations of the eternal Kṛṣṇa—all manifestations being perfect—then one particular Kṛṣṇa i.e., the historical Kṛṣṇa may appear to be just a part of the congregation of so many Kṛṣṇas. Secondly, the Bhāgavata after offering a long list of Descents including Rāma and Kṛṣṇa concludes that all these Descents emerge from Puruṣa and are therefore either “Aṁśa” or “Kalā” of the latter. But in the same line of the verse the Bhāgavata declares Kṛṣṇa to be Bhagavān himself i.e., “Pūrṇa”. Thus the same context declares Kṛṣṇa to be both “Aṁśa” and “Pūrṇa”. It cannot be said, to solve this contradiction, that while “Aṁśa” refers to the historical Kṛṣṇa “Pūrṇa” relates to the eternal Kṛṣṇa because even the Kṛṣṇa Descent that falls in the stream of Descents under consideration has the epithet “Bhagavān”. If this Kṛṣṇa Descent be intended by the Bhāgavata to be a partial manifestation why should the Bhāgavata use that epithet for that Descent? So, the Kṛṣṇa Descent, described by the Bhāgavata along with other Descents, and Kṛṣṇa said to be the Bhagavān himself are presumably one and the same person. Another suggestion may however be offered to solve this riddle. The Bhāgavata in the same context observes that different types of Descents emerge from Puruṣa like so many streamlets from an inexhaustible reservoir of water. It is possible to conceive on the basis of this statement that like other Descents Kṛṣṇa Descent may for the sake of harmony be taken to emerge from Puruṣa and thus like other Descents be taken as a partial manifestation. On the other hand in so far as all potencies were fully manifested in Kṛṣṇa he might be held to be a perfect manifestation in the line suggested by Śrīdhara. Thirdly, Śrīdhara discusses the term “aṁśa-bhāga” with reference to the Kṛṣṇa Descent and after proposing several alternatives concludes that in any case the Kṛṣṇa Descent is intended to be the perfect manifestation. For, otherwise the statement that Kṛṣṇa is Bhagavān himself cannot be reconciled. Fourthly, the Bhāgavata from the ultimate point

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46 “avatāraḥ ṛṣyaṁ khyeyā hareḥ sattva-nidher dvijāḥ... yathā vidāśinaḥ kulyāḥ sarasāḥ syuh sahasraśaḥ... 1.3.26
47 athāham aṁśa-bhāgena devakyāḥ putratām śubhe... prāṣāmi tvam yalodāyām nanda-patnyām bhaviṣyasi... 10.2.9
of view holds all the Descents to be the highest Reality. It is therefore possible to imagine from this standpoint that all Descents display their potencies in full vigour but we attribute our inability to grasp them to the potencies and thus call them unexpressed, just as we say that Bhagavān is asleep when in fact we are sleeping over Bhagavān. Thus even Kṛṣṇa may appear to be a partial manifestation though the wise can see through his perfect nature. With the extension of the frontiers of our knowledge all Descents would reveal themselves to be perfect. It is in this sense that Śrīdhara remarks that the discernment of a partial manifestation does not refer to the partial character of Reality but it indicates the limited character of our observation.

**BIOGRAPHY OF THE HISTORICAL KṚṢṆA**

Now that the historical Kṛṣṇa has been established to be the perfect manifestation of the eternal Kṛṣṇa one might concentrate on the biography of the former. It is remarkable to observe that though the Bhāgavata has dealt with various Descents yet none except Kṛṣṇa has been described from the beginning to the end. Thus the biography of Kṛṣṇa is a noble exception to the general rule that some particular section of the life of a Descent has been thrown light upon to realise a particular end for which Bhagavān had taken that particular form.

The biography of Kṛṣṇa, as mentioned before, falls into three parts. His early life was spent in Vṛndāvana. Then he went to Mathurā and became its king having killed the tyrant maternal uncle, Kaṁsa. Subsequently he shifted his capital to Dwārakā. His activities at Vṛndāvana are distinguished from those at Mathurā and Dwārakā in as much as the former always inspired awe in the minds of its inhabitants. Thus while

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48 yat kiṁ ca loka bhaga-van mahas-vad 
ojah-sahas-vad bala-vat kṣamā-vat. 
śrī-hri-vibhūtyātma-vad adbhutārṇam 
tattvaṁ paraṁ rūpa-vad a-svarūpam... 2.6.45

49 Śrīdhara while commenting on the verse "tatraṁśena-vatirnasya viṣṇor viryāṇi tāṁsa nah" (10.1.2) makes the following comment:—

āṁśeneti pratiyabhīṣṣyeyoṇktam.

50 te tatra varṇītam gopaiḥ pūtanā'gamanā'dikam. 
śrutāḥ tan-nidhanāṁ svasti śiloś cāśan suvismitāḥ... 10.6.42
śrutāḥ tad vismitā gopā gopyai cāti-priyā'dṛṭāḥ. 
pretyā'gatam ivautsukyād aikṣanta śrulekṣanāḥ... 10.11.54 etc.
Kṛṣṇa’s activities at Vṛndāvana revealed at every step his majesty and thus the natural was over-arched by the supernatural. Mathurā and Dvārakā experienced Kṛṣṇa as a careful householder and majesty was subordinated to his human nature. The Kṛṣṇa of the Mahābhārata is by and large the Kṛṣṇa of Dvārakā. Of all the activities at the three regions those at Vṛndāvana are the highest because the sovereignty of Kṛṣṇa is revealed therein and of all the activities at Vṛndāvana the “rāsa-līlā” reigns supreme.

An enquiry into the purpose for which Kṛṣṇa was incarnated will throw light upon the supremacy of “rāsa-līlā”. The Bhāgavata has recorded different views on this point: (1) Some consider Kṛṣṇa to have incarnated for extending the fame of Yudhiṣṭhira as a righteous monarch; (2) Others take him to have revealed himself for the welfare of the earth and for the destruction of the demons; (3) Still others opine that Kṛṣṇa took a tangible form for providing such activities as would sanctify the memory and ears of the people constantly tormented in this world by false knowledge and greed. The last view is supported by Kuntī, the great devotee of Kṛṣṇa and the mother of the Pāṇḍavas. And it shows that the historical Kṛṣṇa assumed a human form to instill by his life and preachings into the minds of the commoners the belief that the ideals Kṛṣṇa stood for were, after all, attainable by human endeavour. Those ideals could actually be implemented by human mortals as they were done by Kṛṣṇa who was apparently another human individual like others. Thus his human form was intended to touch upon the vital chord of our life for what was possible for one individual should be within the reach of another.

In the Bhāgavata tradition the status of Brahmā is sub-

81 kacchā āhūr ājaṁ jātaṁ puṣya-lokasya kīrtaye. yadoṁ priyasyaṁ lavāvya malayasyeva candanam... aparā śūladevaya devakyāṁ yācito bhayagā. ajāś tvam asya kṣemāya vadhāya ca sura-duṣyām... bhārāvataraṇāyāṁ nāya bhuvā naivā yodadāhau. sidantāy bhūri bhāreṇa jāto hyāṁ bhuvaṁrthināḥ... bhavāṁsaṁ kṣīryāmānāṁ avidyā-kāma-karmabhiḥ. śravaṇa-smaraṇāṁ rāhāṇi karisyann iti kecana... 1.8.32-35

82 śravantaṁ gāyanti gnāntavyabhikṣṇāṁ
śmarantaṁ nandanti tavehitāṁ janāṁ. ta eva paśyantyacireṇa tāvakaṁ bhava-pravāhāṁparamāṁ padāṁbujam... 1.8.36
lime. To Brahmā was propounded the Bhāgavata by Nārāyaṇa for the first time. And this is what Brahmā observes in connection with the incarnation of Kṛṣṇa: "O Master, though you are undifferentiated per se yet you assume diverse forms just to exhilarate the minds of those who have taken refuge in you". So, on the evidence of Brahmā the eternal Kṛṣṇa had descended as the historical Kṛṣṇa to inspire pleasure in the minds of his devotees.

It may be contended that "rāsa-lilā" was commenced by Kṛṣṇa for his own pleasure as the introductory verse of the five chapters on "rāsa" (rāsa-pañcā’dhyaṇi) indicates. The verse in question declares: "Having observed those moon-lit nights infatu- tuated with the fragrance of sweet-smelling "māliṅkā"-flowers Bhagavān intended to indulge in sports with the aid of "Yoga-māya". Here the phrase "intended to indulge" (manās cakre) is significant from the grammatical point of view. The usage of "ātmanepada" in "cakre" suggests that Bhagavān intended to enjoy himself in the company of the gopīs, for "ātmanepada" is employed when the subject of the verb to which the "ātmanepada"-suffix is attached intends to appropriate the fruit of the action indicated by the verb in question. If therefore "rāsa- lilā" was undertaken for his own satisfaction then surely this cannot be his best sport as claimed before and this is also against the purpose of the Kṛṣṇa Descent, viz, to offer pleasure to his devotees, as indicated in the view of Brahmā.

It may be said in answer that "rāsa-lilā" is the climax that reveals at its best the true nature of Kṛṣṇa as all love. Śrīdhara also comments to the same effect: "Among the Descents Rāma or Kṛṣṇa exhibit the triumph of love". Now, love is like a river in spate. When surging waves flow down its main stream, they break upon the brinks of the river as well. Thus both the banks are affected. So, supposing

53 tene brahma idam ya ādi-kavaye 1.1.1 b
54 prapañcāni niṣ-prapañco’pi viḍambayasi bhūtale. prapañna-janaśa’nanda-sandoham prāktiṃ prabho... 10.14.37
55 bhagavān api tāh rātriḥ saradopulla-mālikāḥ... vikṣya rantum manās cakre yoga-māyaṃ upāśritaḥ... 10.29.1
56 Śrīdhara comments:—
lilā’vatāreṇu īpsitam jagataḥ premā’spadam śri-rāma-kṛṣṇādi-janma on

11.11.20
Kṛṣṇa indulged in sports with the gopīs for his own satisfaction, yet it was no less a satisfaction on the part of the gopīs as well. For, ideal love is reciprocal and the satisfaction derived from it is shared equally by both the parties. This point is borne out by the Bhāgavata when in recognition of the supreme love dedicated to him by the gopīs Kṛṣṇa exclaims:—"I have no adequate return for this love for me. So let this unique gift (of love) be returned to you in exchange". It shows that Kṛṣṇa is offering the same love to the gopīs, which they had offered to Kṛṣṇa. In other words, Kṛṣṇa promises to love them with the same intensity as they had brought to bear upon their love for Kṛṣṇa. It is in this sense that Kṛṣṇa is said to have exhilarated the gopīs though he himself is perpetually settled on his innate pleasure. The point is that Kṛṣṇa indulged in "rāsa-līlā" not for his own sake but for the sake of the gopīs; for, being self-contented (ātmārāma) he does not require any extraneous condition for the realisation of any pleasure which still remains unachieved.

In fact, from the ultimate point of view the gopīs are the potencies of Bhagavān and as such they are identical with him. So, what was a pleasure to him was a pleasure for the gopīs and what was a pleasure for the gopīs reverted to himself. The devotees of all times are, like the gopīs, a part of his being and therefore the same rule of pleasure—its reciprocity and the unity of the enjoyers—holds good for them as well. So it is pleasure of the Reality derived from Divine Sport. This is "rāsa-līlā" which belongs to the innate nature of Kṛṣṇa—whether of the eternal Kṛṣṇa or the historical Kṛṣṇa.

One may pause here a while for understanding the import of "rāsa-līlā" in relation to one's own life. Man is striving for values—fame, money, beauty, philanthropy and what not. He is subjected to chequered experiences to realise his ends. These experiences are emotion, activity and enlightenment with perhaps an admixture of disillusionment. Whether

57 na pāraye'haṁ nir-avadya-saṁyujāṁ
sva-sādhuv-kṛtyaṁ vibudhāyus'pi vah.
yā mābhajān dur-jara-geha-śrūkhalāḥ
saṁnyāicya tad vah pratiyātu sādhunā... 10.32.22
58 iti viścuvaṁ tāsāṁ śrutā yogesvarāvaram.
pṛahasya sa-dayaṁ gopīr ātmārāmo'pyarīramat... 10.29.42
he succeeds or not, willynilly, he confronts varying experiences. But one thing is settled: Though the experiences vary and he drifts along these fleeting shadows, his own self is the only unchangeable reality among the changeables. His intelligence can exhibit its strength and vitality by subjecting all objects to minute scrutiny but the scrutinizer is never challenged. For the existence of doubt and cross-examination postulates the existence of the doubter. *Cogito ergo sum.* So the great philosopher Vācaspati Miśra (900 a.d.) in his gloss on the Bhāṣya of Śaṅkara remarks: “One cannot entertain the idea that one does not exist or that one does exist or not”.

In the Mahābhārata the same truth is borne out in the episode of Yudhiṣṭhira and the crane.

In answer to the query as to what is the most amazing thing in this world Yudhiṣṭhira said: “Beings die away everyday under the very nose of others who are still alive. But the latter still do believe that they are going to live on and never to die”. So at the back of everyday activity—far away from the field of metaphysical discussion—is the innate belief in man, unshakable by any contrary arguments, that he is to exist. This is the primordial concept of the eternity of the soul.

Thus the soul continues to exist for ever. But what for? Is there any mission which it has to realise or does it just go on aimlessly like a floating cloud? In actual experience man is always regulated in his endeavour by a purpose. His voluntary action is always motivated by the desire to achieve something by his efforts. And this anticipation of an end distinguishes a rational being from the rest of the animal world which is guided by blind instinct. Thus man strives for certain values or for what he thinks to be values. When the values are realised he is happy and contented. In the ultimate analysis it will be found that fame and wealth, beauty and philanthropy are values in so far as they all conduce to happiness. Even the selfless devotion of a wife for her husband or the unique sacrifice of a mother for her son or a battalion’s courting

59 na hi jātu kaścid atra sandiśdhe aham vā nā’ham vā iti. na ca vipārasyati nā’ham eveti. Vācaspati Miśra on the Adhyā-śa-Bhāṣya of Ācārya Śaṅkara

60 ahanyahani bhūtānī gacchanti yama-mandiram. "teṣā āyuṣyam icchānti kim āścaryam atah param... MB 3.312.116
death for the sake of saving its mother country—in fact, all expressions of self-abnegation—ultimately boil down to the satisfaction of the person or persons concerned. That is why the Bhāдарणyaka-Upaniṣad declares: "The husband does not become dear to the wife for the sake of the husband but for the wife's sake ... sons are not dear for the sons but for the loving parents ......") In the same context the Upaniṣad arrives at this deduction that all become dear because they are endearing to the soul. Hence the happiness of the soul is the ultimate end to which our efforts are directed.

In order to be eternal the soul has to be distinct from matter which is liable to change and subsequent destruction. So the soul has to be distinct from the physical body or even from the psychological being (sūkṣma-śarīra). Though the soul seems to be inextricably linked up with mind and body yet the soul is not a perpetual flux but is a witness thereof. The soul is not a part of the stream but an interested onlooker. The stream interests the soul in so far as it helps to stimulate the sense of pleasure in it.

But the human tragedy lies in the tremendous amount of unpleasant feelings that always go with the sense of happiness. Whatever is grasped with a view to having pleasure turns out to be of great disadvantage. There is no light without a peal of thunder, no rose without a bed of thorns.

So while search for pleasure is ingrained in the soul the methodology of striving for it has to be changed. One should cultivate the art of doing things in a way which ensures pleasure and eliminates pain for all times to come. The clever device of doing things in such a way is called "karma-yoga".

In order to eliminate the troubles of the world the individual soul clings to Bhagavān for peace and happiness. The glimpses of happiness that the individual soul derives from material objects are now felt to have emanated from that inexhaustible source of happiness, the Brahman of the Upaniṣads. One now turns to God to have happiness unsophisticated by sorrow. One may crave for his pity or for enlightenment that discards all limitations so far imposed upon the individual soul. In

41 na vā are patyuh kāmāya patiḥ priyo bhavatyātmanas tu kāmāya patiḥ priyo bhavati etc. BU 4.5.6
the ultimate, the realisation dawns upon the votary. It is the state of absolute freedom. One now begins to realise that happiness glistening through the world was neither a part of material objects or even of God. It was the radiation of the soul’s innate pristine glory—its own native bliss. Here is the fullest flowering of the soul’s hidden treasures—the perfection of what was potential in it so far. In other words, the votary now realises to be the Bhagavān himself. He is now the only reality reigning supreme. Here is the complete satisfaction with himself, the complete realisation of divine ecstasy. This is “rāsa-līlā”, the Divine Sport of the soul with its own self—the profoundest play with the fullest maturity of its own potentialities. The whole thing is so spontaneous as contra-distinguished from material existence vitiated all the time with obstacles and frustrations that the only term that approximates this free activity is “sport”. Hence “rāsa-līlā” i.e., the sport of the realisation of the ecstasy of the soul cannot but be the summum bonum of all spiritual aspirations.

Thus “rāsa-līlā” being the climax of all the sports of Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa, the great devotee Uddhava remarks:—“The divine grace that was showered upon the gopīs on the occasion of “rāsa-līlā” has transcended all other graces. Nor does the goddess of wealth (Lakṣmī) enjoy it from Nārāyaṇa. Nor do the divine damsels and goddesses claim to have it from their masters”.

In this sport devotion is equated with love and love with bliss. Of all the sports of Kṛṣṇa, therefore, Vṛndāvana sports are the sweetest and of all the sports of Kṛṣṇa at Vṛndāvana “rāsa-līlā” stands the highest.

**IS RĀSA-LĪLĀ A SOCIAL CRIME?**

As “rāsa-līlā” represents the zenith of Kṛṣṇa’s sports and is the climax of all spiritual aspirations it deserves to be exonerated from criticism. In fact there is age-old criticism against Kṛṣṇa’s association with the gopīs, of which “rāsa-līlā” is the peak. The gopīs are described to be others’ wives

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62 nā’yaṁ śriyo’ṛga u nītānta-rateḥ praśādah
svar-yoṣīlām nalīna-gandha-rucaṁ kuto’nyāḥ.
raśtotiave’ṣya bhujā-danda-grhīta-kaśṭha-
labdha’śiṣāṁ ya ud-agāt vraja-vallavināṁ... 10.47.60
in the Bhāgavata. Should Kṛṣṇa, the manifestation of Bhagavān, indulge in their company in a way that invites easy criticism? The behaviour of Kṛṣṇa towards the gopīs—seems to amount to flagrant violation of social discipline. This can least be expected of Kṛṣṇa who is supposed to be the torch-bearer of good conduct. Does it not on the contrary set a bad example for others who are instinctively steeped already in carnal satisfaction?

This objection on moral grounds has been anticipated by the Bhāgavata itself. The emperor Parīkṣit who was waiting for his final hour felt perplexed as to the import of this behaviour on the part of Kṛṣṇa. He therefore enquired: “O Śuka, the Lord of the universe had descended to establish law and order and to eliminate all evils that threaten the moral health of the society. Why should Kṛṣṇa, the protector, propounder and upholder of morality, act otherwise by inflicting outrage on others’ wives? Kṛṣṇa is, after all, self-contented, being the manifestation of Bhagavān. So he must have had a purpose behind this behaviour. Please dispel this misconception for me”.

While the noble king Parīkṣit whose mind was moving at the time in the direction of salvation was subjected to this misconception, no mortal need be blamed if the same question hovers over his mind as well.

Attempts have been made in different ages from different quarters to meet this question. For example, the Bhāgavata itself has tried to meet this situation. Then comes Śrīdhara, the nonsectarian and esteemed commentator, to face it. Thereafter the different Sects of Vaiṣṇavism, that draw their inspiration from the Bhāgavata-Purāṇa, have tackled this problem. In view of the serious character of the criticism which threatens the very existence of sublime quality in the concept of “rāsa-līlā”, one may be pardoned if the different viewpoints are now presented on this burning question. The persistence of the problem through the ages shows its seriousness as the answers attempted

īrī rājovāca.

saṁsthābpanāya dharmasya prāśamāyetarasya ca.
avatirṇo hi bhagavān aṁśena jagad-īvarah...
sa katham dharma-setunāṁ vaktā kartābhīrakṣitā.
pratīṣṭam ācārad brahman para-dāraṁbhimarītanam...
āpta-kāmo yadu-patih kṛtavān vai jugupsitam.
kīm-abhirāṭya etam naḥ saṁśayaṁ chindhi su-vrata 10.33.26-28
by different Schools at different periods bring out their intellectual acumen and their brilliance of devotionalism.

The Bhāgavata has adduced through the mouth of Śuka two reasons to justify the conduct of Kṛṣṇa. It admits, for argument's sake, the fault levelled against him and pleads that extraordinary persons are not to be judged by the ordinary laws of morality. As fire consumes whatever is offered to it so crime loses its sting with reference to a powerful person. Killing a person is murder but a judge inflicting death sentence on a murderer is not a murderer but an administrator of justice. This first answer is from the ordinary point of view. From the point of metaphysics, Kṛṣṇa is the supreme soul of all—both of the gopīs and of their husbands—and therefore if a gopī married a person it amounted to the marriage of one soul to another—or more precisely—the soul, one and only one, marrying its own self. Different persons are merely different bodies assumed by the soul to further the cause of Divine Sport. This is the second answer. As to the purpose for which Kṛṣṇa had behaved as he did, the Bhāgavata says that his behaviour was intended to induce the ordinary people to spirituality. They were steeped in carnal pleasure. So they would naturally be captivated by the stories about Kṛṣṇa, which bore the semblance of lavish epicurianism. So Kṛṣṇa's behaviour was a pleasant device to switch the ordinary people off to spiritual life.

Śrīdhara at the outset of his commentary on the 29th chapter of the tenth skandha of the Bhāgavata expresses the view that the final import of Kṛṣṇa's dalliances with the gopīs is just the reverse of what the ordinary people think about the five chapters on

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44 dharmavyatikramo dṛṣṭa itvarāpāṁ ca sāhasam. teṣyāsyāṁ na doṣāya vaheḥ sarva-bhuvo yathā. 10.33.29
45 gopināṁ tat-patināṁ ca sarveṣām eva dehinām. yo'ntyā carati so'dhyākṣaḥ krīḍānenaḥ deha-bhāk. 10.33.35
46 anugrahāya bhūtaṁ mānuśāṁ deham āstihitaṁ. bhajate tādṛśīḥ krīḍā yāḥ śrutāḥ tatt-saṁ bhavet. 10.33.36
“rāsa”. In fact, the five chapters embody the story of progressive triumph of Kṛṣṇa over sex. The phrases like “Kṛṣṇa resorted to Yoga-māyā for the purpose of sport with the gopīs”, “he gladdened others though he himself was settled in absolute satiety”, “he was the precious rarity even for the god of love”—are pointers to the conquest of mortal love by Kṛṣṇa. So the five chapters⁸⁸ are meant for extinguishing carnal desire and not for kindling them. This rules out the possibility of any misconception about the behaviour of Kṛṣṇa.

The Nimbārka School does not recognize the problem at all. It admits three wives of Kṛṣṇa—Rukmini, Satyabhāmā and Śrī-Rādhā. In the Śrī-Kṛṣṇa-stava by Nimbārka this is borne out in no ambiguous terms. At the beginning of that work Nimbārka states in the laudatory verse: “I contemplate that goddess who surrounded by thousands of friends is embellishing the left side of Kṛṣṇa. She is the daughter of Vṛṣabhānu and she fulfils all desires”.⁶⁹ The commentary of Puruṣottama lays down on the basis of a Rk-pariṣiṣṭa-sruti which describes the eternal association between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, that as Rādhā is perpetually related to Kṛṣṇa she cannot be another person’s wife for association with another man’s wife is bound to be casual and not permanent. The commentator goes further and elicits the three wives of Kṛṣṇa from another portion of the said Śruti. The Śruti states: “Rukmini is the creator of the world. She is the primordial matter and is associated with Kṛṣṇa just as Vraja-stri (Śrī-Rādhā) is”. The commentator remarks that this verse also implies Satyabhāmā, another wife of Kṛṣṇa. By “vraja-stri” Śrī-Rādhā is meant and the “sahās” (friends) mentioned in the description of Nimbārka in the verse quoted above are her female servants. Thus Kṛṣṇa had three wives of whom Satyabhāmā and Rukmini served him at Mathurā while Śrī-Rādhā was his first wife at Vṛndāvana. While Śrī-Rādhā had enjoyed the sweetness of Kṛṣṇa’s first love Satyabhāmā and Rukmini were his companions in executing domestic duties. From the stand point of love Kṛṣṇa’s link with Śrī-Rādhā is the sweetest.⁷⁰

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⁸⁸ 10.29-33.
⁶⁹ Śrī-Kṛṣṇa-stava by Nimbārka p. 70.
⁷⁰ Vedānta-ratna-maṇjūśā by Puruṣottama pp. 70-72.
The line of Nimbārka's approach appears to be oversimplification of the issue. His contention not only refuses to entertain casual relationship between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in their eternal abode viz, Goloka but it also denies any speck of misconception with regard to the historical Kṛṣṇa's contact with the gopīs including Śrī-Rādhā. If Śrī-Rādhā be taken as the married wife of Kṛṣṇa from the sociological point of view and the other gopīs are relegated to the humble status of being her maidservants then the burden will devolve upon the Nimbārka School to explain the Bhāgavata description of the gopīs (including Śrī-Rādhā) being others' wives. It is also not plausible to conceive Kṛṣṇa expressing amorous behaviour with the gopīs who were nothing better than maidservants. So the major portion of the Kṛṣṇa story at Vṛndāvana as depicted in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavata does hardly fit in with the doctrine preached by the Nimbārka School.

The Vallabha School displays greater ingenuity in this respect. It interprets the Kṛṣṇa episodes at Vṛndāvana in the light of symbolism. Thus the birth of Kṛṣṇa is the manifestation of the divine form (śrī-mūrti) in the mind of the devotee. Instruction of Vasudeva to the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana for leaving Vṛndāvana and repatriation to Gokula is the instruction of the teacher as to the obstacles in the path of devotion. The death of the demoness Pūtanā is the destruction of Avidyā which binds man to external objects. The devastation of the demon Śakaṭa is the severance of all contacts with external objects. The panorama of the universal form (viśva-rūpa) revealed before the awe-striken eyes of Yaśodā is the awakening of the devotee to his true nature in dreams. In this way Kṛṣṇa's childhood sports may be explained.

Now begin sports at Vṛndāvana. When the obstructing sins are annihilated and God's grace shines upon the votary then listening to God's name etc. leads to the development of "bīja-bhāva" (a devotional disposition) which, grown in intensity, destroys the guṇa-reals. Thereafter by service (seva) the devotional disposition develops into a passion (vyasana) and Brahma-bhāva (identity with Brahman) is achieved upon the destruction of the guṇa-reals. Revelation of Puruşottama (Nārāyaṇa) follows Brahma-bhāva. Subsequently, the gross
and the subtle bodies are destroyed and the devotee then wins a body fit for the enjoyment of his sports. Finally the votary enters the region of eternal sport. This is salvation.\textsuperscript{71}

It is interesting to observe that the progressive march of devotion reveals Brahmaṇa, Paramātman and Bhagavān in hierarchical order. This view falls in line with the approach adopted by us. Bālakṛṣṇa-bhaṭṭa, the author of Prameya-ratnārṇava, speaks about the revelation of Bhagavān on the basis of the verse in “rāsa-paṅcādhyāyī” viz, “With a smile on his face Kṛṣṇa appeared before the gopīs”.\textsuperscript{72} Similarly, the surrender of both the physical and subtle bodies as preparatory to the entrance to the region of Goloka is traced to another verse of the Bhāgavata, viz, “Though the gopīs had developed a fascination for Kṛṣṇa yet they abandoned their physical bodies because their shackles of guṇa-reals were broken by the association of Kṛṣṇa”.\textsuperscript{73} All these indicate that the author attempted to establish the viewpoint of the Vallabha School on the bedrock of the Bhāgavata-Purāṇa, so that the said view might not appear to be a mere fabrication of imagination.

The theory of annihilation of bodies before the entrance to the spiritual region of Goloka meets the allegation against Kṛṣṇa. After all, sexual intemperance presupposes the existence of a physical body and social laws of morality are based upon it as well. While one has to quit the physical form before one is entitled to enter Goloka with a view to indulging in sports with Kṛṣṇa, the violation of the social law of morality has no bearing upon such a state of affairs. The Vallabha School does postulate another form for the votary with which he enjoys the company of Kṛṣṇa but it is not a physical form but spiritual built up of spiritual matter (visuddha-sattva). So the association with Kṛṣṇa, the region at which the association is forged, the body with which the votary approaches—are all spiritual and therefore the allegation of moral intemperance both with regard to

\textsuperscript{71} Prameya-ratnārṇava pp. 39-44.
\textsuperscript{72} tāsām āvīr-abhūt saurīṛ smayamāna-mukhāmbujāḥ, pitāmbara-dharaḥ sragvī sākṣāṁ manmatha-manmathaḥ... 10.32.2.
\textsuperscript{73} tam eva paramāmānam jāra-buddhāpi saṅgatāḥ, jahur guṇa-mayām dehaṁ sadyaḥ prakṛtiḥ-bandhanāḥ... 10.29.11.
Krṣṇa and the gopīś loses its significance in the present case. In other words, “rāsā” is to be understood as a feature of the eternal Krṣṇa and not of the historical Krṣṇa at all.

In the Bengal School of Vaiṣṇavism the solution to the problem has taken two different directions. Jīva Gosvāmin and Viśvanātha Cakravartin have tackled the problem in their commentaries on the Ujjvala-nilā-māni of Rūpa Gosvāmin. Though they have started from the same place their presuppositions have varied and their attitudes have differed so widely that each deserves separate consideration.

Jīva maintains that love (śṛṅgāra) in its primordial sense means purity. Therefore ideal love cannot be anything but pure. Now, the allegation of moral violation on the part of Krṣṇa must be confined to the manifest sport (prakāta-nilā) of Krṣṇa; for, the unmanifest sport (a-prakāta-nilā) of Krṣṇa in the eternal abode where the gopīś are the intrinsic potencies (iva-rūpa-śakti) of Krṣṇa and to that extent his own wives, is perfectly untouched by any sociological implication of immorality. But as the manifest sport (prakāta-nilā) is but a projection of the unmanifest sport revealed in Goloka, in other words, as history is the manifestation or revelation of the eternal Principle, the former cannot be subjected to criticism as the latter is not. The fundamental principle of unity between the eternal Krṣṇa and his potencies governs the association between the historical Krṣṇa and the gopīś. And if unity (tādātmya) counteracts the idea of “belonging to others” in the case of the eternal Krṣṇa it should do the same with regard to the relationship of the gopīś with the historical Krṣṇa. Hence no body should mistake the relationship of the gopīś with Krṣṇa for taking license with others’ wives.

One may however take this explanation as well an oversimplification of the real issue. For, in face of the express description in the Bhāgavata of the gopīś being others’ wives the consideration of gopīś being the wives of Krṣṇa may seem to be difficult to maintain. The position of Jīva may appear to be as weak as that of the Nimbraka School since both of them appear to go against the love story of Krṣṇa, as presented in the Bhāga-
vata-Purāṇa.

But Jīva has improved upon the Nimbraka School in one
respect. He has tried to explain away the description in the Bhāgavata of the gopīs being others’ wives. His arguments in this respect deserve careful consideration here. Jīva reads a profound significance in that description which paints the gopīs as others’ wives. He draws upon a passage of the Bharatanaṭya-śāstra for this purpose: “The intensity of love reaches its climax when it is impeded by constant obstacles and the meeting of the lovers takes place in concealment and that also very scarcely”. So if one compares between the normal love of a married couple and that of two lovers unmarried to each other, one would find that the irregular love is characterized by a high pitch of emotion which sometimes prevails over all. Instances of such irregular contact ultimately resulting in the surrender of all that were so long so endearing to both the parties are not at all wanting. They suggest the pointedness of irregular love which in exclusion of other considerations inevitably leads to irresistible union between the two lovers.

Jīva has exploited this abnormal psychosis developed in amorous perplexity to throw light on the nature of ideal love for Krṣṇa. As a lover, Jīva would argue, over head and ears in love, relinquishes everything in favour of his beloved, in the same way one should love Krṣṇa, leaving everything behind. To bring this lesson home to every individual, Jīva would conclude, the gopīs have been painted as others’ wives though in fact the gopīs were his own potencies and therefore his own wives. Thus while the Nimbārka School refused to entertain the allegation of Krṣṇa’s so-called immorality and the Vallabha School took the biography of Krṣṇa away from the domain of history to the region of practical ethics, Jīva Gosvāmin was prepared to give a face value to the description of gopīs being others’ wives. His attempt was reconciliation between the view already expressed by Nimbārka viz, that the gopīs were wives of Krṣṇa and the view that the gopīs were others’ wives as evidenced by the description in the Bhāgavata. Nimbārka has confined the status of “wife” to Rādhā only at Vṛndāvana while the other gopīs were to him mere maidservants. Jīva recognised all the gopīs—Rādhā and others—to be his wives. He grafted the theory of gopīs being others’ wives on this bedrock of gopīs being the legal wives of Krṣṇa. He tried to avoid the contra-
diction emerging from this grafting by reading a deep-seated motive behind this description. The motive was, as he feels, to preach practical ethics to the ordinary mortals. The ethics consists in loving Kṛṣṇa in a relentless way that does not allow the interference of any other considerations. It was taking refuge in Kṛṣṇa, surrendering everything else. This is in substance the “secret of secrets” divulged to Arjuna by Bhagavān in the Gītā: “Take shelter in me leaving all. I shall liberate you from all sins. Do not worry”.

Although the Nimbārka and Vallabha Schools have made fruitful contributions to practical ethics in their attitude towards the whole problem yet they may appear to have evaded the real problem—one by flat refusal to admit it and the other by taking refuge in symbolism. Jīva desired to countenance it. But basically his attitude may be said to be a refinement of Nimbārka’s. His explanation viz, reading a profound motive in the description of gopīs being others’ wives exhibits his ingenuity inspired by a deep religious fervour. But when we consider the fact that the allegation was launched against the person whom we call the historical Kṛṣṇa and that the said uncomfortable description should not merely be blasted away with the dynamite of a motive attributed to such description, Jīva also may not be considered to have faced the problem quite squarely.

Jīva, however, took pains to establish his theory that the gopīs were in fact the wives of Kṛṣṇa. He draws upon the Gaṇatī-Tantra which holds that “Kṛṣṇa, the delight of the universe, was the legal husband of the gopīs from birth to birth”. He also quotes from the Gopāla-tāpanī which declares: “Kṛṣṇa is the husband of yours”. The Bhāgavata also addresses the gopīs as the “wives of Kṛṣṇa” (kṛṣṇa-vadhvāḥ). So in face of such authorities including the Bhāgavata, the gopīs ought to be taken as the legal wives of Kṛṣṇa. This is the claim of Jīva Gosvāmin.

Viśvanātha Cakravartin who represents another section of the Bengal School of Vaiṣṇavism (and in fact feelings are so strong on the problem that Viśvanātha is regarded to be a

“sara-dharmān parītyajya mām ekāṁ sarayat vraja. aham te ā sarva-pāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi ma lucaḥ”. Gītā 18.66.
free-thinker mainly because of his view on this point) has faced the problem more realistically. He agrees with Jīva that the unmanifest sport of the eternal Kṛṣṇa is with his own potencies and that eliminates the question of immorality with regard to the eternal Kṛṣṇa. But so far as the allegation against the historical Kṛṣṇa is concerned it must be regarded as a real one. So in all fairness to the problem one should realise the gravity of it and thus propose an answer that does adequate justice to the passages of the Bhāgavata which undeniably describe the irregularity of Kṛṣṇa’s association with the gopīs.

For instance, Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa himself refers to their husbands and brothers: “Your brothers and husbands”\(^5\). In fact, Uddhava lays great premium on the love of the gopīs exclusively because it was an unusual direction that drowns all social and moral considerations. This is what he says: “May I be born an humble shrub in some neglected corner at Vṛndāvana, which is blessed with the dust from the feet of the gopīs. They are the persons who by relinquishing the unshakable path of social and moral life have adopted the path of Kṛṣṇa that is persistently searched for by the hermits”\(^6\). Can one just afford to ignore such unambiguous passages that unmistakably bear out the proposition that the gopīs were others’ wives with whom Kṛṣṇa had forged a questionable association? It is no good to underestimate this situation.

So the answer should take another direction. In fact the Bhāgavata itself has tried to meet this point, remarks Viśva-nātha. The Bhāgavata exonerates Kṛṣṇa from blemishes in view of the fact that Kṛṣṇa is the supreme Lord of the universe and therefore he has no egoity (ahamkāra) to which is traced the notions of good or bad. Thus Kṛṣṇa being the transcendent Real, the empirical notions of right and wrong that are usually confined to the ordinary mortals have no bearing

\(^5\) mātaraḥ pitaraḥ putraḥ bhrātaraḥ patayaḥ ca vaḥ. 10.29.20 ab.

\(^6\) āsām aho caraṇa-reṇu-juvām aham syāṁ
vṛndāvane kim api guṁa-latauṣadhinām,
yā dustyajām sva-janam ārya-patham ca hitvā
bhejur mukunda-padaṁ śrutibhir vimṛgyām. 10.47.61.
on him. On the contrary his associations with the gopīs are extolled in the Bhāgavata. The Bhāgavata declares that “the statements which embody at every step the sanctifying names of Hari embellished with his remarkable deeds fulfil the need for human utterance. That is why the saints give an audience to, sing and praise the names of Hari”.

Had the association with gopīs been looked upon as a social stigma, surely the Bhāgavata would not have come forward to make such curious statements. In fact, the state of the gopīs being others’ wives is a creation of Māyā. Still this state is not illusory as held out by Jīva Gosvāmin. The position is this: Māyā is of two kinds—one the binding principle (Avidyā) and the other (Vidyā) providing for Divine Sports. As Avidyā, Māyā provides for the empirical existence which is the basis of social and moral laws. On the other hand, as the principle of Divine Sports (Vidyā), Māyā creates spiritual existence. While the mortal husbands of the gopīs were under the purview of Avidyā, Kṛṣṇa carthe within the range of Māyā making for Divine Sports. In other words, the gopīs had two kinds of husbands. While ordinary mortals were conventional husbands, Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa was their spiritual husband. A meeting with the spiritual husband cannot be subjected to moral criticism for morality is to be understood only in the context of the empirical world to which belong their conventional husbands.

In terms of the Bhāgavata philosophy the concept of Viśvanātha Cakravartin’s “Māyā” incorporates YoGa-māyā, the principle of Divine Sport, and Avidyā, the principle of bondage. So while Viśvanātha recognises Kṛṣṇa as the spiritual husband he practically refers to the association of the gopīs with the eternal Kṛṣṇa. His agreement to the proposal that the gopīs were

\[\text{kūśulā'caritenaśām iha svārtho na vidyates.}\\
\text{viparyayena vā'narthe nir-ahaṁkārināṁ prabho...}\\
\text{kim utā'khila-sattvānāṁ tiryāṁ-martya-dīvaukaśāṁ.}\\
\text{iśātu cēlātavānāṁ kuśalā'kuśalā'nvayaḥ... 10.33.32-33.}\]

\[\text{tad-vāg-nisargo janatā'gha-viplavo}\\
\text{yasmin prati-ilo kām a-baddhavatyaāpi.}\\
\text{nāmānta-nyanāntya yośo'nikāti yat}\\
\text{śrāvanti gāvanti gṛñānti sādhvahā... 1.5.11.}\]

77 Commentaries of Jīva Gosvāmin and Viśvanātha Cakravartin on the Ujjvala-nilā-maṇi of Rūpa Gosvāmin, pp. 10-30.
others’ wives as evinced by the passages of the Bhāgavata indicates his realism. But the juxtaposition of two types of husbands to meet the criticism does not exactly solve the problem. The problem was: Why should the historical Kṛṣṇa (i.e., the Kṛṣṇa Descent) behave in such way with the gopīs who are described to be others’ wives as to rouse the question of immoral conduct on the part of Kṛṣṇa? The concept of Kṛṣṇa being their spiritual husband does not give him the license to exhibit amorous behaviour which stinks at the nose of ordinary beings. After all, people are prone to imitate the character of the great and if Kṛṣṇa had come down upon the world to set a standard of right behaviour his personal life does not seem to warrant it.

A REVIEW OF THE WHOLE PROBLEM

In view of the serious nature of the problem arising out of Kṛṣṇa’s association with the gopīs one may venture to suggest further consideration of the real issue. In fact the entire Kṛṣṇa-philosophy—both its ethics and metaphysics—is hinged upon a satisfactory answer to the problem under consideration. So, if the Kṛṣṇa-cult is to flourish as glorious as ever it is worthwhile to devote some more space to this vexatious question.

The great devotee Uddhava brings out the uniqueness of the association of Kṛṣṇa in the following way: “After all, the cowherd women were rural. But still they were entitled to possess divine love (rūḍha-bhāva) for Kṛṣṇa. This was none to their credit. This was the majesty of the association with Kṛṣṇa which leads to the highest good as a good medicine shows its efficacy, irrespective of the attitude of the patient towards it”. In this context Uddhava uses the epithet “vyabhicāra-duṣṭāḥ” (which means “subjected to adultery”) applied to the cowherd women. So his statement suggests two things: (1) the cowherd women were undoubtedly others’ wives and therefore in the eye of the society they committed a moral offence in their association with Kṛṣṇa and (2) still the very association with Kṛṣṇa who was the perfect manifestation of Bhagavān, the third grade of Reality, crystallized their human love into divine.

kvemāḥ striyo vana-carir vyabhicāra-duṣṭāḥ
kṛṣṇe kva caīṣa paramātmāni rūḍha-bhāvah.
nanvīśvaro'nubhajato'viduso'pi sākṣāc
ehreyas tanotyagada-rāja t вопayuktāḥ... 10.47.59.
Now an offence of this kind entails misconduct on both the partners. In the present case Kṛṣṇa is liable to be charged with it as are the cowherd women. It is now being proposed to review the behaviour of Kṛṣṇa in his contact with the cowherd women.

Presuming that Kṛṣṇa participated in what may appear to be amorous, it is still remarkable to observe that Kṛṣṇa proved himself to have had perfect control over himself during his association with the gopīs. Śrīdhara also emphasizes this point that the extraordinary control over animal instinct indicates the triumph of Kṛṣṇa over sex. This self-mortification finds a parallel in the spiritual method of the Tāntrikas who have the tradition of undergoing this most difficult process of conquering the sex in face of the most tempting situation. It is also possible to imagine in this context that the behaviour of Kṛṣṇa towards the gopīs may be looked upon from the standpoint of the Tāntrikas. The difference between the cult of the Tāntrikas and that advocated by the Vaiṣṇavas lies however in the fact that the Bhāgavata allowed its actual practice only in the case of Kṛṣṇa who is believed to be the perfect manifestation of Bhagavān. But the Bhāgavata has categorically prohibited its practice by ordinary mortals: “By no means should a person practise such religion, who is not a master of his senses. If anybody takes to this out of other motive or even out of mistake he is bound to be ruined as one other than the lord Śiva dies of poison. The preaching of the wise is true but their conduct scarcely befits the ordinary mortals. So an intelligent person should practise only what he is advised to.”

If we realise the original position thus stated by the Śrīmad-Bhāgavata any doctrine that preaches the imitation of the conduct of Kṛṣṇa can legitimately be considered to an aberration of the real “Bhāgavata-dharma”.

In view of Kṛṣṇa’s complete mastery over sex the Bhāgavata therefore describes him as “the destroyer of Cupid”.

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81 sa satya-kāmo'nurata'balā-gaṇaḥ siṣevā atmānyavaruddha-saurataḥ... 10.33.25 bc.
82 Vide Śrīdhara on 10.33.25.
83 naitat samācerej jātu manarā'pi hyaniśvarāḥ. vināśyatācarān maudhyād yathā'rudro'bdhi-jain viṣam... 10.33.30-31.
84 sāksān manmatha-manmathaḥ... 10.32.2d.
And this mastery over sex is a permanent feature with him throughout his life. Had sex had any influence upon Kṛṣṇa we might have observed him behaving otherwise at least with his legal wives. But this is what the Bhāgavata has to state about it: “Despite all sorts of gestures and graceful dalliances the wives of Kṛṣṇa could not overpower him. They tried their best but were a complete failure. They were sixteen thousand in number”.

So the explanation that Kṛṣṇa’s restraint in his contact with the cowherd women was a taboo against sex, limited only to others’ wives, is an oversimplification. In fact, his lordship over sex was a part of his innate nature and not a mere taboo against some specific members of the opposite sex.

As Kṛṣṇa could not be involved in ordinary behaviour so Parīkṣit also wondered as to the purpose for which Kṛṣṇa took to such activities. Had Parīkṣit taken the behaviour of Kṛṣṇa at its face value he would not have troubled himself to hunt for a reason for this behaviour on the part of Kṛṣṇa.

In fact, one should be surprised to observe that in actual dalliances with the cowherd women Kṛṣṇa is described to be a neutral participator. He was just submitting himself to the wishes of the gopīs, never to grow impatient and never taking initiative in any of these activities. The whole show was in fact a fulfilment of his promise to play with the cowherd women. It was anendeavour to please them but he himself had no axe to grind.

It was in consonance with this mastery over sex that he disappeared from the midst of cowherd women when he noticed that they have grown proud of his company. Certainly the infusion of holy humility into the parters forms no part of ordinary sexual behaviour.

A closer scrutiny of the opening verse of “rāsa-līlā” will

\[\text{caruabja-kośa-vadanā'}yata-bāhu-netra-sa-prema-hāia-rasa-vikṣita-valgu-jalpāiḥ,} \\
\text{sammohitā bhagavato na mano viśeuthu} \\
\text{svair vibhraqi sam-alakan vanīta vibhūmnaḥ...} \\
\text{patnyas tu śodala-sahasram anāṅga-būnir} \\
\text{yasvendriyam vimathitum karṣair na lekuḥ... } 10.61.3, 4ab. \\
\text{tatra’rhatā govindo rāsa-krīḍām anu-vrataiḥ... } 10.33.2a. \\
\text{ātmā’rāmo’pyariramat } 10.29.42d. \\
\text{tāśm tat saubhaga-madam vikṣya mānaṁ ca keśavaḥ.} \\
\text{praśamāya prasūdāya tatrāvāntar-adhiyata... } 10.29.48.
throw more light on the nature of activities undertaken by Kṛṣṇa in the company of the cowherd women. The opening verse reads thus:

bhagavān api tā rātriḥ śradotphulla-mallikāḥ  
vikśya rantum manaś cakre yogamāyāṁ upāśritaḥ...

"Having noticed the arrival of those promised nights of the autumn, perfumed by different sweet-smelling flowers, Bhagavān intended to play with the cowherd women with the aid of Yoga-māyā". Before the dalliances commence the Bhāgavata thus charges the atmosphere with Yoga-māyā, the principle of Divine Sports. Further, Kṛṣṇa is described here in terms of Bhagavān. So Bhagavān, the third grade of Reality, undertook to commence these Sports with the aid of Yoga-māyā when he observed that the time was ripe for such plays. Though being Bhagavān he was perpetually settled in self-satiety yet he intended to satisfy the desire of the cowherd women who had been wistly longing for his company for a long time. This is indicated by “api” (although) in the verse under consideration. Further, as Yoga-māyā is the principle of Divine Sports unveiled in unmitigated spirituality, such activity on the part of Bhagavān transcends all criticism which is confined to the empirical world of ordinary mortals labouring under the influence of Māyā, the principle of bondage.

The consideration of the connotation of the word “rāsa” is also relevant in this context. It is the ordinary principle of interpretation that the primary meaning of a word should be ascertained, if possible, by its usage in another context in the same work. Fortunately the word “rāsa” has actually been used in another verse:

yat-sevayā bhagavataḥ kūṭasthasya madhu-duṣiṣaḥ  
rati-rāso bhavet āviro pādayor vyasanā’rdanah...

"By resorting to such ethical things the ovation of devotion to the feet of Kṛṣṇa flourishes". Śrīdhara interprets the word

* 10.29.1.
* 3.7.19.
“rāsa” in this context to mean “ovation”. And, unless repugnant to the context, the same meaning should be applicable to the occasion of “rāsa-līlā”. In other words, “rāsa-līlā” is a divine fiesta brought into existence by the sweet will of the Absolute.

One may apparently object to the word “rantum” used in the opening verse under consideration. The word is associated with sex. It literally means “in order to satisfy sex”. But, if we apply the same principle of interpretation as has been suggested in the case of “rāsa”, we come upon the conclusion that the word “rantum” also does not imply sex but mere play. The Bhāgavata describes the sports of Kṛṣṇa in the company of his boy friends in the following vein:—

\[\begin{align*}
\text{tan mañju-ghosāli-mrga-dvija\text{'}kulari} \\
\text{mahan-manaḥ-prakhya-payah sarasvatā} \\
\text{vātena juṣṭam śata-patra-gandhinā} \\
\text{niṛikṣya rantum bhagavān mano dadhe}\text{?}
\end{align*}\]

“Having noticed the forest resonant with humming bees and chirping birds and the wind laden with the fragrance of lotuses, Bhagavān desired to play”. It is significant to note that the same word “rantum” has been used in this context as well. Now, the context unmistakably makes it clear that the word “rantum” cannot have any other connotation than sheer play. Why should it be considered to have a separate connotation when used in the context of “rāsa-līlā”? Moreover, the diction here closely corresponds to that of “rāsa-līlā”. For example the verse reads:

‘niṛikṣya rantum bhagavān mano dadhe’.
And in “rāsa” it reads:

\[\begin{align*}
\text{bhagavān api ...........} \\
\text{vīkṣya rantum manaś cākre.}
\end{align*}\]

This close parallelism of diction suggests close correspondence of thoughts. And if in one case the sentence describes mere

\[\text{91 10.15.3.}\]
sport there is no reason why in the other it should mean something else.

It is also interesting to observe the same way of concluding the description. Thus Kṛṣṇa’s sports have been concluded in the following vein:—

\[
\text{evām nigūḍhātmatiḥ svā-māyayā
gopātmajavanī caritair viḍambayan.}
reme ramā-lālita-pāda-pallavo
grāmyaiḥ samāṁ grāmyavad īśa-cesṭitāḥ}
\]

“In this way the Absolute played with the rural boys like an ordinary mortal, by concealing his majesty”.

The sports of the gopīs conclude also in a similar manner:—

\[
evām pariśvāṅga-varābhimarśa-
\text{snigdheśkṇoddāma-vilāśa-hāsaiḥ}
reme rameśo vraja-sundarībhīḥ
yathā’rbhakaḥ svā-pratibimba-vibhramaḥ
\]

“In this way the Absolute played with the cowherd women as a child plays with his shadows”. Here the word “reme” deserves also some consideration. In another context the Bhāgavata describes that he was pleased by pleasing others (ramayan reme). All this brings home the fact that Kṛṣṇa indulged in mere sports with the cowherd women just to satisfy their heart’s desire in an atmosphere of spirituality away from the conventional pattern of unwarranted love.

Now that Kṛṣṇa has been exonerated from the allegation of immorality, it remains to see the position of the cowherd women, the other party to the alleged crime. It would do no harm to recognise at the very outset that the women were attracted to Kṛṣṇa out of their animal instinct which finally sublimated into a divine sentiment. Though the centre of

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51 10.15.19.
52 10.33.16.
53 3.3.21.
attraction was Kṛṣṇa’s beauty yet the association of Kṛṣṇa who was the perfect manifestation of Bhagavān, the third grade of Reality, crystallized their basic instinct into selfless love. This is a glorious instance as to the ennobling nature of association with the good (sat-saṁga).

That the cowherd women are actuated by sex at the first instance is borne out by the Bhāgavata which describes about a few unlucky women who were restrained from meeting Kṛṣṇa when he had sent a call through his lute. The Bhāgavata states: “Though they had forged an association with Kṛṣṇa, knowing him to be an excellent lover (jāra) yet they left their material bodies with the immediate destruction of their bondage”.

This of course evokes the query of Paṁśu: “The cowherd women knew him merely as a lovable young man (kānta). But they never realised him to be the manifestation of Reality (Brahman). How could such women who are thus steeped in materiality escape the shackles of guṇa-reals?” Certainly the question and the ground which gave rise to this suggest that the cowherd women began with sex.

The answer of Śuka to the question of Paṁśu bears this out more clearly. Śuka declares: Sex, anger, fear, affection, blood relationship or friendship—in fact any feeling directed incessantly to Hari—brings about concentration on Him”. The Bhāgavata has cited stock examples to substantiate this statement in another context. “Persons have ultimately merged into Kṛṣṇa by sex like the gopīs, by anger like Śiśupāla etc., by fear like Kaṁsa, by affection like Yudhiṣṭhīra etc., by blood relationship like the Vīṣṇis (in whose family Kṛṣṇa had descended) or by natural devotion like Nārada etc.”

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datiś bhayaṁ ca bhujā-daṇḍa-yugaṁ vilokya
vapiṁ śriyāka-ramaṇaṁ ca bhavāma dāryaḥ...

97 tam eva paramātmānāṁ jāra-buddhiyāṁ saṁgatāḥ.
jahur guṇa-mayaṁ dehaṁ sadyaṁ prakṛśṇa-bandhanāḥ...

98 kṛṣṇaṁ viduḥ paramaṁ kāntaṁ na tu brahma tayaṁ mune.
guṇa-pravāhoparamas tāsāṁ guṇa-dhiyāṁ katham...

99 kāmaṁ krodhaṁ bhayaṁ sneham aikyaṁ sauhydham eva ca.
nityaṁ harau vidadhato yānti tanmayatāṁ hi te...

100 gopyaṁ kāmad bhayaṁ kāmo duśūc caidyāṁ dayo ṇṛpāḥ.
sambandhād uṣṇayah snehād yūyaṁ bhaktyā vayaṁ vibho...

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10.29.39.
10.29.11.
10.29.12.
10.29.15.
7.1.30.
of the Bhāgavata makes it abundantly clear that the gopīs had approached Kṛṣṇa with sex.

In fact, the Bhāgavata lays emphasis on the concentration on the Divine and it therefore entertains any feeling which eventually leads to this goal. The Bhāgavata explains the whole psychology in the following way: As a type of insect which gets into the clutches of the wasp (peśaskṛt) eventually transforms itself into a wasp by intense contemplation of its enemy so the intense contemplation of Hari transforms the nature of the contemplator. Contemplation purifies the mind. A purified mind is possessed by Hari. This possession (āveṣa) secures final beatitude.\(^{101}\) So the Bhāgavata recommends the centring of the mind on Kṛṣṇa by any means.\(^{102}\)

In the context of concealing the clothes of the gopīs (vastra-haraṇa-tilā) Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa reveals the excellence of erotic feelings placed on him in the following way:—“Erotic feelings of those whose minds are offered to me do not grow into the satisfaction of animal instinct. A fried seed does not grow into a plant.”\(^{103}\) So the conclusion is inevitable that the gopīs started with sex. Still they have no reason to be ashamed of; for, this love was placed on the Absolute.

In fact the difference between the animal instinct and divine love is not of kind but of degree. This is borne out both by the Viṣṇu-Purāṇa and the Bhāgavata. The Viṣṇu-Purāṇa records the prayer of Prahlāda, one of the finest devotees, in the following strain:—“Let that unabated love which an ordinary mortal feels for material objects never leave my contemplating mind.”\(^{104}\) In other words, the love for a material object and love for God are one in substance. The difference lies in the content of love, which, in one case, is the evanescent

\(^{101}\) kiṣaṭ peśaskṛtā ruddhaḥ kuḍāyānāṃ tam anusmaran. sanāmabhya-yogena vindate tat-svarūpataḥ. evam kṛṣṇa bhagavati māyā-manuja itvare. vairṛṣa pūta-pāmpanas tam āpur anu-cintayā. kāmād āveśād bhayāt snehāt yathā bhakṣyeśvare manah. āveṣāya tad aghām hitvā bahavas tad-gatim gatāḥ. \(7.1.27-29.\)

\(^{102}\) katamo'pi na veṣṇā syat pāncānāṃ puruṣaṃ prati. tasmāt kenāpyupāyena manah kṛṣṇe nīveśayet. \(7.1.31.\)

\(^{103}\) na mayānāśīta-dhīyām kāmāḥ kāmāya kalpat. bharjjitā kvatiḥāḥ dhānāḥ śrayo bijaya nesaye. \(10.22.26.\)

\(^{104}\) yā prītir a-vivekānāṁ viṣayesvarapāyinā. tvām anu-smarataḥ sā me hṛdayān na'pasarpatu. \(VP ~1.20.29.\)
object, and God in the other. The Bhāgavata voices the same note when it says "Attachments act as thieves, the house acts as the prison cell, and delusion serves as fetters until one is initiated to the divine presence of Kṛṣṇa".103

So it may be concluded on the basis of the Bhāgavata that the Bhāgavata does not look down upon our animal instinct as something loathsome. To the Bhāgavata an instinct is neutral —neither good nor bad. It becomes so according to the use we put it to. Attributed to God it puts forth the highest result whereas exercised for the sake of material satisfaction it revets the chain of bondage. Of the feelings, again, the Bhāgavata considers love to be the best. And, in view of the instinct of sex being the most primordial in man, emphasis on sex discloses a deep insight on the part of the Bhāgavata into the constitution of human mind.

It should now be interesting to trace the evolution of divine sentiment in the cowherd women. The following is an attempt to show the stages through which the sex of them was rarified into divine love:—

The lute of Kṛṣṇa played a vital part in establishing the relationship of the gopis with Kṛṣṇa, which eventually culminated in the most profound unity between the cowherd women on the one hand and Kṛṣṇa on the other. And, if we remember the metaphysical principle for which the lute of Kṛṣṇa stands it becomes understandable why the lute played such a vital role in bringing about such unification. The lute stands for the attractive power of Kṛṣṇa, as suggested before. It is a part of his Divine Sport that he unfolds himself into diversity involving the plurality of individual souls. But it is a part of the same Sport that he calls the souls back to his own self. From time immemorial the entire creation has been saturated with the resonance of divine music. It is said that the lute calls by the name of Śrī-Rādhā. In fact, the lute can have no other name to call for. The concept of Śrī-Rādhā stands for the individual souls. This is brought about by the fact that the Bhāgavata does nowhere explicitly mention the name of Śrī-

103 tāvad rāgā'dayas stenās tāvat kārā-grham grhaṁ. tāvan mohō'nghri-nigādo yāvat kṛṣṇa na te janāḥ... 10.14.36.
Rādhā. The only verse that has been construed to imply Śrī-Rādhā is:—

anayā’rādhitā nūnāṁ bhagavān harir īśvaraḥ
yan no vihāya govindaḥ pṛito yām anayad rahaḥ. ¹⁰⁵

“She indeed has worshipped Krṣṇa. For, leaving us all Govinda being pleased with her has allowed her to enjoy his company in solitude”. The Bhāgavata has mentioned her as just a cowherd girl (gopī). The Vaiṣṇava Schools have tried to explain the phrase “anayā’rādhitāḥ” to mean “Krṣṇa is endowed with Rādhā in the shape of this gopī.” But in view of the vow which the gopīs had undertaken to please Kātyāyanī for the sake of obtaining Krṣṇa as their husband, the literal meaning of this phrase seems to be—“She indeed has worshipped Krṣṇa”. In fact “Rādhā” literally means a worshipper and one might therefore imagine that a worshipper became Śrī-Rādhā by the quality of her worship. A worshipper is usually conceived in terms of feminine because Krṣṇa is the husband (īśvara) of all. Now, as one worshipper was given the status of Śrī-Rādhā at the hand of the Vaiṣṇava Schools, it may be presumed that the status of Śrī-Rādhā is obtainable by other worshippers as well. In other words, all the individual souls are potentially Rādhā. They are worshippers (ā-rādhikā) as long as they do not attain the full stature of Rādhā-hood. Their success in worship makes them Rādhikā. So the lute of Krṣṇa cannot but call by the name of Rādhā only.

The lute has been sending its standing message to the individual souls—the clarion call to be re-united with the perpetual bliss of the Absolute. Though the call is for all the souls yet only a few can lend their ears to it. It requires a refined and trained ear to listen to that call. It is now necessary to feature the broad outlines of the Bhāgavata-dharma exemplified through the life of the cowherd women. The Bhāgavata-dharma falls into three well-marked hierarchical stages:—(1) The surrender of action unto God (2) the ninefold devotion viz., listening, chanting, remembrance, service, worship, prayer, servitude, friendship and self-surrender and (3) divine love. The Bhāgavata has suggested an alternative to the first stage, the
surrender of action unto God. And that alternative is association with the good (sat-saṁga)\textsuperscript{107} In the case of the cowherd women it was the association with Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa, the third grade of Reality. So they earned an exemption from practising the first stage of the Bhāgavata-dharma. In other words, the gopīs begin with listening, the first stratum of the second stage.

So the lute begins its business. It implants sex in the mind of the gopīs; it develops that to a point when the desire to have Kṛṣṇa is kindled into an impetuous love. It is the lute which leads this love to a calm and selfless divine sentiment and subsequently unites Kṛṣṇa and the gopīs in an indissoluble tie. The role of the lute is then fully realised by the gopīs as is evident from the eulogy by the gopīs about the lute after they were blessed with the embrace of Kṛṣṇa at “rāsa-līlā”.\textsuperscript{108} The activity of the lute further suggests that the best way of obtaining his union is submitting oneself to the divine will. The Absolute takes the initiative because of its inherent urge to realise its own nature—its native ecstasy. So the credit of the cowherd women to possess the rare love was in fact the credit of Kṛṣṇa who took the initiative and who always does the same.

So, Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa played on his lute. “In the midst of other cowherd boys he drove the cattle to the forest with a mind to play and engrossed in playing upon the lute”\textsuperscript{109} When he would return home in the evening twilight he would always be playing upon his lute. He looked wonderful in wild flowers stuck to the peacock feather held fast by the lump of his hair turned ruddy with the dust of the cattle. His cowherd friends were singing in his praise. And the cowherd girls assembled in groups with a desire to see him”\textsuperscript{110}

\textsuperscript{107} satāṁ prasāṅgāṁ mama viṁña-saṁvido bravaṁti hṛt-karṇa-raśāyaṁkā kathāḥ. taj-joṣaṁ adhāpaṇa-dvāraṁ-vartmaṁ śraddhā ratir bhaktir anu-kramisyati... 3.25.25.

\textsuperscript{108} 10.55.

\textsuperscript{109} tan mādha vo venum uḍārayan urto gopair gṛṇādhīś svay-aśo balāñvitaḥ. paśuḥ puraskṛtya paśavayam āvīl dad viharukāmaṁ kusumā-karamaṁ vanam... 10.15.2.

\textsuperscript{110} tam go-raja-ccurita-kuntala-baddha-barhava-vaya-prasūna-rucirekṣaṇa-cāru-hāsam. venum kvaṃ kāntam an-gair anu-gita-kirtiṁ gopyo didṛkṣita-drśo-bhyagaman sametāḥ... 10.15.42.
So day in and day out the cowherd girls listened to the lute of Kṛṣṇa. And it was no wonder that their instinct of love, so long unconsciously brewing in their minds, gradually took a tangible shape as a desire to see him. But Kṛṣṇa continued his game. He continued to graze the cattle in the company of the cowherd boys and his lute was always active. At the sound of the lute which eventually pronounced their instinct of love (smarodayam) they felt the urge of discussing Kṛṣṇa in his absence.\textsuperscript{111}

It may be noticed from the above description how the instinct of love was slowly but steadily undergoing evolution. Originally it was unconscious. But being constantly tempered by the sound of the lute the instinct was developed enough to be at the threshold of consciousness and began to be felt as a desire to see Kṛṣṇa. Its presence was unmistakably felt when it was strong enough to create an emotional tension in their minds, asking for release. This was done in the shape of the chanting of his activities among the cowherd girls. Seen from the standpoint of spiritual advancement the development of love has been brought by listening to Kṛṣṇa's lute and by mutual discussion about Kṛṣṇa—the first two strata of the ninefold devotion referred to above as the second stage of the Bhāgavata-dhāma. But still such love was growing in concealment. That is why the cowherd girls in their shyness described Kṛṣṇa when he was gone. They were plunged in pleasure in doing so.\textsuperscript{112}

The constant chanting of Kṛṣṇa led the cowherd girls to remembrance which culminates in undisturbed concentration. Thus the Bhāgavata describes that by constant description of Kṛṣṇa the dwellers of Vṛndāvana became absorbed in him.\textsuperscript{113}

Next comes the vow of Kātyāyanī. At this stage their love

\textsuperscript{111} kusumita-vana-rājī-suṣmi-bhṛṅga-
dvija-kula-ghuṣta-sarāh-sarin-mahidhram.
madhupatir avagāhya cārayaṁ gāh
sa-paśu-pāla-balas cukīja vepum... 10.21.2.
tad vraja-sriya āśrutya veṇu-gītām smarodayam.
kāśīt parokṣam kṛṣṇaya svā-sakhīḥbhīyo naavarṇayan... 10.21.3.

\textsuperscript{112} iti veṇu-ravaḥ rājan sarva-bhūta-mano-haram.
śrutā vṛaja-sriyaṁ sarvā varṇayanto'bhirebhire... 10.21.6.

\textsuperscript{113} evaṁ-viḍhā bhagavato yā vṛṇḍāvana-cāriṇāṁ,
varṇayanto mitho goṛāḥ kṛṣṇās tanmayatām yasyaḥ... 10.21.20.
for Kṛṣṇa took the definite shape of asking Kātyāyanī to offer Kṛṣṇa as their husband.114 And this desire was fulfilled as the Bhāgavata in the context of “rāśā-līlā” addressed the cowherd women as the “wives of Kṛṣṇa” (kṛṣṇa-vadhvaḥ). Yet from the conventional point of view they were married to other persons. This is evident from the fact that when at the clarion call of Kṛṣṇa the cowherd women had left the bed-sides of their respective husbands, they still felt, under the illusion of Kṛṣṇa, as if their respective wives were with them and thus they did not grudge Kṛṣṇa for taking away their wives.115

But if the cowherd women were married to other persons how could they be regarded as the wives of Kṛṣṇa? Certainly therefore the connection of Kṛṣṇa with the cowherd girls was other than conventional. This is brought out in another context in the Bhāgavata. When at the sound of his lute the cowherd women had assembled round Kṛṣṇa, he dissuaded them from coming to him, with a view to ascertaining the quality of their love. Surely this is not a conventional behaviour as one might expect in ordinary love. Subsequently Kṛṣṇa agreed to play with them when they refused to return. At this the cowherd women felt elated. But self-elation, however noble may be the cause of it, is incompatible with the presence of the Absolute and therefore Kṛṣṇa disappeared at once.116 A love which requires complete self-effacement cannot be included in the conventional category. Moreover, the cowherd girls did not attain the stage of puberty when they craved for Kṛṣṇa as their husband.117 So, the Bhāgavata calls them little girls (kumā-rikāḥ).118 How can such girls be motivated by the desire which finds its fulfilment in marriage in its ordinary sense? Hence the prayer of the cowherd girls to win Kṛṣṇa as their husband was not inspired by the animal instinct of sex but by innate love

114 kātyāyanī mahā-māye mahā-yoginyadhiśvarī. nanda-gopā-sutaṁ devi paśiṁ me kuru te namaḥ... 10.22.4.
115 nā’sūyān khalu kṛṣṇāya mohitās tasya māyaśa. manyamāñāḥ svā-pārśva-sthān svān svān dārān vṛṣa-vakṣaḥ... 10.33.37.
116 evāṁ bhagavatāḥ kṛṣṇāl labha-mānā mahātmanāḥ. ātmānam menire striṁāṁ māninyodbhadyakāṁ bhavi... tāsāṁ tat saubhaga-madāṁ vikṣya mānaṁ ca keśavāḥ. prālamāya prasādāya tattraivaṁtarti-adhiyāta... 10.29.47-48.
117 bhagavān ā-hatā vikṣya suddha-bhāva-prasāditāḥ. 10.22.18.
118 nanda-vraja-kumarikāḥ 10.22.1b.
steadily undergoing crystallization. Such love culminated in having Kṛṣṇa as their husband—a husband available by pure love. In other words, Kṛṣṇa was the spiritual husband of the cowherd women though they were conventionally married to other persons.

The desire to see Kṛṣṇa, further pronounced as a desire to win him as their husband, came to its head at the sport of stealing away the clothes of the cowherd girls when they had descended into the Yamunā for a bath. The Bhāgavata describes how the Lord stripped the cowherd girls of all their restraints and traditional limitations: “The girls were befooled. Social taboos left them. They were subjected to ridicule. In fact, they were treated as puppets. Their clothes were stolen. Yet they did not grudge him for they were immersed in happiness in his company”. So long Kṛṣṇa was instigating their love only indirectly by playing upon his lute. But now noticing appreciable growth of their attachment he comes into the open to exhibit his initiative in riveting the tie of love. The gopīs are now infatuated to the point of courting his servitude: “Please return our clothes, Oh lovable one, we shall do your bidding.”

Though submission to do Kṛṣṇa’s bidding was associated here with a threat to lodge a complaint to the king in case he refused to return their clothes, yet Kṛṣṇa was satisfied to see their pure feeling (suddha-bhāva). He therefore placed their clothes on his shoulders and addressed them with a smile. One is reminded of a similar situation in the Bhagavad-gītā where the Lord declares that he carries the burden of the devotee who chooses to depend on him. It is in consonance with this situation that Kṛṣṇa addressed the cowherd girls in the following terms:—“Oh girls, You have done your part of the job.

119 drāhāṁ pralabdhaṁ trapayaṁ ca hāpitāḥ prastobhitāḥ kriśaṁ avac ca kāritāḥ. vastraṁ caiva pāṅkhiṁ yatam evam tu na bhūyāyaṁ priya-saṅga-mārtaṁ... 10.22.22.

121 iyāmaṁ-sundaraṁ te dāsyā karavāma tavādātā. dehi vāsāṁsi dharma-jīna no ced rājñe brvāmakena... 10.22.15.

122 bhagavān ā-haṁ vikṣya suddha-bhāva-prasāditaṁ. skandhe nīthāya vāśāṁsi prītaṁ pravāca sa-smītaṁ... 10.22.18.

123 ananyāṁ cintayanto māṁ ye janāḥ paryupāsate. teṣāṁ nityāṁ-bhijuktānāṁ yoga-kṛṣeṁaṁ vahāvyaham... Gītā 9.22.
Do return now to your respective homes. I shall fulfil your heart’s desire to enjoy my company, in due course”.

Thus the love for Kṛṣṇa was initially an unconscious instinct. It then grew into a desire to see him. Thereafter it developed into the desire to win him as their husband and subsequently it crystallized into a pure feeling, untrammeled by ordinary considerations. In fact it was a feeling of humble submission to divine will. This stage is arrived at by a desire to servitude, the seventh stratum of the ninefold devotion. But actual servitude, friendship and self-surrender, the last three strata of ninefold devotion, are yet to follow.

The vow of Kātyāyanī was performed by the cowherd girls in the first month of the dewy season and it continued for a month. Within a few days hence, Kṛṣṇa had the occasion to conceal their clothes. Thereafter nearly for a year Kṛṣṇa was engaged in various other sports like the lifting of the hill, Govardhana, to save Vṛndāvana from the devastating shower of Indra and so on. During this period we cease to hear anything about the cowherd girls. Did their love terminate in the meantime or was it steadily gaining in strength by perpetual nourishment with the sonorous music of the lute? Several seasons rolled on. The rainy season made its appearance when the rivers were in high spate with muddy volumes of gushing water. This was followed by the autumn when tumultuous fury gave place to solemn and peaceful journey of the mature streams carrying the burden of crystal-clear water. Was the change in the deepening love for Kṛṣṇa similar to what was happening in Nature? Undoubtedly the gopīs were nurturing the burden of love, calm and peaceful, and, at the same time, substantial and crystal; for, when Kṛṣṇa was sure of it he in-

123 yātā’bala vrajāṁ siddhā mayemā raṁsyathā kṣapāḥ. 10.22.27ab.
124 hemante prathame māṁ naṁ vraja-kumārikāḥ.
125 cerur havisyāṁ bhūjānāṁ kātyāyanyacana-vratam. 10.22.1.
126 evam māsāṁ vratāṁ ceruḥ kumāryāḥ kṛṣṇa-cetasaḥ 10.22.5.
127 uṣasyutthaṁ gotraṁ svair anonyaṁ baddha-bāhavaḥ.
128 kṛṣṇam ucchār jagur yāntyāḥ kālindyaṁ snātum anvaham.
129 nadyāṁ kodacīd āgatyā tīre nīkīṣṇyā pāru-vat.
130 vāśāṁśi kṛṣṇam gānyānto vaisarkuḥ laulīe muddā.
131 bhāgaśvaṁś tad abhipreyat kṛṣṇo yoṣeyavareśvaraḥ.
132 vayasyair āvṛtas tatra gatas tat-karma-siddhaye. 10.22.6-8.
133 10.25.
tended to indulge in playing with them in the moon-lit nights of the autumn.\textsuperscript{128}

As a preparation to "rāsa-līlā" which subsequently followed, Lord Kṛṣṇa, in his usual manner, blew his lute.\textsuperscript{129} At this the cowherd girls did not merely exhibit the advent of love (smarodaya) but the lute inflamed their rigour of love (anāṅga-vardhana) so much so that they became possessed by Kṛṣṇa (kṛṣṇa-grhīta-mānasāḥ).\textsuperscript{130} The intensity of their love may be evinced from the fact that they left their hearth and home and ran wildly to meet Kṛṣṇa. They met him at the bank of the Yumunā, regardless of all dissuasions by their husbands and brothers.\textsuperscript{131}

This last statement has posited a problem. In another context the Bhāgavata has stated that though their wives had left yet the respective husbands of the cowherd women did not grudge Kṛṣṇa for they falsely thought their wives to be present at their bed-sides. The Bhāgavata has also described the pitiable state of some unfortunate women whose respective husbands kept them confined at home by force. They just left their material body and attained Kṛṣṇa by means of deep contemplation.\textsuperscript{132} How to reconcile these mutually contradictory statements? The Bengal School of Vaiṣṇavism opines that there were some women who left their physical forms to meet Kṛṣṇa. There were however others who defied the orders of their husbands and went away to meet Kṛṣṇa. Yet their husbands did not mind because they were duped to consider the shadows of their wives as real ones.\textsuperscript{133}

\textsuperscript{128} 10.29.1.
\textsuperscript{129} dṛṣṭvā kumud-vantam akhaṇḍa-maṇḍalam ramā'nanā'bhām nava-kūnkumā'ruṇam. vanān ca tat komala-gobhir anijitam jagau kalaṁ vāma-arśāḥ mano-haram... 10.29.3.
\textsuperscript{130} niṣamya gitaṁ tad anāṅga-vardhanaṁ vraja-strīyāḥ. kṛṣṇa-grhīta-mānasāḥ. ājagmur anyo'nyam a-lakṣitodyamāḥ sa yatra kāṇto java-lola-kuṇḍalāḥ... 10.29.4.
\textsuperscript{131} tā vāryamāṇāḥ patibhiḥ pīṭbhīr bhrātīr-bandhubhiḥ. govindā'pahita'timāno na nyavartanta mohitāḥ... 10.29.8.
\textsuperscript{132} duḥ-saha-precītha-viraha-tōrā-tāpā-duhūś'ubhāḥ. dhyaṇa-prāpta'cyuta'sleṣa-nirūtyā kiṣṇa-manigalāḥ... tam eva paramātmānam jāra-buddhya'pi sānātāḥ. jahur guṇa-mayaṁ deham sadyaḥ pra-kiṣṇa-bandhāḥ... 10.29.10-11.
\textsuperscript{133} nāśūyan khalu kiṣṇāya mohitās tasya māyāya. manyamāṇāḥ sua-parśva-sthān svāṁ svāṁ dārāṁ vrajaukasaḥ... 10.33.37.
At the stealing of the clothes the cowherd girls were shorn of customary taboos. But now they have relinquished all they had for the sake of Kṛṣṇa. It may be pointed out here that the empirical self consists in two things—"I" at the centre and "Mine" at the circumference. The cowherd women have now attained the stage of relinquishing "Mine". This is evident from the dialogue that follows.

When with a view to ascertaining the quality of their love for him, Kṛṣṇa dissuaded them from staying with him they said:

"True, one should be devoted to one's husband and children. But Bhagavān, the friend and the soul, stands for all of them. People love God because they love their own soul. So please do not disappoint us. Allow us to remain with you".

Recognition of Bhagavān as their dearest is the stratum of friendship in the ninefold devotion. Inflamed by this the cowherd women further confess:—"Our mind so long sunk in household is now robbed by you. Our hands no longer aspire after domestic duties. Our feet do not move an inch from your presence. How can we go and what for?"

So the cowherd women in the fervour of their love implore:—"Be pleased with us. We have resorted to your feet in the hope of serving you. The more we look at you the more it kindles in us attachment for you. Oh best of men, offer us your servitude". This humble prayer for servitude is its actual attainment. Thus the cowherd women are now entitled to possess servitude, another stratum of ninefold devotion.
But though they had dedicated their ‘Mine’ for the sake of Kṛṣṇa yet their “I” was still vigilant. So they pray:—“You have removed the fear of Vṛndāvana people from all sorts of troubles. So now satisfy our heart’s desire”. Kṛṣṇa began to play with them, honouring their fervent request. He indulged in various dalliances. But all the time he had perfect control over himself while he was pleasing the cowherd women. At this, the exuberance of them found expression in the shape of self- elation. And, having observed their egoity the Lord disappeared at once for appeasing that and thus for showering great blessing on them.

The loss of Kṛṣṇa was followed by a frantic search for him. The cowherd girls turned mad and so absorbed they were in Kṛṣṇa that they thought themselves to be Kṛṣṇa himself and imitated his behaviour. Yet all the time they kept on searching. It was not only a search in the physical world but it was a search within as well. In this process they eventually succeeded in breaking through the veil of ignorance, the root cause of all egoity. Thus the cowherd women drowned their ‘I’ and ‘Mine’ by intense concentration on Kṛṣṇa and as a result of it they at last regained their spiritual sublimity.

Now with the dawning of consciousness they realised for the first time that Kṛṣṇa was not a mere child of Yaśodā, that he was in fact the innermost core of all being, the seer, that he had descended on the earth in response to the prayer of the
creator (Brahmā) to save the earth from sacrilege. But this consciousness consolidated their attachment for Kṛṣṇa. They now began to feel that they can no longer bear the separation from Kṛṣṇa; that a moment’s absence appeared to them to be the separation for ages. They felt in fact that the creator who made their eye-lashes obstructing the vision of Kṛṣṇa was but a dullard.

It was at this state of mind that they mourned over the hard truth how afflicted Kṛṣṇa must have been now that they are away from him. He must have been wandering in wilderness bestrewn with the beds of thorns and other sharp things. And his feet must have undergone the strain of being affected by these. What a misfortune that the cowherd women cannot find him and render any help in this distress of Kṛṣṇa! But was it not a fact that the cowherd women were also subjected to the distress akin to what they have been contemplating of Kṛṣṇa? But they have disregarded all about it in the thoughts of Kṛṣṇa. This was indeed a definite turning point in their life. So far they pursued Kṛṣṇa because of selfish motive. But now their attachment was crystallized to a stage when selfishness is transcended by selflessness. This is in fact the line of demarcation between human love and love divine. While human love is motivated by personal interest love divine finds its culmination in taking delight in surrendering one’s own for the sake of the beloved.

When thus the surrender of both ‘I’ and ‘Mine’, the last and the ninth stratum of ninefold devotion, was complete, appeared Kṛṣṇa in his usual dress and with a smile on his face.

142 na khalu gopikā-nandano bhavān
akhila-dehinām antar-ātma-dṛṣṭ.
vikhanasaṁrthito vīśva-guṇtaye
sakha udeyivān sātvatāṁ kule... 10.31.4.

143 aśāti yad bhavān ahī kānanam
truṣṭir yugāyate tvām a-phaṣyatām.
kujila-kuntalāṁ śrī-mukhaṁ ca te
jaḍa udikṣatāṁ paṇḍām-kṛṣṇa-dṛṣṭāṁ... 10.31.15.

144 yat te sujāta-caraṇāṁbu-rūpaṁ staneśu
bhūtāṁ sanaṁ priya dadhimahi karkeśu,
tenaṁ aṣṭiṁ aṣṭiṁ tad vyathate na kīṁ svit
kūrpaṇīdhii bhramati dhir bhavād-aṣṭasāṁ naḥ... 10.31.19.

145 tāsāṁ āvīr-ahūc cauriḥ smayamāna-mukhaṁ-bujaḥ.
pitā-mbara-dharaḥ sragvi sāksāṁ manmatha-manmathaḥ... 10.32.2.
From here begins the third stage of the Bhāgavata-dharma. The cowherd women now attained the stage of identity of themselves with Brahman for all their afflictions were gone. The finer shades of love now began to manifest themselves. For example, the cowherd women were piquant in view of the persistent callousness on the part of Kṛṣṇa all this time. But Kṛṣṇa pleaded that he pretended to be callous in order to enhance their hankerings after him. He now gave in unambiguous terms due recognition of their most profound love for him: “If I strive to offer something in exchange for this priceless love, I swear that I just cannot do it. Your selfless love in abnegation of the shackles of worldly interests knows no parallel. So let this love yours be its own exchange”. In other words, the Lord promised to love them with the same rigour and profundity which they have brought to bear upon their love for him.

While thus the cowherd women became the owners of the priceless treasure of selfless love, Kṛṣṇa thought it fit to initiate them to the mysteries of his eternally blissful nature. He now created a realm of bliss that transcends the limitations of worldly existence. The Bhāgavata exhausts the imageries from the literary description of the autumn—and it openly confesses to do so—to give expression to the enjoyment of bliss in which the cowherd women now participated. In terms of literary criticism, such union of Kṛṣṇa with the cowherd women represented the perfect revelation of the sentiment of love (prema-rasa), in which the nucleus (ālambana) was Kṛṣṇa, the exciting conditions (uddīpana) were the full moon, the fragrance of flowers etc., the expressive conditions (anubhāva) were the different

146 tibhir vidhūta-lokābhir bhagavān acyuto ēryaḥ. vyarocatādhikaṁ tata puruṣaḥ saktibhir yathā... 10.32.10
147 bhajato’nu bhajantyeke eka etad-viparyayam. nobhayāṁi ca bhajantye ka etāṁ no brūhi sādhu bhoh... 10.32.16.
148 na pāraye’ham nir-avadya-sāmyujāṁ sva-sādhu-ktvam nibudhā’yuṣa-pari vah. yā mā ‘hajan dur-jara-geha-śrīnkalāḥ sāmyujāya tad vah praiṣayatu sādhunā... 10.32.22
149 evam śalāṅkā’niṣu-virājita nīśāḥ. sa satya-kāmo’nurā’balā-gaṇaḥ. sīṣeṣa ātmya-varuddha-saurataḥ sarvāḥ sarat-kāya-kathā rasāirayāḥ... 10.33.25
gestures of cowherd girls and the fluctuating conditions (sañcāri-bhāva) were pique, sorrow etc. on the part of the gopīs.

In this revelation of Kṛṣṇa’s nature as all-bliss, popularly described as “rāsa-līlā”, each of the cowherd women embraced bliss in its perfection. This is why the Bhāgavata describes Kṛṣṇa to take as many forms as there were cowherd women to meet him. And their ecstasy is described in terms of a dance. They danced in a circle. Now, circle has no starting point and no end. In other words, the cowherd women entered into the realm of bliss which knows no beginning and end—eternal bliss perpetually renewing itself.150 As indicated before, the Bhāgavata had to take refuge in literary imageries to delineate this enjoyment of ecstasy because enjoyment of ecstasy per se is beyond all description. So the Bhāgavata had to condescend to popular imageries in terms of which ordinary people can at best conjure them up in their minds in their own ways. Seen in this light, as suggested so far, the allegation is likely to vanish.

The Bhāgavata conception of Kṛṣṇa is thus intensely human yet perfectly divine. Such a conception has every claim on our feelings. If those feelings become geared to Kṛṣṇa they provide for the highest good of mankind. It was this intensely human yet divine nature which puzzled Kunti. When Yoṣodā wanted to bind him with a rope in order to curb his boisterousness, the boy Kṛṣṇa was all in tears and his eyes suggested fear. This state was a riddle for Kunti when she considered the fact that Kṛṣṇa was himself the fear of all fears.151 The concept of Kṛṣṇa is a synthesis of the immanent and the transcendent, of religion and metaphysics.

150 rāsotsavaḥ saṁpravrtto gopī-maṇḍala-maṇḍitaḥ. 10.33.3a
kṛtvā tāvantam ātmānam yāvatīr gopā-yoṣitaḥ.
reme sa bhagavāṁs tābhir ātmārāmo’pi līlayā. 10.33.19.

151 gopādade tvayi kṛtāgasi dāma tāvad
yā te daśā’stu-kalilā’jana-sambhramā’kṣam.
vaktraṁ niniya bhaya-bhāvanayā sthitasya
sā māṁ vimohayati bhīr api yad bhīheti. 1.8.31
CHAPTER VI

THE STRUCTURE OF THE SECOND GRADE

PARAMĀTMAN (VIŚNU)

Paramātman or Lord Viṣṇu is a creation of pure Indian mythology.¹ Monistic trend, conspicuously noticeable in Indian thought from its earliest record, the Rg-Veda, found tangible expression in the concept of Viṣṇu. In the Puruṣa-Sūkta, the Puruṣa-Viṣṇu is said to have covered the entire earth and yet his all-pervasive nature was too broad to be exhausted therein.² In the Vājasaneyi-Samhitā, Viṣṇu is stated to have pervaded the world with his three strides and yet his fourth stride reached out into the world beyond, that ordinary eyes cannot penetrate.³ The aspect of all-pervasiveness which thus obtained the sanction of unbroken tradition naturally led the Viṣṇu-Purāṇa to suggest the following derivation of the term “Viṣṇu” : “It is derived from the root ‘viś’ (to enter) and Lord Viṣṇu is so called because with his native power he has entered and pervaded the entire universe”.⁴ Viṣṇu, then, stood for the all-pervasive Reality, the original Puruṣa (ādi-puruṣa)—the vital principle of life (Paramātman) that has animated material mass (pura).

As the all-embracing principle of animation, Viṣṇu legitimately occupied his rightful place in Nature organised by speculative thinking into man and his environment. In man, Viṣṇu was revealed in mind in the depth of meditation (maniṣā)⁵ and in the physical universe Viṣṇu’s all-embracing nature

¹ Vedic Mythology, p. 20.
² sa bhūmin viśvato vṛtvātyatiṣṭhad daśāṅgulam RV 10.90.1.
³ idam viṣṇur vicakrame tredhā nidhadhe padam samudhham asya pāṃśure svāhā VS 5.15.
⁴ yasṛcd viṣṭam idam viśvaṁ tasya śaktyaḥ mahātmanaḥ. tasmāt sa pṛcyate viṣṇur vīler dhāloḥ praveṣanāt... VP 3.1.45.
⁵ satō bandhum asati nir-avindan hṛdi pratiṣyaḥ kavayo maniṣā

Nāsadiya-Sūkta RV 10.129.4.
integrated into his own personality the three worlds, along with gods and other sentient beings. The Bhāgavata has developed, into a grand unity, the two different forms of Viṣṇu—one revealed in the heart of man and the other expressed through the universe. Such unity was not the mere juxtaposition of both the forms, but involved a continuous evolution from the material to the transcendental, finding its consummation in the concept of unique consciousness that excludes the possibility of all duality. This means that the delineation of the concept of Viṣṇu falls under three hierarchical stages—the gross, the subtle and the transcendental. In other words, in our quest for Truth, we first direct our attention to the world, then we go beyond it to our own self and, finally, having cast away our material vesture, we enter infinity, the greatest fulfilment of our own self, the Paramātman. From the state of fragmentation marked by darkness and limitations, we thereby achieve the immutable integration characterised by light and perfect freedom from all limitations. This is what the Bhāgavata calls reaching the feet of Vaikuṇṭha-pati.

The cosmic Man whom, in the wake of the Puruṣa-Sūkta, the Bhāgavata calls “Vairāja-Puruṣa”, is the unity of the fourteen worlds. In his cosmic structure the lowest region (pātāla) forms the feet and the highest region (satya-loka) the head. In between the two extremes come the other worlds. If, on the other hand, the more orthodox view is adhered to, the earth is his feet, the heaven his head and the aerial space his naval region. But the cosmic Puruṣa is not exhausted in the gross physical worlds—three or fourteen—but he includes much more. He includes the subtle world consisting of the inner mechanism (antaḥ-karana)—Manas, Buddhī, Ahamkāra and

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6 aṇḍa-koṣe śarireśmin saṅkṣévaraṇa-saṁhyute. vairājaḥ puruṣo yo’sau bhagavān dhāraṇāśrayaḥ... 2.1.25.
7 bhūr-lokaḥ kalpitaḥ padbhyaṁ bhuvah-loko’sya nābhitaḥ. hṛdā svār-loka urasā mahār-loko mahātmānāḥ... grivāyāṁ jana-loko’sya tapo-lokaḥ stana-dvayāt. mūrdhah śatya-lokas tu brahma-lokas sanātanaḥ... tat-katyāṁ cātalaṁ kiptam uruḥbhyaṁ vītalam viho. jānubhyāṁ sutaṁ śuddham jaṅghābhyaṁ tu talatalaṁ... mahātalan tu gulphābhyaṁ prāpodbhyaṁ rasātalaṁ. pātālaṁ pāda-talaṁ iti loka-mayāḥ pumāṁ... bhūr-lokaḥ kalpitaḥ padbhyaṁ bhuvah-loko’sya nābhitaḥ. svār-lokaḥ kalpito mūrdhāṇi iti vā loka-kalpana... 2.5.38-42.
Citra—and their corresponding gods—Candra, Vīrīcīca, Rudra and Dharma. Nay, his all-embracing form further reaches out into the Unmanifest (a-vyakta), the primordial cause of the manifest worlds—gross as well as subtle.

To complete the picture of the cosmic personality, the gods like Indra are said to be his arms, the sun his organ of sight, the god of death his teeth, his illusive power his smile, unending creation his glance, the clouds his dark hair, the twilight his garment. The Brāhmaṇa caste is said to be his mouth, the warrior caste his arms, the merchants his thighs and the Śūdras of dark colour (kṛṣṇa-varna) his feet.

Such conception of the cosmic Puruṣa is obviously an improvement on the concept in the Puruṣa-Sūkta. While the Sūkta is primarily confined to the materialistic representation of Puruṣa and that also to the three worlds-only—the earth, the heaven and the air—the Bhāgavata has not only expanded the three worlds into fourteen but has gone much deeper—into the subtle and then into the primordial cause. In the Puruṣa-Sūkta the only reference to the extra-gross reality is mind (Manas). The Bhāgavata has elaborated this concept into four realities Manas, Buddhī etc. and then traced the original source of all these realities. The personality of Viṣṇu, thus enriched by the incorporation of additional realities, was intended to satisfy the demands for the visualisation of unity behind the bewildering details of physical creation—gross, subtle and causal—by means of ordinary experience, as it was commended to appear

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8 candro manyo yasya dṛg arka ātmā ahaṁ samudro jaṭharaṁ bhujendraḥ...
romāṇi yasyaṁadhayoṁbu-vāhāḥ keśa virīcīca dhīṣaṁ vīśaṁgah...
prajāpātir hṛdayaṁ yasya dharmah
ta vai bhavān puruśo loka-kalpaḥ...
10.63.35cd,36.

9 avyaktam āhur hṛdayam 2.1.34c.

10 indra-dāya bāhava āhur uṣrāḥ
dyaur akiṁci cakṣuṁ abhūt pataṁgaṁ
dramaṁtra yamah sneha-kalā duṣjāni
hāso janaṁmāda-kari ca māyā
duranta-sargo yad-āśita-mokṣaṁ...
iśaya keśāṁ vidur ambu-vāhāṁ
vāsas tru sandhyāṁ kuruvarya bhūmnaṁ.
brahmaṁ-anām kṣatra-bhuṣu maṁmaṁ
vid ūrur anghri-ṛṣita-kṛṣṇa-varṇaṁ...
2.1.29a, 30a, 31bcd, 34ab, 37.

11 etad rūpaṁ bhagavato hṛyāīśvraṁ cīd-ātmanaṁ,
māyā-guṇaṁ virācitaṁ mahād-ādhibhir ātmāṁ...
1.3.30.
in intuitive vision in the depth of man’s mind. Cosmic *Puruṣa* is, then, the first discovery of thought in man’s search for the Universal through the physical existence. The search was crowned with the presence of the cosmic *Puruṣa* both within and without.

*Paramātman*, the first principle of animation, is not static existence but is the vital urge, perpetual dynamism ever renewing itself through all possible ways of self-expansion. That is how Viṣṇu, the being, appears as Viṣṇu, the becoming. A becoming has three successive stages—origin, sustenance and dissolution. The universe, the becoming, originates from, is sustained by and finally dissolves into *Brahman* which is Viṣṇu, the being. When man speculates upon the ultimate reality, the origin and the dissolution of the universe do not so much engage his consideration, because his attention becomes engrossed in the universe as an established reality. Being a part of it, man is instinctively committed to its continuance. In the face of its fleeting nature, man invokes divine intervention to ensure its stability. So, when he divined three gods associated with the origin, sustenance and dissolution of the universe, his emphasis was naturally upon the god of sustenance. Viṣṇu, the universal spirit of the *Ṛg-Veda*, the young lovable god of war who had helped Indra in his martial exploits and who had upheld the moral order (*ṛta*), naturally endeared himself as the god of protection. With increasing emphasis on this protective character, Viṣṇu had undergone complete orientation of his constitution and become the eight-handed Viṣṇu, a magnanimous personality.

Man is prone to finding his own reflection in the objective world. Not only does he imbue matter with spirit but he visions the world in his own shape. The *Bhāgavata* has duly noticed this tendency in man to account for the conception of Truth as his own shadow. Thus, according to the *Bhāgavata*, the universal Man (*Puruṣa*) was conceived by man in his own

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12 "*paśyantyado rūpam adabhra-caksuṣā sahasra-pādoru-bhujānanā′dhutam. sahasra-mūrḍha-travaṇākṣi-nāśikam sahasra-maulyambara-kunḍalollasat" 1.3.4.

13 "yāvān ayaṁ vai puruṣo yāvatyā sansthayā mitah. tāvān asāvapi mahā-puruṣo loka-sansthayā..." 12.11.9.
image. But, as the Bhāgavata is aware, the cosmic Man is a crude materialistic representation of Viṣṇu. With the progress of thought the crude form of Viṣṇu was chiselled into a supple delicate shape and the first result of creative imagination in this direction was Viṣṇu endowed with eight arms. Already in the Puruṣa-Sūkta arms stood for the principle of activity and protection, embodied in the warrior caste; and, the new conception of Viṣṇu with emphasis on his act of protection was naturally moulded in terms of arms.

The protection of Viṣṇu brought in its pale all the eight quarters—east, west, north, south and their four joints of one with the other. The Viṣṇu-dharmottara says that eight directions to which the all-pervasive protection of Viṣṇu was extended are represented by the eight arms of Viṣṇu. Viṣṇu thus stretched out his eight arms into eight directions so that all beings, wherever they might possibly be, could come under his shield of protection. As animism discovered eight gods—Indra (east), Varuṇa (west), Kubera (north), Yama (south), Agni (south-east), Sūrya (south-west), Candra (north-east) and Vāyu (north-west)—each committed to the protection of a specific direction—the Bhāgavata takes these protecting gods (lokapālas) to merge into the essence of Viṣṇu, as his eight arms.

In this new conception of Viṣṇu the original trait of the war god reasserted itself in the shape of eight weapons in the eight arms. They are: the wheel (sudarśana cakra), the conch-shell (pāñcagajanya śāṅkha), the club (kaumodakī gadā), the sword (asi), the bow (śārṅga dhanu), the arrows (iṣu), the plough (hala) and the pestle (muṣala). The plough and the pestle have alternated with the shield (carman) and the noose (pāśa) or with the shield and the lotus (padma). Of these, the wheel and the conch-shell seem to be the most fundamental.
weapons of Viṣṇu. In the Rg-Veda the sun is a brilliant weapon;⁴⁵ and, like Viṣṇu, both the wheel and the conch-shell with their glowing colour and circular form can be derived from the sun. When the Bhāgavata describes⁴¹ the conch-shell to possess intolerable lustre (a-sahya tejas) and thousand spokes (daśa-satārta) comparable to the thousand rays (sahasra-rašmi) of the sun, it gives definite indication of its solar origin. And, the solar character of the wheel as the typical weapon of Viṣṇu is only too obvious to require specific corroboration. But, in the light of the fact that the Bhāga-
vata has conceived Viṣṇu as the unity of the eight protectors of directions (loka-pālas), the wheel and the conch-shell can as well be traced to these gods, indicative of the contributions of these gods towards the formation of Viṣṇu. If the sun is the prototype of the wheel then the golden rising sun and Indra, the protector god of the east, belong to the same region viz, the east. This association of Indra with the wheel is transferred to Viṣṇu when Indra himself came to form a part of Viṣṇu. Or, we might say that the bānīer (dhvaja) and the thunder-bolt—the specific signs of Indra—clung to the feet of Viṣṇu while the wheel came to Viṣṇu from Sūrya of the southwest. The conch-shell, a product of the sea, can legitimately be taken to have been donated by Varuṇa (the god of waters), the protector of the west. The other weapons can similarly be traced to the other gods of directions. From Yama, the god of death, came the smashing weapon club (gadā), from Kubera (the god of wealth) of the north the lotus symbolizing prosperity, from Varuṇa (the Vedīe god) the noose, and, from Vāyu, the wind god of the north-west bringing in his train drenching shower and rainbow, arrows and the bow. Hala (plough) and muṣala (if the word be interpreted as the pestle for thrashing grains from the paddy), standing for cultivation and agriculture, may be connected with the god of fire (Agni) oblations to which are said to enhance food. The sword (āsi) and shield (carman) may represent the lightning and the cloud respec-

⁴⁵ sūryo jyotis caratī citram āyudham RV 5.63.4.
⁴¹ saṅcintayed daśa-satāram a-sahya-tejāḥ
saṅkham 3.28.27c.
tively, associated with Indra, the god of thunderbolt. Finally the moon is said to stand for the mind.

The suggestions adduced here are liable to further investigation. They are intended to bring home the fact that the conception of the Viṣṇu with eight arms is but the outcome of the naturalistic concept of the Viṣṇu as recorded in the Puruṣa-Sūkta. The eight arms can therefore be obtained as refinement of their crude naturalistic prototypes. Indra in his original form is no other than the eastern sun as Varuṇa is the setting sun in the western sky. The ideas of the sacrificial period have moulded the concept of Yama etc. Yama, the god of death, is linked up with the path of Fathers (pitr-yāna-mārga) laid out in the south. Agni on which sacrificial oblations are poured for attaining heaven is placed at the south-east corner of the gārhapatya fire and that gave rise to the conception of Agni being the god of the south-east. To the north of that fire is another fire leading to the path of gods (deva-yāna-mārga) and this path is associated with all sorts of divine wealth. This gave rise to Kubera being the god of the north. Similarly, as the full moon rises from the north-east and the setting sun in the Daksināyana period of the year reclines towards the south-west, they are said to be the gods of these directions respectively. Monsoon in the northern and western India breaks with the north-western wind carrying clouds pregnant with water. So Vāyu whose conception was being formed when the Aryans were largely in the Indus valley would naturally be conceived as the deity of the north-west. From the point of the philosophy of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavata it is interesting to note how natural phenomena which embodied the grotesque form of the cosmic Man was further chiselled into the form of the Viṣṇu with eight arms, the all-pervasive Reality that suffused all quarters with its protective force.

Gradually more realistic approach reduced the eight quarters to four and the protection of four quarters was represented by four arms of Viṣṇu. As the Viṣṇu with four arms emerged from the Viṣṇu with eight arms, and, as the weapons on those eight arms stood for the martial character of Viṣṇu, the same trait prevailed upon the process of re-shaping Viṣṇu with four arms. Viṣṇu now held in three arms the wheel, the conch-
shell and the club. In the meantime the “bhaga” or “bhraga” of the Rg-Vedic Viṣṇu was asserting itself as his majesty. The new conception of Viṣṇu accommodated this aspect as well by the recognition of the lotus in his fourth hand which only was still left free. Thus, while the wheel, the conch-shell and the club maintained his martial character, the lotus indicated the growing stature of Viṣṇu by the elaboration of the concept of “bhaga”. But until four-handed Viṣṇu could establish himself so well as to replace the earlier concept of the eight-handed Viṣṇu, both the forms of Viṣṇu—the four-handed and the eight-handed—elicited equal homage for some time, as found in the Viṣṇu-Purāṇa.

Parallel to the enlargement of the Viṣṇu concept towards the sublime altitude of sovereignty, the historical Kṛṣṇa was also mustering stupendous influence so much so that he verged upon the prominence of Viṣṇu himself. The first contact between Viṣṇu and Kṛṣṇa resulted in the recognition of the historical Kṛṣṇa as a fragment or part of Viṣṇu. The Viṣṇu-Purāṇa records that the great (mahā-bala) Viṣṇu tore a couple of hair—one white and the other black (sita-kṛṣṇa)—and they were born as Bala-rāma and Kṛṣṇa respectively. The Mahābhārata further elaborates this idea. According to the Mahābhārata, white hair entered Rohini and black hair Devaki, both belonging to the family of the Yadus, and consequently white Bala-rāma and dark Kṛṣṇa were born respectively. Kṛṣṇa was called “keśava” because he came out of a hair (keśa) and by colour (va, the

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22 bhrājāmānāṁ padma-karaṁ śaṅkha-cakra-gadā-dharam. 10.39.52ab.
23 bhagavān bhaga-sabdārtham līlā-kalamam udvahan 12.11.18 ab.
24 pralambaśta-bhujāṁ viṣnum athavā'pi catur-bhujām cintayed brahma-bhūtam tam pīta-nirmala-vāsasam...

VP 6.7.82cd, 83cd.
Both the forms of Viṣṇu, the four-handed and the eight-handed, are met in the Padma-Purāṇa and the Brhat-Saṁhitā of Varāhamihira (600 A.D.). The Annual Report of the Archeological Survey of India (New Series) also records four-armed Viṣṇu-image of late Kushan or still later period discovered at Taxila (1935-36 PI.XL a). The two forms therefore may be presumed to have taken shape between 400 and 600 A.D.
25 evarām saṁśītyaṁānas tu bhagavān paramesvaram. ujjahārātmanaḥ keśau sita-kṛṣṇau mahāmune... ibid. 5.1.60.
first letter of varṇa) was black. As Śridhara suggests, “keśa” need not be taken literally and the Bhāgavata uses the word “Kalō” (fragment) to describe the nature of the Kṛṣṇa Descent. It may be noted here that the usage of the word “keśa” to mean a “fragment” is just the traditional way of describing a part of the whole. The Śvetāsvatara-Upaniṣad, for example, describes the individual soul to be just a small particle of a hair (vāla) of Reality.

The contact of the historical Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu gradually meant a fusion between the two. As a result, the historical Kṛṣṇa emerged as Vāsudeva-Viṣṇu, a radically overhauled personality. The dignity attained by the historical Kṛṣṇa due to his identification with Viṣṇu had far-reaching effect. Balarāma, Pradyumna and Aniruddha, three other outstanding personalities of the same family, were also admitted to similar honour and the result was the emergence of the doctrine of the four Vyūhas.

All the four personalities—Kṛṣṇa-Vāsudeva, Balarāma, Pradyumna and Aniruddha—were now adjusted to the general pattern viz, the four-handed Viṣṇu; and, the wealth of the eight-handed Viṣṇu was fully exploited to justify the mutual variation of the four forms. The personality of the eight-handed Viṣṇu was dissolved and his weapons were distributed among the newly-created four forms. While the lotus and the conch-shell were common to all, the other weapons varied in twos. Thus the club and the wheel of Vāsudeva varied with

26 sa cā’pi kelau harir uccakarta
ekaṁ śuklam aparāṇ cā’pi kṛṣṇam.
tau cā’pi keśavāviśatāṁ yadūnāṁ
kule striyau rohiniṁ devakīṁ ca...
tayor eko bala-bhadrā bahūva
yo’sau śvetas tasya devasya keśaḥ.
krṣṇo duṣitaḥ keśavāḥ sambhūva
keśo yo’sau varṇataḥ krṣṇa uktāḥ...
MB 1.197.32-33, quoted by Śrīdhara on 2.7.26.
28 klesa-vyayāya kalayā sita-kṛṣṇa-keśaḥ 2.7.26b.
29 vāla’gra-lata-bhāgasya śatadhā kalpiyasya ca
bhāgo jivah sa vijñeyah. SU 5.9.
the pæste and the plough of Bala-ráma, the arrows and the bow of Pradyumna and the sword and the shield of Aniruddha.\footnote{10}

The prominence of the lotus and the conch-shell, as reflected in their persistence in all the four \textit{Vyúhas}, suggests the shifting of emphasis from Viśñu’s martial character to his sovereignty betrothed to the advancement of peace and prosperity of the universe, although the weapons of Viśñu are still active to further this supreme cause. It may be mentioned here that the two-handed Viśñu who may be considered as the first concrete representation of the \textit{Purūsa} of the \textit{Puruṣa-Sūkta} and as such the precursor of even the eight-handed Viśñu, had the club and the wheel in his hands that exhibited his martial trait;\footnote{11} and, the same character found its consummation in the conception of the eight-handed Viśñu. The protective quality of Viśñu that had been brooding through the different stages of the Viśñu concept now came to its own in the form of Vāsudeva wherein Viśñu’s animal powers became subdued to the unfoldment of his divine nature. Viśñu was now all protection dedicated to the peace and prosperity of the universe.

The rise of the doctrine of the \textit{Vyúhas} further suggests the consolidation of the concept of the four-handed Viśñu and the consequent disintegration of the eight-handed Viśñu concept. The emergence of the concept of the two-handed Viśñu, referred to above, was nothing more than the indication of the ideal set before religious imagination. The eight-handed Viśñu was the first conscious attempt to humanise the cosmic Giant

\footnote{10} \textit{Vājra uvāca}
\vāsudevasya devasya bahu-rūpasya bhārīgava.
brūhi me rūpa-nirmānam śāivatasya mahātmanah...
Mārkaṇḍeya uvāca
\textit{eka-vaktres datu-bahuḥ saumya-rūpaḥ sudarśanah}.
\textit{utphulla-kamalaṁ pāṇu kuryād devasya daksiṇe}.
vāma-pāṇi-gataṁ saṁkhāṁ saṁkhā’kāraṁ tu kārayet...
daksiṇe tu gāḍa devi tanu-mādhyāṁ sulocanā.
vama-bhāga-gataṁ cakraḥ.
vāsudevasya rūpeṣa kāryah saṁkarṣanah prabhuh.
gadā-sthāne ca muśalam cakra-sthāne ca lāṅgalam.
vāsudevasya rūpeṣa pradyumnaṁ ca tathā bhavet.
cakra-sthāne bhavet cāpaṁ gadā-sthāne tathā lāmam.
etad eva tathā rūpam aniruddhasya kārayet.
cakra-sthāne bhavet carma gamā-sthāne’sir eva ca.
VD 3.85.1,2ab,10-11,13a,21ab,22ab,23ab,24ab,25ab,26ab.

\footnote{11} \textit{eka-vaktro duḥ-bahuḥ ca gadā-cakra-dharāḥ prabhuh}.
deha-vinyāsām aparam prāg utkam kiritam hareḥ...
ibid 3.64.2.
(Puruṣa). The four-handed Viṣṇu with his fusion with Kṛṣṇa-Vāsudeva (i.e., the historical Kṛṣṇa) was an important step in this direction. The amalgam between Viṣṇu and the historical Kṛṣṇa gave rise to the concept of Vāsudeva-Viṣṇu, indicated above. In Vāsudeva-Viṣṇu, thought found for the first time an objective (human) counterpart as the object (the historical Kṛṣṇa) transformed itself in the light of thought. In Vāsudeva-Viṣṇu, therefore, thought and reality coalesced, indicative of a merger of metaphysics and history.

One of the effects of this merger is reflected in Viṣṇu’s change of colour. The Rg-Vedic Viṣṇu, as Savitṛ, is golden-handed⁵² and the Bhāgavata adheres to this aspect in its earlier conception of Viṣṇu. The four-handed Yajña-Puruṣa, for instance, is golden⁵³ with golden hands⁵⁴ and possessing thighs comparable in colour to the yellow “atasī” flower.⁵⁵ He is in fact like molten gold all over his body (tapta-jāmbūnada-prakhyā).⁵⁶ But Vāsudeva-Viṣṇu is as dark as the blue lotus⁵⁷ or the rainy cloud.⁵⁸ That this colour is characteristic of Vāsudeva-Viṣṇu is noticed also by the Viṣṇu-dharmottara which describes the colour of Vāsudeva as dark as the cloud charged with water (salilā’dhmāta-meghā’bha).⁵⁹ The second effect of this fusion is the impetus given by the historical Kṛṣṇa for the emergence of Bhagavat-Kṛṣṇa concept. In the Viṣṇu-Purāṇa,

⁵² hiraṇya-pāṇih savitā RV 1.35.9.
⁵³ hiraṇmayāṁ puṣruṣa-vīśesam rūvik-sadasya-grha-patayah... upatasthuḥ. 5.3.3.
⁵⁴ hiraṇmayā-bhujair iva kārṣikāraḥ 4.7.20d.
⁵⁵ ūrū supaṛṣa-bhujayor adhi-sobhamānā-vojo-nidhi atasikā-kusumā’vabhāsau. 3.28.24ab.
⁵⁶ tapta-jāmbūnada-prakhyām 11.27.38a
⁵⁷ nilotpala-dala-syāmaṁ lavāka-cakra-gadādharam. 3.28.13cd.
⁵⁸ ghana-syāman 10.39.46a.
⁵⁹ salilā’dhmāta-meghā’bhaḥ VD 3.85.2c.
the epithets like “bhagavat” and “puruṣottama” are applicable to Viṣṇu, he being the highest Reality therein, and such usage reflects earlier thought on Viṣṇu. But the Viṣṇu-Purāṇa itself has begun to consider Vāsudeva the highest Reality, nay, the very Viṣṇu with another name. Naturally this trend of thought further accentuated the tranquil aspect of Viṣṇu. The club and the wheel, the last vestiges of his martial trait, disappeared as did his two hands with the result that the Vāsudeva-Viṣṇu was now left with his two hands to become Bhagavat-Kṛṣṇa. In the Bhagavat-Kṛṣṇa we come across the Pañcājanya conch-shell which he blew with the breaking out of the great Mahābhārata war. The lotus was transformed into the gopīs in so far as it stood for Śrī who, as we have already noticed, was metamorphosed into the gopīs, the companions of the love-god Kṛṣṇa.

But before Vāsudeva-Viṣṇu could be finally crystallized into Bhagavat-Kṛṣṇa, the fusion of Vāsudeva (the historical Kṛṣṇa) and Viṣṇu meant the intermixture of the Vedic and the Tāntric ideas and the wealth of imageries lavished upon the Viṣṇu

40 tad eva bhagavad-vācyāṁ svarūpaṁ paramātmanaḥ. vācako bhagavac-chabdas tasyāḥ dasyāḥ kṣayaṁ tamanah. The Viṣṇu-Purāṇa defines Bhagavān as follows:— utpattāṁ pralayaṁ caiva bhūtāṁ āgatiṁ gatim. vetti vidyāṁ avidyāṁ ca sa vācyo bhagavān iti. This verse shows that knowledge forms the very essence of Bhagavān although “bhaga” means all the six types of majesty:— jñāna-lakti-balaisvarya-virya-tejāmsyaśeṣataṁ. bhagavac-chabda-vācyāṁ vinā heyair guṇādibhiḥ. VP 6.5.69,78,79.

41 tasmā ca sūkṣmādi-vileṣaṇānāṁ agocare yat paramātma-rūpam. kim apyacintyaṁ tava rūpam asti tasmā namāṁ te puruṣottamāya. ibid 1.19.75.

42 sakalam idam ajasya yasya rūpaṁ parama-padaṁvatas sanātanasya. tam a-nidhanam a-śeṣa-bija-bhūtaṁ prabhum amalam praṇātaṁśma vāsudevam. ibid 3.17.34.

43 targa-sthitī-vināśānāṁ jagato yo jaganmayaḥ. mūla-bhūto namas tasmā viṣṇave paramātmame. sarvatrāśau samastāṁ ca vaṣiṇāveti vai yataḥ tataḥ sa vāsudevāti vidvadbhiḥ paripaṭhyate. ibid 1.2.4.12. Vide also 6.5.80.

44 “tāṁ tadā puruṣāṁ martāya mahā-rājopalakṣanaṁ. yajanti veda-tantrābhhyāṁ param jijnāsavo nṛpa. 11.5.28.
concept from both the sources completely transformed it into a world of grandeur and beauty. The vast mass of imageries was organised under four heads—physical features (āṅga), weapons (āyudha), ornaments (ākālpa) and accessories (upāṅga). Based on the Viṣṇu-dharmottara, the description of Viṣṇu, often presented by the Bhāgavata under these categories, is next to none in the display of pictorial imagination: The palms of Viṣṇu’s feet are marked by the thunderbolt (vajra), the hook (āṅkuśa), the banner (dhvaja) and the lotus (padma). His feet are radiant (jyotirmaya), are saturated with the light emanating from red fingers, and are stuck up with jingling anklets (nūpura). His knees are constantly served by Śrī, his consort. His thighs are as golden as the “atasi” flower. Yellow garment (pīta-vāsas) fastened with golden girdle (kāṇīci) flows down to his anklets. His naval region is the source of the cosmic lotus out of which the worlds are generated. The pair of nipples are dark as emerald but have become whitened with the glow of his golden necklace (hāra). His chest is the permanent residence of Śrī on the left and Śrī-vatsa (circular mole) on the right. His arms, at the upper and the lower ends, are decorated with bracelets and bangles (aṅgada, keyūra, kaṭaka) and at his hands are the four weapons—the conch-shell, the wheel, the club and the lotus. At his neck are suspended (i) the kaustubha jewel, (ii) the golden necklace coming up to his chest, (iii) the sacrificial thread reaching his naval region, and (iv) the Vana-mālā flowing down up to his knees. Viṣṇu’s face is brightened with the rays of his two ear-rings shaped like a “makara”. It possesses a sharp nose, a pair of eyes red like the core of the lotus, a forehead interspersed with stray locks of hair (kuntala). Above all, the beauty of the face is heightened with a blooming smile radiating from his eyes through his eye-lashes, in fluctuating shades and delicacy, and casting a spell of tranquillity and peace all around. At his head the curled locks of dark hair are crowned with a golden crest (mukuta). He is calm (śānta), with budding youth (kiśora) evenly distributed all over his supple limbs. He holds in one hand the lotus while the other hand is resting on his vehicle, Garuda. A unique person with beautiful ears and the twin petals of lips, his masterly personality has completely en-
grossed religious imagination. It is no wonder then that the Bhāgavata would accept this form as the standard constitution of Viṣṇu and the conception of the earlier forms—the two-

45 saṁcintayed bhagavatas caraṇaṁ raivindam
vajrāṁ kṣuṇa-dhavaja-saroruḥa-lāṅchanā śhymam.
uttuigra-rakta-vilasan-nakha-caakra-vālā
dyaṁsābbhir āhata-mahād-hṛdayāṁ nāhakārām...
jaṁu-duyayaṁ jalaja-locaṇayā jananya
lākṣmyā khilasya sara-vanditayā vidhātūḥ.
ūrūr niḍhāya kara-pallava-rociyā ya
samlālitam hṛdi vibhor abhavasya kuryat...
ūrū suparna-bhubayar adhi-lo bamānā
vojo-nidhi atasikā-kusumāvahštāu.
vālambhi-pita-va-ra-vaśasi vartamānā
karchi-kālāpa-parirambhi nitamba-bimbam...
nābhi-hradāṁ bhuvana-kosā-guhodarastham
yatāṁ yoni-dhiṣanā khila-loka-padam...
vāyudhāṁ harin-maṇi-vaṣa-stanayor āmuṣya
bhuyaya duyaṁ viśāda-hāra-mayūkha-geuram...
vakṣo dhīṣāsam yabhasya mahā-vibhūteḥ
pūṁsaṁ mano-mayana-nirūtīṁ ādādhanām.
kaṇṭhaṁ ca kaustubha-maṇjer adhi-bhūjanārtham
kuryān manasyakilā-loka-namakrītāya...
bhūmih ca mandāra-gīrē pārīvarthanena
nīr-nīka-bāhu-valayān adhi-loka-pālān.
saṁcintayed dasa-tātāram a-saṁya-tejaṁ
saṅkhaṁ ca tat-kara-saṁvaḥra-rājahansam...
kaumodakīṁ bhāgavato dayitām smaretat
digadham arāti-bhāja-losita-kardamaṁ.
mālāṁ madhu-urata-varūthā-giropaghuṣṭām
caitrasya tattvam amalam maṁsu atya kaṁte...
handed, the eight-handed and even the thousand-headed—were remodelled in the light of the details that have entered into the formation of the Bhāgavata conception of Vāsudeva-Viśnū.

This standard form found its culmination when grandeur and beauty mingled with the metaphysical elevation of Viśnū. We have already noticed that emphasis on the protective aspect of Viśnū (which, as the vital principle of life, Viśnū really is) has played a great role in his anthropomorphic transformation. As protection is the specific commitment of a king, he (the king) is conceived to be the assembly of parts (mātrās) of the protectors of directions (loka-pālas). If, then, the protectors of directions themselves form a part (the arms) of Viśnū then Viśnū is the king of kings, the monarch (mahā-rāja). Viśnū’s majesty (bhaga) thus manifests itself through his protective faculty; and, this faculty, in the process of its unfoldment, brought in its train all the grandeur and beauty that shaped the personality of Viśnū. But in spite of the earnest longing on the part of the religious mind to create its pet idols, the all-embracing Reality, which Viśnū basically is, can never be exhausted by human imagination. Paradoxically speaking, human imagination grasped this inexhaustible character of Viśnū. It therefore rearranged the diversity of Viśnū against the background of his basically non-dual character. It was in a way an evaluation of the entire evolutionary process involved in the shaping of Viśnū. The evaluation asserted the old Upaniṣadic position that Reality is possessed of forms and is formless as well. This meant that Viśnū as the trans­­dental Reality was left to his native nature while all the diversifying forces are eliminated from his being. Yet, as the all-embracing Reality, Viśnū was the meeting point of both the unity and the wealth of diversity. The Bhāgavata conception of the Vaikunṭha-pati represents this summit of the Viśnū concept.

In the land of light (Vaikunṭha-dhāman) the sovereign Personality (mahā-rāja) of the four-handed Viśnū is seated on the

"rakṣārthām asya sarasya rājānam aṣṭaḥ prabhuh, indra-nilā-pumār-kāśvam agnē ca varūṇasya ca, candra-nilītakot caiva mātrā nir-hṛtya śāvatīḥ. Manu-Saṁhitā 7.3-4.

dve vāva brahmaṇaḥ rūpe mūrtam caiva mūrtam ca BU 2.3.1.
hood of the thousand-headed serpent, Ananta. As the emblem of his sovereignty, stands the white canopy over his head and he is being fanned from both sides.\(^{48}\) The diversity, which Viṣṇu is, arranges itself into a grand hierarchy and is engrossed in the praise of Viṣṇu with appropriate dance and music. First of all his Mahīman (majesty) divided into eight forms (ani-

\textit{man}, laghīman etc.) stands closest to him. Then come his eight powers Śri etc.,\(^{49}\) his Mahā-vibhūtis.\(^{50}\) Next to them stand his material powers Ajā (Prakṛti) etc.\(^{51}\) called his Vibhūtīs.\(^{52}\) Next to them are Kāla, Karman, Svabhāva that help in crea-
tion, including material desire—all called Saktīs. Then appear the twenty-four categories,\(^{53}\) that emanate from Ajā. Last in the row stand the rest of creation down to the clump (stamba).\(^{54}\) Parallel to this hierarchy of objectivity stands its sub-
jective counterpart in another order. His favourite Pārśadas (attendants) Nanda etc.,\(^{55}\) the Brahmārṣis (eternally God-filled souls) like Sanaka etc., the outstanding gods like Indra etc.,\(^{56}\) the Devarṣīs (celestial souls that have attained liberation by the practice of spiritual means) like Nārada etc., Bhāgavatottamās (the great human devotees) like Prahlāda, Viṣvakṣena etc., come in one after the other row. Nay, even his

\(^{48}\) pārśiva-bhramad-asyaṇa-cāmara-rāja-haṁsah
svetātapaśraśinoparījyāmānaḥ... 4.7.21cd.

\(^{49}\) The eight divine powers are:—
Śri (beauty), Puṣṭi (nourishment), Gir (speech), Kānti (lustre),
Kṛiti (fame), Puṣṭi (self-complacency), Ilā (enjoyment) and

\(^{50}\) Śrīdhara explains the term “mahā-vibhūti” appearing in 3.28.26
as “Maḥā-lakṣmi” i.e., Śrī, the first of the eight divine powers.
All the eight powers may therefore be called “mahā-vibhūtis”.

\(^{51}\) The material powers are:—
Vidyā (knowledge), Avidyā (ignorance) and Māyā

\(^{52}\) The Bhāgavata calls these “vibhūtis” 10.13.52.

\(^{53}\) Śrīdhara on 10.13.52 calls the twenty-four categories as “iaktīs”.

\(^{54}\) Śrīdhara does not seem to give any separate name for Kāla, Karman
etc. as he is silent over the designation of the gross creation down
to the clump. The term “iaktī” used by Śrīdhara for the twenty-
four principles may be extended to cover these as well.

\(^{55}\) Nanda etc. are nine:
Nandāṁ sunandaṁ garuḍāṁ pracaṇḍam caṇḍam eva ca.
maḥā-balaṁ balaṁ caiva kumudaṁ kumudekṣaṇam... 11.27.28.

\(^{56}\) Eight or four protectors of directions. The Bhāgavata mentions
nine gods in 10.40.53. This number may be achieved by the addi-
tion of Durgā to the eight gods in 11.27.29.
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weapons have assumed forms and joined the congregation.

The Bhāgavata with its characteristically metaphysical approach explains the huge mass of symbols heaped upon the conception of Viṣṇu, in the light of its own conception of the structure of Reality. The precious jewel Kaustubha occupying the most prominent place in the body of Viṣṇu is his self-luminosity (ātma-jyotiḥ), the state of non-dual consciousness that forms the very core of Viṣṇu. Śrī on the left chest and Śrī-vatsa on the right chest are the radiance (prabhā) of non-dual consciousness, the first representing Viṣṇu’s native power (ātma-sakti) and the second his divine splendour. Vana-mālā, hanging against Viṣṇu’s body is Ātma-māyā, the principle of heterogeneity. He is clothed in the garment of the Vedas (chandas). The garment is yellow in so far as the Vedas have prescribed the path of action stimulated by Rajas whose colour is yellow. The sacrificial thread is the mystic syllable “Om” which is the nucleus (sūtra) of the Vedas (brahman). The pair of ear-rings are the Sāmkhya and the Yoga thoughts that have thrown light upon the concept of Viṣṇu. As Vairāja-Puruṣa, Viṣṇu possesses his physical crest in Brahma-loka (satyaloka). The state of isolation marked by the effacement of diversity (avyākṛta), on which Viṣṇu is settled as Vaikunṭha-pati (the Great Master free from all limitations), is the serpent Ananta (infinitude). Among the weapons white lotus stands for pure matter (viṣuddha-sattva), the club for cosmic life (mukhya-prāṇa, hiranya-garbhā), the source of all material

87 sunandā-nanda-pramukhaḥ svā-pārśadaiś cakradibhir mūrti-dharair niṣadṛṣṭāḥ. puṣṭyā śriyā kirtyajāyāḥkhiḍardhībhīr nīṣeyamanḥaṁ paramaśeṣhināṁ patim... 10.89.56.

88 ātma-di-stambha-paryantair mūrtimadbhiḥ ca ṛg-caṇāḥ... nṛtya-guṇāyaneśārthāh prthak prthag uḍāsitāḥ... animādyair mahiṁśa asaiḍāyāhair vibhūtibhiḥ. catur-vimśatiḥ biḥ tatvāḥ paritā mahād-ādibhiḥ. kālo-saḥbhāva-sanksāra-kāma-karma-guṇādṛṣṭāḥ. svā-mahima-dhvastra-mahībhīr mūrtimadbhiḥ upāsitāḥ... 10.13.51-53. sunandā-nanda-pramukhaḥ pārśadaiś sonekādibhiḥ. sureśaiḥ brahma-rudrāyair navabhī ca dojottamaḥ... prahlāda-nārada-avo-pramukhāḥ bhāgavatottamaḥ stūyamānaiḥ prathag bhādoir saccobhir amalātmaḥbhiḥ... 10.39.53-54. Dark Viṣṇu with four arms and associated with deities and hermits is identified by T. A. Gopinath Rao as the Yoga-variety (yogasthānaka-mūrti), the “uttama” class (Elements of Hindu Iconography Vol. I—Part I, Madras 1914 p. 80).
activities, the conch-shell for water-element to which it belongs, the radiant wheel for the fire-element and the dark sword for the element of ether. The covering shield is ignorance (*Avidyā*) that hides the true nature of Reality. Time is the bow (*dhanus*) that sets the arrows viz, the sense-organs in motion, steeped in the quiver of action. The mind is the chariot so far as it holds Viṣṇu and this chariot is differentiated into the five elements, the basis of gross creation, because out of the speculation (*vikalpa*) of mind, the nucleus of matter is brought into existence. The gestures (*mudrās*) by Viṣṇu’s hand suggest that as the protector he is always ready to give blessings (*vara*) and discard fear (*abhaya*) from the minds of his votaries. The altar of the Viṣṇu-worship is the solar disc and spiritual initiation (*dikṣā*) is the purification of mind. The lotus at hand symbolises his majesty (*mahiman*). The pair of chowries (*cāmara*) are Viṣṇu’s righteousness (*dharma*) and fame (*yaśas*) and the white canopy is the *Vaikūṇṭha-dhāman*. The vehicle *Guruḍa* is the three *Vedas* that carry Viṣṇu who himself stand for sacrifice (*yajña*). His eightfold majesty stands for his favourite attendants and Viṣvaksena etc. are the presentations of the *Tantras*.

We come across interpretations of the symbols also in the

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99 *kaustubha-vyapadesa* svā∗tma-jyotir bibhartya jaḥ.
	tat-prabha vyāpini sākṣa crhivatsaṁ urasa vihkuḥ...
	sva-māyāṁ vacna-mālā khyāṁ nānā-guṇa-mayaṁ dadhat...

vāsas chandomayaṁ pitāṁ brahma-sūtraṁ tri-vṛt-svaram...
	bibharti sāmkhyāṁ yogyam ca devo makara-kūṇḍale.
	maulim padam pāreṣṭhyam sarva-lokābhayamkaram...

avyākṛtam anantākhyam āsanaṁ yad adhiṣṭhitam.

dharma-jñānaṁ dibhir yaktaṁ satvam padman ihocaya...

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[12.11.10-20]
Viṣṇu-Purāṇa⁶⁰ and the Viṣṇu-dharmottara.⁶¹ The variation of interpretations in spite of their affinity in some cases suggests that current terms were construed according to the practical need of propounding a particular outlook on Reality. Nevertheless such interpretations often bring out faithfully the implications of ancient passages in a brilliant fashion. For example, both the yellow garment and the vehicle Garuḍa, have been stated by the Bhāgavata to symbolize the three Vedas. In doing so, the Bhāgavata takes due cognizance of the tradition, recorded in the Vaijāsaneyi-Samhitā,⁶² that looks upon fire as a bird (garutmat) embodying the three Vedas. Elsewhere, the Bhāgavata upholds the same tradition.⁶³ In the process of differentiation of ideas, fire connected with the act of sacrificing assumed the symbol of yellow garment while Garuḍa was conceived as the embodiment of the three Vedas. On the other hand, variation of interpretation is reflected in the meaning of the wheel, for instance. It is fire for the Bhāgavata, mind for the Viṣṇu-Purāṇa and wind for the Viṣṇu-dharmottara.

Viṣṇu has been conceived by the Bhāgavata in different situations. One should contemplate, so the Bhāgavata recommends, the form of Viṣṇu as moving (vrajaṇam), or seated (āśinam) or reclined (sayānam) or clinging to the heart of man (guhā-sayam).⁶⁴ Viṣṇu moves in the worlds on his vehicle Garuḍa. Garuḍa, as we have seen, is either fire or the three Vedas. In so far as sacrificial fire ensures for the sacrificer the attainment of the three worlds, by the satisfaction of Viṣṇu, entailed by pouring oblations on fire, Viṣṇu as Yajñā-puruṣā has his vehicle viz, fire which he uses for the protection of the three worlds in which his devotees live. Similarly, Viṣṇu rides on the three Vedas as their only import (tātparya) and spreads

⁶⁰ VP 1.22.68-81.
⁶¹ VS 3.85.17-20.
⁶² suparṇo'si garutmahs, tri-vṛt te śīro, gāyatram cakṣur, bhūd-rathān-
tare pākṣau. stoma ātmā, chandāmsi anāgni, yajūmiśi nāmai. sāma te tanur vāmadevyam, yajñā yajñīyaṃ pucchant, dhiṣṇyāh śaphāh.
suparṇo'si garutman divam gaccha svāḥ pata... VS 12.4.
⁶³ tadā suv-prabhāyā teśāṁ dyotayantyā dilo daia-
mūṣāṁ teja upāṇitas tāryeṇa strōtra-pājīna... 4.7.19.
Vide also 6.8.29.
⁶⁴ sthitam vrajanam āśīnam śayānam vā guhākṣayam. prekṣaṇyehitaṁ dhīyec chuddha-bhāvena cetasa... 3.28.19.
himself out in the three worlds meant for the performers of Vedic duties. So, when Viṣṇu moves in the three worlds Garuḍa serves as his vehicle. If, on the other hand, we invoke the Vājasaneyi-Saṁhitā tradition that, as we have already noticed, conceives Puruṣa residing in the solar disc and if the solar disc in that sense is taken to carry Puruṣa, then Viṣṇu, the Puruṣa, rides on the sun conceived by the Rg-Veda as a bird, as we have already noticed. Viṣṇu is seated on Ananta and this is the form of Vaikunṭha-pati. Ananta stands for infinitude and so Ananta is conceived to be a big serpent with one thousand hoods.65 Apparently the Bhāgavata invokes here the form of the thousand-headed Puruṣa of the Rg-Veda to give the impression of infinity. Grounded in his infinite nature Viṣṇu per se is free from all material limitations (Vaikunṭha-pati). Viṣṇu is described as a baby lying on the bed of the leaf of a banyan seedling (nyagrodha-pota).66 This is the form of Viṣṇu when cosmic deluge has taken place. If we recall how springing from an insignificant banyan seed the giant of a banyan tree spreads out roots from the trunk into the soil below, we should be able to appreciate this conception of Viṣṇu. Baby Viṣṇu is the power of animation that lies in the nucleus of matter which eventually grows into worlds. Lastly, Viṣṇu resides in the heart of man. The Bhāgavata visualizes heart as a lotus which blooms into eight petals with a pericarp (karnikā) at the centre. The pericarp is distributed into three hierarchical regions—the land of the sun, the land of the moon and the land of fire. The summit, the land of fire, holds

65 tasmin mahā-bhogam anantar adbhutatam
sahasra-mūrāhanyaphanā-mañi-dyubhiḥ.
vibhrājamānam dvi-guṇeśa-vanam
siḍa'ca'dham svita-kañja-jīvam...
dadarā tad-bhoga-sukhāsanam vibhum
mahā-nubhāvan pruṣottamottamam...
10.89.53,54ab.

66 nyagrodha-potān dadrē phala-pallava-jibhitam.
prāg-uttarasyām lākhyāh tasyāpi dadrē śiṣum.
syānām phatra-puṭake grasantaṁ prabhāya tamank...
12.9.20cd, 21.
The word "nyag-rohā" literally means rooting out (rohā=roha) downwards (nyak). The Bhāgavata has preferred this word to convey the idea of the emergence of the world from Viṣṇu.
the form of Viṣṇu, the standard four-handed Personality.67

These four forms of Viṣṇu may be said to have satisfied the human urge to see the first principle of life (Paramātman) in terms of creation and also in terms of spiritual attainment. The baby Viṣṇu is the starting point of creation, and, while the worlds have come into existence through cosmic evolution, Viṣṇu pervades all with the help of his vehicle, Garuḍa. When man becomes fed up with the trifles of materialism, he shuts himself up in the depth of his heart to discover therein the Great Master, the all-pervasive Reality which penetrates all—Nature as well as man’s mind. The inward vision gradually helps man to get rid of his mundane costume consisting of his gross and subtle bodies; and, finally, with the disappearance of the veil of ignorance (Avidyā) man enters the portals of the promised land, the golden realm of knowledge and bliss to be awakened to the sovereignty of Lord Viṣṇu (Vai-
kunṭha-pati) perpetually reposed on his infinite and sequestered loneliness.

From the practical point of view the Bhāgavata recognises the utility of all the forms. Duties become worship when one discovers the all-pervasive Reality through every detail of his performance. This outlook dedicated to the materialistic conception of Viṣṇu crystallizes mind on which then dawn the spiritual form of Viṣṇu, which finds its highest fulfilment in transcendental Infinity symbolized in the concept of the Lord of Vaikunṭha-dhāman, the second grade of Reality.68

67 hṛt-puṇḍarikam antaḥ-stham ūrdha-nālam adho-mukham.
dhyātwordsa-mukham un-nidram asa-patram sa-karṇikam
karṇikāyāṁ nyaset śuṛya-somā’gīnīn utarottaram...
vahni-madhya smare’d rūpaṁ mamaitad dhyāna-maṅgalam.
samām praśāntam sumukham dirgha-cāru-catur-bhujam...

68 sampracaratsu naṁ-yāgeṣu viracitaṁngi-kriyeṣu ajñurvedya yaṁ yat tati kriya-
phalam dharmā’khyāṁ pare brahmaṁya yajña-puruṣa sara-devatā-
lingeṇāṁ mantrayāṁ artha-niyamakatayā sākṣat kartari para-deva-
tāyāṁ bhagavati vāsudeva eva bhāvyamāna ātma-naiṣṭya-mrūdite-
kaśāyo haviṣvadharyubhir gṛhyamāṇesa sa yajamāna yaṣa-haṁjo
devāṁ tāṁ puruṣāvaṣeṣu abhyadhyāyat...

evaṁ karma-visuddhyā visuddha-sattvasyāṁ tar-krayaṁ kāśa-sāre śri-
brahmaṁ ābhavaṁ viṣayev yasudeva mahā-puruṣa-rūpapalakaṁ śri-vatsa-
kaustubha-vanamālīs’-dara-gada’dibhir upalakṣite niṣa-puruṣa-hy-
līkhitendrānāṁ puruṣa-rūpeṇa virocamāna ucchastaram bhaktir anudi-
nam edhamāna-rayaḍāyata... 5.7.6-7.
MAHĀ-MĀYĀ (ŚRI OR VIṢṆU-MĀYĀ)

We have noticed that Lord Viṣṇu is the ancient god of chivalry. A great fighter for a noble cause against the forces of evil, Viṣṇu with his budding youth exposes quixotic characteristics. In the earlier literature and thought the martial character of Viṣṇu receives due recognition. He is “tri-vikrama” i.e., the maker of three great strides and is an esteemed friend of Indra in his expedition against the giant Vṛtra. He is armed, for the purpose, with the blowing conch-shell, the rolling wheel and the fierce club. The lotus does not find here any place because Viṣṇu is then the war-god through and through.

But the sun, the prototype of the Viṣṇu concept, is not merely a brilliant reality dispelling the forces of darkness with its own light radiating from its disc symbolised in the conch-shell and the rolling wheel. With its dynamic creativity it heralds as well the influx of beauty condensed into peace and prosperity. Viṣṇu therefore combines in him “a youth vast in body who is no longer a child”. His insuperable beauty had evoked the prayer for having a male child with the most beautiful form of Viṣṇu. Viṣṇu is invoked for promoting conception. Savitṛ is said to be the origin of all. Viṣṇu’s identification with Savitṛ fulfils the aim of his beauty—the achievement of all that is good and auspicious. Viṣṇu thus emerged from his earlier martial character to embody youth, beauty and creativity.

Parallel to this development of Viṣṇu arose the concept of Śrī or Lakṣmī, first recorded in the Śrī-Śūkta. Her being
was culled from the moon (candrā) and the sun (sūryā). She inherited from the moon beauty and charm and from the sun brilliance and creativity. She thus possesses golden colour (hirānya-varṇā) on the one hand, while on the other she is self-luminous (prabhāsa). As the principle of creativity she represents all that is best—fame (kīrti), nourishment (puṣṭi), self-complacency (trptām), provision for the enjoyment of others (tarpayanī), power (durādharśā) besides her soothing beauty (Śrī) and sweetness (kāntī). As the embodiment of liquid beauty, Lakṣmī is wet (ādrā) and as prosperity incarnate she is permanently settled on the lotus (padme sthītā). As a personality of unique beauty she is destined to be the ideal beloved as she is to be universal mother (māty) because of her free creativity.

As we have already noticed, by the time of the Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa, Śrī becomes the daughter of Prajāpati. This new fact adds to the character of Śrī. Prajāpati, the Hiraṇya-garbhā, is said to have generated sound, as we shall see later on. Śrī thus becomes identified with sound (śabda or gīr). By the time of the Baudhāyana-dharma-sūtra, as stated before, she becomes an object of worship.

Thus both Viṣṇu and Śrī stood for beauty and creativity. They could not therefore remain apart: So, if Viṣṇu was fire (sacrificial) Śrī was his flame (piṅgalā—Śrī-Sūkta). The Bhāgavata takes into account the original characters of Viṣṇu and Śrī, viz, the sun and the sun-cum-moon respectively, that make Viṣṇu resting on the bosom of the sea, and Lakṣmī or Śrī rising from the womb of the sea respectively. The Bhāgavata then proceeds to describe the origin of Ramā (the beloved of Viṣṇu) as follows:—In course of the churning of the sea appeared Ramā, the incarnation of beauty and prosperity. Like lightning at the crest of the crystal hill, she saturated all directions with the radiance of her beauty. Her birth was hailed with universal acclamations from gods, demons and men—all enthralled by her beauty, elegance, youth and colour. She was given a grand reception, was washed and was decorated, with appropriate music and dance. Then, with a lotus garland in her hand she moved in the congregation of all living beings of different orders in search of her matching husband. She em-
ployed her selective mind and at long last her choice fell upon Lord Viṣṇu, the eternal reservoir of all qualities and no demerits, permanently settled on his disinterested isolation. As a befitting reward for her choice she was installed permanently right on the left bosom of Viṣṇu. Thus Viṣṇu and Ramā became universal parents.  

The coalescence of Viṣṇu and Ramā or Śrī meant the unity of static existence and perpetual dynamism. In other words, beauty was reduced to truth and creativity remained to explain the world-process. While Viṣṇu as Truth is the transcendental reality, Śrī as creativity is the subtle germ of the universe, that gradually unfolds its unimpeachable delusive nature. Śrī, as the elusive power of Viṣṇu (Viṣṇu-māyā), unravels herself as the sacrifice, or rather the totality of action, while Viṣṇu enjoys the fruits thereof. The universe is the manifestation of Śrī while

\[\text{\textsuperscript{77}}\text{tatāt cā'virabhūt sākṣāc chṛī ramā bhagavat-parā.} \]
\[\text{raṇjayanī diśāh kāntyā vidyut saudāmanī yathā..} \]
\[\text{tasyāh cakre śphām sarve sa-sūra-sura-mānaśāh,} \]
\[\text{rūpaudārya-vayo-vārṇa-mahimā'ksipta-cetasāh..} \]
\[\text{tasyā śasanam āninye mahendro mahad abhikutam.} \]
\[\text{mārītmatyāḥ saric-chreṣṭāḥ hema-kumbhair jalarā śuci..} \]
\[\text{ābhisecanikā bhūmīr āharat sakalauṣadhiḥ.} \]
\[\text{gāvāḥ pāneā pavitraṇī vāsanto madhu-madhāvau..} \]
\[\text{tasyāḥ kalpa'yānācakrur ābhisekāṃ yathā-vidhi.} \]
\[\text{jagur hadrāṇi gandravā naṭyaś ca naṃtur jaguh..} \]
\[\text{meghā maṛdaṅga-paṇava-muraṇā nake-gomukhān.} \]
\[\text{vyanādāyan śaṅkha-veṇu-vināś tumula-nivānanān.} \]
\[\text{tato'bhīṣisicur devim śrīyam padma-karām satim.} \]
\[\text{dig-ibhāḥ pāṛṇa-kalasaḥ śūkta-vākyaṁ dojiteriṣāḥ} \]
\[\text{samudrāḥ pīta-kauleye vāsāī samupāharat.} \]
\[\text{varūṇāḥ srajanā vaijayantiṁ madhunā matta-ṣat- padām.} \]
\[\text{bhūṣaṇāṁ veicitrāṁ viśva-karma praジャーī.} \]
\[\text{hāraṁ saravaṇī padmāṁ ajo, nāgaś ca kuṇḍale} \]
\[\text{tatāḥ kraṭa-svastayāntopa-srajam} \]
\[\text{nada-dviśrephaṁ pariṣṭhaya pāṇinā.} \]
\[\text{caśāla vaktaram su-kapalo-kuṇḍalam} \]
\[\text{sa-vṛīḍa-hāraṁ dadhati su-sobhanam.} \]
\[\text{vilokayaṇi nir-anadyam utmānaḥ} \]
\[\text{padam dhruvaṁ cā'vyabhīcāri-sad-guṇam.} \]
\[\text{gandravā-sīdhaṁ sura-yaka-cārana-} \]
\[\text{traipīṣja-pedādyā diṣṇu na'navindata.} \]
\[\text{evam vīṃṣīyā vyāvīcāri-sad-guṇair} \]
\[\text{varāṁ niṇaiśrayatayā guṇāḥ śrayam.} \]
\[\text{bauvare varaṁ sarva-guṇair apekṣitaṁ} \]
\[\text{ramā mukundaṁ niḥ-āpekaṁ śītātaṁ.} \]
\[\text{tasyāḥ śrīyas tri-jagato jananā jananyā} \]
\[\text{vaśo-nivāsam akarot paramaṁ vibhūteḥ.} \]
\[\text{śrīḥ svāḥ praジャーā sa-karuṇena nir-ikṣaṇena} \]
\[\text{yatram sthitāyata sādhīpatīṁs tri-lokān..} \]

8.8.8.17, 19, 23, 25.
Viṣṇu helps the process of manifestation and at every step enjoys the inner beauty of manifestation. Śrī transforms herself into gross and subtle bodies and Viṣṇu serves as the soul thereof. Śrī represents names and forms and Viṣṇu is ineffable consciousness. The elusive character of Śrī deludes the individual souls (Jīvas) to be caught up in the stream of worldliness leading to the effacement of their transcendental reality. But when the entire universe is resolved into Viṣṇu, the supreme soul (Paramātman), spiritual equilibrium is restored by the reinstatement of the isolated nature of Viṣṇu shining against the cosmic deluge.

Viṣṇu as the Puruṣa of the Puruṣa-Sūkta possessed majesty (mahiman) which subsequently becomes eightfold (aṇimān, laghiman etc.). The absorption of Śrī into the essence of Viṣṇu further enriched Viṣṇu's personality which in its turn gave impetus to the differentiation of Śrī so that Viṣṇu's association with Śrī could be grasped in sumptuous variety and colour. The different facets of Śrī, as recorded in the Śrī-Sūkta, assumed individuality under the stress of the process of differentiation so that eventually, parallel to his eightfold majesty, Viṣṇu possessed eight powers (Mahā-vibhūtis)—Śrī and seven others—nourishment (puṣṭi), speech (gir), sweetness (kānti), fame (kṛiti), self-complacency (tuṣṭi), enjoyment (ilā) and power (ūrja). In so far as all the seven powers emerged from Śrī by the process of differentiation, Śrī heads the list of these powers and is recognised to occupy the most prominent place among all. When Viṣṇu developed into Bhagavat-Kṛṣṇa, as we have already seen, and Bhagavat-Kṛṣṇa's potencies correspondingly increased to infinite number, Śrī still maintained her unique prominence. The Bhāgavata records how Kṛṣṇa had disappeared from the presence of all gopīs with the exception of one who

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98 yuvān tu viśvasya vibhū jagataḥ kāraṇāṁ param.
iyam hi prakṛṭiḥ sūkṣmā māyā-śaktir duratayāḥ..
tasyā adhīśvarah sākṣāt tvam eva purusah paraḥ.
tvam sarva-yajña iṣyeyam kriyeyam phala-bhug bhavaṁ..
tvam hi sarva-śarīryātmā śriḥ śarīrendriyā layaḥ.
nāma-rūpe bhagavati pratayasy tvam apāsrayaḥ...

99 11.3.1-16.

10 12.9.11-31.

11 śrīyā puṣṭyā girā kāntyā kṛttiyā tuṣṭyelayarjyā.
vidyāyāvidyāyā śaktiyā māyāyā ca niṣeṣitam...
10.39.55.
was especially privileged to accompany Kṛṣṇa. One can readily recognize in the gopīs (derived from the root “guṇp,” to protect) the protective forces of Viṣṇu. When gopīs were appropriated by the Bhāgavata to delineate the blissful nature of Bhagavat-Kṛṣṇa, the eight powers of Viṣṇu pursued Kṛṣṇa. Their special position found due recognition in the concept of eight girl friends (aṣṭa-sakhīs); and, among the eight, Śrī was still the most favourite. Later on, Śrī developed into Śrī-Rādhā.

From the metaphysical point of view, Śrī is not merely a “Mahā-vibhūti” but is the very core of Viṣṇu’s substance. If Viṣṇu is the Lord of isolation (kaivalya-pati), Śrī is his consciousness of unity, as the Śrī-Sūkta has properly recorded (so’smi-tā). As the knowledge of unity, Śrī has transcended all duality. She again is the transcendental impulse that transforms itself into spiritual diversity providing for the weapons, the ornaments and other signs of Viṣṇu. She is, further, the material universe. Yet, through all shines the fundamental character of Viṣṇu, permanently settled on his pristine glory of non-duality.

VAIKUNṬHA-DHĀMAN

The conception of Vaikunṭha-dhāman—the state of existence free from worldly limitations (kunṭha)—sprang from a different construction of the term “pāda,” viz., “abode.” The Puruṣa-Sūkta referred to the immortal abode (amrta pada) situated in heaven (divī). The Rg-Veda further calls it supreme (parama) and finds it glowing like an extensive (ātata) eye (cakṣus) in heaven. This supreme abode is also stated to contain the eternal source of honey. But when this immortal, shining and blissful region is stated to be supreme, naturally this description seems to imply less exalted abodes of Viṣṇu. In the wake of the Rg-Veda, the Vājasaneyi-Saṁhitā throws useful light on this issue when it records three abodes of Viṣṇu

\[82\] yathāikātmyaṁubhāvānaṁ vikalpa-rahitah svayam. bhūṣaṇa-yudha-liṅgākhyā dhatte saktīṁ sva-māyahā.. 6.8.32.
\[83\] tri-pāda asyaṁśtaṁ divī RV 10.90.3.
\[84\] tād viṣṇoḥ paramam pade mādyo utaṁ sadaṁ paśyanti sūrayaḥ divivā cakṣur ātataṁ.. RV 1.22.20.
\[85\] viṣṇoḥ parame pade madhva uṣaḥ.. RV 1.154.5.

idāṁ viṣṇur vicakrame tredhā nidadhe padam saṁudhāṁ asya pāṁśūre RV 1.22.17.
spread out in the universe. The Chāndogya-Upaniṣad rescues earlier thought from the vagary of the three regions, when it describes heaven to be the third region from the earth (itaḥ). Ācārya Śaṅkara brings out the implication of this passage by his remark that heaven is the third in relation to the other two regions—the earth and the aerial space. So, in the light of Śaṅkara’s interpretation of the Chāndogya-Upaniṣad, the three abodes of Viṣṇu recorded in the Vājasaneyi-Saṁhitā, are the earth, the aerial region and the heaven. Of the three, the Rg-Veda would recommend the heaven to be the best in that it is the immortal land of light and bliss.

When earlier thought located the supreme abode in heaven and found it shining, naturally attention was directed to the vast body of luminaries in search of this supreme abode. The Bhāgavata started enquiry from the sun because it was the nucleus that differentiated into the three worlds. Along the path of the gods (deva-yāna) the Bhāgavata penetrated through the sun and then came upon the pole star (dhruva) in which the sun was grounded. The Bhāgavata proceeded farther to discover “śīrṣa-māra-cakra”, as the basis of the pole star. According to the Viṣṇu-Purāṇa this region is attainable by childlike simplicity (śīrṣa) and is relatively immortal (āmṛta) in that it is destructible (māra) only at the cosmic deluge. The Bhāgavata therefore conceives it as the abode of Viṣṇu. It may further be taken as a wheel or rather the axle of a wheel round which revolves the grand galaxy of stars and constellations in-

86 VS 5.15.
87 brahma-loke śṛiyaśāḥ iti divi Ch U 8.5.3.
Śaṅkara comments on the term “śṛiya” as follows:—
bhuvam antarikṣam ca'pekṣya śṛiya dyauḥ.
88 sūryaḥ hi vibhajyante dīlaḥ khaṁ dyaur mahi bhīdā.
svaṅgā'pavargau narako rasaukāṁśi ca sarva-lāḥ... 5.20.45.
89 The Viṣṇu-Purāṇa gives a clear picture of the path:—
ādhāra-ḥūṣaḥ savitar dhruvo muni-varottama,
dhrusaya śīrṣumaṁsau so'pi nārāyaṇaṁmakah... VP 2.9.23.
90 yasyā (śiṣumārasya) puchchāgre ... dhruva ubakṣiṣṭaḥ... 5.23.5.
91 te'samprayogāṁ lobhaya maithunasya ca varjandat.
itihātmā kāraṇaṁ juddhāṁ te'mṛtatvaṁ hi bhisīre.
ā-bhūṭa-sampadaṁ sthānam āmṛtatvaṁ vi Śīruṣyaṁ.
trailokya-sthitī-kālo'yam a-punar-māra ucyate... VP 2.8.93ab,94cd,95.
cluding the sun and the moon. So, the abode of Viṣṇu is the great centre that unites and lends light to the innumerable luminaries in heaven. Beyond the three worlds, this abode of Viṣṇu endowed with its innate splendour has been deemed as the goal of spiritual life.

The Brāhmaṇa period marked improvement upon the earlier concept of the supreme abode. The Rg-Vedic god Indra, with his tremendous power and indefinite character, emerged now as the supreme god; and, by the time of the Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa his eminence was recognised on all hands. As the best of gods, because of his power, vigour, tolerance and other qualities, Indra was installed to sovereignty (sāmrājya). He was placed on an altar (āsandī) which his glory (yaśas) as its cover, and beauty and prosperity (śrī) as its pillow (upavārāṇa). The Mantra with which he was sprinkled with holy waters suggested that he now incorporated the person of Varuṇa (another mighty god of the Rg-Veda) as well. Gods from all directions—east, west, north, south, centre (dhrupa) and above—sprinkled him and Indra was installed to the highest status (parameśṭhi) and became the root of all creation (prājāpatya).

During the period of the Upaniṣads earlier words were imbued with new connotations, to fit in with the philosophical doctrines that were gaining ground against the sacrificial cults holding their sway so far. One of the earliest Upaniṣads,
the Bṛhadāraṇyaka adopted this method. The Upaniṣad adduced the apology that words do not mean what they appear to, because the gods are fond of indirect description. Thus “Indra” meant just ‘the bright’. The same line of thinking was followed by the Aitareya-Upaniṣad. The Upaniṣad repeated almost verbatim the same logic as adduced by the Bṛhadāraṇyaka to uphold the view that “Indra” means ‘Paramātman’ in that “in” (idam) denotes “this” and “dra” (adarśam) denotes “saw”. Thus Paramātman, the cosmic witness, is figuratively called Indra. The Bhāgavata also takes due cognizance of this indirect way in which a Vedic truth is promulgated.

But in this development of thought, one is confronted with conflicting ideas. The Hīranyagarbhā-Sūktā declares that Hīranya-garba was the principal Prājāpāti out of whom creation was brought into existence. The Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa, on the other hand, claims, as we have noticed above, the same status for Indra who, according to the Aitareya-Upaniṣad, is no other than Paramātman. Now, Hīranya-garba being a part of creation cannot be identical with Paramātman who creates all including Hīranya-garba. The Chāndogya-Upaniṣad seems to have anticipated this inconsistency when, by way of solution, it has recognised the aspect of Reality immanent in creation to be Hīranya-garba and its transcendental aspect to be Paramātman.

For the Chāndogya, then, the highest abode of Indra, described by the Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa, was the region of Hīranya-garba, briefly called “Brahma-loka”. As the two sovereign

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96 indho ha vai nāmaiṣa yo’yaṁ dākṣiṇe’kṣan puṁsas tam vā etam in- dhām santam indra ityācaksate, parokṣenaiva, parokṣapriyā iva hi devāḥ prayākaśa-dvīṣah... BU 4.2.2.

97 etam eva puṁsaṁ brahma tatatatam apalyam idam adārām iti. tasmād idandro nāmedandro ha vai nāma, tam idandro santam indra ityācaksate parokṣena: parokṣa-priyā iva hi devā parokṣa-priyā iva hi devāh... Ai U 1.3.14.

98 Śaṅkara comments: indro nāma paramātma

99 bāhrīmaṁ etad adhyātmam pāroksyaṇa pradarśitam... yat parokṣa-priyo devo bhagavān viśva-bhāvanah... 4.28.65, vide also 11.3.44, 4.29.59.

100 Hīranyagarbhaḥ samavariṣṭaṁ RV 10.121.1.

101 hantāḥam... anena jīvendītmanānupravīya nāma-rūpe vyākaranāṇī. Ch U 6.3.2.
gods—the brilliant god Indra and the water-god Varuṇa—had enriched the personality of Viṣṇu, the Paramātman, whose material character Hiraṇya-garbha or Brahmā represents, the conception of Brahma-loka as found in the Chāndogya incorporates some of the elements of Indra, Varuṇa and Viṣṇu, besides drawing upon the idea of “aranyā” (forest) in which penance is prescribed in the Bhadāranyaka for obtaining Brahma-loka.²⁰¹ The Chāndogya describes that Brahma-loka contains a couple of lakes, as large as seas, of which one is called “ara” and the other is called “ṇya”. It has further a tank (saraḥ) replete with food (irā) and ecstasy (mada). There is then a fig-tree (aśvattha) that constantly breeds nectar (soma). In that Brahma-loka stand the invincible (a-parājīta) citadel (pur) of Brahmā and the golden hall (hiraṃmaya) of the Lord (prabhu).²⁰²

“Aranyā” (forest) of the Bhadāranyaka is being construed here by the Chāndogya as a couple of seas. The association of water with Viṣṇu²⁰³ and Varuṇa²⁰⁴ might have influenced the Upaniṣad to interpret the word in that light. The word “iram-mada” means the flash of lightning attended with the falling of the thunderbolt. Reminiscent of the close association of such a phenomenon with Indra, the word however has undergone radical overhaul of meaning to denote a tank full of food and pleasure corresponding to the spring of honey (madhva utṣah),²⁰⁵ situated in the high abode of Viṣṇu. The fig-tree as well is a concrete embodiment of the same spring of honey in that it is constantly given to discharging honey. The citadel stands for the material vesture of Reality which however is particularly concentrated in its golden hall.

The Kauśitaki-Upaniṣad knits all the earlier fragments of thought, formulated by and conveyed through the Veda, the

²⁰¹ ye caṁi aranyā śraddhāṁ satyaṁ upāsate... iṁ vaidyutāṁ puruṣo manasā eṣṭaḥ brahma-lokān gamayati BU 6.2.15.
²⁰² teṭha yad aranyāyanaṁ ityācaksate brahaṃcarayam eva tat. aroṣ ca ha vai nyāṁ caṁravāva brahma-loke śṛiṣyāṁ āto divi. tad aṁdaṁ madyam saras, tad aśvatthaḥ soma-savanāḥ, tad aparājītaḥ pūr brahmaṇaḥ, prabhu- vimittam hiraṃmayam. Čh U 8.5.3.
²⁰³ tat aṣya priyam abhi pātho āṣyāṁ RV 1.154.5.
²⁰⁴ AiB 8.3.2.
²⁰⁵ viṣṇoḥ pade parame madhva utṣah... RV 1.154.5.
Brāhmaṇas and the earlier Upaniṣads, into a consistent story and presents the same in a way that strikes a balance between a reproduction of old ideas and interesting innovations. When a person is fit for entering the Brahma-loka, so begins the Upaniṣad, a large number of heavenly girls (apsarases) approach him with fruits, ointments, garlands, vestments and powdered aromatics in their hands. They then adorn him with the adornment of Brahmā. He then comes to the lake (hrada) called “ara”. Then he enters the region of moments (muhūrtas). From there he proceeds to Yeṣṭihās. Then before crossing the river called Vijarā (ageless) he leaves behind him his merits and demerits. Having crossed it he comes across the tree of food (ilya) wherefrom divine smell (brahma-gandha) enters his nostrils. From there he moves on to the city (saṁsthāna) abounding with large trees grown on the banks of the different types of water reservoirs (śāla-jya). Here the flavour of Brahmā enters him. Then, he reaches the invincible ( aparājita) palace (āyatana) of Brahmā. Here he catches the īṣṭre (tejas) of Brahmā. Then, passing the pair of doorkeepers—Indra and Prajāpati—he moves on to the hall of Brahmā, that bears the stamp of his individuality (vibhu-pramita). Here he acquires the glory (yasas) of Brahmā. In that hall he visualises Brahmā seated on the altar (āsandī) of intellect (prajñā) in the bed (paryaṇka) of inexhaustible vigour i.e., life (prāṇa), sustained by beauty (śrī) and food (irā). A couple of wives, Mānasī (mind) and Cākṣuṣi (literally, the eyes; the external organs) are always at his bidding. Brahmā further possesses abundance of flowers (worlds), the Mothers (the Vedas) and little mothers (ambāyāvī) and heavenly girls (apsarases).

When he intended to ascend that bed of Brahmā, the latter wanted to know his credentials. The person answered: You and I are one and the same. Brahmā questioned: What am I? Out came the answer: You are the Truth (satya), the grand unity of the transcendental called “sat” and the imma-

nent called “tya”. This supreme knowledge entitled him to the highest status, the supreme self.107

The ideas which seem to have influenced the Kauśitaki-Upaniṣad in its conception of Brahma-loka are like these: If materialism is not the goal of man, he has to cast off his material vesture before he can attain divinity. He has to transcend for this purpose the space-time scheme that holds on to materialism. Entrance to the threshold of divinity is marked by the touch of divine beauty which the celestial damsels stand for. They furnish him with equipments appropriate for the spiritual journey. His journey starts from the lake or stream (hrada) of ever-changing materialism (ara).108 He moves on to the larger units of time (muhūrtas). He discovers in the fleeting shadows of materialism the reflection of his own mind, the propensity that (yā) chooses to satisfy itself through material pleasures and thus kills (han) his spirituality (iṣṭi).109 Before his divine light of meditation, the shadows of materialism disappear. Consequently merits and demerits wither away. Having abandoned all material stuff, he leans out into the river of time to reach the other bank, the timeless region. On the other bank stands the tree of “manna” (irā) that provides spiritual nourishment to

107 “tya” is a tiny division of time, also known to the Jainas.
108 “yeṣṭhā”=yā+iṣṭi+hā, that which kills sacrifice. The Upaniṣads have used the term “kāma” (the material urge) to denote the same (vide, for example, BU 4.4.7).
compensate his material impoverishment. Here for the first time he obtains the direct apprehension, the smell of Brahmā. Vitalized with it, he marches on to the city enriched with all sorts of beauties impressive by their colossal structure. Gradually he moves on to the centre—the royal palace guarded by Indra and Prajāpati; for, the path of divinity (deva-yāna) lies beyond the region of Indra and the region of Prajāpati. Blessed with the lustre of Brahmā, he enters the royal hall and finally discovers Brahmā, the cosmic soul, reclined on intelligence and life, both of which constitute the essence of the principle of Mahat.\textsuperscript{110} Mahat is the source of the mind and the external organs and the worlds spread out of and shrink into the essence of Mahat. The Vedas and wisdom are associated with Brahmā, the Hiranya-garbha. The Bhāgavata also recognises Mahat to be the abode of Viṣṇu in that Vāsudeva-Viṣṇu is revealed in the heart of man, that (heart) constitutes the individualistic form of Mahat.\textsuperscript{111}

But Brahmā being the immanent aspect of Reality, his abode viz, Mahat does not contain absolute truth. So, beyond the land of Brahmā lies the absolute abode, the realm of the Transcendental, the Paramātman, in which one finally enters with the help of the highest knowledge, the integral vision of non-duality.

The Bhāgavata has elaborated and sometimes remodelled the earlier ideas of the abode of Viṣṇu to draw up a magnificent picture of Vaikuṇṭha-dhāman, the highest region of Vaikuṇṭha-Viṣṇu. The Vaikuṇṭha-dhāman is endowed with an outer garden (vana) called Naikṣreyasa. It is liberation (kaivalya) incarnate, and has the privilege of simultaneous revelry of all the six seasons, bursting upon the trees that fulfil all desires. In the heart of water, bloom vernal flowers that pour their elixir of fragrance in the minds of all including the divine songsters singing in praise of Lord Viṣṇu, in the company of matching women. Birds of innumerable variety raise a tumultuous symphony; but, it is silenced the moment the lyrical hum of the bees is tuned to the laudation of Viṣṇu. The grandeur

\textsuperscript{110} tebhyah samabhavat sūtraṁ mahāṁ sūtreṇa samyutah 11.24.6ab.

\textsuperscript{111} yat tat sattra-guṇam svaccham śaṁtaṁ bhagavatāṁ padam.

\textsuperscript{112} yad āhur vāsudevaṁ khyānti cittaṁ tan mahād-ātmakam.. 3.26.21.
of different flowers submit to the exalted position of Tulasī that the Lord has chosen for his adornment. Abounding in golden chariots with precious jewels and women with explosive beauty and captive smile, Vaikuṇṭha-dhāman still does not stimulate baser feelings.

In the royal palace of Viṣṇu, of golden structure and crystal floor, moves Śrī, the beloved of Viṣṇu, with a lotus in her hand and jingling anklets at her feet. Her pure and beautiful form is reflected on the crystal floor to give rise to the illusion that she is cleansing it with a broomstick to demonstrate her unqualified service to the Lord. By the pool replete with nectarine water with emerald banks, is located the pleasure garden of Śrī. During worship of the Lord with Tulasī, her beautiful face, interspersed with locks of hair and marked by a sharp nose, is mirrored in the pool and appears to be aptly rewarded by the Lord.112

At the door of the Lord’s palace stand a couple of doorkeepers with clubs in their hands. They are dark, of equal age and have ornaments and flowers similar to those of the Lord. The seventh chamber at the door of which they are

112 yatra naišṭreyasam nāma vanam kāma-duśhaira dṛumaiḥ.
sarovartu-śriḥbir vibhrājat kaivalyam iva mūrtimata...
vaimānikāṁ sa-lalanāś caritānā saśvad- gāyanti yatra śamalā-kaśapaṃśi bhartuḥ.
antar-jaleśvikaṃ-sadhu-mādhaviṃnānān- gandhena khaṇḍita-dhiyopyaṇilāṃ kṣipantaḥ...
pārvatadīnyaḥ-stārāsa-cakravākā- dātyūha-haṁsa-juka-tititī-śamanci yāḥ.
kolaḥalalo viramāte cira-mātraṃ uccair
bhṛṅgādhipe hari-kathām iva gāyamāne...
gandheścīte tulastakābharaṇena tasāya
yasaṁs taṭaḥ sumanaso bahu māṇyaṇi...
tat samkulaṁ hari-padaṇi-mātra-dṛṣṭāirm
vaidurya-mārakata-hema-mayaṁ vimānaiḥ.
yeṣaṁ bhṛ-taṭaḥ taṭaḥ smita-lohī-mukhyaḥ
kṣīṃṭmanam na raja ṣādaḥ utsamyaśdyaiḥ.
śri rūpini kvaṇayati caraṇaṁ-ravindaṁ
līla-bujena hari-rādmāni mukta-dosa.
samlakṣyaete sphaṭika-kuḍiya upeta-henni
sammārjaiva yan-anugrahaṇe nya-yatnaḥ...
vāpiṣu vidrūma-taśeṣvamālaṁṛtāḥ-ṣu
preṣyāvīvitā nija-vane tulasiḥ śrīm.
abhyaścita śvalakam unnasam ihya vaktraṃ
ucchejitaṁ bhagavatīyamataṅga ya-cchriḥ. 3.15.16-22
Vide also 2.9.10-17.
stationed opens into the royal hall\textsuperscript{133} where, as we have already noticed, is seated Viṣṇu, the Paramātman, on the hood of Ananta, with all his grandeur and the grand congregation assembled to his service. They have all assumed the four-armed form of Viṣṇu, in fact, everything exactly the same excepting Śrīvatsa and Kaustubha, the exclusive possessions of the Lord. Of these, sixteen are his most favourite including the two doorkeepers, Nanda and Sunanda.\textsuperscript{134}

One can trace here the earlier concepts and their adaptations by the Bhāgavata. The Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad describes how a person gains brilliant hue when passed through the ordeal of spiritual sacrifice (meditation) effected by divine powers,\textsuperscript{135} with the elimination of all his earthly impurities. The “aranyā” of the Chāndogya is appropriated here in the sense of a forest (vana) and its name “Naṁśreyasa” is a clear indication that it is the region of liberation, the summum bonum of all spiritual aspirations. The divine minstrels and their maidens are the elaboration of the “apsaras” concept of the Kauśitaki. The smell of vernal flowers can also be traced to the same source in its concept of “brahma-gandha”. Birds and bees have emerged from the concepts of the reservoirs of water and flowers of the Rg-Veda and the Kauśitaki respectively. The golden chariots with rare jewels are the transformation of the concept of “deva-yāna”, the path of the gods, associated with flame (arcis). The golden palace of Viṣṇu with crystal floor are from the ideas of the Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa. The location of the royal hall at the seventh chamber suggests that the realm of Viṣṇu has transcended the range of time, marked by six seasons. The two doorkeepers, Nanda and Sunanda, correspond to Indra and Prajāpati the two door-keepers of Brahmā, as recorded in the Kauśitaki. The emblems of sovereignty of Lord Viṣṇu, such as the white canopy, the bed of

\textsuperscript{133} \emph{tasminn atitya munayaḥ saḍ asajjamānāḥ kakṣāḥ samāṇa-vayaśvaotha saśatamāyām. devācakṣata grhiṭa-gaddau parārdhyānkeyūra-kundalakirīṭa-uvānaka-velau.} 3.15.27 vide. also 4.12.20.

\textsuperscript{134} \emph{praticyām diṣṭabhūd śivā śaṅkha-cakra-gaddā-dharaḥ. ātma-tulyaḥ sōḍalabhīr vinā śrīvatsa-kaustubhau .} 6.9.28cd, 29ab.

\textsuperscript{135} \emph{etasmin agnau devāḥ puruṣaḥ juhvatī, tasyā āhutyaṁ puruṣo bhāṣvaravarṇaḥ sambhavati.} BU 6.2.4.
Ananta, the mammoth gathering of all beings, are elaborations of the grandeur of Brahmā, as found in the Kauśitaki, while the concept of sovereignty itself is derived from the Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa. Last, but not the least, is the concept of Tulasī that replaces the gigantic fig-tree (aśvattha) of the Chāndogya.

It appears from the general tempo of description that while the Bhāgavata has brought the exuberance of poetic effusion to bear upon the majesty of Lord Viṣṇu, it subdues all restlessness, vanity, tumult and the firework of gorgeous exhibition to sublime tranquillity crowned by Lord Viṣṇu as supreme religion (vṛṣa). The mellow light of beauty and peace suffuses the entire atmosphere with the consequent dedication of all trifles at the altar of the Lord. A land of unabated spiritual ovation with the torch of non-dual consciousness ever ablaze, the Vaikunṭha-dhāman of the Bhāgavata fulfils the unsatisfied urge of man to enter the Transcendental from the land of limitations, including the exalted abode of Brahmā, the cosmic soul.

The three abodes of Viṣṇu thus take on new significance in the Bhāgavata. The first of these is Śīṣu-māra-cakra, that lies beyond and yet serves as the basis of the three worlds. The second is the Mahat, the first material nucleus of both the gross and the subtle. The third is the Transcendental, the eternal land of light, that stands for the highest spiritual value.

VIŚUDDHA-SATTVA

The Prakṛti of the Sāṁkhya School is made of tripartite elements viz, Sattva, the element of revelation, Rajas, the element of activity, and Tamas, the element of darkness. All worldly existences exhibit the combination of these three elements in varying degrees and proportions. This combination is the constant character of the three powers. In other words, the three elements of Prakṛti are inextricable from one another. Therefore, if spiritual advancement means increase in the proportion of Sattva it cannot thereby mean the total elimination of Rajas and Tamas. So, wisdom (viveka-khyāti) of the Sāṁkhya School may at best mean the highest expansion of Sattva with

yatra cāḍyāḥ pumāñ āste bhagavān chabda-gocaraḥ.  
sattvāṁ viśṭabhya vi-rajaṁ svānāṁ no mṛdayaṁ vṛṣaḥ. 3.15.15.
Rajas and Tamas reduced to their minimum. The Yoga-system of Patañjali also could not supersede this limitation of Sattva. A crystallized intellect of a successful Yogan may at best remain almost as pure as the soul in which the Rajas and the Tamas elements pale into insignificance.\(^{117}\)

The Bhāgavata conceives pure matter to account for the spiritual region as well as the spiritual body of Reality. While the world is apparently full of miseries, the spiritual region is stated to be free from them and is full of bliss. Similarly, while the worldly body is subject to afflictions and death, the spiritual body that enables the liberated soul to participate in the eternal ovation, is immune from such limitations. So, while the world of Prakṛti has the elements of restlessness and delusion, another matter has to be conceived to provide for both the spiritual region and the spiritual body. This spiritual matter is “viśuddha-sattva” or pure matter.

Pure matter is Sattva marked by the total absence of Rajas and Tamas.\(^{118}\) It is interesting to observe the kinship of pure matter with impure matter i.e., Prakṛti. This is indicated by the Bhāgavata which puts in the mouth of Brahmā the following words: “I have been created by Sattva which constitutes the dear body of the Lord. Yet I do not know the mystery of Truth, not to speak of others who have been made by Rajas and Tamas.\(^{119}\) Now, Sattva mentioned in the verse along with Rajas and Tamas deserves to be considered as an element of Prakṛti. Yet the adjunct—“that which constitutes the dear body of the Lord”—makes this Sattva absolutely pure i.e., free from the association of Rajas and Tamas. It appears from such description that the conception of pure matter is an outgrowth of the original idea of Sattva usually related to Rajas and Tamas.

\(^{117}\) On the Sūtra 3.55 of Patañjali, the Vyāsa-bhāṣya comments:—

\(^{118}\) pravartate yatra rajas tamas tayoh sattvaṁ ca mūram na ca kāla-vikramaḥ. na yatra māyā kim utāpere harer anuvratā yatra sura-sūrārcitaḥ. 2.9.10.

\(^{119}\) ime vayam yat-priyayaiva tanaṁ sattvena sṛṣṭā bahīr antar āvih. gatiṁ na sukṣmam tayāṣ ca vidmahe kutośūrdyā itara-pradhānāḥ. 8.5.31.
It was imagined that Sattva could, after all, reach the stage of perfection when it was divested completely of Rajas and Tamas. Such thought was encouraged by the idea that if there could be a state when Rajas and Tamas could be reduced to their minimum, then it was only another step forward to eliminate them altogether from the pale of Sattva.

The conception of pure Sattva is vital to the doctrine of Vaiṣṇava salvation. The salvation of the Sāmkhya and the Yoga consists in the final isolation of the individual soul from the association of Prakṛti. Wisdom by which such a state is obtained is also, according to them, a mode of Prakṛti, which at the exhaustion of the Karman by virtue of which the present physical body of the enlightened soul has been brought into being, eventually dissolves into Prakṛti. Thus, the individual soul continues for ever to remain isolated from worldly pleasure and pain. But such isolation is considered by the Vaiṣṇavas to be at best a release from the clutches of worldly sorrows and therefore a negative conception. A Vaiṣṇava would rather like to enter a spiritual region and participate in the pleasures of that blissful region of eternal life. To provide for such a concept of blissful state of existence, Vaiṣṇavism had to conceive pure matter as distinguished from impure matter i.e., Prakṛti of the Sāmkhya School.

While pure Sattva is thus immune from Rajas and Tamas, the Bhāgavata has given it the status of being considered as a modification of Yoga-māyā. The Bhāgavata takes the eightfold majesty (aṣṭa-mahā-siddhi) like reduction to the atomic size, or reduction to the lightest measure etc. (aṇīman, laghiman) that pertain to God, to be the special characteristics of pure matter. And, these features, as stated before, belong to Yoga-māyā. Therefore these majesties establish a link between Yoga-māyā and pure matter. And as Yoga-māyā is a dynamic power one may conceive pure matter to be a solidification of Yoga-māyā.

Pure matter provides for a body of the Absolute. The Bhāgavata calls this matter to be a shining jewel (vasu-deva)

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128 bhagavān ... mahā-vibhūti-patih ... 
visuddha-sattvan dharma-jñāna-virāgyaiśvaryādyāṣṭa- 
mahā-siddhyupalakṣanam ... sandhārayamāṇa ... āste ... 
ātma-yoga-māyā-viracita-vividha-loka-yātrā-gopīthāya .5.20.40-41
and Bhagavān being revealed through this is therefore called Vasudeva. Such concretization of Reality, as refined and pure as it might possibly be, lends meaning to our worship whether for worldly pleasures or for salvation. Revealed through pure matter in a definite form, Bhagavān offers the results of our good acts. On the other hand he dispels the knowledge of plurality for a person aspirant of liberation, by defining himself in a particular form. If we recall the hoary antiquity of image worship among the Hindus from the age of the Rg-Veda, the conception of ‘pure matter’ by the Vaiṣṇavas as an explanation to the divine form of God, may be regarded as a valuable contribution in the sphere of religion and ethics, as well as in the field of metaphysics.

The Doctrine of Descent is also dependent upon this conception of “pure matter”. While a Descent appears like an ordinary mortal in many respects, he is distinguished from the latter in that his intrinsic consciousness is always unclouded. This is because his form is spiritual as distinguished from the physical body of an ordinary mortal, made of tripartite energy of Prakṛti. The material which provides for the spiritual form of a Descent is “pure matter”.

According to the Vaiṣṇava conception, a liberated soul proceeds to the spiritual region of Viṣṇu, called Vaikunṭha. Such a soul is conceived to have spiritual form corresponding

121 sattvaṁ viśuddham vasu-deva-tadbhitam
yad iyate tatra pumān apārtaḥ.
sattve ca tasmin bhagavāna vāsu-deva
hyadhokṣayo me namaśā vidhiyate... 4.323

122 sattvaṁ viśuddham śrayate bhavān sthitau
śarirānāṁ śreya-upāyamāṁ vapiḥ.
vedā-kriyā-yoga-tapaḥ-samādhibhis
tanārthaṃ yena janaḥ samihate... 10.2.34

123 sattvaṁ na ced dhātar idam nijam bhavet
vījñānam ajñāna-bhidāparamājanam.
guṇa-prakāśaṁ anumīyate bhavān
prakāśate yasya ca yena vā guṇaḥ... 10.2.35

124 RV 3.4.5 uses the word “nr-pelas” (having the form of man) to describe a Vedic deity; vide also the Journal of the German Oriental Society XXII. p. 587 ff.

125 bibharṣi, rūpānyavabodha ātmā
kṣemāya lokasya caraścarasya.
sattvopapannāṁ sukhāvahāni
satāṁ abhadraṁ muhuḥ khalānām... 10.2.29
to the spiritual form of Viṣṇu. "Pure matter" is said to build that body for the liberated soul.\(^\text{126}\)

Finally, the abode of Viṣṇu i.e., Vaikuṇṭha is made of pure matter.\(^\text{127}\). Hence the abode and corporal existence of souls therein are all made possible by the conception of pure matter. In short, the entire process of metamorphosis in Vaiṣṇava theology, which serves as the basis of its conception of salvation and diverse divine manifestations within the universe is hinged upon the idea of "pure matter". Reality of the devotees, whether within the universe or beyond it, is thus conceived in terms of "pure matter". It is the element which presents Truth in a concrete form without obscuring in any way its intrinsic nature. "Pure matter" is thus held to be self-luminous.\(^\text{128}\). While thus worldly forms are evanescent, divine forms are real and true.

\(^\text{126}\) yam dharma-kāma'rtha-vimukti-kāmā
bhajanta iṣṭāṁ gatim āpnuvantī.
kiṁcā'śo rāṭyaḥ deham avyayaṁ
karotu me'dabhra-dayo vimokṣyaṁ... 8.3.19

\(^\text{127}\) paitī vikuṇṭhā śubhrasya vaikuṇṭhaṁ sura-sattamaṁ.
tayoh sva-kalayā jajīe vaikuṇṭho bhagavān svayam...
vaikuṇṭhaṁ kalpito yena lako loka-namaskṛtaḥ.
ramayā prārthiṇamānena devyā tat-priya-kāmyayaḥ... 8.5.4-5

\(^\text{128}\) na tad vicirām khalu sattva-dhāmanī
sva-tejasā yo nu purā'pivat tamah... 7.8.24 ed
Chapter VII

THE STRUCTURE OF THE FIRST GRADE

BRAHMAN

Brahman is the first assertion of Truth against the transient cosmic process. It is the world-ground. Physical creation emerges from Brahman, is sustained by it and eventually dissolves into the essence of Brahman. To be the ground of the changing world-process, Brahman has no beginning, middle and end; it has no internality and externality.1 It is the transcendent reality beyond the expressed (vyakta) and the potential (avyakta) forms which ultimately sink into the general background called Brahman.2

Intuition reveals Brahman as the reality comparable to the continuum of ether (ākāśam iva kevalam), the all-comprehensive, undifferentiated and self-luminous being without any reference to individuality.3 It is a stretch of consciousness in which there is apparently no sensible diversity of feature, no preference, no differential incidence of subjective regard. As consciousness pure and simple, Brahman has counteracted the insistence of the flow of tripartite energy (tri-guṇa) by its innate splendour4 and is settled in its native essence which is a challenge to all differential incidence.5 God (Śiva) and primordial matter (Śakti) postulate this non-differential background whose

1 na yasyādyantau madhyāṇa iva svāh paro nāntaraṁ bāhīḥ. viśvavāṁśi yad yasmād viśvaṁ ca tad yāṁ mahat... 8.1.12
2 sabda-brahmātmanas tasya vyaktaḥvyaktā'ītmanaḥ paraḥ. brahmāvabhātī vitato nānā-lakṣyupābhyumkitaḥ... 8.12.47
3 tvam hi brahma paraṁ jyotir guṇaṁ brahmaṁ vāṁMaye. yaṁ paśyantyamadātmā ākāśam iva kevalam... 10.63.64
4 tvam tvāṁ ahaṁ brahma paraṁ premaṁ saṁ pratyak-srotasyātmāṁ sanātanaṁ. svā-Tejasā dhvasta-guṇa-pravāham. vande viṣnunām Kapilaṁ vedā-garbham... 9.33.8
5 jyotiḥ paraṁ 'yatra rajas tamaṁ ca. sattvaṁ na yad brahma nirasta-bhedam... 8.7.31 cd
sovereignty over the cosmic process is unquestionably established by its non-dual nature.⁶

Though *per se* Brahman is limitless, non-dual, immutable and primeval being, it is the reservoir of diverse, heterogeneous and even contradictory potencies. Brahman is therefore the immediate moment and the explanation of the universe of bewildering diversity.⁷ The Law of Causality which binds the individual units of the universe into a harmonious system operates against the background of Brahman which imbues the details of the universe with meaning and rationality.⁸ Nonduality of Brahman is therefore to be interpreted as the non-differentiation when the diverse energies of Brahman are lulled into inactivity. Brahman may be characterised by that state, before creation started. The Bhāgavata describes such a state as the repose of Brahman upon its sweet will.⁹

When the cosmic process begins, Brahman, the ultimate source of plurality, pronounces itself as time, destiny and the other conditions of the cosmic process. They emerge out of Brahman through the play of Māyā and are again sunk into Brahman when spiritual insight penetrates the veil of limited knowledge.¹⁰ By insight, the universe composed of the individual soul (ādhyātmika), its body (ādhishautika) and the environment (ādhidaivika), is reduced to Brahman, the ultimate background of all diversity.¹¹ When the creative process is in

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⁶ jāne tvāṁ iśāṁ viśvāya jagato yoni-bijayoḥ.
   śakteḥ śivasya ca āparāṁ yat tad brahma nirantaram...
   tvam eva bhagavann etac chiva-saktiyoh sa-rūpayoh.
   viśvaṁ śrjasī pāsyatis krīdann ārṇa-phaṭo yathā.
   4.6.42-43

⁷ yasmin viruddha-gatayo hyaniśam patanti
   vidyādayo vīvidha-saktaya ānupūrvyā.
   tad brahma viśvabhavam ekam anantām ādyam
   ānanda-mātraram avikāram aham āprādaye...
   4.9.16

⁸ tvam brahma paramāṁ guhyāṁ sad-asad-bhava-bhāvanam...
   nānā-saktibhir ābhātas tvāṁ ātma jagad-īśvaraḥ...
   8.7.24

⁹ bhagavān eka āśedam agre ātmātmāṁ vibhuh...
   ātmeccaḥnugatāvātmānāṁ-matrāya-palakṣayaḥ...
   meneśantam iṣātmānam suptā-saktir asupta-dṛk...
   3.5.23, 24 cd

¹⁰ ayan tu lākṣād bhagavāṁs tryadhīṣaḥ
   kūṭa-stha ātma kalayāvatirṇaḥ.
   yasminn avidyā-racitaṁ nir-arthakaṁ
   palyanti nānātām api pratītam...
   4.16.19 vide also 10.63.25-26

¹¹ ābhāsā ca nirodhā ca yatōṣṭyadhyāvāsyate.
   sa āśrayaḥ param brahma paramām eti sadyate...
   yo‘dhyātmiko‘yaṁ ātmaḥ sośāvevādhaivaivekāh.
   yas tatrobhaya-viścchedaḥ ātmaḥ hyādhibhautikāḥ...
   2.10.7-8
action Brahmān serves as the abode of all beings\textsuperscript{12} and inanimate objects.\textsuperscript{13} By the inexplicable law of its own, Brahmān thus plays the world drama; and, when it plays the drama out it once again falls back against itself as the only residuum.\textsuperscript{14} Brahmān is thus existence, pure and simple, against the fleeting shadows of creation and is permanently charged with the potentiality of creation, which acts and reacts, at regular intervals, against the immutable background, the Brahmān (kṣara) of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavata.

ĀTMA-MĀYĀ

One might recall that under the urge of Divine Sport Yoga-māyā, which itself is the first outcome of Divine Sport, undergoes the process of differentiation, by the interaction of the two aspects of Yoga-māyā—yoga (divinity) and māyā (delusion). Viṣṇu-māyā represents the stage when the process of differentiation of these two aspects gets more pronounced with insistence on the yoga-aspect. That is why the sense of unity (eko’ham) rules over the knowledge of diversity at the stage of Viṣṇu-māyā; and, so, predominantly as the principle of divinity Viṣṇu-māyā ensures salvation i.e., a state of existence free from limitations (Vaikuṇṭha-dhāman). The process of differentiation is further accentuated when the predominance of divinity is replaced by equal claim of both yoga and māyā. This is the stage of Ātma-māyā, the divine will to be many (bahu syām).

Ātma-māyā then is the principle of diversity. Its varying manifestations baffle all predictions and outstep rational calculations.\textsuperscript{15} As static existence Brahmān cannot explain the emergence of the universe composed of names and forms. Ātma-

\textsuperscript{12} yat paśyati na paśyantam ca kṣur yasya na riṣyati.
\textsuperscript{13} tāṁ bhūta-nilayaṁ devaṁ supraṇam upadhāvata... 8.1.11
\textsuperscript{14} yasya kukṣāvidoṁ sarvaṁ sā’tmaṁ bhūti yathā tathā.
\textsuperscript{15} tat tuṣyapiṁ paḥ sarvaṁ kim idaṁ māyayā vinā... 10.14.17
\textsuperscript{16} sa viśva-kāyaḥ puru-hūta iśaḥ
\textsuperscript{17} satyaḥ svayaṁ-fyotir ajah purāṇah.
\textsuperscript{18} dhatte’sya jaṁma’dyaajeyā’tma-śaktyā
\textsuperscript{19} tāṁ vidyayo’dyāma niḥ-iha āste... 8.1.13
\textsuperscript{20} yo hyāma-māyā-vibhavaṁ ca paryagad
\textsuperscript{21} vathāḥ nabhasvantam athā’pāre kutah... 2.6.36
māyā stands for dynamism in Brahman, that spins out of Brahman the cobweb of creation.16

Dynamism of Reality—whether Yoga-māyā, Viṣṇu-māyā or Ātma-māyā—seems to yield two facets, energy (sakti) and matter (dravya). In relation to Yoga-māyā the matter-aspect of yoga explains the creation of Goloka while the energy-aspect of yoga is visible in the conception of goṭiṣ. Māyā—portion of Yoga-māyā is operative only in the producing of the ever-renewing enchantment involved in the association of Kṛṣṇa with the goṭiṣ. In the sphere of Viṣṇu-māyā, pure matter, out of which Vaikuṇṭha-dhāman is brought into existence, and Śrī together with the other potencies, noted above, represent respectively the matter and the energy aspects of yoga while māyā is confined to creating a picturesque halo round Viṣṇu in its conception of Vaikuṇṭha-dhāman. Thus both in Yoga-māyā and in Viṣṇu-māyā the māyā-aspect is reduced to its minimum while the yoga-aspect rules and transforms itself into a spiritual region and a potency through which Reality realises its urge of Divine Sport. Although in Ātma-māyā the emphasis on yoga is distributed equally between yoga and māyā and the balance between the two finds further expression in a sort of antagonism17 when Ātma-māyā gives rise to two contradictory powers, Cīt-sakti and Māyā, yet the transformation of Ātma-māyā into energy and matter both with regard to Cīt-sakti and Māyā remains intact. Thus the divine aspect of Ātma-māyā is visible as energy called Cīt-sakti and also as matter (viśuddha-sattva) forming the pure bodies of the Descents (avatāras). Similarly Māyā is split up into Avidyā and Prakṛti of which the first works as the force of worldly life while the second operates as matter giving rise to the physical world. Vidyā is also produced from Māyā to counteract the force of Avidyā.

So, Ātma-māyā, the divine will inherent in Brahman, the first grade of Reality, behaves in different ways. It evolves into

16 yathā’tma-māyā-yogena nānā-laktuṇaḥ prabhūmitam.
viśrampana viṣṭjan grhaṇan bibhrad ātmānām atmanāh
kriḍāyaṁga-sankalpa ūrṇa-nābhīr yathorṇute
tathā tad-viṣayaṁ dhehi maniṣāṁ mayi mādhaiva... 2.9.26-27

17 māyāṁ vyudeṣya cīc-čaktya kaivalya śhita atmanī. 1.7.23cd
bahu-rūpā iśābhāti māyayā bahu-rūpayā.
ramamāṇo guṇeṣvasyā mamāḥtam iti manyate... 2.9.2
Māyā which puts up a show of manifoldness in the Non-dual when Māyā gives rise to the guṇa-reals. When delusion (Avidyā) brought about by Māyā deepens and the individual soul is caught between the prongs of “I and Mine” (aham mama iti)—the selfish motive—the individual soul is then plunged into the abyss of darkness and affliction. Thus Māyā not only brings about the physical existence, gross and subtle, but also clothes the soul with a physical form. Yet the soul can trace its way back to its basic nature by the operation of Cit-śakti which is equally vigilant within the cosmic process, and which kindles Vidyā for the extinction of Avidyā, the evil force.

Thus Ātma-māyā provides both for the principle of bondage and the principle of release. As Cit-śakti and Māyā, these two principles operate in God. Or, these two principles may operate as Vidyā and Avidyā in the individual soul whose liberation is guaranteed when divine flame from Cit-śakti kindles Vidyā into super-consciousness resulting in the disappearance of Avidyā. Of the two principles, then, spirituality triumphs over materiality and Ātma-māyā thus serves the cause of Divine Sport to its further unfoldment. The panorama of diversity never obscures the unitary vision.

18 yasmin viruddha-gatayo hyaniśam patanti
vidyā’dayo vividha-śaktaya ānupūryā...
tad brahma. 4.9.16 ab
19 yathā’tma-māyā-yogena bibhrad ātmānam ātmanā...
20 ātma-māyām rte brahman parasyā’nubhavā’tmanah.
na ghājeta’tṛtha-sambandhaḥ svapna-draśṭur ivā’ñjasā...
21 ekaḥ sṛjati bhūtāni bhagavān ātma-māyāyā.
esāṁ bandhaḥ ca mokṣaṁ ca sukhaṁ duḥkhaṁ ca niśkalaḥ...
22 vidyā-vidyā mama tanū viddhyuddhava sarīrīnāṁ,
bhāda-mokṣa-kāri ādye māyāyā me vinirmiite...
23 yathā’tma-tantraḥ bhagavān vikriḍatya-ātma-māyāyā,
visṛjya vā yathā māyām udāste sākṣi-vad vibhuh...
CHAPTER VIII

THE DOCTRINE OF INCARNATION (EXPOSITORY)

When the Rg-Vedic seer had declared—"Who can exhaust the powers of Viṣṇu?—Not even one capable of counting the dust particles on the earth dares do it."—hardly did he realise that his declaration would provide a very fertile ground for creative imagination of posterity. Indeed the Bhāgavata has exploited this Rg-Vedic idea to serve as the foundation of its illustrious Doctrine of Incarnation (āvatāra-vāda). The importance of this Doctrine in the Bhāgavata cult cannot be overestimated. The Bhāgavata starts with several questions all of which revolve round the Doctrine of Incarnation—the purpose of an Incarnation like Kṛṣṇa, the noble deeds an Incarnation performs, the religion which an Incarnation leaves to humanity through his teachings and performances as a sure guide, and so on. Through the length and breadth of the Bhāgavata, these questions have been answered in details so that the Bhāgavata can legitimately make the concluding remarks: "Thus the initial questions have been fully answered in that the extraordinary

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1 viṣṇor nu kaṁ vīryāṇi pra vocāṁ yaḥ pārthivāṇi vimame rajāṁsi. RV 1.154.1.
2 viṣṇor nu vīrya-gaṇanām katamo’rhatiha yaḥ pārthivāṇyāpi kavīr vimame rajāṁsi.
   gāyan guṇān daśa-satā’nana ādi-devaḥ
   sēṣo’dhunā’pi samavasyati nāsya paramaḥ. 2.7.40ab, 41cd.
3 yāni yaniha karmāṇi yair yaḥ svacchada-janmabhīḥ.
   cakre karoṭi kartā vā haris tāni bruvantu naḥ
   yo vā anantasya guṇān anantān
   anukramiṣyan sa tu bāla-buddhiḥ
   rajāṁsi bhūmer gaṇayet kathaṅcit
   kālena naivākhila-sakti-dhāmnaḥ. 11.4.1-2.
4 sūta jānāsi bhadraṁ te bhagavān sātvatāṁ patiḥ.
   devakyaṁ vasudevasya jāto yasya cikīrṣayaṁ
   tasya karmānyudārāṇi parigitāṁ sūribhiḥ
   brūhi naḥ śraddhadhānāṁ līlayā dadhataḥ kalāḥ
   kṛtvāṁ kila karmāṇi saha rāmeṇa kelaṅaḥ
   atimarttyāṇi bhagavān guḍhaḥ kapāta-mānuṣaḥ
   brūhi yogelvare kṛṣṇe brahmāṇye dharma-varmaṇi
   svāṁ kāṣṭham adhunopete dharmaḥ kāṁ saraṇāṁ gataḥ.

1.1.12, 17, 20, 23.
deeds of Incarnations have received adequate treatment in the body of the work". Hence the Doctrine of Incarnation may be regarded as the central pivot round which revolve the other Theories of the Bhāgavata cult.

It may be recalled that non-dual consciousness (advaya jñāna) is the highest truth of the Bhāgavata. Under the spur of Divine Sport this supreme Reality, as characterised by Yoga-māyā, the first expression of the instinct of Divine Sport, is called Bhagavān, the all-blissful, the Kṛṣṇa of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavata. And, Bhagavān, the third grade of Reality, is the primordial source of all Incarnations. By the intrinsic law of Divine Sport Bhagavān is differentiated into Viṣṇu, the second grade of Reality, and that into Brahman, the first grade of Reality, and finally that into Puruṣa (God). If an Incarnation is taken to be a partial representation (Aṁśa) of his original then Puruṣa, distant from Bhagavān by three degrees, may legitimately be described as "the part of the part of the part". But Divine Sport does not stop at Puruṣa. Untrammelled by the law of causality that necessarily involves time-sequence between the cause and the effect, Divine Sport proceeds to bring into existence the infinitesimal details of creation at the same instant. This means that Divine Sport starts its operation from the emanation of Viṣṇu from Bhagavān and finishes with the emergence of the grosser of the gross. The congregation thus brought about by a single stress in Bhagavān consists in Prakṛti and all its evolutes, the cosmic controllers that work behind the cosmic process (loka-pālas), God, the super-cosmic principles like Time and Nature, and also, Brahman and Viṣṇu—the
transcendental Realities. The widest concept of Incarnation, envisaged by the Bhāgavata here, apparently embraces all expressions of Bhagavān—immanent and transcendent, sentient and insentient—all integrated by the law of Divine Sport into the grand unity of Bhagavān, the third grade of Reality.

If, however, an Incarnation be conceived in terms of immanence i.e., a descent of the Transcendental to the phenomenal state of existence and if such immanence is confined to a conscious principle working in close co-operation with the physical universe, then such a conception gives rise to the idea of the world-soul. Puruṣa of the Bhāgavata responds to this idea because He is the representation of Bhagavān, the Transcendental, within the physical universe, although He is directly traced to Brahmaṇ, the first grade of Reality and is also intimately connected with the physical universe which is taken to constitute the psycho-physical organism of God. So the Bhāgavata with its characteristically monotheistic approach has discovered God, also called Puruṣa, because of His permanent residence in the universe (pura). And the Doctrine of Incarnation has found fresh impetus with God as the first principle. In other words, God as the first immanence of the Transcendental (ādyāvatāra) enjoys the exclusive privilege of serving as the perennial source of all Descents (avatāras) that from time to time emerge from God and having discharged their specific mission recede to Him again. The Bhāgavata has given a long list of names of Descents that are expressly stated to have emerged from Puruṣa. 

9 ādyāvatāraḥ puruṣaḥ parasya kālāḥ svabhāvāḥ sad-asan-manaś ca. 
dravyam viśāra guṇa indriyāni 
virāṭ svarāṭ sthāṇu cariṇu bhūmnaḥ... 
ahan bhavo yajña ime prajēśā 
dakṣādayo ye bhavad-ādayaś ca 
sva-loka-pālāḥ khaṇa-loka-pālāḥ 
hr-loka-pālāḥ tala-loka-pālāḥ... 
gandharva-vidyādhara-cāraneśaḥ 
ye yakṣa-raṣoraga-nāga-nāthāḥ. 
ye vā ṛṣinām ṛṣabhaḥ pīṭṛpāṁ 
dayendra-siddheśvara-dānauendṛaḥ... 2.6.42-45.

10 ayajam vyaktam avyaktam puruṣam su-śamāhitāḥ... 2.6.29cd. 
Śridhara comments:=" 
vyaktam indriyādīrtupaṇa, avyaktam svataḥ. anena "puruṣaṁ jātam agrata" ityasya ērtho darśitaḥ.

11 etan nānāvatārāṇāṁ nidhānam bijam avayam... 1.3.5 ab.
12 1.3.6-26.
The concluding remarks of the Bhāgavata in this context are interesting in that they throw light on the relationship between God and His Descents. The Bhāgavata compares here the Descents with streamlets (kulyā) and God with their inexhaustible reservoir (avidāsin sarāḥ). Such comparison suggests that while God exercises limitless powers the Descents manifest only partial powers although, as the same comparison leads us to believe, the Descents are made of the same stuff as God. Thus His Descents, whose number can never be exhausted, are but the forms of God. In spite of this consubstantiality between God and His Descents, the Bhāgavata has indulged in the classification of Descents, based on partial manifestation of powers in a Descent and also on the practical difference between God and the empirical ego (Jīva). Descents, according to the Bhāgavata, fall under three distinct categories—Amśa, Kalā and Amśa-kalā. Amśas are literally forms of God, having omniscience and omnipotence although they need not reveal all the powers they actually possess. Yajña, Vibhu, Vāmana were all parts (Amśas) of God. They have exhibited divine powers which can legitimately belong to God only. Kalās, on the other hand, are empirical egos, the God-filled souls. All gods belong to this category. Among human beings, Vyāsa, Gaya,
Datta, Kumāra<sup>23</sup> are all God-filled souls with extraordinary powers not to be found in ordinary mortals. Amśa-kalās, the residuary type, expose hybrid characters of both man and God. For example, Rṣabha revealed the signs of Godhood at his very birth<sup>24</sup> although he owes his origin to human parentage. The Bhāgavata therefore calls this species Amśa-kalās where the borderline between man and God seems to have been blurred.<sup>25</sup> It may be noted here that this classification of Descents is only practical and need not be taken too rigidly. For example, the third variety of Descents (Amśa-kalās) is an obvious admission of the fact that both man and God can be one and the same person. In fact the Bhāgavata itself has used the term “Kalā” to describe Descents in general<sup>26</sup> and this gives a hint to Śrīdhara to describe any being as “Kalā”, who displays the symptom of divinity and still has not been able to acquire a distinct name in the category of Descents.<sup>27</sup>

The intrinsic law of Divine Sport, that regulates the unfoldment of the cosmic process, suggests that creation is a purposive endeavour conforming to a definite design. Although from a higher point of view, indicated above, God and entire creation are two simultaneous expressions of Bhagavān, yet, in consonance with the Doctrine of Causality (abhivyakti-vāda) adopted by the Bhāgavata, God as the omniscient and omnipotent being may be regarded as the overall superintendent to bring about the operation of Time (Kāla), Nature (Svabhāva) and Action (Karman) on primordial matter (Prakṛti) which thus evolves into different categories (tattvas) resulting ultimately into the fourteen planes of physical existence. In this process of differentiation of primordial matter which is unmanifest (a-vyakta) the first step is the appearance of the three guṇa-reals—sattva,
rajas and tamas—as three distinct realities. God as the witness of each of these realities acquires, in relation to each of them, a separate name. The name varies according as His mission does. For creation God as the witness of rajas is called Brahmā; for sustenance of the universe thus brought into existence God as the witness of sattva is called Viṣṇu; and, when the cosmic drama reaches its denouement He is called Giriṣa, the witness of tamas, responsible for the total annihilation of creation—both gross and subtle. God thus viewed in relation to the three guṇas is called “Guṇāvatāras” and if Descents as such are taken to be distinct from God then God may be said to effect creation, sustenance and destruction through the Guṇāvatāras.

If God is to maintain His transcendental nature while superintending the cosmic process and yet if the creative process is to proceed in perfect harmony, He has to translate His divine will through some other conscious agencies. Such agencies are to be traced to God and they should be directly responsible in their individual capacity for each step of the evolution of categories from the primordial matter (Prakṛti). These agencies, called the cosmic officers with specific assignments (ādhikārikas), and the manifestations of God, in the act of His divine supervision especially with reference to the internal organs (antah-karana) that emerge in course of the evolutionary process, deserve due consideration as well. The first category to evolve from Prakṛti is the cosmic mass (Mahat) and the cosmic officer in charge of it is Hiranīya-garbha who, in the light of the Doctrine of Descent, may be regarded as a partial expression of Brahmā, one of the Guṇāvatāras. From the cosmic mass evolves Ahaṅkāra and the corresponding officer is Rudra, an emanation of Giriṣa, the other Guṇāvatāra. Similarly the officers in charge of the eleven organs—five sense-organs, five action-organs and the mind—are the eleven gods—the god of

28 sattvaḥ rajas tama uti prakṛter guṇās tair
yaktāḥ paraḥ puruṣa eka健康的 dhatte,
shityādāye hari-virici-hareti-sanjñāh
śreyā̄ṃsi tatra khulu sattva-tanor nṛṇāṃ syuḥ... 1.2.23.
29 yo vā aham ca giriṣa ca vibhuḥ svayaṁ ca
sthityudbhave-pralaya-hetava ātma-mulam.
bhittō u tri-pād bhrdha eka uru-prarohas
tasmai nāma bhagavate bhuvana-drumāya... 3.9.16.
30 guṇāvatāraṁ viśvaśa sarga-sthityapayādārayam.
śrjataḥ śri-nivāsasya vyācaksvodāra-vikramam... 3.7.28.
directions, the god of wind, the sun-god, Pracetas, the twin gods (Aśvinī-kumāra-dvaya), the god of fire, the god of lightning (Indra), Upendra, Mitra and the moon. The god of the cosmic egg constituted by the elements is Hiranya-garbha who, as distinguished from the first Hiranya-garbha, the controller of Mahat, may be regarded as a fragment (Amśa) of the latter. This second Hiranya-garbha is the prototype of a number of other gods that occupy the different parts of the gross body of God. As Mahat is the first evolute of which are evolved in succession the other evolutes, the gods from Rudra onwards that control those other evolutes may likewise be regarded as the “Amśas” of Hiranya-garbha. And as Hiranya-garbha bound down to cosmic assignment may be looked upon as an empirical ego (Jiva) so all gods traceable to Hiranya-garbha may be viewed as labouring souls discharging the duties assigned to them by God.

Although God as the cosmic witness endures through each category of creation yet His benign presence is specially felt in mind due to its preponderance of sattva. According to the Bhāgavata the inner mechanism (antaḥ-karaṇa, briefly called mind) consists in Citta, Ahaṁkāra, Buddhi and Manas although in the evolutionary process Citta and Buddhi are treated as identical. Through these is revealed God in four successive forms—Vāsudeva, Saṁkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha. As distinguished from the cosmic officers—Hiranya-garbha,

\[\text{vaikārikān mano jai} \text{ñe devā vaikārikā dāsa.}
\text{diś-vātārka-praceto'scripción-vahnindropendra-mitrakāḥ... 2.5.30.}\]

\[\text{Śrī-śaṁkara uvāca}
\text{yayaṁ na tāta prabhavāma bhūmi}
\text{yasmīn pare'nye pya ja-jiva-kośāḥ.}
\text{bhavanti kāle na bhavanti hīdṛśāḥ}
\text{sahasraśo yatra vayaṁ bhramāmāḥ... 9.4.56.}\]

\[\text{tasyāḥ pṛṣaṭur īṣṭasya kūṭasthasyā'khila'tmanah.}
\text{sṛṣṭiṁ sṛṣṭiṁ sṛṣṭo'ham ikṣayāvābhicoditaḥ... 2.5.17.}\]

\[\text{vide also 10.40.3:}\]

\[\text{mano buddhīr ahaṁkāraś cītām ityantara-ātmakam.}
\text{catur-ādha lakṣyate bheda vṛttyā lakṣaṇā-rūpayā... 3.26.14.}\]

\[\text{Śrīdharā comments on 3.26.21 :—}
\text{adhyātma-rūpeṇa cītām iti, upāśya-rūpeṇa vāsudeva iti, adhiśhāṭā tu}
\text{tasya kṣetra-jñāḥ. evam ahaṁkāre saṁkarṣaṇa upāśyaḥ, rudro'dhiśhā}
\text{ṭhātā, manasi aniruddha upāśyaḥ, candro'dhiśhātā, buddhau pradyum}
\text{na upāśyaḥ brahmā'dhiśhātā iti draṣṭavyam.}\]
Rudra etc.—they are the cosmic witnesses and so, in terms of the Bhāgavata, may be regarded as the Amśas of God, or rather of the Guṇāvātāra Viṣṇu, while Hiranÿa-garbha etc. are His Kalās. The ten organs being just subsidiary to the inner mechanism the Bhāgavata seems to have chosen to confine the divine manifestations to inner mechanism only although a casual reference indicative of other divine manifestations beyond the pale of the inner mechanism is also found in the Bhāgavata.\textsuperscript{36} In the elemental creation, God, the cosmic witness, is found again as Vairāja-Puruṣa in the physical universe and also as the inner controller through the mind of man. Thus under the overall supervision of God, the different cosmic officers, falling into a hierarchical order, bring directly the subtle and gross creations into existence. In terms of the Bhāgavata Doctrine of Descent, God manifests Himself as Amśas and Kalās; as Kalās He becomes involved in creation while as Amśas He stands out of it as its disinterested guide. God thus maintains His immanent and transcendent nature.

Creation down to Mahar-loka continues up to dviparārdha, the life of Hiranya-garbha. Further down, the three worlds involve his daily activity. His everyday is of two kalpas of which one kalpa is meant for his activity while the other is the period of his retirement. The period of activity of Hiranya-garbha, then, should engage our attention while we consider the question of sustenance of the universe. As Viṣṇu, the controller of the sattva-guṇa, God sustains the universe by his unflagging vigilance right up to the end of a kalpa.\textsuperscript{37} And as a kalpa is made up of a few manvantaras, each of which, again, consists in a number of yugas, God marked by these units of time is said to reveal Himself as Descents. This is how God came to be recognised as Manvantarāvataaras and yugāvatāras. In every Manvantara, under the sustained inspiration from God (the Manvantara-vatāra), operate Manu, his sons, the hermits, Indra and the gods in their joint venture to maintain law and order. The holy Scriptures (Vedas) embodying eternal truth are revealed to the hermits; and, Manu as the head of the human organisation

\textsuperscript{36} sātvatāṁ nava-mūrtinām ādi-mūrtir ahaṁ paraḥ... 11.16.32cd.

\textsuperscript{37} ā-kalpaṁ evaṁ gato bhagavān ātma-yoga-māyā-viracita-vividha-loka-yātrā-gopīthāya 5.20.41.
takes to propagate them. The sons of Manu administer human subjects according to the prescriptions of the Vedas. Naturally the subjects perform sacrifices prescribed by Vedic injunctions, in which the gods enjoy their respective shares. But the lion’s share goes to Indra, the god of heaven. It is his duty to pay back the sacrificial benefits in the shape of protection of the three worlds. Thus under the superintendence of a Manvantara’vatāra, gods and men (both rulers and hermits) enter into close co-operation to fulfil the divine mission of sustenance of the universe. Nay, God goes still further. In order to be thorough in His vigilance He distributes His attention to each unit (yuga) of a manvantara. As a Yuga’vatāra, then, He imparts knowledge as an enlightened soul (siddha e.g., Sanaka), teaches the path of action as a ritualistic seer (ṛṣi e.g., Yājñavalkya), propagates yoga (meditation) as a practical spiritualist (yogesa e.g., Dattāreya), contributes to progeny as a progenitor (praśeṣa e.g., Marici), kills the enemies of man (dasyus) as a king (svarāj) and, at the end of a yuga, replaces the whole scene by a new one, as Time. In relation to a Manvantara’vatāra, the entire organisation—both human and celestial—as noted above, consists in so many Kalās. With the aid of their respective Kalās fourteen Manvantara’vatāras—Yajña, Vibhū, Satyasena and eleven others—incessantly keep them-

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28 yajñā’dayo yāḥ kathitāḥ purusyas tanavo nṛpa...
manu’dayo jagad-yātrāṁ nayantyābhīḥ pracoditāḥ...
catur-yugaḥnte kālena grastān śrutī-gaṇān yathā...
tapaśa yayo’paśyan yato dharmah sanātanaḥ...
tato dharmam catus-pādaṁ manavato hariyoditāḥ...
yuktāḥ saṅcāravyantyaddhā sve sve kāle mahīṁ nṛpa...
pālayanti prajā-pāla śvoad antaṁ vibhāgaḥ...
yajñā-bhāga-bhujo devaṁ ye ca tatā’vitiā sa taḥ...
indro bhagavata dattaṁ trayokya-sriyam urjitām...
bhūjānaḥ pāśī lokāṁs trin kāmaṁ loke pravargaṁ...

29 jñānam e’ṇuṇyugam brūte hariḥ siddha-svarūpa-dhīk.
ṛṣi-rūpa-dharaḥ karma yogam yogesa-rūpā-dhīk...
sargaṁ prajñā-rūpeṇa dasyāṁ hanyāt svarūpa-vāpyū.
kāla-rūpeṇa sarvējām a-bhavaṁ prthag-gunaḥ...

30 ṛṣayo manavo devaṁ manu-putrā mahājasaḥ...
kalaṁ sarve harer eva sa-prajāpatayah smināḥ...
1.3.27.

31 tāṁs tathā’vastāṁ viśvya yajñāḥ sarva-gato hariḥ...
yāmaṁ pariṣṭo devaiḥ hatvā’sālat trivijayataṁ...
8.1.18.

8.1.21.

32 darmasya sunṛtāyān tu bhagavān puruṣottamaḥ...
satyasena iti khyāto jataḥ satyavratāṁ saha...
8.1.25.
selves engaged in maintaining law and order throughout a kalpa.

It would appear from the nature of assignments of men and gods, referred to above, that the law and order which they try to uphold is basically moral and spiritual. But, if sustenance of law and order, in spite of its moral and spiritual character, means a stagnation it is bound to be opposed to the very nature of Bhagavān. Bhagavān, as the Doctrine of Divine Sport implies, is the ever-renewing dynamism resulting into infinite differentiations. From the higher point of view such differentiations may be taken as simultaneous, or, following the ordinary law of cause and effect, they may appear one after the other. Nevertheless the fact remains that the differentiations of Bhagavān cannot be categorized into specific patterns and are thus open to fresh possibilities. As a preparation for such possibilities Bhagavān has endowed man with free will. And as free will involves a choice between at least two alternatives, it implies a struggle between two opposites—instinct and reason—the demons and the gods. So man is the battling ground of two contrary forces and, in this incessant fight, the evil, as a rule, gains victory over the good, because the divine purpose is accelerated by the process of steady deterioration. This steady deterioration is reflected in the conception of the four yugas in which the movement lies from the golden age to the iron age. That God silently approves of this process is suggested by the fact that He allows change of His colour in response to the change of era. When such conflict between the good and the evil reaches a critical point, that is to say, when the evil spirits flourish and the good are set at naught by the denial of even elementary justice to them, Bhagavān realises His fresh

“yāṁ yāṁ saktīṁ upāsītya puruṣākāriṇaṁ pariḥ pumān. ātmānam kriyayām kriyā karoṇaṁ vikaroti ca... 2.4.7.”

“yathā gupāṁ tu pratīṣṭa yugapāt kramālo'pi vā, bibhāti bhūriṣas ikekaṁ kuvaṇaṁ karmāṇi janmabhāṁ... 2.4.9.”

“śaṁ vanāṁ trayo hyaṁ gṛhṇato'nuyugam tathāṁ. suklā raktaṁ tathā pita tīḍāṁ kṛṣṇatāṁ gataṁ... 10.8.13.”
possibility, at that juncture, by courting embodiment as a Descent.47

According to the Bhāgavata pure matter constitutes the body of a Descent.48 And pure matter being supra-cosmic substance it is but natural for a Descent, so Śrīdhara’s trend of arguments would suggest, to depart from this world together with his body, as distinguished from a yogin who by mystic powers (yoga-dhāraṇā) burns his physical body and then departs. If Śrīdhara’s contention is limited to the fact that a Descent departs with his body made of pure matter the Bhāgavata will come to his support.49 But if he takes this verse to mean that a Descent possesses a single body of pure matter only, the Bhāgavata will contradict him; for, it expressly mentions that a Descent relinquishes his body before departure.50 These two apparently contradictory statements by the Bhāgavata may be reconciled if a Descent is recognised to have a couple of bodies—one of pure matter and the other of Prakṛti. In fact the Bhāgavata recognises both the bodies to belong to God, the first Descent. It is stated that the entire creation that constitutes the gross body of God is built up by Māyā.51 But, behind this gross form shines in its pristine glory God’s spiri-

47 tvam deha-tantrāḥ prālamāya pāpmanāṁ	nidesa-bhājāṁ ca vibho vibhūtaye.
yathāvatārās tava śūkarādayas

tathā’yaṁ aṣṭaṁ-paṭhaṁ-paladbhaye... 3.33.5.
48 tvayodito’yaṁ jagato hitāya

tyādā yadā veda-paṭhaṁ puruṣāṁ.
bādhyaṁ pāṣaṇḍa-paṭhāṁ a-sadbhāṁ

tadā bhavāṁ sattva-guṇaṁ bibharti... 10.48.23 vide also 10.2.29-34.
49 lokā’bhīrāmāṁ svā-tanum dhāraṇā-ṝgyana-maṅgalam.
yoga-dhāraṇayā-gneyyā dagadhaṁ dhāmaṁ avāśiṣat svakam... 11.31.6.
Śrīdhara pleads for the spiritual form of Bhagavān as follows:—

bhagavāṁ tu... svā-taṁ-saṁita eva svakam dhāmaṁ vaikunṭhā’khyam

āviṣat... iciousa-sarīrā’bhīrāyena vā yathā-srutam eva’stu; tatrā’pi

tu lokā’bhīrāmāṁ-ityādīnāṁ viśeṣāṇāṁ anarthaka-prasaṅgāṁ, tad

āpi adagadhaṁ nirgata ityeva sāmāpratam...
50 yayaḥ harad bhuvu bhāraṁ tāṁ tanum viṣahāvajah.
kaṇṭakam kaṇṭakeneva dvayaṁ cā’piśūh samam...
yathā matsu’dā-rūpeṇa dhatte jahyād yathā nātaḥ.

bhī-bhāraḥ kṣayito yena jahau tac ca kalēvaram... 1.15.34-35.
51 amuni bhagavād-rūpe māyā te khyāvartnita.
ubhe āpi na grīhaṁ māyā-syṣte vipaścitaḥ... 2.10.35.
tual form envisaged by the Puruṣa-Sūkta.²² Indeed it is in
fitness of things that God should have a couple of forms—one
material and the other spiritual—because He is the Lord of two
powers, Māyā and Cit-sakti and the two forms are brought
about by these two powers respectively. And as Descents are
but God in miniature forms they should also wield the same
powers in varying degrees. But these two powers are to be
confined to His “parts” (Anīsas) only and not to be extended to
“Kalās” as well, who, in spite of their extraordinary behavi-
our, are still labouring under Avidyā. This means that the
spiritual form is noticeable in the three Guṇāvatāras, the four
emanations of Viṣṇu (Vyuḥas),²³ the Cosmic Descents, the
Vairāja-Puruṣa and the Descents who come down upon the
earth to lighten its burden of evils.

Among the Descents having a couple of bodies, the
Saviour Descents deserve special attention here. The Bhāgavata
designates this type as “Līlāvatāra”,²⁴ and, of all the types the
Bhāgavata considers this to be the best.²⁵ Distinguished from
the Guṇāvatāras or the Vyūhas revealed in the isolated corner
of an individual mind, a Līlāvatāra comes to dwell with us.
Moved by natural pity²⁶ he assumes all sorts of forms—of man,
animal, fish and what not²⁷—only to abide by the desire of his
devotees.²⁸ A Līlāvatāra behaves like an ordinary mortal just to

²² pāİyantyado rūpam adabhro-cakusū añ
sahasra-pādoru-bhujānārādābhutam.
sahasra-mūrdha-śraraṇākṣi-nāzikāraṁ
sasra-maulyambara-kupīḍalollasat.. 1.3.4.
²³ Saṁkarṣaṇa is described as “sahasra-śraraṁ sākṣād yam anantam
pracaksate” (3.26.25ab). Aniruddha is also described as “tāradena-
divara-śyāma” (3.26.28c).
²⁴ bhāvatyaṁca sattvena lokāṁ vai lokabhāvāṁ.
līlāvatāraṁ navata deva-tīryaṁ-nara-diṣu.. 1.2.34.
²⁵ prābhāyaṁ yān ta añamanī
līlāvatāraṁ puruṣasya bhūmāṁ
āpiyatāṁ karṇa-kaśyapā-losān
anukramīye ta imāṁ supeśāṁ.. 2.6.46.
²⁶ apyārāga-uritayo yasya maḥi tvāma-bhuvādayaṁ.
yathā-matiğaṁ añmaṁ maṁ kṛṣṇugraha-vigradam.. 4.7.24.
²⁷ sūresvarāśiḻa tathāvāṁ nṝsvapi
tīryaṁ saṁvapī te ṯanāsya
jannāṁsatām dur-madā-nigrāhāya
prabhō vidhātaṁ sad-anugrahaṁ ca.. 10.14.20 vide also 7.9.38.
²⁸ nāmas te deva-dveṣa saṁkha-cakra-gadā-dhara,
-bhāketecchopata-rūpāya āramotmaṁ nāmoṣtu te.. 10.59.25.
win our confidence and thereby to instill into us the ideals of life. That is why Rāma, a Līlā'vatāra, appears to have been mad with the grief for Sītā only to awaken us to the troubles that worldly attachments mean. Otherwise, being the eternal possessor of Cīt-īsaktī which by its nature is opposed to delusion, a Līlā'vatāra cannot be swept away by the trifles of weal and woe.\(^{50}\)

So, like an actor he puts on different garments,\(^{60}\) like a magician exhibits his fireworks\(^{61}\) and like wind moves high and low, unbound.\(^{62}\) A Līlā'vatāra destroys the evils, comforts the good and restores moral equilibrium befitting the particular age\(^{63}\) and in accordance with the path laid down by the Vedas.\(^{64}\) He renders impetus to new values (aiśvarya), shows the right path of truth, shower upon his devotees the undenyling gift of pity and thus spreads the halo of his fame.\(^{65}\) Fully satisfied that his unstinted fame has been largely able to overhaul the mental constitution of humanity, a Līlā'vatāra departs from this world, leaving behind the living flame of his glory burning for ever and his enchanting form and speech as the permanent source of inspiration\(^{66}\) and the common heritage of mankind.

Thus the Doctrine of Descent as envisaged by the Bhā-

\(^{50}\) marītyā'vatāras tvīha marītya-sīkṣaṇam rakoṣa-vadhāya va na kevalam vibho hi. kuto'nyathā syād ramataḥ sv a atmanāḥ sītā-kṛtiñī vyasa nāśa vyāsa vyāsa. . . 5.19.5.

\(^{60}\) yathā maṣṭyā'di-rūpeṇa dhatte jaha yathā naṣṭaḥ . . . 1.15.35ab.

\(^{61}\) naitāvatā bhagavataḥ sv a-māyā-maya-śṛtti bhiḥ. praduṣyeta'nuḥkāsā tair māyināḥ kuhakāṁ yathā . . . 12.10.30.

\(^{62}\) ucēva ca bhūteṣu ca ranā vāyur iva vīravāraḥ. noccāva cetantam bha jate nirguṇatvād dhiyo guṇaiḥ . . . 8.24.6.

\(^{63}\) iṁtāṁ nr-tiryag-ṛṣi-deva-jhaga'vatāra ir lokān vibhāvaśi harīte jagat-praṭipān. dharme mahāpurṣaṁ pāṇi yuga-śṛtti tam channām kalau yad abhavas tri-yoga'tha sa tvam . . . 7.9.38.

\(^{64}\) yadā yadā veda-pathaḥ purāṇaḥ bādhya tāṇḍa-pathir a-sadbhiḥ tadā bhāvan sattvā-guṇāṁ bibharti . . . 10.48.23 bed

\(^{65}\) yadā hyadharmena tamo-dhiyo ṇriṇa jīvantā tatraīa ṇi sattvātaḥ kila. dhatte bhagam satyam tāṁ dayām yaśo bhāvyā rūpāṁ dadhad yuge yuge . . . 1.10.25

\(^{66}\) jīvasya yaḥ sanśāraṇo vīmoksāṇaṁ na jānato'nrtha-vahāc charirataḥ. līlā'vatāraḥ sv a-yaśaḥ-pradipakaṁ prājñālayat tv aṁ tam aham prapadye . . . 10.70.39 vide also 11.1.7.
gavata has given the widest interpretation of the Viṣṇu-hymn. It visions Vedic Viṣṇu to range from Bhagavān, the third grade of Reality, to a Lilāvatāra with whom we can establish the most intimate personal relationship. The concept of a Lilāvatāra fulfils the craving of the Vedic seer—"Pray, let Viṣṇu maintain times and again the essence of moral order by His birth; let His glory endow us with auspicious mind". Though Viṣṇu appeals to us directly through God yet His transcendental nature requires due recognition. Thus His immanent and transcendent natures are co-ordinated by the concept of Divine Sport. It is obvious that such benign and sovereign personality would reduce all gods—high and low—to His mere shadows recognised by the Bhāgavata as His Kalās over whom shines the halo of the great God, Viṣṇu.

67 rtasya garbhāṁ januṣā pipartana
mahas te viṣṇo sumatiṁ bhajāmahe... RV 1.156.3

68 sarve hymi vidhi-karās tava sattva-dhāmno
brahmādayo vayam ivela na codijantaḥ.
kṣemāya bhūtaya utāma-sukhāya cā'sya
vikriḍitam bhagavato rucirāvatāraiḥ... 7.9.13
CHAPTER IX

THE DOCTRINE OF INCARNATION (CRITICAL)

The pantheon of Vedic gods of different categories that had filled the entire space of earth, air and heaven, and had participated with men in sacrificial oblations, together with the enemies of both gods and men, seems to have undergone complete orientation by the time the Bhāgavata-Purāṇa was written. The process seems to have been ingrained in the very concept of the different deities of whom a large section represented different aspects only of the same reality. It was no wonder then that the logical mind would try to integrate those aspects on realistic basis, resulting in the reduction of the inflated number of the gods to their rational minimum. The Etymological School of Vedic interpretation, for example, recognised three gods only—the god of fire on the earth, the god of wind or thunderbolt in the air, and the sun-god in the sky. It tried to explain away the sizable number of gods as mere appellations of the three gods, indicative of their functional differences.\(^1\) The Bhāgavata completes this process of synthesis by drawing upon the concept of the three strides of Viṣṇu—a concept that has enjoyed unassailable authenticity throughout the Vedic period. The three strides of Viṣṇu embraced the three regions and naturally, the three gods of the Etymological School were absorbed in the all-comprehensive being of Viṣṇu. The three were thus reduced to one. This unique position of Viṣṇu was duly recognised in that He was called God as distinguished from gods—the Great Personality (Puruṣa) as different from the shadowy figures of the Vedic gods. The declaration of the Puruṣa-Sūktas that Puruṣa was all, encouraged this Great Personality to include further in His being, all categories of exist-

\(^1\) tisra eva devatā iti nairuktāḥ. agnih ṃṛthvi-sthāno vāyur vendro
vāḥntarika-sthānaḥ sūryo dyu-sthānaḥ... Nirukta 7.5

The BU also (1.2.3) says:—sa tredha’tmānam vyakuruta, ādityaṁ
tṛiyoṁ, vāyuṁ tṛiyoṁ. Śaṅkara observes on this:—tathā vāyuḥdityā-
pekṣayāgniṁ tṛiyoṁ iti draṣṭavyām.
ence, both living and non-living. Viṣṇu thus achieved all-embracing unity that appropriated the sublimity and majesty of all the gods.

But the absorption of gods into the essence of Viṣṇu did not mean their total annihilation. While forming parts of Viṣṇu, they were left with their individuality to further the Divine purpose of God—to assist Him, in creating the universe by undertaking cosmic assignments, and, at the time of cosmic deluge, in destroying the same. God reserves for Himself the task of sustenance. The variety of functions on the part of the gods, to which the Etymological School refers, is thus restated in terms of creation, sustenance and destruction of the universe to which different gods contribute their own share. But as discharging their respective obligations they are no longer free but are bound down to specific commitments. They fare therefore no better than ordinary mortals. Distinguished from these gods, are the forms of God, which He undertakes for the purpose of sustenance. His purpose will be defeated if the forms of God as well suffer from the same limitations as the gods do. Hence such forms deserve to retain the original character of Godhood, although behaving like ordinary beings.

But God, the Great Personality, vis-à-vis the sustaining forms of God on the one hand and the gods on the other, poses the question of interrelationship among these realities. As already noted, the Bhāgavata has suggested to consider this question in terms of the Doctrine of Incarnation. In due deference to the fact that the forms of God are free as distinguished from the gods tied to unavoidable assignments, the Bhāgavata has chosen to call the former as “Aṁśas” (parts) and the latter as “Kalās” (particles). One might deduce from this assertion:

aḥaṁ bhavāṁ bhavaṁ caiva ta ime munayo'gra jaḥ. sura-surā-narā nāgāḥ khagā mṛga-sarīṣpāḥ... gandhavāḥ pīrāsā yaśā rāko-bhūta-ganorāgāḥ. pālaṁḥ piṭarāḥ siddhāḥ vidyādhrāḥ cāraṇāḥ drumāḥ... anye ca vividhā jīnā jala-nāthā-nabhanvāsaḥ. grahamkṣa-ketavās tārās tadiṭaḥ stanyātinavāḥ... sarvāṁ puruṣa evedaṁ bhūtaṁ bhavyaṁ bhavaṁ ca yat. tenedam dūrtāṁ viśvaṁ vitastim adhūtāṁḥ... 2.6.13-16

muḷāṁ hi viṣṇur devaṁnām yatra dharmak samānaḥ. sa hi sarva-sura'dhvaṁ kṣa na devaṁ bhavaṁ kāśyapāḥ. tan-mūlā dévaṁnām sarvāḥ seśāvaṁ sa-catur-mukhaṁ... 10.4.39 ab, 42 abcdef
of the Bhāgavata that the term "Āṁśa" might be applied to a reality homogeneous in character and substance with its prototype and that the term "Kalā" would be applicable to a different kind of reality heterogeneous in character and substance from its prototype. In spite of the Bhāgavata's admission of a hybrid type called "Āṁśa-kalā", as we have already noticed, where the same reality is liable to be conceived as both God and man, we might adhere to the two clear-cut divisions into Āṁśa and Kalā and ignore the hybrid type, for the purpose of exposition of the Bhāgavata Doctrine of Incarnation. Further, we might use the two terms—Āṁśa and Kalā—not only in relation to God but also in connection with one god and another. Thus a god may be an Āṁśa of another god but Kalā of a form of God, suggesting the homogeneity between the two gods but heterogeneity between the form of God and the god under consideration.

In relation to creation and destruction of the universe the Bhāgavata has arranged both gods and men in a hierarchy. In such a scheme the enemies of gods and men are also accommodated. Already in the Śvetāśvatarā-Upaniṣad, Primordial Matter (Prakṛti) was described as made up of three fibres (guṇas)—red, white and black (lohitā-sukla-kṛṣṇā)⁴—and they were taken to mean the three guṇa-reals—rajas, sattva and tāmas—standing for the principle of activity, the principle of knowledge and the principle of darkness respectively. These native characteristics of the three guṇas that constitute Primordial Matter have influenced the cross-sections of both Āṁśas and Kalās, that enter into the formation of the hierarchy, into three broad categories—sāttvika, rājasa and tāmasa—that is to say, wise, active and ignorant. For example, gods, men and the creatures of hell represent three types of beings differing from one another in point of varying natures of sattva, rajas and tāmas respectively.⁵

Let us now examine in some details a few categories of Descents in the light of these observations:—

Associated with the threefold Divine purpose viz, creation, sustenance and destruction stand the Guṇāvatāras—Brahmā,

⁴ ajām ekām lohitā-sukla-kṛṣṇā ŚU 4.5
⁵ sattvāṁ rajas tama iti tisrah sura-nṛ-nārakāḥ... 2.10.41 ab
Viṣṇu and Maheśvara. The Etymological School, as we have already noticed, had arrived at the concept of the triad of gods—fire, wind (or Indra) and the sun. During the Brāhmaṇa period, fire became intimately connected with Brahmā, one of the four priests, who would superintend the sacrificial rites performed by the other three priests. This exalted position of Brahmā in fire-worship gradually deified him and in course of time fire-god was replaced by Brahmā as we find in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavata. Agni is said to have produced man. 6 Brahmā was therefore conceived to be in charge of creation. Similarly the god of wind was gradually transformed into Maheśvara who, at his core, was Vedic Rudra, "a storm god considered mainly in the form of lightning." 7 Rudra "as known to the Yajur-Veda is essentially a compound of the two gods of fire and storm" 8 and this composite nature of Agni and Rudra was re-affirmed by the recognition of Maheśvara in the same triad with Brahmā. But because the Vedic Rudra, as the derivative meaning of the term would also suggest, was a god of horror, Maheśvara became associated with destruction of the universe. Creation and destruction being thus assigned to Brahmā and Maheśvara respectively, Viṣṇu, the sun-god, joined the triad as the god of sustenance. These three functions were gradually related to the three guṇas of Primordial Matter; and, as a result, the triad of gods—Brahmā, Maheśvara and Viṣṇu—were viewed in relation to the three guṇas. Thus Brahmā as the god of creation became associated with rajas, the principle of activity, Maheśvara, the god of destruction, with tamas, the principle of darkness and Viṣṇu, the god of sustenance, with sattva, the principle of knowledge. Hence the concept of three gods—Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśvara—is the direct result of the evolution of the Vedic deities.

In the Bhāgavata these three gods have found due recognition as Guṇāvatāras. Indicative of their mutual relationship with the three guṇas, Brahmā was taken to be red,

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6 Keith RPVU p. 161.
7 ibid., p. 147.
8 ibid., p. 146.
Maheśvara black and Viṣṇu white. Their integration into the nature of God, the Great Personality, as well as their composite character have also forced themselves on the notice of the Bhāgavata. The Bhāgavata denounces the outlook that tries to read mutual difference among the triad of gods and appreciates the wisdom that penetrates into their unity. It reiterates that Brahmā and Rudra are not two different realities but are only functional names referring to the same being. In fact, according to the Bhāgavata, they cannot afford to be different because one and the same reality viz, the Great Personality has assumed three names in response to three different functions—creation, sustenance and destruction. This basic unity among the three gods and God suggests that in the light of the Bhāgavata Doctrine of Incarnation they can be regarded as the Aṁśas of God. This aspect is asserted when the Bhāgavata describes both Brahmā and Mahēśvara as “universal preceptors”—an epithet primarily applicable to God in view of His inherent power of spirituality (Cit-śakti). As luminous realities the triad may be called gods and as the source of all other gods may be described as the gods of the gods.

Although the three Guneśvatāras represent one and same reality viz, God yet their further differentiations into Descents

8a sa tvam tri-loka-sthitaye svam-māyāya bibharji sūklaṁ khalu varṇam ātmenaṁ.
8b sargāya raktam rajasopabṛhitam kṛṣṇa ca varṇam tamasā janaṁtyaye... 10.3.20
9 tvam eka eva'asya sataḥ prasūtis tvam sannidhāṇam tvam anugrahaś ca.
9a tvan-māyāya samuṭṭa-cetasas tvam pāṣāyaṁ nānā na viṣṇucito ye... 10.2.28
10 trayāṇām eka-bhāvānāṁ yo na pāṣāya vai bhidām.
10a sarva-bhūta'tmanāṁ brahmaṁ sa lāntim adhīcācati... 4.7.54 vide also 12.10.21-22.
11 ātmā-māyāṁ samāvīṣya so'ham gunamayiṁ dvija.
11a sṛjan rakṣan haran vi tvam dadhre samijñaṁ kriyocītāṁ... tasmā brahmaṁyadvitiye kevala paramātmānaṁ.
11b brahma-rudram ca bhūtāṁ bhedena jñōnu pāṣāyaṁ... 4.7.51-52
12 paraṁ puruṣa eka ihā'sya dhatte
12a sthityādaye hari-virīcī-hareśi-samaṁāṁ. 1.2.23 bc
13 Brahmā uvāca
13a tasmāi namo bhagavate vāsudevāya dhimahi.
13b yan-māyāya dur-jayāya māṁ vadanti jagad-gurum... 2.5.12
13c rudrāṁ tri-lokaika-guruh nanāma sīrāṁ muniṁ... 12.10.14 cd
14 Śrī-deva-devā (brahma-viṣṇu-girīlāḥ) ucit. 4.1.29
reveal mutual differences in kind. According to the Bhāgavata scheme, Brahmā results in Hiranāya-garbha, Maheśvara in Rudra and Viṣṇu in the four Emanations (Vyūhas)—Vāsudeva, Saṃkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha. But both Hiranāya-garbha and Rudra differ from the four Emanations of Viṣṇu in that they are empirical souls while the Emanations of Viṣṇu are the majestic forms of God. As we shall presently discuss in detail, Hiranya-garbha and Rudra were important Rg-Vedic deities while the Doctrine of Emanation (Vyūha-vāda) is an innovation of the Tāntrikas. Yet with the rise of Viṣṇu as the sovereign deity together with His amalgamation with Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa, the exalted status of both Hiranya-garbha and Rudra was eclipsed and both were relegated to the humble position serving the cause of Viṣṇu. On the other hand, the Doctrine of Emanation that is intimately bound up with the ascendency of Kṛṣṇa to the sublime stature of Viṣṇu could naturally claim to have a special place in the exposition of the Bhāgavata cult. This claim for privilege is reflected in the discrimination between the other forms of Viṣṇu and His fourfold Emanation.

Srīdhara puts up an admirable plea for this discrimination on metaphysical grounds. He resorts to the popular Vedāntic Doctrine of Bimba-pratibimba-vāda for this purpose. His arguments may be summed up as follows:—When God is reflected on the three guṇas of Prakṛti, He is conceived as three prototypes (bimba) corresponding to His three reflections (pratibimba) on the three guṇas. These three prototypes are the triad of gods known as Guṇāvatāras. Although there is unity in the nature of the prototypes in that all the three, unruffled by worldliness, are but one in substance, yet the reflections as such are liable to be affected by the nature of the individual guṇas; and, so, the reflections vary from one another due to the variation of the characters of the guṇas. Thus the reflection of Viṣṇu-prototype on sattva-guṇa varies from the reflection of the Brahmā-prototype as well as from that of the Maheśvara-prototype. The basis of this variation lies in the fact that the reflection on sattva-guṇa is free; because the guṇa concerned, being the principle of illumination, is opposed by nature to delusion.

For details see Chaps. IV and VI.
But as *rajas* and *tamas* stand for activity and darkness respectively, the reflections thereon are pervaded by activity and darkness respectively without the privilege of wisdom. This position on the part of the reflections of *rajas* and *tamas* does not mean that they are steeped in ignorance but only that they lack the knowledge of the highest truth, although their cosmic agency necessarily involves certain amount of knowledge required for the purpose of discharging efficiently their specific assignments. In this sense, they are said to embody *sattva-guṇa*. The reflection on *sattva-guṇa* has acquired the designation of fourfold Emanation (*Vyūha*) while those on the *rajas* and *tamas* are Hiranya-garbha and Maheśvara—empirical egos—however exalted their position in the cosmic process might otherwise be. In terms of the *Bhāgavata*, the reflection on *sattva-guṇa* might be called *Aṁśa* while those on the *rajas* and *tamas* Kalās only. Accordingly, the results of the worship of these gods are bound to vary in consonance with the nature of the god that becomes the object of worship. In this light the worship of the fourfold Emanation of Viśnū stands the highest.

The arguments of Śrīdhara in favour of Viśnū find support in the *Bhāgavata*. To establish the excellence of *sattva* over *rajas* and *tamas*, the *Bhāgavata* draws upon an analogy:

\[\text{ahāṁ mahendro nirūtih pracetāḥ} \]
\[\text{somo'gnir ihaḥ pavano vīrīciḥ.} \]
\[\text{ādiyā-viśve vasavo'tha sādhya} \]
\[\text{marud-gaṇā rudra-gaṇāh sa-siddhāḥ} \]
\[\text{anye ca ye viśva-ṣro'maresā} \]
\[\text{bhṛgvādayo'śṛṣṭa-rajas-tamaskāḥ.} \]
\[\text{asyehitam na viduh śṛṣṭa-māyāḥ} \]
\[\text{sattva-pradhānā api kiṁ tato'nye...} \]
\[\text{6.3.14-15} \]

\[\text{atreṇaḥ tattvam:—} \]
\[\text{vasuno guṇa-sambandhe rūpa-dvayam iheṣyate.} \]
\[\text{tad-dharma-yogā'yoğābhyāṁ bimbavat pratibimbavat...} \]
\[\text{guṇāḥ sattvādayaḥ śānta-ghora-mūḍhāḥ svabhāvataḥ.} \]
\[\text{viśnu-brahma-svānāṁ ca guṇa-yantar-svarūpiṇāṁ...} \]
\[\text{nāśibheda bhāṣed bheda guṇa-dharmair ihaṁśataḥ.} \]
\[\text{sattvasya śāntyā no jātu viśnora viṣeṣa ucyate...} \]
\[\text{rajas-tamo-guṇābhyaṁ tu bhaveṭāṁ brahma-rudrayoh.} \]
\[\text{guṇopamardato bhūyas tad-amśānāṁ ca bhinnatā...} \]
\[\text{ataḥ samāgra-sattvasya viṣṇor mokṣa-kari matiḥ.} \]
\[\text{aṁśato bhūti-hetuḥ ca tathā'nta-mayai svataḥ...} \]
\[\text{aṁśatas tārakāmyena brahma-rudrā'disevinām.} \]
\[\text{vibhūtaya bhavantyeva śanair mokṣāpyanamśataḥ...} \]

Śrīdhara on 10.88.5
From inert wood emerges curling smoke, so would the Bhāgavata argue, which ultimately kindles into sacrificial flame. Similarly, from the tripartite clod of the man’s mind steeped in tamas, appears the streak of rajas symbolised in spiritual unrest which eventually culminates in the dawning of divine light marked by sattva; this light reveals directly the supreme truth. On the basis of this analogy the Bhāgavata concludes that only the sāttvika persons worship Nārāyaṇa-Višṇu while others labouring under rajas and tamas fritter away their homage to Fathers, cosmic progenitors and so on. The supremacy of Viṣṇu is further possessed by His Aṁśas such as His Emanations (Vyūha) and Lilāvatāras so that their names are absent from the lists of persons (including Brahmā and Maheśvara), stated to be carrying out the orders of the Great Personality.

The Bhāgavata absorbs the Doctrine of Emanation in the all-embracing structure of its Doctrine of Incarnation. By the term “Vyūha” (Emanation) the Bhāgavata understands “mūrti” (form) that embodies the substance (ātman) of God. This means that the Bhāgavata equates Vyūha with Aṁśa. This equation is further corroborated by the Bhāgavata in the description of a Kalpāvatāra. Like a Yugāvatāra and a Mānvantarāvatāra, protecting the worlds for a yuga and for a manvantara respectively, God protects the worlds for a kalpa, having undergone emanation (Vyūha) of His own self. Apparently this specific Emanation of God refers to Vairāja-

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18 pārthivūd dāruṇo dhūmas tasmād agnis trayi-mayaḥ.
   tamasas tu rajas tasmāt sattvam yad brahma-darinam...
   bhejire munayo’thāgre bhagavantam adhokṣajam.
   sattvam viśuddham kṣemaya kalpante ye’nu tān iha...
   1.2.24-25

19 mumukṣavo ghora-rūpān hitvā bhūta-patīn atha.
   nārāyaṇa-parāh lāntā bhajanti hyanasiyayaveḥ...
   rajas-tamaḥ-prakṛtayāḥ sama-sīlā bhajanti vai.
   pārtha-bhūta-prajēśādīn śrīyalivarya-prajēpsavaiḥ...
   1.2.26-27

20 aham bhavo daksā-bhṛgu-pradhānāḥ
   prajēśa-bhūteśa-sureśa-mukhyāḥ.
   sarve vayam yan-niyamam pāpam
   mūrdhnyaripitam loka-hitam vahāmaḥ...
   9.4.54

21 angoṇāṅga’yudhā’kalpair bhagavāṃs tae catuṣṭayam.
   bibharti sma eaur-mūrtir bhagavān harir ik’uraḥ...
   12.11.23

22 na tathā me priyatama ātma-yonir na samkaraḥ.
   na ca samkarṣaṇo na śrīr naivā’tmā ca yathā bhavān...
   11.14.15

23 evam hyanādi-nidhano bhagavān harir uvarah.
   kalpe kalpe svam ātmanām vyūhāya lokān avatayajah...
   12.11.50
Puruṣa manifested in the three worlds; and, lasting for a *kalpa* this Emanation may be described as a *Kalpa'vatāra* in the same way as His form lasting for a *yuga* or a *manvantara* is called a *Yuga'vatāra* or a *Manvantara'vatāra*. So, a *Vyūha* means an *Amśa-Avatāra*. The fourfold manifestation of Viṣṇu juxtaposed against the *Vairāja-Puruṣa* offers the total picture of the Descent of Viṣṇu in the physical world, supplemented by His inward revelation in the mind of man.

The Doctrine of fourfold Emanation of Viṣṇu forms an integral part of the Kṛṣṇa-cult; and, therefore, the origin and development of this Doctrine must be traced to those of the Kṛṣṇa-cult. It is stated that the historical Kṛṣṇa had Bala-rāma as his brother, Pradyumna as his son and Aniruddha as his grandson. When the extraordinary personality of the historical Kṛṣṇa assured for him the sublime status of Viṣṇu, the Great Personality, then Bala-rāma, Pradyumna and Aniruddha, so closely associated with the historical Kṛṣṇa, followed the suit and were naturally admitted to divinity. Their historical emergence of one from the other was duly recognised although, from the metaphysical point of view, emphasis was laid on the unity of substance. But Bala-rāma had to face difficulty in this new adjustment. He was, after all, the brother of Kṛṣṇa. How could he be taken in the new scheme as an emergence from Kṛṣṇa? Bala-rāma therefore finds admission in another name—Saṁkarṣaṇa. That it was a mere change of name and not of substance is indicated by the fact that the *Bhāgavata* describes Saṁkarṣaṇa as a part (*Amśa*) of Bala-rāma. But Bala-rāma as such finds recognition as a Descent distinct from Puruṣa and outside the pale of the fourfold Emanation.

The *Bhāgavata* has tried to link up the fourfold manifestation of Viṣṇu with the inner mechanism of man. According to the *Bhāgavata* the inner mechanism (*antah-karana*) consists in *Manas, Buddhi, Ahamkāra* and *Citta*. In spite of the fact that

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23 vāsudevaṁ saṁkarṣaṇaṁ pradyumnaṁ puruṣaṁ svayam. aniruddha iti brahmaṁ mūrti-vyūho'bhidihiyate... 12.11.21
24 rāma rāma mahā-būho na jāne tava vikramam. yasyaikāṁśena vidhiṛtā jagatī jagataḥ pate... 10.65.28
śrīdhara comments:—ekāṁśena=ṣeṣā'khyaṇena
25 ekavaiśāṁ viśiśatime viṣṇuṣu prāpya nāmaṁ. rāma-kṛṣṇāvīti bhuvo bhagavān aharad bharam... 1.3.23
the inner mechanism is a single reality it is treated as four in view of its fourfold mode (vr̥tti) [viz, saṁkalpa (speculation), niścaya (certainty), abhimāna (egotism) and adhyayasāya (resolution)]. But the inner mechanism as a single reality with four modes is a typically Vedāntic concept; and, it is difficult to adjust it in the Sāmkhya scheme of categories, adopted by the Bhāgavata to explain the cosmic evolution. In the Sāmkhya scheme of the evolution of categories, Mahat, the first evolute of Prakṛti, is called Buddhi or Citta when viewed in its individual aspect. From Mahat emerges Ahamkāra and from the latter Manas. If, according to this scheme of evolution, Buddhi and Citta refer to the same reality viz, the first evolute of Prakṛti taken in its individualistic aspect, then the adjustment of the fourfold manifestation of Viṣṇu to man’s inner mechanism which forms a part of the general scheme of Sāmkhya evolution, becomes difficult. In fact, in its attempt to do so, the Bhāgavata had to eliminate Pradyumna. For example, the Bhāgavata affirms Vāsudeva, the first Vyūha, against Citta (or Buddhi), Sānkarsaṇa, the second Vyūha, against Ahamkāra and Aniruddha, the fourth Vyūha, against Manas. But the Bhāgavata is silent over Pradyumna in this context, although he figures in the Doctrine of Emanation. Śrīdhara treats Buddhi and Citta separately and assigns Pradyumna to Buddhi and Vāsudeva to Citta. This would mean that in the Sāmkhya scheme of evolution Buddhi emerges from Ahamkāra; for, the emergence of Pradyumna from Sānkarsaṇa who is linked up with Ahamkāra requires that Buddhi to which Pradyumna is to be associated has to emerge

26 mano buddhir ahamkāraś cittam ityantarātmacak. catur-dhā lakṣyate bheda vyttā laṣaṇa-rūpayaḥ... 3.26.14
27 ādhātta viryam sāsūta mahat-tattvam hiranyamayam. yad āhur vāsudevaḥ khyam cittam tan mahad-ātmakam... 3.26.19 cd, 21 cd
28 yad āhur vāsudevaḥ khyam cittam... 3.26.21
29 mahat-tattvād vikurvānād bhagavat-virya-coditaḥ. kriyā-saktir ahamkāras trividhāḥ samapadyata... sahasra-sirasam sākṣād yam anantam pracaṅkṣate. saṁkarsaṇaḥ khyam puruṣam bhūtendriya-mano-mayaḥ... 3.26.23-25
30 vāsudevaḥ saṁkarsaṇaḥ pradyumnaḥ puruṣaḥ svayaṁ. aniruddha iti brahman mūrti-vyūho bhūḍhātya... 12.11.21
31 Śrīdhara on 3.26.21, quoted above; ref. 28
correspondingly from *Ahamkāra*. But nowhere does the *Bhāgavata* seem to propose such a scheme of cosmic evolution, although the involutionary process indicates such succession.\(^{32}\)

A more plausible adjustment seems to have been suggested by the *Bhāgavata* by resorting to a different concept of the fourfold manifestation. The four manifestations of Viṣṇu are conceived as the witnesses of the four states of the empirical ego.\(^{33}\) Thus Aniruddha is the witness of the waking state, Pradyumna of dream, Saṅkarṣaṇa of dreamless sleep and Vāsudeva of the transcendental state. This perspective of the *Vyuhas* is similar to the previous view in that in both the views the *Vyuhas* are conceived as witnesses (*sāksin*) who without being involved in empirical life, control the empirical ego with the aid of their intrinsic knowledge (*ikṣā* or *Cit-śakti*). But the two views differ in that the former is an inadequate attempt to link the *Vyuhas* with the categories of creation while the latter has been able to establish a consistent relationship between the four *Vyuhas* and the four states of the empirical ego.

Out of the historical nucleus, indicated above, the Doctrine of the four *Vyuhas* had an opulent growth at the hand of the *Tāntrikas*\(^{34}\) i.e., the upholders of the Sātvata Cult. They imbued the Great Personality with pictorial grandeur falling under four well-defined heads: distribution of limbs (*aṅga*), the accessories like vehicle, attendants and so on (*upāṅga*), the weapons (*āyudha*) He bears, and the garments and ornaments (*ākalpa*) He wears. The *Bhāgavata*, of course, sublimates these physical concepts to the plane of metaphysical symbols. For example the peerless jewel *Kaustubha* is nothing but the empirical ego held fast to His bosom; *Vana-mālā*, the variegated garland, is the tripartite *Prakṛti* and so on.\(^{35}\) It may be noted here that, in this context of metaphysical interpretation of the four aspects of pictorial grandeur, the *Bhāgavata* states the

\(^{32}\) indriyāṇi mano buddhiḥ saha vaikārikair nṛpa.
praviśantī hyahankāram sva-guṇair aham-ātmanī... 11.3.15

\(^{33}\) sa viśvas tajjasah prājñas turīya iti vṛttibhiḥ.
arthendriyāsāya-jnānair bhagavān paribhāvyaite... 12.11.22

\(^{34}\) tāntrikāḥ paricaryāyām kevalasya śriyāḥ pateḥ.
aṅgoḥpāṅgaḥyudhā’kalpaṁ kalpayanti yathā ca yaiḥ. 12.11.2

\(^{35}\) 12.11.10-20.
The Doctrine of the four Vyāhas. One wonders whether the four Vyāhas were the natural outcome of the Doctrine of four aspects subsequently grafted on the historical Krṣṇa and his descendants. One cannot swear as well that the four hands of Vāsudeva-Viṣṇu did not emerge as symbols for His act of sustenance of the world in four different forms—Vāsudeva, Saṃkarṣaṇa etc. In fact the doctrine of four seems to have developed itself in different directions, giving rise to the four aspects of the Great Personality, His four manifestations, the fourfold witnessing of the four states of the empirical self and what not.\(^{36}\)

The historical Krṣṇa crystallized himself into Vāsudeva.\(^{37}\) From the status of a human being he was thus sublimated to the transcendental reality, the tranquil, immutable, self-luminous Truth that served as the source of the cosmic lotus blooming into creation.\(^{38}\) His ineffable essence shines upon Citta of man.\(^{39}\) But the dark colour of the historical Krṣṇa, comparable with the glossy darkness of the rainy cloud, was too conspicuous to be ruled out by the white or golden colour which as influenced by sattva, he should be expected to possess. Vāsudeva had four hands, a sweet well-cut face and was made of the quint-essence of all beauties.\(^{40}\) Saṃkarṣaṇa did not attain the chiselled beauty and proportionate dimension of Vāsudeva. He still exhibited the early stage of his identification with Puruṣa, the thousand-headed, although as the witness of Ahamkāra, the direct source of diversity, his conception as the thousand-headed Puruṣa is quite appropriate. In association with the Nāga-cult, Saṃkarṣaṇa is identified with Ananta,\(^{41}\) the lord of serpents.\(^{42}\)

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\(^{36}\) aṅgopāṅgā’yudhā’kalpair bhagavāṁs tca catusṭayam. bibhātri sma catur-mūrtir bhagavan hariś ivaraḥ... 12.11.23

\(^{37}\) yaḥ param rahasaḥ sāksāti tri-guṇāc jīva-saṃjñītāt. bhagavantaṁ vāsudevaṁ praṇamante sa priyo hi me... 4.24.28

\(^{38}\) namaḥ paṅkajana-nābhāya bhūta-sūkṣmendriyā’tmane. vāsudevaya śāntāya kāśṭhāya sva-rociṣe... 4.24.34

\(^{39}\) yad āhur vāsudevaṁ khyām cītāṁ tan mahād-ātmakam. svacchāthaṁ a-vikāritvam śāntato 'ma iti cetasāḥ... 3.26.21 ed., 22 ab

\(^{40}\) snigdha-prāyord-ghano-raśmā stava-saundarya-saṁgraham. cārvāyatam-catur-bhū-suṣṭā-sucīrā’nanam... 4.24.45

\(^{41}\) yā vai kalā bhagavatas tāmasi samākhyaṭā ananta iti, sātvatiyā āraṣṭ-dṛśyayoh saṁkarṣaṇam aham-ityabhīṣma-lakṣaṇam yanti saṁkarṣaṇa ityacākṣate... 5.25.1

\(^{42}\) yasyā’ṅghri-kamala...manda-leṣu ahi-patayah...sva-vadānāni... vilokayanti 5.25.4.
with his thousand heads (conceived as hoods) dazzling with one thousand crests.\(^{43}\) God, reposing on His infinity, is metaphorically taken to rest on Ananta.\(^{44}\) In fact, God’s nature to serve as the substratum of all finds expression in Ananta, who, after all, is an Amśa of God. So, Ananta is at the bottom of the fourteen planes of existence as their perpetual sustainer.\(^{45}\) The historical Bala-rāma is said to have saved the family of the Yadus from a split and so he earned for himself the designation of “saṁkarṣaṇa” (who puts together) as a token of admiration.\(^{46}\) The Bhāgavata seems to have appropriated this idea to explain the nature of Saṁkarṣaṇa from the metaphysical point of view. Saṁkarṣaṇa as the witness of Ahāmkāra is pleased to see that the empirical ego ties itself up to the world of pragmatic pleasures, with the sense of egotism (abhimāna). Saṁkarṣaṇa is so called because under his supervision this unification between the subject and the object is achieved.\(^{47}\) The description of Saṁkarṣaṇa as an intemperate person.\(^{48}\) and the mention of his colour as white as the mountain of crystal\(^{49}\) are further illustrations of his historical relationship with Bala-rāma. But, in spite of the different elements that went into the moulding of the Saṁkarṣaṇa-concept, his personality as a Vyāha is well-established by the time of the Bhāgavata. As an Amśa of God,\(^{50}\) Saṁkarṣaṇa possesses divine majesties

\(^{43}\) kriṣṭa-sahasra-maṇi-praveka-pradyyotitoddāma-phaya-sahasram. 3.8.6d

\(^{44}\) dadarśa tadbhoga-sukhā’sanāṁ vibham. 10.89.54a

\(^{45}\) evam-prabhāvo bhagavān ananto duranta-viryoruguna’nubhāvaḥ. māle rasāyāḥ sthīta ātma-tantro yo itilā kṣaṁśh sthitaye bibharti. . . 5.25.13

\(^{46}\) ayaṁ hi rohinī-patro ramayan suhṛdo guṇaiḥ. ākhyāyate rāma iti balādhikyād balaṁ viduḥ. yaduṇāṁ a-prthag-bhavāt saṁkaraṇam uṣyaṇta. . . 10.8.12

\(^{47}\) draṣṭr-driyayok saṁkaraṇam aham-ityabhimāna-lakṣaṇam yaṁ saṁkaraṇa ityācakṣate. . . 5.25.1

\(^{48}\) upagīyamāna-carito vanitābhir halā’yudhāḥ. vaneṣu vyacarat kṣibo mada-vihvala-locaṇāḥ. . . 10.65.23

\(^{49}\) sitā’cālā’bham 10.89.53

\(^{50}\) saṁkaraṇam devam akuṇṭha-sattvam svam eva dhiṣṇyan bahu mānayantam yad vāsudeva’bhidham āmananti. . . 3.8.3b, 4ab
(bhaga).51 Gifted with unclouded vision52 he is in substance none other than God.53 We do not hear much of Pradyumna excepting his reference in the group of the four Vyūhas. At one place54 the Bhāgavata describes Pradyumna to be the reality that works behind the revelation of the universe as the controller of the inner mechanism. As Buddhī (intellect) is the revealer, Śrīdhara naturally takes this passage to mean that Pradyumna is the witness of Buddhī. But we have seen that there is difficulty in accepting this position. Or perhaps, one might say that the term “buddhī” stands here for Jñāna-śakti, the cognitive aspect of Ahaṅkāra; and, Pradyumna is conceived as the witness thereof. Aniruddha is the witness of mind and is described to be as dark as the autumnal blue lotus. Being the witness of the mind he is the lord of the organs; for, all organs obey the mandates of the mind.55 As thoughts are communicated through appropriate sounds, thoughts are taken to be the primordial forms of sounds; and, as thoughts originate from mind, the latter is conceived as the source of all sounds. Aniruddha as the witness of the mind is therefore taken to be the ultimate ground of all sounds.56 Aniruddha is conceived to dwell in Jana-loka, beyond the three worlds; from the unblemished region (śveta-duśpa) that forms a part of Jana-loka and where actually Aniruddha lives, flows the spring of eternal sounds embodied in the treasure-house of ancient wisdom, the Vedas.57

The Doctrine of fourfold Emanation seems to have undergone further development as the Doctrine of ninefold

51 tāmasiṁ mūrtim āṭmanah saṁkarṣaṇa-saṁjñāṁ... bhava upadhāvati. bhaje bhajenyāraṇa-pāda-paṅkaajāṁ bhagasya ṇrīṣnasya param parāyaṇam... 5.17.16, 18ab
52 na yasya māyā-guṇa-citta-ṛttibhir nirikṣato hṛvaṇvapi dṛṣṭiḥ ajyate. 5.17.19ab
53 cf. 5.25.7
54 nāma viśva-prabodhāya pradyumnāyaṁ netar-ātmane. 4.24.35cd
55 yad vidur hyaniruddhaḥkhyāṁ ṇṛṣikāṇāṁ adhitvaram. śāradendīvahraṁ yamānāṁ samrādhyāṁ yogibhiḥ śanaiḥ... 3.26.28
56 yāḥ sāvatāṁ kāma-duḥgho-niruddhaḥ yam āmananti sma hi śabda-yoniṁ manomayāṁ sattva-turuṁa-tattvam... 3.1.34bcd
57 śveta-duśpaṁ gatavaḥ tvayi draṣṭam tad īśvaram. brahma-vādaḥ susamvṛittaḥ śrutayo yatra īśrate... 10.87.10abcd Śrīdhara comments:— īśvaram = aniruddha-mūrtim
Emanation. Indications are available from the Bhāgavata as to how the latter gradually evolved from the idea of 'four aspects' of the Great Personality (aṅga, upāṅga etc.). The Bhāgavata introduces the description of the distribution of limbs of the Great Personality with the preamble that He is liable to differentiation into limbs in the shape of the first nine principles responsible for the existence of the cosmic lump (virāj).

These first nine principles are, as we are already aware, Prakṛti, Mahat, Ahaṁkāra, Manas and the five Tanmātras. If we remember how the four Vyūhas are conceived in relation to the categories of creation, it is no wonder if these nine categories would give rise to the Doctrine of ninefold Emanation. And, as we may notice that the categories related to the four Emanations are included here in the first nine principles, we can naturally presume that the Doctrine of nine is an extension of the Doctrine of four. But the Doctrine of nine does not appear to be a mere elaboration of the Doctrine of four. If we accept the names mentioned by Śrīdhara as the nine 'forms' of the Sātvatas,59 then, beside five others viz. Nārāyaṇa, Hayagrīva, Varāha, Nṛsimha and Brahmā, the four Vyūhas also—Vāsudeva etc.—find recognition in this group of nine. In this new set-up Vāsudeva becomes related to Prakṛti, Saṁkarṣaṇa to Mahat, Pradyumna to Ahaṁkāra and Aniruddha to Manas. The other five are related to the five elements. The scheme seems to avoid the inconsistency traceable in the Doctrine of four, by finding correspondence between the nine Vyūhas and the nine categories of creation. Relation of Vāsudeva with Avyakta or Prakṛti, as envisaged in this scheme, explains more plausibly the concept of Nārāyaṇa lying in the ocean of the primal cause, often referred to in the Bhāgavata. In the case of first nine principles being Puruṣa, Prakṛti, Mahat, Ahaṁkāra and the five elements, as the Bhāgavata has enumerated in another context60, the correspondence is carried another step forward so that Vāsudeva is linked up with Puruṣa, Saṁkarṣaṇa with

58 māyā’dyair navabhis tattvaiḥ sa vikāra-mayo virāṭ. 12.11.5ab
59 sātvatām nava-mūrtinām ādi-mūrtir ahaṁ paraḥ. 11.16.32cd
60 puruṣaḥ prakṛtir vyaktaṁ ahaṁkāro nabho’nilaḥ. jyotir āpah kṣitir iti tattvānyuktāni me nava... 11.22.14
Prakṛti, Pradyumna with Mahat and Aniruddha with Ahamkāra. But in any case this Doctrine of nine seems to differ from the Doctrine of four: While the former becomes associated with creation the latter is purely confined to the illumination of the inner mechanism of man. From this point of view the Doctrine of nine may be taken as a less exalted growth than the Doctrine of four.

Another concept of the Doctrine of nine is available in the Bhāgavata in relation to the sun-god that constitutes the essence of Viṣṇu. Under the auspices of the sun-god is held sacrifice consisting in nine parts—time, place, rites, the priests, the materials, sacrifice itself, the Mantras, the oblations and the result accruing from the performance of sacrifice. This is apparently a Doctrine of nine in terms of sacrifice and is associated with the sun on the presumption of basic identity between the sacrificial fire—the pivot of sacrifice—and the sun-god. It thus differs from the previous Doctrine of nine because it has nothing to do with the evolution of the cosmic process excepting perhaps that human destiny (Karman) has been accepted by the Bhāgavata to be a regulating factor of the cosmic evolution. But in any case this idea of nine is obviously materialistic and can hardly claim recognition as a refined Doctrine of the ninefold Emanation.

Perhaps the Doctrine of twelve is more acceptable than this latter Doctrine of nine. The sun-god is taken to protect the world throughout the year and he is conceived to be different in each month of the year. At the conclusion the twelve forms of the sun-god are, of course, called "vibhūtis" although the Bhāgavata introduces them as Vyūhas.

Of these Doctrines of four, nine and twelve, by virtue of tranquil sublimity that removes silently the baser elements from the human mind and thus raises it to the sphere of delicate purity that can reflect the transcendental being of God, the
Doctrine of four has undeniably the most abiding influence on religious imagination.

Distinguished from the fourfold Emanation is Hiranyagarbha who should now engage our attention. From Śrīdhara’s point of view he is the reflection of prototype-Brahmā on rajas; and, as the reflection affected by rajas he is treated as a Jīva with specific assignment in the cosmic process. In terms of the Bhāgavata, Hiranyagarbha is a Kalā of prototype-Brahmā, the Guṇāvatāra. Because, while prototype-Brahmā being an Āmśa is God Himself, Hiranyagarbha being a Jīva and so heterogeneous in nature from his prototype, should be a Kalā. Again, as Vāsudeva Vyūha is but God Himself so Hiranyagarbha may be looked upon as a Kalā of Vāsudeva as well. Nevertheless, Hiranyagarbha has the privilege of being the first Jīva; and, being the first of his kind he is declared as aja i.e., not born of a father of the same kind. Being Jīva he is naturally divested of divine knowledge. Knowledge he possesses is a borrow from Vāsudeva-Viṣṇu whose Kalā he is. The Bhāgavata often refers to what had existed before creation started. There was Viṣṇu, reposing on His infinite nature and engrossed in His spiritual slumber (yogāniddrā). Then, with the expression of Divine will to create, arose from the centre (nābhi) of the Infinite a finiteness, pictorially described as the cosmic lotus. Hiranyagarbha was a part of that finiteness in that the lotus was his original home. He was called Hiranyagarbha because the said lotus of golden colour (hiranyā) served as his embryo (garbha). Eventually he was awakened by the animation of God but with limited knowledge he beheld none excepting his own self. Then, God goaded him to undergo penance which he did for a long long

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66 hiranyagarbham ... ādi-puruṣam ... iti hovāca. 5.1.9, 10
brahmādayas tanu-bhṛto bahir-artha-bhāvaḥ. 11.7.17d
67 ajo’numuddhah sa guṇair ajāyāḥ 10.40.3c
Śrīdhara — so’jāḥ = Brahmā’pi
68 tad-dattayā vayunayedam acaṣṭa viśvaṁ
supta-prabuddha iva nātha bhavat-prapannaḥ. 4.9.8ab
bhavantām laraṇaṁ prapanno=brahmā (Śrīdhara)
period of one thousand divine years. As a result, knowledge dawomed on him as a divine gift. He could now visualize the ideal forms of the fourteen worlds which he was to create, like a fig on his palm. Fortified with this knowledge he was now rightly called the first hermit. It was divine grace that gave him physical, mental and spiritual strength. Hiranya-garbha then set his hand to creation and eventually created the fourteen worlds. The above allegory shows the insignificant existence of Hiranya-garbha by the side of God. As a Kalā or particle he is conceived to have emerged from God, like a spark from fire. The penance of Hiranya-garbha

sa ādi-devo jagatām paro guruh
sua-dhīṣyam āsthāya sīrṣyakṣata
tam nādhyagacchad dṛṣam atra sammatāṁ
prapāñca-nirmanā-vidhir yāyā bhavet.
sa cintayan duvakṣaram ekādīmbhā-
syapāṣṇod dvir gadaṁ vaco vibhuḥ.
sparśu yat soḍāśam eka-viṁśatāṁ
niś-kiścinānāṁ niśa yad dhanam viduḥ.
naśmya tad vaktra-dīrṣīyaśā diśo
viloṣya tatrāṇyad apātyamānaḥ.
sua-dhīṣyam āsthāya vimṛṣya tad-dhitam
tapasyupādiṣṭa ivādadhe manaḥ.
duṣyam sahaśābdham amogha-darīano
jita-nilātmā vijótabhayendriyaḥ.
atypata sma-khiṇu-loka-tāpanaṁ
tapas tāpiyāṁs tapataṁ samāhitah.
tasmā suvetuṁ bhagavān sabhājītaḥ
sandaraśayāmāsa paraṁ na yat param.
vayaśeta-saṁklesa-vimoha-sādhvasam
suva-dṛṣṭavaddhiḥ puruṣair abhiṣṭutam... 2.9.5-9

yena sua-rociṣā viśvaṁ rocitaṁ rocaymyaham.
yathārko'gnir yathā somo yatharkṣa-graha-tārakāḥ... 2.5.11

svarōṣā hyetad bhavān veda bhūta-bhavya-bhavit-prabhuḥ.
karāmalaka-vād viśvaṁ viṁśānāvastām tava... 2.5.3

namo viśṇā-viṁśa 3.15.5a

rīm ādyam na badhnāti pāpiyāṁs tvāṁ rajo-ṛṣuṇaḥ. 3.9.35a,b

na bhārati me'nāga mṛtopalaksyate
na vai kucin me manaso mṛṣā gatiḥ.
na me hṛṣikāṇi patantyasat-pathe
yan me hṛdatkāṇṭhyavatā dhṛto hariḥ... 2.6.34

3.8.10-33

kuṭaṁ tamo-mahad-āham-kha-carā'gni-vār-bhū-
samveṣṭiṁṇa-ghaṭa-sapta-vitasit-kāyaḥ.
koḍṛg-vidhā vīgaṇiḥ niḍa-parāṇu-caryā-
vātādha-roma-tivārasya ca te mahītvam... 10.14.11

māyāṁ vitatvyekṣitum ātma-vaibhavaṁ
tvāham kīyāṁ aicchaṁ ivāreir agrau... 10.14.9cd
consummated in the acquisition of knowledge which is nothing but Čit-śakti.\(^\text{78}\)

The concept of Hiranya-garbha is found in connection with two different types of creation—the subtle and the gross. In the subtle creation he is found to embody Mahat, the first principle to evolve from Prakṛti. In the gross he is associated with the cosmic lump that differentiates itself into the fourteen worlds. In the subtle he may be conceived to be a Kāla of the Nārāyaṇa lying in the causal water (kāraṇā’ṛṇava-śāyin) which can be identified with primordial matter (Prakṛti). In the gross he is the Kalā of the Nārāyaṇa lying in the water from which rises the cosmic lump (garbhoda-śāyin). Hiranya-garbha, associated with the gross, may be conceived to embody the fourteen worlds that constitute the gross creation.\(^\text{79}\) As the best of all empirical souls including gods, this Hiranya-garbha dwells in the highest world, Satya-loka\(^\text{80}\) and possesses the maximum longevity called dvi-parārdha. He has his royal hall at the crest of Sumeru, the mountain of gold\(^\text{81}\), and has a white swan as his vehicle. These last two elements help to recognise him as the sun as really he is.\(^\text{82}\) From the standpoint of the evolution of thought, one might then say that out of the physical sun emerged in time the concept of Viṣṇu, which underwent further differentiation in the idea of Hiranya-garbha. The myth of the emergence of Hiranya-garbha from Viṣṇu, as indicated above, is then a pictorial record of this development of thought that stands for the differentiation of Hiranya-garbha from Viṣṇu.

The process of differentiation proceeds to an important point with the concept of Rudra. Rudra has an unbroken and chequered history of his own from the days of the Rg-Veda. In the Rg-Veda, Rudra is a mighty aerial god, ‘the god of storm considered mainly in the form of lightning’ and

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\(^{78}\) tapo me ěṛdayam 2.9.22c  
hṛdayam = antar-āṅgā ṣaktīḥ ... yasya jñāna-mayaṁ tapah  
(Mun U 1.1.9) iti śruteḥ—Śrīdhara

\(^{79}\) vyaktaṁ vibho sthūlam idaṁ śarīram 7.3.33a

\(^{80}\) tāvāśīṣya jagat-sraṣṭā kumāraiḥ saha nāradaḥ.  
haniso harīsenā yānena tri-dhāma-paramaṁ yayau... 3.24.20

\(^{81}\) tato brahma-sabhāṁ jagmur meror mūrthani sarvalaḥ. 8.5.18ab

\(^{82}\) mṛteṅde esa etasmin yaḥ abhūt tato māraṁda iti uvapadesaḥ.  
hiranya-garbha iti yaḥ hiranyaṅḍa-samudbhavaḥ. 5.20.44
in importance next only to Viṣṇu. He is conceived to be as bright as the sun and shining like gold. He takes man from the pale of death to immortality. He is also stated to be associated with three mothers (tryambaka). As the god of liberation he is naturally taken to be auspicious. But in the Rg-Veda, Rudra is also conceived to be an angry god; and, prayers are laid at his door to appease his wrath so that he may refrain from killing the near and dear ones. Viewed in the light of this deadly aspect, Rudra can very well be identified with fire. In the Yajur-Veda, his auspicious character is confirmed. On the basis of his identification with fire he acquires the designation "dark-red" (nīla-lohita). His other names are "paśu-pati", "bhava", "śarva", "iśāna", "mahā-deva" etc., suggestive of his different associations. His prominence is duly recognised in that he is stated to have spread himself out in innumerable forms on the earth. Although some of these forms are auspicious, others are terrible. In his terrible aspect, Rudra seems to have developed association with the Serpent Cult and also with the ghastly tribal god. Thus the Yajur-Veda describes Rudra regulating the serpents and championing the cause of the knaves and the swindlers. By the period of the Brāhmaṇas there are indications of decline of

83 yaḥ śukra iva sūrya hiranyam iva rocate śreṣṭho devanāṁ vasuḥ. RV 1.43.5
84 tryambakam yajāmahe RV 7.59.12
Keith RPVU p. 149 refers to the differences of opinion as to the meaning of the term 'tryambaka'.
85 saṁ naḥ karati RV 1.43.6
86 mā tvā rudra cukrudhāmā namobhiḥ. RV 2.33.4
87 mā no mahāntam uta mā no arbhakam mā na ukṣaṇam uta mā na ukṣītam. mā no vadhīḥ pītaram mota mātaram mā naḥ priyās tanno rudra rīṣaḥ. RV 1.114.7
88 agne rudro RV 2.1.6
89 namaḥ sambhāvāya ca mayobhavāya ca namaḥ śaṁkarāya ca mayaskarāya ca. nama śivāya ca śivatārāya ca. VS 16.41
90 nīla-grīvo vilohitaḥ VS 16.7
91 agim.. paśupatim.. bhavam.. śarvam.. iśānam.. mahādevam. VS 39.8
92 asamikkhyātā sahasrāṇi ye rudrā adhi bhūmyām VS 16.54
93 ahiṁś ca sarvāṁ jambhayan VS 16.5
94 namo.. taskarāṇāṁ pataye .. muspatāṁ pataye namaḥ. VS 16.21
his status. With the rise of Prajāpati as a supreme god, Rudra is said to have originated due to him. Nevertheless, Rudra was still a god of glory, who maintained a unique balance between an auspicious god and a deadly god.

The Bhāgavata has absorbed the cardinal aspects of the Vedic Rudra, to go into the formation of its Rudra concept. Rudra is born of angry Brahmā from the centre of his eyebrows, the focal point of his anger, and was named “dark-red” (nīla-lohita). Being as good a Jīva as Brahmā (Hiraṇyagarbha) Rudra was his Āmśa; and he was a Kalā of Samkarśana because of their mutual difference in kind. Rudra emerging from Brahmā is legitimately identified with Ahamkāra; because while Brahmā (Hiraṇyagarbha) embodies Mahat, Rudra, the son of Brahmā, should embody the son of Mahat i.e., Ahamkāra. As Ahamkāra admits of three types—sāttvika, rājasa and tāmasa—Rudra embodying each of these characters should be called tranquil (śānta), active (rajo-juś) and terrible (ghora) respectively. As the three aspects of Ahamkāra serve as the matrixes of the universe, Rudra associated with them should be called “tryambaka”. Rudra linked up with sāttvika Ahamkāra is conceived as a great spiritualist. He is taken to be the exponent of the Yoga system of thought. Constantly engrossed in transcendental bliss, his sublime personality rises above the trifles of worldly life. Though as a Jīva he was liable to human frailties he gradual-

95 AiB 3.3.9
96 dhiyā nirghyamāṇo’pi bhruvor madhyāt praśāpateḥ,
    sadyo’jayata tan-manyuh kumāro nīla-lohitaḥ... 3.12.7
97 yasyā’dya āśīd guṇa-vigrahō mahān
    vijñāna-dhiṣṇyo bhagavan ajāh kila,
    yat-sambhavo’hāṃ tri-urtā svā-tejasā
    vaikārīkaṃ tāmasam aindriyam svē... 5.17.22
    yasya=samkarṣanaṣya.
98 śivaḥ sakti-yutāḥ šaśvat tri-liṅgo guṇa-saṁurtāḥ,
    vaikārikas tajjāsa ca tāmasaś cetayahāṃ tri-dhā,
    tato vikārā abhavaṇaḥ podalā’miṣu kañcana,
    upadhāvan vibhūtināṃ sarvāśaṃ aśnute gatim... 10.88.4
99 namāḥ śivāya śāntāya saittvāya pramṛḍāya ca,
    raro-juśe’t’ha ghorāya namaḥ tubhyāṁ tamo-juṣe... 12.10.17
100 taṁ brahma-nirvāṇa-samādhim āśrītam
    vyupāśrītāṁ girīsam yogā-kakṣām... 4.6.39ab
101 skanne retasi spalayad ātmānām deva-māyāyā,
    jaḍikṛtam ṇṛpa-śreṣṭha saṁnyavartata kaśimalāt... 8.12.35
ly rose to the zenith of his penance and thus transcended pragmatic life.\textsuperscript{102} He was detached, because he rose above Māyā.\textsuperscript{103} With disinterested outlook,\textsuperscript{104} he fulfils desires\textsuperscript{105} and is thus the blessing of the blessings.\textsuperscript{106} In his rājasā aspect, Rudra is a cosmic progenitor—indeed, the source of different categories of progenitors, like Marīci, Atri etc.\textsuperscript{107}—and is thus declared to be the best of all progenitors.\textsuperscript{108} From Rudra, called Nila-lohita,\textsuperscript{109} emerge innumerable progenitors; but eleven of them have gained prominence by virtue of their association with the categories that emerge from Ahamkāra when creative process is on. If, on the basis of their common character viz, the cognitive faculty (jñāna-sakti) the five sense organs are counted as a single unit and similarly on the basis of common character viz, conative faculty (kriyā-sakti) the five action organs are taken as another unit, then the emergents of Ahamkāra, viz, the mind, the unit of sense organs, the unit of action organs and the five elements would make eight realities. And, if we add to the list the sun, the moon and penance, each of which is akin to Rudra in point of their glow and strength, then the number swells to eleven. Embodying each of these elements Rudra may be called as having elevenfold Vyuhas, the eleven forms standing for the unique substance of Rudra.\textsuperscript{110} As

\textsuperscript{102} Brahmā said to Rudra:—
\begin{verbatim}
tapa ātiṣṭha bhadrām te sarva-bhūta-sukhāvaham.
tapasaiwa yatā pūrvām srasṭā visvam idam bhavān... 3.12.18
\end{verbatim}

\textsuperscript{103} Viśu said to Girīśa:—
\begin{verbatim}
ko nu me̲ṭ̲itāren māyām viśaktas toad ṛte punān.
tāṁ tāṁ viśrjātim bhāvān dūstārām kṛṣṭāṁtmabhāḥ...
seyāṁ guṇa-mayi māyā na tvām abhibhaviṣyati.
mayā sametā kālēna kāla-rūpeṇa bhāgalaḥ... 8.12.39-40
\end{verbatim}

\textsuperscript{104} kas taṁ ca rācara-gurum nīr-vairam śānta-vigraham.
ātmārāmaṁ katham dvesṭi jagato daivataṁ mahat... 4.2.2

\textsuperscript{105} namasye tvāṁ mahādeva lokānāṁ gurum ilvaram.
pūṁsām a-pūrṇa-kāmānāṁ kāma-pūrṇa-marāṅaṁ-praṣṭa-pam... 10.62.5

\textsuperscript{106} eṣām anu-dhīyeva-padañjala-yugmāṁ
jagad-gurum maṅgala-maṅgalaṁ svayam... 6.17.13ab

\textsuperscript{107} grhāṇātāṁ nāmāṁ sthānāṁ ca sa-jośāpaḥ.
ebhīḥ yasa praṇāḥ bahvīḥ praṇānāṁ asi yat patiḥ... 3.12.14

The different categories of creation are described in 3.12.21-29

\textsuperscript{108} bhavānāṁ bhagavān bhavāḥ prītyā'caṣṭaḥ:—
ahaṁ kalānāṁ ṛṣabhāḥ. 8.12.42b, 43c

\textsuperscript{109} rudrāṇāṁ nila-lohitāḥ. 11.16.13d

\textsuperscript{110} hṛd-indriyānasur vyoma vāyur agnir jalaṁ mahi.
sūryaś candras tapaś caiva sthānanyagre kṛtāṁ te... 3.12.11
the master of the five elements he is also called Bhūta-pati. 111 The Bhāgavata also gives the specific names of the eleven Rudras and their corresponding feminine powers.112 Through Rudra, Brahmā (Hiranya-garbha) is called the primal progenitor.

In his tamasa aspect Rudra became largely overshadowed by Non-Aryan characters. His association with snakes, garment of tiger-skin, crude tribal weapons, human skulls and filthy habits like wandering in the cremation ground, earned for him strong censure from the Vedic circle and his position as the supreme progenitor was threatened by Dakṣa who by that time rose to eminence as one of the best of progenitors.113 He was refused for a time his due share in a Vedic sacrifice. In fact, Rudra was treated as an outcaste unfit to sit by the side of other gods in a sacrificial invitation. But then, by the exhibition of his dreadful outrages, he was able to ensure for himself a share, left over to him after the other gods had had their respective shares.114 But while the other gods were assigned a place in the east, Rudra was given a place in the north. He thus became the lord of Kailāsa and married the daughter of the Himālayas. He was then giri-ṣa—lying on the mountain. The tamasa aspect of Rudra is told by the Bhāgavata in the garb of a myth.115 The moral of the myth is clear: The non-Vedic character of Rudra had swamped for some time his Aryan origin. The eminence he used to enjoy had led him to this pitfall of being absorbed by non-Aryan cult and the religious organisation that developed round his figure was consequently denounced116 and proscribed. Eventually, of course, he regained his position in the Vedic fold when gradually people

111 yat tvam paṣṭhaḥ pāñcābhir bhāsi bhūtaḥ. 4.7.37d
112 manyur manur mahinaso mahāṁ chiva rta-dhavajāḥ. ugra-retā bhavaḥ kālo vāma-devo dhīta-vrataḥ. dhīr dhṛtī rasalomā ca nisya sarpir ilāmbikā. irāvati-svadhā-dikṣā rudrāṇyo rudra te striyaḥ. 3.12.12-13
113 praśāpatininām dakṣo'ham 11.16.15a
114 eṣa te rudra bhāgo'stu yad uchisṭo'dhvarasya vai. yajñās te rudra bhāgena kalpatāṁ ādyā yajñā-haṁ. 4.6.53
115 4.2-7
116 bhava-vrata-dharā ye ca ye ca tāṁ samanuvratāḥ. paśaṇdinas te bhavantu sac-chāstra-ḥariṇathināḥ. naśa-laucā mūḍha-dhiyo jaṭā-bhāsimā'sthi-dhāriṇāḥ. vasantu līva-dīkṣāyāṁ yatra daivaṁ surāsavam. 4.2.28-29
could recognize in him his original character of a sāttvika god and his really Vedic heredity.

Apart from this tāmasa character which is largely a reproduction of a non-Aryan deity, Rudra has another phase of his tāmasa nature, relevant to the cosmic function which, in his case, is annihilation of the universe. As universe meant originally the three worlds—the earth, the air and the sky—Rudra is said to destroy the three worlds when, in terms of the Bhāgavata, Naimittika-pralaya takes place. In order to dissociate this concept of Rudra from the previous concept with tribal bearing, the Bhāgavata describes how just at the time of deluge emerged Rudra from Saṃkarṣaṇa.\footnote{This Rudra, then, is not the supreme progenitor but the cosmic destroyer. The Vedic Rudra, 'the howling storm god associated with lightning and viewed in its destructive aspect', reasserts himself in this concept of Rudra. The Bhāgavata describes how the three-eyed Rudra suddenly explodes into disastrous violence with a three-forked trident in his hand and how the howling winds agitate the ocean to mass-scale inundation. The trident is apparently the lightning and it is accompanied by the winds comparable to the different 'forms' of Rudra himself. Then from the mouth or the third eye of Rudra, fixed at the centre of his eye brows, is flung cosmic fire that reduces the three worlds to ashes. This is then the incarnation of Rudra as cosmic fire. As we shall see the Prākṛtika-pralaya occurs at the end of the longivity of Brahма (Hiranyagarbha) when creation dissolves into Prakṛti and finally Ātyantika-pralaya is achieved when the individual soul is liberated. Rudra’s activity is then confined to the destruction of the three worlds which, for all practical purposes, constitute the universe.}

\footnote{\textit{kāленopasañjihīrṣato’marṣa-viracita-rucira-bhramad-bhruvor antareṇa saṃkarsaṇo nāma rudra ekādaśa-vyūhas tryakṣas tri-sīkham śūlam uttambhayan udatiṣṭhat.} 5.25.3}

\footnote{\textit{tānat tri-bhūvanam sadyaḥ kalpāntaidhita-sīndhavaḥ. plāvayantyutikaṭāṣṭopa-cāṇḍa-vāteritormayaḥ...} 3.11.31}

\footnote{\textit{atho anantasya mukhāṇalena sandahyamānam sa nirikṣya viṣvam.} 2.2.26ab}

\footnote{\textit{yas tvanta-kālé idam ātma-kṛtam sva-netra-vahni-sphulīṇga-sīkhaya bhasitaṃ na vedā...} 8.7.32cd}

\footnote{\textit{tataḥ kālāgni-rudrātmā yat syaṃ tam idam ātmanah. sanniyacchati tat kāle ghanā’nikam ivā-nilāh...} 2.10.43}
In this way the Divine purpose that expressed itself in three aspects—creation, sustenance and destruction—completes its own circle; and, the whole process is knit into the texture of the Doctrine of Incarnation. But the different grades of Divine manifestation, as presented by the Bhāgavata, suggest immensely practical religious value. We may, for instance, begin from the other end and say that ordinary experience is confronted by the physical world as an unresponsive mass. But gradually ordinary experience, under the stress of religious emotion, crystallizes itself into the discovery of conscious principles animating the physical world. These principles we have described as cosmic progenitors. With further development of insight these principles drive fast towards a unity, the Hiranya-garbha. Then, away from the troubled ocean of worldliness, we gradually decipher in the rigour of worship the cosmic witness in the inner chamber of our mind—the fourfold Vyūha. But cosmic witness also points to an apprehension with reference to worldliness. So, this insight is transcended by the integral vision of the Transcendental self, the Great Personality of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavata. From this standpoint the Doctrine of Incarnation is a device to lead the practical soul from the trifles of the everyday world to the eternal land of bliss to share in the Divine Ecstasy perpetually renewing itself in its perennial glory and effulgence.
Chapter X

THE STRUCTURE OF THE PERSONAL GOD

THE PERSONAL GOD

The principle of heterogeneity (Ātma-māyā), itself the expression of Divine Will (Viśnu-māyā), undergoes, by the urge of Divine Sport, differentiation into two mutually co-operative yet contradictory powers viz, the principle of materiality (Māyā) and the principle of divinity (Cit-śakti); and, characterised by these two powers, Brahmaṇa, the substratum of Ātma-māyā, becomes immanent in creation. As residing in creation of composite nature (pura), Brahmaṇa is then called "Puruṣa" (God).

But does this imply the pre-existence of creation in which Brahmaṇa could be immanent? The opposite seems to be true because God is stated to have started creation; and, in order to do that He has had to pre-exist creation. How to solve this dilemma? From the Bhāgavata point of view the answer is that neither God nor creation pre-existed the other, but that both simultaneously came into existence. One has to accept this position because no other alternative does stand scrutiny: Creation as a harmonious design presupposes the intervention of an intelligent person. God cannot serve the purpose of such a person because He cannot be said to create the universe in the same way as the potter produces the pot. God cannot be linked up with creation in the ordinary sense of cause-and-effect because causality involves a sequence between the cause and the effect. The cause, to be able to produce the effect, has, among other things, to pre-exist the effect and the effect has to come later than the cause as a result of the causal operation. The element of a-before-and-an-after (i.e., sequence) means time. The proposed causal relationship between God and creation presupposes, then, the existence of time before creation had started. But time itself (as sequence) being a part of creation cannot afford to exist before creation. So, the
relationship between God and creation has to be interpreted not in terms of causality but in some other terms. From the Bhāgavata point of view creation is a differentiation of Bhagavān, the third grade of Reality. Free creativity of Bhagavān realises itself by bringing into existence both God and creation at a single instant i.e., without the intervention of time-sequence. As already stated, in the light of the Doctrine of Incarnation God and creation are all incarnations of Bhagavān.¹ But in so far as the boundless activity of Bhagavān was limited by the appearance of God as the first fact that He is called the first Incarnation and the universe emerging subsequent to the first fact is said to have been created by God. Thus God creates the universe in the sense that He manifests the universe which is already inherent in Bhagavān. This idea of causation as mere manifestation has been adopted by the Bhāgavata as a general rule as it has gone into the formation of the Sāṃkhya Theory of Causation.

The process of differentiation intended to explain the emergence of God and creation may be looked upon to have started beyond the world of matter. When the process of differentiation had begun to operate, the first incident was Viṣṇu, the second grade of Reality. The second incident to emerge directly from Viṣṇu was Brahman, the first grade of Reality. The third incident was God (Puruṣa) when Brahman became immanent in creation. God is thus distant from Bhagavān by three degrees (aṁśa-aṁśa).² Although Bhagavān is the ultimate source of all emergence, ranging from Viṣṇu to the smallest trifle of the physical creation, yet God, being an Aṁśa of Brahman which in substance is Bhagavān, is identical with Bhagavān and so is held to be the immediate source of hundreds of Incarnations. Entire physical creation is thus Incarnation

¹ ādyo'vatāraḥ puruṣaḥ parasya kālaḥ svabhāvaḥ sadasan manasi ca.
dravyaṁ vikāro guṇa indriyāni
virāṭ svanāt sthānu carisnu bhūmnaḥ etc. 2.6.42-45
Śrīdhara also observes in this context:— sarveṣāṁ aviśeṣaṇa avatāratvam ucye
² yasyāṁśāṁśa-bhāgena viśvotpatti-layodayāḥ.
bhavanti kila viśvātmams tāṁ tu ādyāḥmaṁ gatiṁ gatā 10.85.31
of Bhagavān. Already inherent in Bhagavān, creation is thus merely manifested by God who, as the first Incarnation in the empirical plane and also as the wielder of Māyā and Cit-śakti, is immensely equipped to do so.

God creates by mere will and His will is done. His Māyā transforms itself into the physical universe; and, as Māyā clings to God, the creation of Māyā (i.e., the physical universe) is knit into the texture of God’s being. It is taken to constitute the psycho-physical organism of God. His Cit-śakti, on the other hand, clothes Him with spiritual form. It further provides Him with six divine majesties: sovereignty (aśvarya), detachment (vairāgya), glory (yaśas), knowledge (avabodha), power (vīrya) and beauty (śrī). By the operation of Māyā and Cit-śakti, described collectively as Atma-māyā or Vībhūti-māyā, God is clad in a couple of bodies—one material and the other spiritual—and, besides His cosmic operation, appears

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8 sa vai bhavān veda samasta-guhyam
 upāsito yat puruṣāḥ purāṇaḥ.
 perāvareśa manasaiva viśvaṁ
 srjayavatyatti guṇair asaṅgaḥ. 1.5.6

4 satya-sanākāla iśvaraḥ. 11.1.5 b

6 naitac citram bhagavati hyanante jagadīśvare
 ota-protam idam yasmin tantaṃviṣaṅga yathā paṭaḥ. 10.15.35

6 viṣeṣas tasya deha’yam sthaviṛghaḥ ca sthava-yasām.
yatredam vyayate viśvam bhūtaṁ bhavyaṁ bhavac ca yat... aṇḍa-kōṣe śāriṛśmin sapta-varana-saṁyute.
vairājaḥ puruṣo yo’sau bhagavān dhāraṇāśrayaḥ. 2.1.24-25
vide also the verses 2.2.27-35 e.g., :—
uraḥ-sthalaṁ jyotir-anikam asya
griśa mahār vadanam vai jano’sya
taṇḍu rāṣṭīṁ vidur ādi-puṃsaḥ
satyaṁ tu śiṛṣaṁ sahasra-śiṛṣaḥ. 2.1.28

7 yaśyaśvavya-sanāsthānaik kalpiṇa loka-vistaraḥ,
tad vah bhagavato rūpaṁ viśuddham sattvam urjitaṁ. 1.3.3

8 tvāṁ sūrībhis tattva-bubhutsayāḍdhā
 sadābhuvādharṣaṇa-pāda-piṭham.
aśvarya-vairāgya-yaśo’vabodha-vīrya-śriyāṁ pūrtam ahaṁ prapatye. 3.24.32

9 nahyasa janmano hetuḥ karmāṇo vā mahi-pate.
ātma-māyāṁ vinēśāya paraśya draśṭur ātmanaḥ... 9.24.57

10 nānā-tanūr gaganavad vidadhaj jahāsi
 ko veda bhūmna urugāya-vībhūti-māyāṁ 10.85.20 cd
to the plane of our finite apprehension and reveals His supernatural qualities as a Līlāvatāra.\textsuperscript{11}

Although plurality emanated out of His being and He allowed most intimate connection to develop between Him and His creation\textsuperscript{12} and His divine will matured into creation, yet He never allowed the principle of creation (Ajā) to overrule His principle of spirituality (Vidyā). Throughout the continuous process of co-operation between the two powers,\textsuperscript{13} God remains permanently disinterested and is never deluded with the sense of plurality.\textsuperscript{14} Though immanent in the universe He is never doomed to worldly destiny. Permanently settled on the sense of unity, He is immune from the polluting sense of plurality.\textsuperscript{15} Thus He kept up His independent nature though indulging in creation of His own self.\textsuperscript{16} This brings out God's essentially transcendental nature which is not to be exhausted either through physical form or spiritual form or through both. In essence God is pure consciousness\textsuperscript{17} and limitless bliss.\textsuperscript{18} When the world-drama draws to its close and potencies of plurality are wound up and are lulled into inactivity, God retires to His

\textsuperscript{11} sattvāṁ na ced dhātar idaṁ niṣam bhavet vijñānam ajñāna-bhida-pamārjanam. guṇa-prakāśaṁ anumāname bhavān prakāśate yasya ca yena vā guṇaḥ.. 10.2.35 tais tait vanca-bhṛtai rūpaṁ kāle kāle svayam vibho. karma durviṣaham yan no bhagavāṁs tat karoti hi.. 8.5.46

\textsuperscript{12} yāṁ yāṁ śaktim upāśritya puruṣa-śaktiḥ paraḥ pumān. ātmānam kriṣṭayan kriṣṭan karoti vikaroti ca.. 2.4.7

\textsuperscript{13} sa viśva-kāyaḥ puruṣ-śastraśīlaḥ satyaṁ svayam-jyotir ajñaḥ purāṇaḥ. dhattedaśya janmādyajayaṁ tāma-śaktya tāṁ vidyayodasya nīriha āste.. 8.1.13

\textsuperscript{14} ya eka tvo jagad ātma-lilayā srjatavatvatyati na tatra sajjate.. 1.10.24 cd

\textsuperscript{15} so'mṛtasyābhayasyeśo martryam annam yad atyagāt. mahimaśa tato brahmaḥ puruṣasya duratyayaḥ.. 2.6.18

\textsuperscript{16} ātmanā'śāśrayaḥ purvaṁ māyayaṁ sasye guṇaṁ. 10.37.12 ab

\textsuperscript{17} vidītośi bhavāṁ sākṣat puruṣaḥ prakṛṭeḥ paraḥ. kevalānubhāvavānanda-svaruṇaḥ sarva-buddhi-drk.. 10.3.13

\textsuperscript{18} ajāta-jana-sthiti-samyamāya, guṇaṁ nirvānaṁ-sukhārṇavaṁ. ajar animne'pariganyā-dhāmne mahānuḥbhāvāya namo namas te.. 8.6.8
being, Brahman, the first grade of Reality. Divested of all appearances God is then Brahman, pure and simple. Here also the Bhāgavata reaffirms the transcendental nature of Vedic "Puruṣa".

The Bhāgavata has taken the "vīrya" of the Vedic Viṣṇu to mean infinite powers inherent in God, achieved as a result of the process of differentiation of Ātma-māyā of Brahman. Endowed with such powers Puruṣa, the personal God, is called "limitless" (ananta). God's infinitude has baffled the attempts of the different Theorists to categorize Him to a fixed denomination. The Vedāntists call him Brahman, the Mimāṃsakas like to call Him Dharma; the Sāṅkhya School calls Him Puruṣa distinct from Prakṛti and its evolutes while the Pāncarātras conceive him to be endowed with nine powers viz, Vimalā, Utkarṣiṇī, Jñānā, Kriyā, Yogā, Prahī, Satyā, Iśānā and Anugrahā. Schools like the Pātanjalas call Him the Great Puruṣa. His powers are responsible for convergence and divergence of views. People, for example, quarrel over the issue whether God has a form or not. But both of them forget that the postulation of a form or formlessness is done against the background of Reality which is then other than both form and formlessness. In fact, such disputes expose the limited nature of intelligence which

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19 yasmin viruddha-gatayo hyaniṣam ṭaṭanti vidyādaya vividha-saktaya ānupūrvyā. 
   tad brahma viśva-bhavam ekam anantam āyam ānanda-mātram avikāram aham āhām prapadye... 4.9.16

20 etad rūpaḥ bhagavato hyāryasya cidātmanāḥ. 
   māyā-guṇair viracitaṁ mahādādibhir ātmani. 
   atak param yad avyaktaṁ avyūdha-guṇa-bṛyāhitam. 
   yatreme sadasad-rūpe pratiṣiddhe sva-saṁvidā. 
   avidyāyatmāni kyte iti tad brahma-darśanaṁ... 1.3.30, 32 ab, 33.

21 viṣṇor nu kam vīryaṇi pra vocam. RV 1.154.1

22 nābhi/hradād ita satoṁbhaṛi yasya punio 
   vijnāna-laktir aham āsam ananta-lakteḥ... 3.9.24 ab vide also 3.93.3

23 yo vā anantasya guṇān anūtānān anuκramiśyant sa tu bāla-buddhiḥ. 
   rajāṁśi bhumerr gaṇayet kathamścit 
   kālena naivākhila-lakti-dhāmanāṁ... 11.4.2 
   vide also 8.17.27, 10.17.25, 10.63.25, 10.88.40, and 12.12.65

24 tvāṁ brahma kecid avayantyata dharmam eka 
   eke param sad-asatoḥ puruṣam pareṁ. 
   anye avayantī naivākṣi-yutam param tvāṁ 
   kecin mahā-puruṣam avayam ātma-tattvam... 8.12.9; vide also Śrīdhara
can at best touch upon the fringe of Reality but cannot hope to exhaust it.\textsuperscript{24} Such is indeed the majesty of God.\textsuperscript{25}

That God possesses innumerable merits is accountable by the presence of infinite potencies. He is called "ananta" (limitless) also because He is the shelter of all kinds of virtues that respond to both cosmic and spiritual demands.\textsuperscript{26} God’s innumerable manifestations and activities are traceable to these potencies.\textsuperscript{27} God is limitless also because of infinite dimension. The cosmic egg (aṇḍa-kośa) containing the fourteen worlds is said to be of fifty crore yojanas; such egg is said to be encased by the eight principles (tattvas) viz, the five elements, Ahamkāra, Mahat and Atīyakta, each of which is said to be ten times bigger than its immediate successor. But such a staggering mass rests in Him like an atom.\textsuperscript{28} Crores of other universes move in Him like atoms\textsuperscript{29} and yet they cause no strain in God.\textsuperscript{30} Thus the Bhāgavata has tried to explain the epithet "ananta" applicable to God in different ways that make Him the God of religion with innumerable merits to the advantage of His worshippers,
and also, God, the creator, in whom His creation comfortably abides. God can answer to both the spiritual and cosmic needs because He possesses infinite potencies.

God’s infinite potencies can ultimately be reduced to two contradictory powers viz, Cit-śakti—the power of divinity—and Māyā—the power of materiality—to which reference has already been made. Māyā explains how God lends Himself to manifold expressions as the physical existence while Cit-śakti suggests that He is not exhausted in materiality because God as being is opposed to God as becoming. Through Cit-śakti, then, God maintains His existence distinct from matter and its evolutes although at the same time God is inextricably bound up with physical creation.31

The Bhāgavata position that the world serves as the body of God suggests that God is the soul of His creation. This means that like the individual soul pervading the individual body, God, the cosmic soul, has pervaded His entire creation. Like wind32 or ether33 God fills His creation; like smell pervading earth34 and like earth through its products,35 He endures through the details of creation; and, like a man wandering through the land of his dream,36 He has lent His existence to the creation of His own imagination. This last analogy affirms

31 anantāvyakta-rūpeṇa yenedam akhilam tatam. cid-acic-chakti-yuktāya tasmai bhagavate namah... 7.3.34 tvam ādyah pūrṣaḥ sākṣat īśvaraḥ prakṛteḥ paraḥ. māyāṁ vyudasya cichaktyā kāvalye shīta ātmāni 1. 7. 23
32 yathā-nilāh sthāvara-jaṅgamānām ātmā-svarūpeṇa nivṛṣṭa iṣṭet. evam para bhagavān vāsudevaḥ kṣetrajña ātmādanda anupraviṣṭah... 5.11.14 vide also 1.17.34
33 yan na sṛṣṭanti na vidur mano-buddhīndriyāsavaḥ. antar bāhiś ca vitatam vyomavat tan nato’smyaham... 6.16.23
34 tvām ātmānīla bhūvi gandham ivāti-sūkṣmam bhūtendriyāsyamaye vyitatam dadarśa... 7.9.35 cd
35 ātma-sṛṣṭam idaṁ viśvam anuviṣṭaḥ sv-aśaktibhiḥ. iyate bahudhā brahmaḥ śruta-pratyakṣa-gocaram... yathā hi bhūteṣu carācareṣu mahyādayo yonyuḥ bhānti nānā. evam bhavān kevalam ātma-yoni-bhūmaṁ-śūnetra-tantro bahudhā vibhāti... 10.48.19-20
36 nādyā na dārasanām prāptaḥ paraṁ paraṁ-pūrṣaḥ. yahhidām saktibhiḥ sṛṣṭvā praviṣṭo hyātma-sattayaḥ... yathā kayānāh pūrama manasai-vātma-māyāyā. sṛṣṭvā lokāṁ paraṁ svāpnam anuviṣṭaḥ vahāśate... 10.86.44-45
God's being against His creation which then is not as real as God Himself. And, if entrance implies the same degree of reality between the entrant and the entered into, then God must be taken to appear to enter His creation though in fact He does not. The Bhāgavata draws upon the Puruṣa-Sūkta to explain how God has pervaded His creation. God penetrates through the material mass (vīrāj) brought about by the five gross elements (sthūla-bhūtas) and was thus designated as "Vairāja-Puruṣa" or simply as "Puruṣa". The fourteen planes of existence contained in the material mass (vīrāj) constitute the different limbs of the Cosmic Man (Vairāja-Puruṣa). But in fact God's body extended beyond the gross creation contained in the material mass; it included all principles (tattvas) up to Aavyakta (primordial matter), that constitute the subtle creation propounded by the Sāṁkhya School and adopted by the Bhāgavata. And, as the subtle creation forms the psychic organism of God, distinguished from elemental creation which
constitutes His physical organism, God expresses His feelings, graces and affections through His subtle creation.⁴³ Thus creation, gross and subtle, serves as a living organism permeated by God as the soul thereof.

Just as the physical creation which sometimes goes under the name, Naître, is suffused with the presence of God, so the four types of individual bodies are equally blessed with His presence. The Bhāgavata calls these bodies, each of which stands for a complex pattern of organic unity, "pura" (dwelling place) and God living in them is naturally called "Puruṣa."⁴⁴ Like fire distributed in multiple pieces of faggot, God has distributed Himself into the details of pragmatic existence of all degrees.⁴⁵ So, God has invaded both the macrocosm and the microcosm—the cosmic and the individual—and, though One He may appear to be many in response to our limited outlook. Getting into the body God settles in mind.⁴⁶ And, of all minds, man's mind declares the triumph of God's all-pervasive nature. His divine nature glows over man's doubts and perplexities.⁴⁷ As man with his superior type of mind cannot but be conscious of His divine presence, human form is God's dearest.⁴⁸ The vacuum (dahara) of the mind is filled by God's presence and nothing short of this will gratify those who are grounded in the great spiritual tradition (āruṇayaḥ).⁴⁹ Though

⁴³ daṁstraḥ yamaḥ sneha-kalā dvijāṇi hāso janomādakari ca māyā duranta-sarga yad-apāṅga-mokṣaḥ. 2.1.31 bed
⁴⁴ śṛṣṭaṁ su-aṣaktyedam anupraśiṣṭai catur-vidharthi puram ātmāriṣṭakena. atho vidus taṁ puruṣaṁ santam antar bhūndte hṛṣikair madhu sāraghaṁ yaḥ... 4.24.64
⁴⁵ yathā ṣvayahito vah miningārūvekaṁ saṁyoniṣu. nāneva bhāti viśvātmā bhūteṣu ca tathā pumān 1.2.32
⁴⁶ vide also 4.9.7
⁴⁷ upattiṣṭhavā puṣuṣaṁ bhagavantaṁ janārdaṇām sarva-bhūta-guḍhavāsāṁ vāsudevaṁ jagad-gurum... 8.16.20
⁴⁸ yaḥ kṣetra-viltapatayā hṛṣī visvag āviḥ pratyak caṅkāsti bhagavāṁś tam avehi so'smi 4.22.37 ed
⁴⁹ prāyena manujā loke loka-tattva-vicākaṁśaḥ. samudhharanty hyātmānam ātmānavaiśvābhaśayā... eka-dui-tri-catuṣ-pādo bahu-pādas tathā padoḥ. bahuḥ santi puruḥ śṛṣṭas tāsāṁ me puṣuṣi priyā... 11.7.19, 22
⁵⁰ udaram upāsate ya pījī-vartmuṣu kūrapa-śrīmāḥ. parisara-paddhatim hṛdayam āruṇayaḥ daharam. 10.87.18 ab
God is all-pervasive. He appears to be particularised in the individual centres of consciousness and that enables the individual mind to enjoy a sense of exclusive possession of the Divine. Here God behaves like the sun appearing many through the myriads of its reflections.  

God does not merely saturate all creation with His existence but also witnesses every bit of His creation. Knowledge belongs to His being and this is so because God possesses Cīt-sakti, the principle of divinity. He is the Divine light diffusing itself through mind and matter. But, because of its preponderance of sattva, mind can receive His reflection while matter overburdened with tāmas cannot. God is therefore omniscient because He knows all bodies (kṣetra), whether individual or cosmic.  

Omnipresence, omniscience and omnipotence combine together in God as perfect equipment for cosmic control. They constitute His Lordship. Such Lordship finds expression, among others, in divine grace (kṛpā), majesty (bhūti), power (tejas), sovereignty (mahiman) and irresistible force (oajas). His Lordship had begun to operate before creation started. The Bhāgavata describes how from the centre (the naval region) of the unmanifest (avyakta), the limitless expanse of flexibility (antah-salīla), arose Buddha or Mahat, the first principle radiant in its essence like a golden lotus, and how the rest of creation followed from Mahat with Brahmā, the presiding deity of Mahat, as the cosmic designer under the overall superin-

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50 tam imam aham ajaṁ śarīra-bhūjām.  
ḥṛdi hṛdi dhīṣhitam ātma-kalpitānām.  
prati-dūlam iva naikadhā'rkam ekam  
samadhigato'smi vidhūta-mohāḥ... 1.9.42  
51............. bahir-antar-ātman  
kiṁ vā'nya-uṭijñāpyam aśeṣa-sākṣiṁaḥ... 8.6.14 cd  
52 yo'ntar bahiś cetasa etad ihaṁ  
kṣetrajña ikṣatyaśaṅkena caksuṣā... 10.38.18 cd  
53 śriyāḥ patir yajña-patiḥ praśā-patiḥ  
dhiyāṁ patir loka-patiḥ dharā-patiḥ.  
patir gatiḥ cānḍhaka-urṣi-sātvatāṁ  
prasidatāṁ me bhagavān satāṁ patiḥ... 2.4.20 vide also 8.17.7 and 9.8.7  
54 yathā tvam kṛpayā bhūtyā tejasā mahimaujasā.  
juṣṭa iṣa guṇaiḥ sarvais tato'śi bhagavān prabhūḥ... 6.19.5
tendence of God. The unmanifest was urged to creation when it was presided over by God who was then a baby whose physical growth was sought through the growth of creation. The same God is recognizable as the ineffable reality when all that appear (etat akhilam) i.e., the three worlds of tangible apprehension merge into the womb of God at the end of a kalpa; and, again, when gross creation starts anew, Brahmā, sheltered at the material mass (virāj) called the golden lotus emerging from the centre of the Infinite (nābhi-samudra), moves the cosmic process to action. When the evolutionary process starts operation the three guṇa-reals of Prakṛti lose their balance (śāmya), giving place to the preponderance of one guṇa over the others. Thus deities, progenitors (prajāpatis) and demons come into existence according as sattva, rajas and tamas get upperhand over the other two respectively. Thus emerge the world agents (Ādhikārikas) in grand hierarchy from Brahmā down to the Loka-pālas with respective assignments. Left to their provincial autonomy they discharge their function individually and collectively under the central superin-

55 nābhi-hradād iha sato'mbhasi yasya puṁso viñāṇa-saktir akam āsam ananta-sakteḥ... 3.9.24 ab
56 athāpyayo'ntah-saṁlīre yāyāṁ bhūtendriyarāthātmamayaṁ vāpūs te...
guṇa-pravāhena sad-aleṣa-bijam
dadhyau svayaṁ yaj-jatharābja-jātaḥ...
sa eva viśvasya bhavān vidhatte
guṇa-pravāheṇa vibhakta-vīryaḥ
gargāyāniḥo'vitaśābhisandhīr
ātmelvaro'tarkya-sahasra-saktiḥ...
sa tuṁ bhiro me jaṭhāreṇa nātha
tathāṁ nu yasyodara etad āṣīt
viśvam yugānte vāṭa-patra ekaḥ
śete śma māyā-sīlāṁ aṁghri-pānaḥ...
3.33.2-4
57 kalpānta etad akhilam jaṭhāreṇa grhyan
śete puṁśa svā-dṛgy ananta-sahkas tad-anke.
yan-nābhi-sindhu-ruha-kāńcana-loka-padma-
garbhe dyumān bhagavate prāvato'smi tasmai...
4.9.14
58 na tvāṁ vayam jāda-dhiyo nu vidāma bhūman
kūṭatham ādi-purusam jagatāṁ adhisam.
yat-sattvataḥ suva-gaṁśa rajasaḥ prajēṣā
manyoś ca bhūta-patayaḥ sa bhavān guṇelāḥ...
9.10.14
59 pare'ver'ni śthira-jāṅgamā ye
brahmādayo yena vāṣaṁ prāṇitūḥ...
7.8.7 od
tendency of God. 60 The Bhāgavata concept of a cosmic machinery working in perfect harmony under the supervisory control of God suggests that creation is not allowed to drift aimlessly. Rather, creation is a controlled situation betrothed to the realisation of a profound purpose envisaged by the Doctrine of Divine Sport. The Ideal has become real to discover Its unending mystery of Divine ecstasy. Thus God's vigilance continues relentlessly until He cries a halt i.e., until cosmic deluge overtakes creation; and, then, God recedes to His background, Brahma, the first grade of Reality, nay, to Paramātman, the second grade of Reality; and, having cast off the shell of immanence He reposes upon the splendour of infinitude. 61. From the state of relative infinitude God thus courts absolute infinitude.

But until that final moment arrives God keeps on his vigilance over the cosmic process. God controls by His living presence which vitalizes all. 62 God is in the full height of His glory when in exercise of His principle of divinity (Cit-śakti) He sustains, impels and guides the empirical ego. 63 The same principle ensures His mastery over materialism, the evolution of Māyā 64 and so, in spite of His fusion with the cosmic process His intrinsic nature does not suffer in the least. 65 Silently and incessantly He works through and floods the entire creation

60 yāṁ loka-pāḷāḥ kila matsara-jvarā
hitvā yatanto'pi ṣṛṭhak sametya ca.
pāṁ na ṣekur dvi-padas catus-padaḥ
sarṣyāṁ sthāṇu yaḥ atra dṛṣṭaye... 5.18.27 vide also 6.9.25
61 satyāṁ bhayāṁ iva gṛṁebhya uru-kramāṁntaḥ-
śete samudra upalambhama-mātra uṭmā... 10.60.35 ab
62 tvam ilīṣe jagatas āsthūṣaḥ ca
prāṇena mukhyena paṭiḥ praṇānām.
citṛṣya citier manā indriyānāṁ
paṭīr mahān bhūta-gaṇālayaṁ... 7.3.29
63 para-rajāḥ savitur jāta-vedo
devaṁya bhargo manasedaṁ jajāna.
sva-retasādaṁ punar āvīṣya caṣṭe
haṁśam grāhānaṁ niṣ-ṣad-rīṅgiṁ īmaṁ... 5.7.14
64 tasyāṁ-ṣantrasya harer adhīśītaṁ
paṛṣya māyādhīpater mahātmanaṁ... 6.3.17 ab
65 kva sva mahimnyahīrato bhagaśāṁs tryadhiśaṁ
kvāham guṇa-prakṛtir ajña-grhitā-pāda... 10.60.34 cd
with His liberating knowledge and vitality. Thus God extends His universal protection expressive of His pity. Even His chastisement is pity in disguise for He punishes to purge a fallen soul. He had to pronounce death sentence on as great a villain as Hiranyakasipu; but, God allowed the dying demon to be engrossed in His being. He courted death peacefully while his eyes were fixed on God. So, God punishes so that purged of all sins a sinner can follow righteous path. In this way God keeps moving the wheel of empirical life (samsāra).

In His sustenance of the universe God maintains absolute impartiality. He has no friend or foe, no relative near or distant. This position enables Him to be impartial and disinterested. In fact, egotism (abhimāna) with its branches of attachment serves as the foundation of the system of partiality; and, such egotism is rooted in limited vision, the non-discrimination between matter (Prakṛti) and spirit (Puruṣa). God cannot but be free from partiality because God being identical with everything, does allow no scope for separatism that feeds egotism. With the aid of His Cit-śakti God not only realises His transcendental nature beyond the clutches of Prakṛiti but He knows also His identification with Prakṛti and all that it evolves into. Such vision is then the basis of His disinterested-

66 etan nānā-vidham ānāvān ātma-sṛṣṭam adhoksaja.
   atmanānuprasyaśātm prāṇo jīvo bīharsya jana.
   10.85.5
   Śridhara comments:— prāṇāḥ = kriyā-saktiḥ; jīvaḥ = jñāna-saktiḥ ca;
   san tvam eva bīharsī.

67 tathā pāṇāṃ bhagavān bīharta
   dharmaśya guptaih khala-nigrāhaya...
   10.27.5 cd

68 yāṁ yogino yogasamādhīnā raho
   dhyāyanti liṅgād asato mumukṣayā.
   tasyaiva daitya-rśabhaḥ padāhato
   mukhaṁ praṣaṇas tanum utsarṣara ha...
   3.19.27

69 anugraḥo yāṁ bhavataḥ kṛto hi no
dandaḥ satāṁ te khalu kalmajāpahāḥ.
yad dandaśūkatvam amuṣya dekinaḥ
crohō'pi te'nugraha eva sammataḥ...
   10.16.34 vide also 10.27.7

70 alaṁ te nir-apeksāya pūrṣa-kāma namo(stu) te.
   6.19.4 ab

71 na yasya loke svā-janaḥ paro vā
   nātyādṛto nota kaciid vīgarhyah...
   3.14.26 ab

72 na tasya kaciid dayitaḥ pratipo
   na jñāti-bandhur na paro na ca svah.
   samasya sarvatra nirāṇjanasya
   sukhe na rāgaḥ kutaḥ eva roṣah...
   6.17.22
ness; for, such vision of unity rules out disintegration of His nature into two, one of which might be favoured in exclusion of the other. Yet, in spite of His indifferent nature, He does favour some while He punishes others. How could this happen?

The answer is to be sought in the nature of God’s control. God’s grip over the cosmic process as well as over sustenance of the universe does not mean that the empirical ego is dispossessed of its personal responsibility for what it does in life. He has left His wisdom (Vedas) at the disposal of the empirical ego for its guidance. Such wisdom is further presented to the ego as a formulation of moral laws for the guidance of its conduct. But at the same time God has vested us with free will so that we are left with the option of choosing between adherence to His advice treasured in the Vedas, and utter surrender to the cravings of animal nature. This means that man is the architect of his own destiny, good or bad, and God controls man according to the laws of action (Karman) which man himself has performed. Such laws which work behind the fruition of actions performed by us bind us down to a definite destiny. Their range right up to Brahmā suggests their character of universal application. Like bulls submitting to the wish of the

\[\text{\textit{vaiśamyam iha bhūtānāṁ mamāham-iti pārthiva}} 7.1.23\text{\textit{ cd}}
\text{\textit{tathā na yasya kaivalyād abhimāno'khitātmanaḥ}}. 7.1.24\text{\textit{ ab}}
\text{\textit{sarvātmanāḥ sama-dṛśo viśamaḥ svabhāvo bhakta-priyo yad as kalpa-taru-svabhāvaḥ}}. 8.23.8\text{\textit{ cd}}
\text{\textit{vide also 10.38.22}}
\text{\textit{tathā'pi daṇḍaṁ bhagavān bibhasi}} 10.27.5\text{\textit{ c}}
\text{\textit{antar bahiś cā'khila-loka-pālakair adṛśta-rūpo vicaryasyuru-svānaḥ}}.
\text{\textit{sa śivaras tvam ya idam vaśe'nayan īhām yathā darumaiṁ naraḥ striyam}}. 5.18.26
\text{\textit{yo dur-vimarśa-pathayā nija-māyayedam śrīvā gunān vibhajate tad-anupraniṣṭhaḥ.}}
\text{\textit{tasmai namo dur-avabodha-vihāra-tantra-samsāra-cakra-gatyate paramesvarāya}}. 10.49.29
\text{\textit{yd-vāci tantryāṁ guṇa-karma-dāmabhiḥ}}
\text{\textit{su-dus-tarair vatsa vayaṁ su-yojitaḥ}}. 5.1.14\text{\textit{ ab}}
\text{\textit{na tasya kaścit tapasā vīdyayā vā}}
\text{\textit{na yoga-viryeṇa maniṣaya vā}}.
\text{\textit{naiśvṛtha-dharmaḥ paraṁ svato vā}}
\text{\textit{kṛtam vihantuṁ tanu-bhṛd vībhūyāt}}. 5.1.12
\text{\textit{nasyotavan yasya vaśe ca lokāḥ}}. 6.3.12\text{\textit{ d}}}
driver, when pulled by the strings fastened through nasal pores, from Brahmā down to the humblest of the living creatures submit themselves to the inevitable laws of action. 81 Besides action, time (Kāla) is an additional aid to God’s control. Due to time, the universe is in the state of perpetual flux. Everything is changing, and inevitably. Such change varies from a simple transition from one state to another to titanic upheaval. 82 God controls and modifies the cosmic process as well as the behaviour of the living beings with the rod of time. All this means that appearance of favour and disfavour in God does not affect His impartial nature when He is engaged in cosmic control, because He does not arbitrarily favour and disfavour; but He directs the empirical ego to reap the fruit of its own action in course of time, without any apparent disruption in the harmonious evolution of the cosmic process.

But action and time as aids to the control of God appear to lead to a dilemma: If they are not admitted, God suffers from the charge of partiality; if, on the other hand, they are admitted, God loses His independence; for, God is then not absolutely free in His action but has to look upon action and time while He controls. The Bhāgavata meets the situation in this way: Action of variegated types which might lead either to bondage or to liberation is but an expression of God’s power (śakti-visarga) 83; similarly, time is the creation of God. 84 So, both of them being the expressions of God’s dynamic character, belong to His essence. Naturally both action and time being included in God, His dependence on action and time does not affect His independence. Rather, they exhibit His divine nature unfolding itself through the mysteries of diversity. Thus time being brought into existence disturbs the equilibrium of the three guṇa-reals and one of the three guṇas attains emphasis. Thus emphasised the guṇa inspires action which, in its turn, regulates the behaviour of the three guṇa-reals to evolve.

81 vide 5.18.26 ref. 76
82 kālaḥ kalayatām iśāḥ 10.56.27 c
83 tathā’pi taś-chakti-visarga eśāṁ sukhāyā duḥkhyāya hiśākiyāya; bandhāyā mokṣāya ca mātyu-Janmanoḥ sarirināṁ samśīrte’vakałpate. . 6.17.23
84 kālaṁ caranāṁ sṛjatāla āśrayam 7.1.11 a
in a particular direction. As the three guṇas are not emphasised simultaneously\(^{85}\) the triumph of sattva means the flourish of Gods; similarly, emphasis of rajas is conducive to the rise of the demons while victory of tamas releases evil forces of lowest types.\(^{86}\) God appears to favour all by turns, in compliance with the upsurge of one of the guṇas, determined by time and action.\(^{87}\) Thus God's creation seems to move backward and forward although He sits at its helm all the time. Such variations add colour to His creative activity as well as to His insatiable desire for enjoyment.\(^{88}\)

Again, it is a part of His control that God, the divine light, burns within us all the time. There is something divine (Vidyā) in the "finite clod" of the empirical ego, which catches His flame (Cit-sakti) and it is part of God's nature to have this generous self-giving.\(^{89}\) God thus acts as the spiritual guide. In fact, He is the primordial teacher (parama guru)\(^{90}\) sending His spiritual message through all (jagad-guru).\(^{91}\) He combines within Himself the teacher, the soul, the friend and the Lord. He is the guide, the spiritual link of supreme consciousness between man and his highest good, and finally the summum bonum of spiritual aspirations.\(^{92}\) Thus God stands for the most complete response to all kinds of needs of the empirical ego, emotional as

\(^{85}\) sattvaṁ rajas tama iti prakṛter naṁ tmano guṇāḥ.  
na teṣāṁ yugapad rājan hrāsa ullāsa eva vā... 7.1.7

\(^{86}\) jaya-kāle tu sattvasya devarṣiṇ rajasasurān.  
tamaso yakṣa-raṣṭāṁsi tat-kālāṅguruḥ bhajat... 7.1.8

\(^{87}\) ya eṣa rājann api kāla liñā  
sattvam surāṇikam iva idhayatyataḥ.  
tat-pratyākṣāṁ asuraṁ sura-priyō  
rajas-tamas-kāṁ prāminotyuru-śravāḥ... 7.1.11 cdef

\(^{88}\) yadā sīṣṭaṁ pūra ātmanāḥ para  
rajaḥ sṛjatyesa pṛthak suva-māyāyā.  
sattvaṁ vicitrāśu rivaṃsārī ṣivaraḥ  
lāyasyamāṇas tamaḥ īrayatasyau... 7.1.10

\(^{89}\) jñānaṁ yad etad adadhāt katamahaḥ sa devas  
traiklākāṁ sthira-cāṛṣvānuvarītām.  
tam jiva-karma-padaṁ anuvartamānas  
tāpa-trayaśaṁmanāya vayaṁ bhajemaḥ... 3.31.16

\(^{90}\) bhagavataḥ parama-guroh 6.9.43

\(^{91}\)āśvaṁ bhagavāṁ itthaṁ citra-ketuṁ jagad-guroh.  
palayatas tasya vīśātmā tataḥ cāṁtar-dādhe hariḥ... 6.16.65

\(^{92}\) svam sarva-lokaṁ suḥṣṭa-prīṣṭavaro  
hyātmā guruṁ jñānam abhiṣṭa-siddhiḥ. 8.24.52 ab  
vide also. 10.27.13
well as intellectual, and, above all, spiritual. As the spiritual teacher *par excellence* God leads us unmistakably to the path of emancipation. A human teacher may mislead but the ineffable light of God shines upon man to disclose his ultimate being (*nija-pada*). A human teacher may himself be blind to higher truth. How can he then bring others to the portals of knowledge? But God is the unfailing guide, the beacon light that surely points to the goal. So one should depend more on God than on human beings. Unflinching adherence to God, the spiritual teacher, shakes off the evils of intellect and breaks through the stronghold of prejudices. It effaces the taints of mind and the empirical ego regains, as a consequence, its lost paradise just as silver, passed through fire, gets back its original hue.

Longing for God is a natural urge in man as generous self-giving is an instinct in God. Man seeks God because God is the fulfilment of man, the cosmic soul, in which man's broken and fragmentary life is harmonised and completed. God is then the dearest. Things are dear to us, that give satisfaction to our soul. God standing for the highest good is the cosmic soul and is then the dearest. God, the cosmic soul, is the soul of all souls just as water is the source of life of all fish that live in it. The entire universe is irrevocably moving towards
what pleases the soul.\textsuperscript{101} So in spite of God’s absolute impartiality, God is the dearest of all,\textsuperscript{102} the beloved life-principle that sustains the being of all.\textsuperscript{103}

The instinct of love for God finds expression in man’s behaviour which we call the worship of God. But here we are confronted by several questions. Does man’s worship satisfy God? If it does, then God is not self-sufficient because man’s worship removes an inadequacy, a want, so long inherent in Him. If it does not, why should man undergo all the pains for it? If man’s worship satisfies God, that satisfaction should express itself in the form of His favour. Similarly, man’s hostility to God should incur his displeasure which should similarly be felt as His disfavour. How can God maintain His impartial character in face of such favour or disfavour? If, on the other hand, grace of God is a spontaneous act, it should shine on all, irrespective of worship or hostility. Questions like these have raged in man’s mind. The Bhāgavata has proposed answers to them: (i) God is comparable to the celestial tree (kalpa-vṛkṣa) which, despite its neutrality, fulfils the desire of a person asking for such fulfilment. So God is neutral; yet He responds to the prayer of man.\textsuperscript{104} (ii) But this answer is naive. Apart from the question of reality of such a benign tree, analogy can never adequately serve as a logic that sets all questions at rest. So the Bhāgavata proposes a second answer intended to forge a compromise between God’s impartiality and utility of worship: Worship of God does Him no good. Yet such a process enhances inner purity of the worshipper. If one wishes to ornament the shadow-face of oneself one should ornament the real face of oneself. Similarly, if the worshipper wishes to increase his inner excellence he should

\textsuperscript{101} sarveṣām api bhūtānāṁ nṛpa svātmaiva vallabhaḥ. itarēpataya-vittādyās tad-vallabhatayaiva hi...
sasmāt priyatamaḥ svātmā sarveṣām api dehinām. tad-artham eva sakalaṁ jagad etac carācaram... 10.14.50, 54

\textsuperscript{102} na hiṣyāṣṭi priyāḥ kaścin nāpriyāḥ svāḥ puro’pi vā. ātmataḥ sarva-bhūtānāṁ sarva-bhūta-priyo harī... 6.17.33

\textsuperscript{103} sarveṣām api bhūtānāṁ harir āmesvarah priyāḥ bhūtār mahadbhiḥ suva-kṛtaḥ kṛtaṁ jīva-samājītaḥ... 7.7.49

\textsuperscript{104} bhakta-priyo yad asi kalpa-taru-svabhāvaḥ. 8.23.8 d

vide also 10.38.22
worship God whose shadow he is.\textsuperscript{105} In other words, worship
or hostility assumes the shape of destiny of man; and, it re-
gulates the cosmic process. As destiny (\textit{Karman}) is the mani-
festation of God's power of materiality (\textit{Māyā}), God is said
to undergo pity or chastisement though in fact the blessing or
wrath of heaven refers to man's own action while God con-
tinues to maintain His native indifférence.\textsuperscript{106}

In this sense God is inclined to the good although He is
impartial to all.\textsuperscript{107} As God possesses man so man possesses God.
The worshipper surrenders himself only to acquire God as a
bargain.\textsuperscript{108} God assumes diverse forms in response to the
personal taste and propensity of the worshipper.\textsuperscript{109} Ever ready
with His divine grace, He is especially disposed to the down-
trodden;\textsuperscript{110} even the hostile demons are no exceptions to it.\textsuperscript{111}
Sincere and concentrated worship of God dispers impurity from
the mind which then radiates with His divine form.\textsuperscript{112} The
only shelter of the drowning soul,\textsuperscript{113} God disentangles the snare

\begin{footnotes}
\item[105] nairod'man'ah prabhur aya'n nija-labh-pu'rno
mānām janād avidusāh karuṇo yāntīte.
yad yaj yano bhagavate vidadhita mānām
tac cā'tmane prati-mukhasya yathā mukha-srih... 7.9.11
\item[106] sama-vijama-matinām mataṁ anusarasi yathā rajju-
khantaḥ sarpādi-dhīyāṁ. 6.9.37
\item[107] tasyaiha te'mūs tanavas tri-lokyāṁ
śāntā aśāntā uta mūḍha-yonayaḥ.
śāntāḥ priyāṁ te hyadhūnā'vīturāṁ satāṁ
sthātu ca te dharma-parīṣayehataḥ... 10.16.50
\item[108] vide also 1.9.21-23 and 8.16.14
\item[109] a-jita jītaḥ sama-matibhiḥ
sādhubhir bhavān jītaṁ-mabhavā bhavatā.
vijitās te'pi ca bhajatām
a-kāma'tmanāṁ ya ātma-do'iti-kurupāḥ... 6.16.34
\item[110] tvam bhakti-yoga-paribhāvita-hṛt-saroya
āsē śrutēkṣitā-patho nantu nātha punāṁ.
yad yad dhīyā ta uru-gāya vibhāyantī
tat tad vāpuḥ praṇayase sad-anugrahāya... 3.9.11
\item[111] tvam vai praṇānam sthīre-jāṅgamānāṁ
parāyaṇam naun īva mañjāto'psu... 8.17.28 ad
\item[112] yasmiṁ voirāṇubandhena rūḍhena vibudhetarāḥ,
bahavo lebhīre siddhiṁ yāṁ u haikānta-yoginoḥ... 8.22.6
\item[113] parameṣṭis-yo gama-samādhiṁ paribhāvita-parispūta-
pāramahāṃpya-dharmenodghātita-tanah-kavāya-dvāre crite'pau̇rya
ātma-loke svayam-upalabdaṁ niya-sukhānubhavo bhavān... 6.9.33
\item[114] bhitaṁ praṇānaṁ pari-pāti yad bhayāṁ
mṛtyuḥ praṇāvatyaṁnam tam imahi. 8.2.33 ed
\end{footnotes}
of pragmatic existence and leads man to his cherished goal, the land of eternal bliss. Worship of God not only ensures personal emancipation but it entails satisfaction of the entire world. The reason is that the satisfaction of the world-soul means the satisfaction of all just as watering at the root refreshes the whole tree. Worship of God therefore satisfies other deities for they have all branched off from God’s being.

Through all the stages of the cosmic drama the Divine enjoys. He is not merely the cosmic witness thereof but participates as an actor. As the cosmic soul God enjoys all simultaneously. Distributing Himself as the cosmic agents (Brahmā etc.) He enjoys in succession. He had started creation to satisfy His instinct of pleasure and when the evolutionary process was solidified into the fourteen worlds He entered them to enjoy pleasure out of His own creation. Yet His enjoyment must be distinguished from the happiness of the empirical ego. While happiness of the latter emerges from the dark chasms of perplexing attachments, God enjoys the crystal of His own unending dynamism in which no limitation is allowed to cast its shadow. But if Divine Sport consumes all particulars the empirical egos cannot stand out from this totality.

\[ sakṛd yad-aṅga-pratimāntarāhitā \]
\[ manomayaḥ bhāgavatīṁ dadau gatim... 10.12.39 ab \]
\[ yathā taror mūla-niṣecanena \]
\[ tṛpyanti tat-skandha-bhūtopa-sākhāḥ. \]
\[ prāṇopahārāc ca yathendriyāpām \]
\[ tathāvā sarvāḥpām acyutejyā... 4.31.14 \]
\[ asau guṇa-mayair bhūvair bhūta-sūkṣmendriyātmaḥbhīḥ. \]
\[ svā-nirmitēṣu nirdiṣṭo bhūnkte bhūteṣu tad-guṇān... 1.2.33 \]
\[ yathā guṇāṁs tu prākṛter yugapat kramaśopī vā. \]
\[ bibharti bhūriśas tvekaḥ kurvan karmāṇi janmabhiḥ... 2.4.9 \]
\[ bhūtair mahadbhir ya imāḥ puro vibhur \]
\[ nirmāya šete yad amūṣa pūruṣaḥ. \]
\[ bhūnkte guṇān sādāsa sādāśātmakaḥ. \]
\[ so’lankṛtāḥkīlā-vit vacāṃsi me... 2.4.23 \]
\[ tat tathuṣaś ca jagataś ca bhavān adhiśo \]
\[ yan māyayottā-guṇa-vikriyayoṇaṁ. \]
\[ arthān juśann api hṛṣika-pate na-lipto \]
\[ ye’nye svataḥ paśihṭad api bibhyati sma... 11.6.17 \]
God, then, suffers as the empirical ego and even so He furthers the cause of His instinct of play!\textsuperscript{120}

**CIT-ŚAKTI**

Creation has no *first* beginning. So, the only rational and practical way to describe the beginning of a specific creation is to state how a particular creation came to its end so that it could serve as a fresh springboard for another creation. The *Bhāgavata* describes the process of dissolution as follows:—

When involution began the gross elemental creation dissolved into the five subtle elements and the five subtle elements merged into the unmanifest consisting of the three guṇa-reals. Time, which at the beginning of creation had disturbed the equilibrium of the three guṇa-reals, restores the same in them.\textsuperscript{121}

Then, the guṇa-reals together with their auxiliaries, time etc., are lulled into Māyā. But Māyā as well recedes to its background, Ātma-māyā. With the cessation of Māyā, the empirical egos merge into their being, Brahman, the first grade of Reality, and ultimately to Paramātman, the second grade of Reality,\textsuperscript{122} when Brahman, divested of its minimum anxiety of creation (i.e., with Ātma-māyā's dissolution into Viṣṇu-māyā), becomes Paramātman. Paramātman, the cosmic soul, is then left to its native splendour. For, when the principle of diversity (Ātma-māyā) is fast asleep in the womb of Viṣṇu-māyā, the latter is left, with its creative aspect sterilised for the time being, to represent Paramātman's native splendour only. Marked by such a state of Viṣṇu-māyā, Paramātman is then said to be asleep though, in fact, He can never be asleep for that would be the denial of His native splendour (*supta-śakti* but *a-supta-*)

\textsuperscript{120} evaṁ sṛṣṭāṁ bhūtāṁ praviṣṭāṁ pāńca-dhātubhiḥ. ekadāha dasadāhātmānam vibhajan juṣate guṇān... guṇair guṇān sa bhūjāṇa ātma-pradyottitaṁ prabhuh...\textsuperscript{121} kālenātmā'nubhāṣena sāmyam nītāsu śaktīsu. sattva'dispūdā-puruśaṁ pradhāna-puruṣeśvarah...\textsuperscript{122} sa vai kīlāyaṁ puruṣaṁ purātano ya eka aśīd avīśeṣa ātmani. agre guṇebhio jagad-ātmanīvare nimilūdāṅmanṁ niś supta-śaktīsu...
If, on the basis of the analogy of the states of the empirical ego, we consider the gross elemental creation to provide for the awakening (jāgrat) of God, the subtle creation from Mahat to the Tanmātras (five subtle elements) to stand for His dream, and, beyond these two types of creation, the stage of the unmanifest (Avyakta) leading up to Ātma-māyā to be God’s dreamless sleep when God retires to Paramātman, then, Paramātman, as the Ultimate Reality beyond these three states (jāgrat, svapna and susupti) may legitimately be called the fourth state (turīya), the transcendental. It may be noted here that dissolution of the gross as well as the subtle is the cosmic ocean, the undifferentiated material mass (Avyakta) called “tamas” (darkness). Plurality having ceased, God is then left to His residual nature transcending Avyakta. This is then the rest of God on Śeṣa (His own residual nature) above the ocean.

God, merging into the essence of Paramātman, as stated above, is then left to His divine isolation (kaivalya-saṁjñitah) because all that shines at that time is His native splendour. Deprived of any conditions (upādhi) which it might consume as its objects (viśaya), such splendour then falls back and feeds upon the totality of bliss (ānanda-sandoha). This innate splendour is the core of Cit-śakti which finds expression in God as the principle of divination. While a kind of fruit (karkatikaphala) brusts into destruction, lightning fades away with a spark and the rest of the creation are destroyed or at least submit to change—in short, while the material world appears and dis-

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123 sūpta-śakti a-sūpta-dṛk 3.5.24d
124 nyasyeyad ātmani jagad viśaya’mbu-madhye śeṣe tmanā niṣa-sukha’nubhavo nir-īhaḥ. yogena mālita-dṛg ātmani pīta-nidras turē sthito na tu tamo na guṇāṁ ca yunkeṣe 7.9.32
126 tamas tad āśid gahanam gabhiram yas tasya pāre’bhivirājate vibhuḥ 8.3.5cd
127 rūpaṁ yat tat prāhur avyaktam adyam brahma jyotir nir-guṇam nir-vikāram. sattā-mātram nir-viśeṣam nir-īham sa tvam sāksad viṣṇur adhyātma-dīpah 10.3.24
128 paraṁvarāṇāṁ parama āste kaivalya-saṁjñitah. kevalā’nubhavā’nanda-sandoho nir-upādhikah 11.9.18
appears—the eternal light glows unabated and witnesses all that happens.\textsuperscript{128}

Divine splendour or \textit{Cit-śakti} distinguishes God from man. While man drifts along the dispositions of the mind with which he falsely identifies himself, God endures through the same mind and is yet the disinterested witness thereof. \textit{Cit-śakti} helps God to steer clear of all plurality because it is the integral vision (\textit{akhaṇḍa sva-dṛṣṭi}) which dissolves all fragmentations into indissoluble unity.\textsuperscript{129} The ripples of plurality (\textit{saktiūrmi}) give place to the immutable oneness of blissful consciousness (\textit{ātma‘nandā‘nubhūti}) which by its very nature discards plurality.\textsuperscript{130} Oneness and transcendentalism which characterise \textit{Cit-śakti} thus enable God to remain free from the coils of empirical life. While the empirical ego suffers under the pressure of action (\textit{Karman}) brought about by its own limited vision that creates a life of allurement and attachment, God enjoys perfect freedom because His unitary vision never allows His nature to be polluted by phenomenality.\textsuperscript{131} This divine splendour is the vision of unity which has nothing but eternal bliss, within its purview.

But within the framework of basic unity, divine splendour (\textit{sva-rocits}) works as the first impetus to creation.\textsuperscript{132} With its help God manifests what is dormant in Him. It is first expressed as divine speculation (\textit{ikṣāna}) out of which in due course emerge Time, Action and Nature (\textit{Kāla, Karman and Svabhāva}) which act upon the three \textit{guṇa}-reals to evolve into creation. The same power rouses the world-agents (\textit{Prajā-pātis}) to resume their cosmic duties. Thus \textit{Cit-śakti} helps God to make the factors of creation operative, whether they are

\textsuperscript{128} \textit{yaḥ svā’tmanidaṁ nīja-māyayā’rpitaṁ kvacīd vibhātāṁ kva ca tat tirohitam. a-biddha-dṛṣṭā sākṣyubhāyām tad ikṣate sa ātma-mūlo’vatu māṁ parāṁ paraḥ... 8.3.4

\textsuperscript{129} \textit{tvaṁ niya-mukta-pariśuddha-vibuddha ātmā kūṭastha ādi-puruṣo bhagavāṁs tryadhīlāḥ. yad buddhyavasthitim a-khaṇḍitayā sva-dṛṣṭyā draṣṭā sthitāvadhī-makho vyatirikta āsse... 4.9.15

\textsuperscript{130} \textit{ātma‘nandā‘nubhūtyaiva nyasta-saktyūrmaye namaḥ. 6.16.20ab

\textsuperscript{131} \textit{tasmā te‘nubhūtyoparata-kriyā’rthaṁ sva-māyayāvartita-loka-tontram. 3.21.21ab vide also 10.84.33

\textsuperscript{132} \textit{tasmai nāmo bhagavate ya idaṁ svena rocitaḥ. ātma-sthānā vyahjayāmāśa sa dharmāṁ pūtum arhati... 3.12.32
efficient causes like Time etc. or intelligent agents, or the material causes like the three guṇa-reals.\textsuperscript{133} Cit-śakti in this way ensures self-sufficiency of God, the creator, in that it co-operates with Māyā, although as the unitary vision, Cit-śakti is opposed to Māyā which brings about the experience of plurality. This means that Cit-śakti does not oppose creation \textit{per se} i.e., the manifestation of God, but it does oppose the disintegrating outlook of the ego which the latter develops towards creation; and, as such outlook is the outcome of Avidyā, an aspect of Māyā, so Cit-śakti is opposed to Māyā.

Cit-śakti is with God not only beyond, before and behind creation but it also enables God to control each stage of the evolutionary process. Again, when the world is brought into existence God continues to be within it as the cosmic witness with the aid of Cit-śakti.\textsuperscript{134} Unimpeded, it travels through all the details of creation and thus stands for God’s omniscience. With its help God knows all our desires (cikīrṣitam)\textsuperscript{135} and such knowledge is always direct. God knows all because He sees all.\textsuperscript{136} All types of knowledge which the ego may acquire are blessed with the touch of divine knowledge. God’s splendour radiates upon the sense organs and the mind, as it diffuses itself in the world of external objects.\textsuperscript{137} It is His splendour, again, which dispels the impenetrable gloom from the mental horizon of the empirical ego (tamo hāṃsi sva-rociṣā).\textsuperscript{138} Thus evading the ordinary experience of the empirical ego, Cit-śakti casts its radiance upon the infinitesimal details of creation, like the rays of the sun, that penetrate the clouds and shine upon the plains down below. Like the sun lighting up both the clouds and the plains below, the Self-luminous, although screen-
ed by the three guṇa-reals, illumines both the guṇas as well as
the ego labouring under them.\footnote{yathaiva sūryāḥ pihitaḥ chāyayā svayā  
chāyāḥ ca rūpāni ca saṅcakāsti.  
evam guṇenaḥ pihito guṇāṁ tvam  
ātma-pradīpo guṇīṇaḥ ca bhūman... 10.63.39
\footnote{vide 6.16.48 above ref. 137}}

The divine splendour does not merely illuminate but vital-
izes all as well. The “clods” of pragmatic existence (jīvas)
breathe because God’s splendour breathes through all.\footnote{jāne tvāṁ sarva-bhūtānāṁ prāṇa ojaḥ saho balam.  
viśuṇum prāṇa-puruṣam prabhaviṣuṇum adhīśavaram... 10.56.26
\footnote{prāṇa dināṁ viṣava-sṛjāṁ saktayo yāḥ parasya tāṁ. 10.85.6ab
\footnote{suṣṭa-saktir a-suṣṭa-dṛk 3.5.24d
\footnote{māyāṁ vyudarya cic-chaktyā kaivalye śhita ātmani. 1.7.23cd
\footnote{sa viṣava-kāyaḥ puru-hūta iṣaḥ  
satyaḥ svayaṁ-jyotir ajāḥ purāṇaḥ.  
dhateṣya jāmāḍyajayaṁ tma-saktyaṁ  
tāṁ vidyayodaśya nir-iha äste... 8.1.13}}

And lastly, the ever-lasting power of Cit-śakti which re-
mains wide awake while all other powers fall to sleep,\footnote{vidye 8.1.12 above ref. 137} and
which maintains the integrity of God through all the stages of
the cosmic process,\footnote{vidye 8.1.12 above ref. 137} continues to exist in its pristine glory
when the world drama unfolded by the three guṇa-reals (Ajā)
comes to its close and the undifferentiated Reality (Paramāt-
man) is left to shine, from which the world of plurality has
disappeared for all times to come.\footnote{vidye 8.1.12 above ref. 137}

MĀYĀ

&

VIDYĀ, AVIDYĀ AND PRAKRĪTI

The Absolute of metaphysics and the personal God of re-
ligion are fused in a point of view which we call the philosophy
of religion. The recognition of Cit-śakti and Māyā, the prin-
ciple of divinity and the principle of materiality, is an outcome
as well as an explanation of this uniting process. There is said
to be conflict between the two and, as a result, Čit-śakti overtakes Māyā and so God becomes the Absolute, divested of His material vesture. Conversely, when Māyā predominates over Čit-śakti empirical life of the individual soul triumphs over spiritual insight. But, in spite of conflict the two principles may co-operate and creation is brought into existence as a consequence. In creation Čit-śakti may again show its conflicting tendency and the individual soul regains thereby its lost paradise. Thus constant conflict and co-operation between the two principles serve to maintain the unity of the Absolute perpetuality renewing itself through earthly forms.

From the standpoint of metaphysics with its insistence on the unity of the Absolute, Māyā stands for phenomenalism. It is an explanation for the world of plurality (māyayā uruddha). And in conformity with the unity of the Absolute it has to owe its existence to the Absolute—a power (śakti), a divine dynamism unfolding itself into the cosmic drama of plurality. So, to the Bhāgavata, Māyā is an expression (vai-bhava) of Yoga-māyā, a solidification of Viṣṇu-māyā and the direct transformation of Ātma-māyā, the Divine Will, the anticipation which directly materialises into the principle of phenomenalism. From the standpoint of metaphysics (jñāna) therefore the Bhāgavata defines Māyā as follows:—“That which merely appears (without a reality of its own) against the background of the soul and at times eludes detection though it is there in the soul is Māyā. In its first aspect, it may be compared with the second moon which distorted vision may sometimes present. In its second aspect it is comparable to “rāhu” (the mythical monster—the dark shadow appearing to swell the moon at the time of the lunar eclipse) which though existent is not visible excepting at some specific points of time.

146 tad idam bhagavān rājan eka ātmātmanān svā-drk.
antarō'ntaro bhāti paśya taṁ māyayorudhā. 1.13.48
vide also 3.9.1
147 sa evam anubhūyedam nāraṇya-vinirmiṣṭam.
vai-bhavaṁ yoga-māyāyā tāṁ eva saraṇam yayau...
yan-māyayā'pi vibudhā muhyanti jñāna-kāśyā. 12.10.1, 2cd
148 iṣṭam hi prakṛtiḥ sūkṣmā māyā-śaktir dur-ātayā. 6.19.11cd
149 re'ṛthaṁ yat pratiyeta na pratiyeta cātman.
tad vidyād ātmano māyāṁ yathābhāso yathā tamaḥ. 2.9.33
of the Absolute; while the Absolute shines and always reveals Its own essence, Māyā has no essence of its own and its elusive character is sometimes detected, some other times not. Māyā is thus reduced to a mere shadow (ābhāsa or tamās) of the Absolute; yet, its practical bearing is undeniable and its modus operandi is simply an enigma for logic.150

This shows that the standpoint of metaphysics and the practical standpoint need not converge. The individual soul is, in fact, confronted by an inexorable world where it is drifting along the stream of empirical life under the compulsion of forces over which it has no control. Caught up by afflictions it wistfully longs for liberation. No metaphysics can, all on a sudden, dissolve the problems which are intensely practical. These problems have to be properly formulated, their root-cause detected and some gospel of liberation has to be promulgated anew. The Bhāgavata comes forward to meet this situation. In its allegiance to religion permeated by the presence of the personal God, it resorts to Pantheism and accordingly takes Māyā to evolve into Prakṛti which brings the universe into existence. But such universe is not an illusion for all practical purposes; it is the emanation of God. The cause of suffering of the individual soul has therefore to be sought elsewhere—in Avidyā, the force of bondage, which, by the mysterious operation of Māyā, is born a twin with Vidyā, the force of liberation. As bondage and liberation refer to the material existence of the individual soul, both Avidyā and Vidyā, the principle of bondage and the principle of liberation, are to be traced to Māyā, the principle of materiality.151 So, from Māyā emerge Prakṛti, the principle of creation, on the one hand, and Avidyā and Vidyā, the principles of bondage and liberation, on the other. Māyā thus represents an object-subject complex which shows that the Bhāgavata reaffirms its faith in the compromise between the practical and the metaphysical.

The nature of Prakṛti largely conforms to that of the Sāmkhya. Prakṛti, at its core, is undifferentiated (a-viśeṣā)

150 athavā deva-māyāyā nūnām gatir a-gocarā. cetaso vacasaê ca'pi bhūtānām iti niścayā... 1.17.23 vide also 5.2.7
151 vidyā-vidyē mama tanū viddhyuddhāva śarīro-ām. mokṣa-bandha-kāri ādye māyāyā me vinirmite... 11.11.3
though it is the primordial source of all differentiations (viṣeṣa-vat). It is distinguished from non-dual Brahman in that it consists in the three guṇa-reals (tri-guṇa). Being a non-product (avyakta) it is other than its evolutes, Mahat etc., which are all products. Constituting the chain of cause and effect (kārya-kāraṇātmaka) it is distinct from Time which, being merely the efficient cause (nimitta-kāraṇa), does not incorporate its effects within it. Lastly, being the energy of God it is eternal (nitya) though it is constantly given to flux (parināmin). But the Bhāgavata would prefer to call Prakṛti by the name “guṇamayī Ātma-māyā”. Being an expression of Māyā, it can be nothing other than Māyā. As Māyā is in essence God Himself, so Prakṛti cannot but be Ātma-māyā. And finally, as it consists in three guṇa-reals it is naturally called “guṇamayī”. So, the designation points to the pedigree as it describes the nature of Prakṛti. The description of Prakṛti in terms of Māyā also suggests the conformity to a set pattern adopted by the Bhāgavata for indicating the powers of the different grades of Reality.

But the Classical Sāmkhya has effaced God. We have the individual selves (puruṣas) on the one hand and Prakṛti on the other. Prakṛti is an automaton, constantly liable to change by its mechanical necessity without any intervention from an intellegent being. In this sense, Prakṛti is a self-sufficient and completely independent reality. The Yoga system has recognised the necessity of God as the primordial spiritual teacher; but, apart from this practical utility which is the characteristic of the Yoga system, God has no place in its scheme of creation. In other words, such God helps the individual soul (puruṣa) to discard ignorance (Avidyā) but He does not meddle with creation which is brought about by Prakṛti alone. It may be suggested that in both the Classical Sāmkhya and the Yoga, the mere presence of puruṣa [puruṣas in the case of the former and a specific puruṣa (puruṣa-viṣeṣa) viz, God in

152 yat tat tri-guṇam a-avyaktaṁ nityam sad-asad-ātmakam. 
pradhānam prakṛtiṁ prāhur a-viṣeṣam viṣeṣa-vat. . 3.26.10
153 arākṣid bhagavān viśevaṁ guṇa-māyaṁ-ātmām-māyaṁ. . 3.7.4ab
154 so'ham tad draṣṭum icchāmi yat te yoṣid-vapur dhīrtam. . 8.12.12cd
ātma-nīśa-bhūtaṁ tam māyāṁ bhavāniṁ bhagavān bhavāḥ. . 8.12.42ab
the case of the latter] is all that is needed for the evolution of Prakṛti. But God’s active co-operation is not anticipated by either of these two systems. The Bhāgavata goes a step further than the Yoga in its affirmation that God is the active agent both at every stage of the creative process as well as in bringing about the liberation of the individual souls. This follows logically from the Bhāgavata concept that Māyā as well as its different expressions like Avidyā and Prakṛti are all energies of God; even each of the three guṇa-reals deserves the recognition as God’s energy,¹⁵⁵ and energy is but the creative dynamism of God Himself. If God’s power expresses itself in the shape of creation and also works through the individual souls to deal with their personal problems, no body can still hold that God is a mere onlooker to the cosmic drama and not a participant in it as well.

So, God of the Bhāgavata engages Himself in creation. First of all, being the substratum of Māyā, God is the foundation (adhiṣṭhāna) of creation which is but the expression of guṇamayā Ātma-māyā (Prakṛti), a mode of Māyā.¹⁵⁶ He further exerts Himself as the energy of Time which gives a start to the creative evolution from Prakṛti by disturbing the equilibrium of the three guṇa-reals, the constituents of Prakṛti.¹⁵⁷ The dominance of one of the three guṇas introduces variation in God’s activity. When God impels rajas, creation is on; He galvanises sattva to exhibit divine play, and, desirous of winding up all activity, He drives tamas to prominence.¹⁵⁸ All this means that God is self-sufficient. Prakṛti, with its accessories, is brought about from God’s being and they all operate, including the cosmic agents, under the overall supervision of God.¹⁵⁹ Being the emergent of Prakṛti, creation, subtle and gross, ex-

¹⁵⁵ nirodho’syā’nukayananm ātmanāḥ saha īaktiḥ. 2.10.6ab
¹⁵⁶ yayo’ham etat sad-asat suva-māyah. pālye mayi bhrumany kalpitam āre... 1.5.27cd
¹⁵⁷ sa khalidaṁ bhagavān kāla-saktīyā guṇa-pravāhena vibhakta-viryaḥ... 4.11.18ab
¹⁵⁸ yadda sīṣkṛuh pūra ātmanāḥ paro rajaḥ sṛjatyā pṛthak suva-māyah. sattuṁ vicitṛśu viramṣur īsvaraṁ śayāyamānaṁ tamaṁ, śrayatyasu... 7.1.10
¹⁵⁹ so’pyamśa-guṇa-kāla’tmā bhagavad-dṛṣṭi-gocaraḥ, ātmanāṁ vyākarod ātmā viśvasya’ya sīrṣayaḥ... 3.5.28
presses the nature of the three guṇas; and, in relation to God it may be looked upon as His cosmic form. Thus we arrive at the pantheistic concept where God is in the world and the world is in God. But from the metaphysical standpoint, both the physical forms, the gross and the subtle, including Prakṛti, the primordial cause, are phenomenal and they pale into nothingness before the all-consuming divine splendour (sva-saṁvit) of the Absolute.

Now, if unity of consciousness is the central truth of the Bhāgavata why should the individual soul suffer? If creation is the emanation of God why should the entanglement of the individual soul with creation—a physical body and a physical environment—be the source of sorrow? The Bhāgavata has recognised the concept of Avidyā, largely on the lines of the Yoga, to account for sufferings on the earth. Avidyā has invaded the mind of man. The Bhāgavata recognises that immediately after the birth of mind, Avidyā is there to take possession of it. Of course, Avidyā starts its operation first on intellect (buddhi) which is then polluted by doubts and speculations (vikalpa). They then percolate through all that emerge from intellect, including mind, and take definite shapes as they grow in dimensions. Under their sway, intellect drifts along, without moorings, as a challenge to the very existence of the soul. Avidyā of the Bhāgavata is not a negative concept, mere absence of knowledge, but is a positive reality opposed to knowledge. As a dark shadow on intellect, Avidyā shuts out the vision of Reality (ātma-loka-varaṇa) and presents instead a

160 sa vācya-vācakatayā bhagavān brahma-rūpa-dhṛk. 2.10.36ab amuni bhagavad-rūpe mayā te hyanuvartite. ubhe api na gṛḥanti māyā-sātte viśicitaḥ.. 2.10.35
161 yatrete sad-asad-rūpe pratiśiddhe svā-saṁvid. avidyayā'impani kṛte iti tad brahma-darśanam. 1.3.33
162 saṣṭhas tu tamaso sargo yas tvābuddhi-kṛtaḥ prabhō. 3.10.17cd
163 moha-vikalpa-hetur vaikārikaḥ.. 11.22.33 cd
164 ātma-parijñāna-mayo vivādo hyaśiti nāsti' ti bhidārtha-niśṭhaḥ. vyartho'pi naiivoparameta punām mātāh parāvṛttā-dhiyām svā-lokāt.. 11.22.34
165 icchāmi kālena na yasya viślavas. tasyātma-loka-varaṇasya mokṣam.. 8.3.25cd vide also 10.14.44
counterfeit world.\textsuperscript{166} Although the body and the soul are radically different yet Avidyā forges identity between the two\textsuperscript{167} and all types of relationship, which directly refer to body, are imposed upon the soul, as a result. Thus is created a world of relationship and the physical world is split into the dichotomy of "I and Mine" on the one hand and "Thou" on the other, based on the world of relationship.\textsuperscript{168} The sense of dichotomy is then the outcome of Avidyā and is recognised by the Śāmkhya-Yoga under the name "abhimāna" or "ahantā" (egoity) and is said to possess Ahamkāra, the category to emerge directly from intellect (Mahāt). Attachment for "I and Mine" and detachment from its negative counterpart, "Thou", follow in its trail\textsuperscript{169} and they are known to the Śāmkhya-Yoga under the names "rāga" and "dveṣa" respectively. Delusion further deepens\textsuperscript{170} and the world of self-interest discards and replaces the world of God. The individual soul wistfully clings to its personal world thus wrought out by Avidyā and is under constant fear (abhinivesa of Patañjali) lest it should slip away in spite of constant vigilance. Thus the snare of delusion (moha-pāśa) is completed.\textsuperscript{171}

This is the Bhāgavata conception of Avidyā acquiring five designations—tamas, moha, mahāmoha, tāmśra and andhataṃsra—according as its delusive effect deepens progressively, standing for spiritual blindness, egoity, attachment, detachment and fear of death respectively. They are, in fact, the progressive stages of the same principle viz, Avidyā (pañca-parvā) and in so far as it obliterates the transcendental nature of the soul it is the antithesis of knowledge (chāyā).\textsuperscript{172} Unlike, for

\begin{align*}
\text{ātma-māyāyanam hareḥ.} \\
\text{ābhātya-parthaṁ nir-mūlaṁ vitva-mūlaṁ na yad bahiḥ.} \\
3.7.16 \text{ vide also 3.7.10, 4.12.15, 9.9.48}
\end{align*}

\begin{align*}
\text{tvam-māyayaṁ ṛtham abhipadya kalavareśmin} \\
\text{kṛtvā mamāḥam-iti dur-matir ut-pathaiḥ svaiḥ.} \\
4.7.44ab
\end{align*}

\begin{align*}
\text{kva deho bhautiko-nātmā kva cātmā prakṛteḥ paraḥ} \\
\text{kasya ke pāti-puṭrādyā moha eva hi karaṇam...} \\
8.16.19 \text{ vide also 10.8.42}
\end{align*}

\begin{align*}
\text{aho māyā-balaṁ viṣṇoḥ sneha-baddham idaṁ jagat.} \\
8.16.18cd
\end{align*}

\begin{align*}
\text{yan-māyāyā mohita-cetasas tuāṁ} \\
\text{vidūḥ swa-samsthaṁ na bahiḥ-prakāśāḥ.} \\
9.8.22cd
\end{align*}

\begin{align*}
\text{kāma-karmendriyāśayaḥ moha-pāśaḥ.} \\
9.8.26bc
\end{align*}

\begin{align*}
\text{sasrja cchāyāyāvyādīyāṁ pañca-parvāṇam agrataḥ.} \\
3.20.18ab
\end{align*}
example, “abhimāna” of the Śāṅkhya, all the different five-fold expressions of Avidyā are impositions on the inner mechanism (antaḥ-karaṇa) ascribed by Avidyā to the soul. Whether antaḥ-karaṇa is, as conceived by the Yoga, a composite reality called “citta” or, as in the Śāṅkhya and the Bhāgavata, a complex of intellect (Buddhi), individuation (Ahaṁkāra) and mind (Manas), one giving rise to the other, i.e., whether it is a unitary or a complex reality, intellect-individuation-mind is the haunting ground of Avidyā which knits into existence an egotistic world of personal hopes and desires, distinct from the objective world of God. So man’s world is different from God’s world but in so far as God’s world serves as the peg on which man hangs his own, God’s world is said to delude man. It follows that creation, by itself, is not an evil, because it is the emanation of God. Man makes an evil of it because of his perverted outlook. So the defect lies in man as it is his responsibility to remove such defect. If man has created the wrong it falls on him to rectify it. So, in God’s world man is left with a free will to eke out his own destiny, heaven or hell, the bliss which never fails or the abyss of darkness which entails endless misery. If man could but see beyond his own the God’s world, the evergrowing sorrows of man would be reduced to minimum! But somehow that is not to be. So, the perennial need of philosophy as a reminder.

Away from the unity of consciousness, Avidyā flies to and settles in the intellect of the individual soul and gradually effects cleavage and fragmentation that breaks through the basic ‘at-oneness’ of the individual soul with God’s creation. Delusion developed in five stages, called by Patañjali as the “kleśas” (afflictions), brings about the empirical life of man. In fact, pervasion by Avidyā, distraction of intellect and empirical life follow one another in easy succession. The individual soul having lost its integral vision becomes embroiled in pragmatic life marked by action and inevitably leading to the cycles of

178 yad-yoga-māyā-guṇa-yoga-mohitam
vivais samastam bhagavan vidhehi sam. 3.13.45cd
174 bahu-rūpā iva’bhāti māyayā bahu-rūpāyā. 2.9.2ab, vide also 7.5.11, 10.54.45
175 yatropajātām upasarpati deva-māyā
mithyā-matir yad anu saṁśṛti-cakram etat. 3.31.20cd
birth and death. The instinctive nature of the soul seeks to satisfy pragmatic ends through the path of action though such path might have at its back the sanction of sacred convention of the Scriptures.\textsuperscript{178} The satisfaction of instinctive life nourishes it further to crave more intensely for fresh food of earthly pleasures. Thus the process repeats itself: Delusion (kleśas) gives rise to action (Karman) which engenders pleasure and pain (vipāka) which in their turn feed and strengthen the subliminal tendencies (āśaya) adding fresh impetus to delusion and so on. To labour under the compulsion of Avidyā and all that it leads to is the bondage of the individual soul. While groaning under it the limited ego lives in perpetual predicament, away from the creative contact of the Divine, the personal God Who has always permeated the ego’s being yet Whose pulsation is not felt within.\textsuperscript{177}

But should this be the end of the empirical ego without redemption—the inevitable destiny from which there is no hope for escape? The Bhāgavata has described God to be the all-pervasive light of the spirit (viṣṇur adhyātma-dīpāḥ).\textsuperscript{178} Its native splendour (Cit-sakti) kindles Vidyā, the third product of Māya (besides Avidyā and Prakṛti) which God has implanted in the intellect of the ego as a free gift and which is ever awaiting its revival through action on the part of the ego by the exercise of its free will. Here then is the gospel of liberation. God is waiting for man and it is for man to go and meet Him.

From the ultimate point of view unity is constantly flowing into plurality and plurality is gaining its highest fulfilment in its unity restored. But if the calm and the serene is to reign over the distracting plurality, the triumph of unity is inevitable

\textsuperscript{178} śabdasya hi brahmaṇa esa panthā
yan nāmabhīr dhyāyati dhir āparthaiḥ.
paribhramś tatra sa vindate’ṛthān
māyā-maye vāsanayā lāyānāḥ.. 2.2.2 vide also 3.14.26

\textsuperscript{177} nānaṁ vateśāya samihitaṁ janaṁ
tan-māyāyā dur-jayayā ’kṛtātmabhīḥ.
na lakṣyate yas tu karod akārayad
no’neka ekaṁ parataḥ ca iṣvaraḥ.. 4.17.32 vide also 10.37.11

\textsuperscript{178} sattā-mātram nir-viśeṣam nir-ihaṁ
sa tvam sākṣād viṣṇur adhyātma-dīpāḥ. 10.3.24cd
because it declares the sovereignty of Divine Sport, the resting place of all philosophical speculations where intellectualism is silenced by the tranquillity of integral vision of non-dual consciousness.\footnote{sa e\textit{sa} pr\textit{ak\textit{ṛ}}\textit{ti}ṁ sūk\textit{śmāṁ da\textit{iviṁ g\textit{uṇa-mayīṁ vibhuh.}
\textit{yad-rechayaivopagatāṁ abhyāpadyata līlayā.} 3.26.4} The \textit{Bhāgavata} conception of \textit{Vidyā}, \textit{Avidyā} and \textit{Prakṛti} is a reminder of this perfect state of harmony.
CHAPTER XI

THE PRINCIPLE OF TIME

According to the Bhāgavata, the characteristic feature of the principle of Time (Kāla) consists in its disturbing the equilibrium of guṇamāyī Ātma-māyā i.e., Prakṛty. This definition of the principle of Time suggests that the creative process presupposes the existence of Time which, therefore, cannot be considered as a part of the material creation. Time, then, is a supra-phenomenal reality. Indeed, the Bhāgavata refers to the view which, in due recognition of the important status of Time, extolled it, in lieu of God, to be the regulator of the pragmatic life of man. Similar views were expressed with regard to Action (Karman), Nature (Svabhāva), Providence (daiva) and Demiurge (kāma). But, the Bhāgavata has chosen to incorporate all these in Māya. The Bhāgavata includes Providence in Action and Demiurge in Divine Will and recognises the rest i.e., Time, Action and Nature to co-operate with the Lord while He is engaged in creation, with the help of His Cit-śakti and Māya. As an expression of Māya, Time is a power (vīrya), a dynamism (Kalā) of God; and as a force driving the cosmic process to materialise into subtle and gross creations, it can be described as God’s effort (ceṣṭā), although

1 kālād guṇa-vyatikarañ. 2.5.22a vide also 3.20.12, 3.26.17
2 kecit karma vadanvēnam svabhāvam āpare nṛpa.
   eke kālaṁ āpare daivaṁ puṁsaṁ kāmam utā pare... 4.11.22
3 esa bhūtāṁ bhūtātmā bhūteṣo bhūta-bhāvanāṁ.
   sva-śaktyām māyayā yuktāḥ sṛjatyāt ca pāti ca... 4.11.26
4 sa eva bhūyo niñja-vīrya-coditāṁ
   sva-jīva-māyāṁ prakṛtyṁ śirṣakaṁ...
   ....... anusāsārā śāstra-kt... 1.10.22abd
5 eko nārayano devaḥ pūrva-sṛṣṭam sva-māyayā.
   saṁhṛtya kāla-kalayā kalpānte idam iva-rājaḥ... 11.9.16
6 sa khalvidaṁ bhagavāṁ kāla-śaktyā
guṇa-pravāheṇa vibhakta-vīryaḥ.
   karotyakartaiva niḥantyaḥkaraṇā
ceṣṭā vibhūṁmah khalu dur-vibhāvyā... 4.11.18
   vide also 10.3.26, 3.6.2-3
it may escape the certitude of precise definition and discernment. As dynamism (śakti or Kālā) pertains to the very nature of God’s being, Time is God Himself. In fact, the Bhāgavata takes the same Reality to pervade the mind of man as his inner controller (Puruṣa), and the external universe as Time. But Time as related to the flux of physical existence may also be conceived as an empirical reality. Distinguished from the supra-material Time, such empirical reality—month or year—may be called the part (avayava) of the supra-material if we are to recognise basic unity between the supra-material and the material. Thus, from the standpoint of the Bhāgavata, Time may be looked upon to put on three forms: (i) God, (ii) His power and (iii) time-sequence. The first two concepts are metaphysical while the last one is empirical. When the Bhāgavata describes Time to be the twenty-fifth among the Sāṁkhya categories it refers to the first concept; when it takes Time to be a power of Puruṣa it refers to the second and lastly, reference to Time in terms of year etc. is to be understood in the third sense.

It follows from such conception of Time that, as the power of motivation, Time does not confine its operation to the mere breaking of the equilibrium of tripartite matter but it pursues the creative process at every stage. The Bhāgavata describes how creation started with God as the agent cause and Time as an efficient cause. Through the operation of Time ten kinds of creation consisting in material (prākrta), elemental (vaikṛta) and mixed (prākrta-vaikṛta) were brought into existence. The material creation (prākrta) falls into six manifestations from primordial matter (Prakṛti), viz, (i) Mahat, (ii) Ahamkāra, (iii) Tanmātras, (iv) external sense organs, (v) pre-

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3.26.18 vide also 10.10.30
3.26.15d
3.26.16ab
3.26.17
siding deities over the sense organs and the mind, and (vi) Avidyā with five knots. The elemental (vaikṛta) is threefold:— (vii) vegetation, (viii) animals and (ix) human beings who are always active to eke out their own destiny. The mixed creation (prākṛta-vaikṛta) is represented by god-filled souls, the great personalities like Sanat-kumāra, Nanda etc. As they are divinely human they are called (x) prākṛta-vaikṛtas. The Bhāgavata further classifies the creation of gods (deva-sarga) into prākṛta and vaikṛta according as they have material or elemental bodies. While the presiding deities of the sense organs (noted above under v), constitute prākṛta type, the other gods, the Fathers, the demons etc.—altogether eight categories—come under vaikṛta because, according to the Bhāgavata, they have all elemental bodies.

First, the enumeration of the ten types of creation gives us a glimpse of the evolutionary process at work: How from the psycho-physical organism of God (Puruṣa), gradually evolves, directly from the five subtle elements (Tanmātras), the elemental creation consisting of the physical worlds including our earth; how, then, gradually the face of the earth is covered with vegetation; how life appears in congenial circumstances, animals first and then man who organises his own species so that life itself can grow into something fruitful—a focussing point where both the physical demands on the one hand and the moral and the spiritual values on the other may converge. Thus, man and God come in close bond. Secondly,
the classification of gods, as indicated by the Bhāgavata, is a pointer to the revolutionary changes which Vedic gods have undergone under the aegis of the Bhāgavata-Purāṇa. They are all dislodged from their paramount status—Indra and Varuṇa are no exceptions to it—and are assigned positions akin to those of the demons, the ghosts and other evil forces, although Fathers, musicians and other divine angels (cāraṇas) are also clustered in the same assembly. On the other hand, gods who fare best are the presiding deities of the sense organs, frequently referred to in the Upaniṣads in the context of the establishment of superiority of the vital airs (mukhya-prāṇa) to the sense organs. The Bhāgavata therefore may be said to be confirming the position of the Upaniṣads, in this respect.

Besides Time being God and the power of motivation, it deserves some consideration as sequence. The physical world represents a hierarchy in point of extension (parimāṇa), from the minutest particular (paramāṇu) to the largest general (parama-mahat) constituting the totality of the twelve stars (dvādaśa-rāṣṭratmaka)16 for which the Bhāgavata has used a collective name, “bhuvana-kośa”. The sun moves across this physical world (This is just the other way round since the days of Copernicus,) and the time occupied for its crossing of the atom (paramāṇu) is called “paramāṇu” corresponding to the dimension crossed. Similarly, the time occupied by the sun for revolving round the “bhuvana-kośa” is called “parama-mahat” or year. In between these two lie the different divisions of time—dyaṇuka, tryasareṇu, l ava, yāma, dīna, māsa etc.17 This is the ordinary concept of time defined in terms of the velocity of the earth in the solar system.

From here the Bhāgavata soars to mythology. A year of man is a day (consisting of the day and the night) of god;18 and, corresponding to man’s hundred years, the highest limit of his longevity, gods also live up to one hundred years consi-

16 dvādaśaṇḍopi māṣeṇu devoḥau saadbhir asya vai. caran samantāt tanute paratreha ca san-matim... 12.12.46
17 3.11.1-14 especially the following:—
graharka-tāra-cakra-sthāḥ paramaṇvādinā jagat. samvatsarāvatsāne ca paryetyanimiso vibhuh... 3.11.13

18 sūrya-rathaṣya merun parikrāmataḥ saṁvatsaraḥ tāmakāṁ cakram devānām aha-rātrābhyaṁ paribhratāṁ. 5.20.30
dered in terms of the equation: man’s one year = god’s one day. If we call god’s year as divine year (divya-varṣa) then the four “yugas” will constitute a total of twelve thousand divine years. As one yuga (era) imperceptibly gives rise to another that follows it, it is difficult to ascertain where the previous yuga has ended and where the succeeding one has begun. But the end and the beginning require due cognizance. This end or the beginning is somewhat different from the full swing of the yuga itself. These facts have been duly recognised by the Bhāgavata. If we describe the setting of a yuga as the evening twilight (sandhyāṁśa) and the rise of another as the morning twilight (sandhyā) and also take into consideration the introduction of the four yugas in cyclic order, then each yuga is prefixed by a sandhyā and suffixed by a sandhyāṁśa. If equity is equality then both these parts of a yuga should be taken of equal length, though such length in all legitimacy should be much lesser than that of the yuga itself. Finally, if the golden age (satya) is the ideal and the succeeding ones present a picture of steady deterioration, the moral nature of the universe requires that the succeeding yugas should be replaced more and more quickly to ensure the restoration of the lost “paradise” i.e., the golden age.

These ideas have influenced the classification of the yugas in terms of divine years as follows:\[18a\]:

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>satya</th>
<th>tretā</th>
<th>dvāpara</th>
<th>kali</th>
<th>div. yrs.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sandhyā</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yuga</td>
<td>4000</td>
<td>3000</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>10000</td>
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<td>400</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4800</td>
<td>3600</td>
<td>2400</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>12000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Beyond the three worlds, in the upper regions from Mahar-loka to Satya-loka, one thousand of four yugas form a single

\[18a\] kṛtaṁ tretā dvāparaṁ ca kaliś ceti catur-yugam. divyāir dvādalabhir varṣaiḥ sāvadhānāṁ nirūpitaṁ...

catuṛśtriṇighṛte caikaiṁ kṛtaṁ ṛṣiṣu yathā-kramam.

samkhyaṁśāṁ sahasrāṁ dvi-guṇāṁ satāṁ ca...
sandhyāṁśa-yugasāṁśayor antar yah kālaṁ śata-samkhyaṁśayoh.

tam evaḥur yugaṁ taj-jñā yatra dharmo vidhiyate... 3.11.18-20
day (kalpa) of Brahmā. His night falls to the same length. By the
time Brahmā’s day draws to its close, fourteen Manus who
are placed in charge of the three worlds below, complete their
career.\textsuperscript{19} Hence individual Manu rules for a period of a little
over seventyone yugas. In every era of a Manu, called Man-
vantara, kings in the lineage of the Manu are born in succes-
sion. Hermits, gods and angels bless these worlds by their
birth. The three worlds, placed in charge of the fourteen
Manus, constitute the daily creation of Brahmā. With the
approach of Brahmā’s night, the three worlds merge into him
when a veil of cosmic darkness appears and cosmic fire con-
sumes all. Storms agitate the oceans which establish them-
soever in the vacuum left by the three worlds. When the con-
vulsions of the elements cease, there appears on the surface of
unending expanse of water, Lord Viṣṇu reclined on the bed
of Ananta. He is then engrossed in super-cosmic sleep (yoga-
nidrā) with the attending bards from the higher regions.\textsuperscript{20}

It will be seen from the above description that the Bhāga-
vata sticks here to the Vedic conception of the three worlds,
dyau, prthivi and antarikṣa—the sky, the earth and the in-
mediate space. The Vedic cosmogony propagated by the
Nāsadīya-Sūkta\textsuperscript{21} and further elaborated by the Hiranyagarbha-
Sūkta\textsuperscript{22} presupposes cosmic water, Viṣṇu, the primordial creator,
and Brahmā who rested in Viṣṇu and eventually brought the
three worlds into existence. As Brahmā had to exist in space

\textsuperscript{19} catur-yuga-sahasram tu brahmaṇa dinam ucyate.
sa kalpo yatra manavas catur-dala viśām-pate..
tad-ante pralayas tāvān brahmī rātrir udāhītā. 12.4.2, 3ab

\textsuperscript{20} manvantaresu manavas tad-vamśyā śrīyā surāḥ.
bhavantī caite yugapat sureśās cā’nu ye ca tān.
esa daṇ安定ināḥ sargo brāhmaḥ trailokya-vartanāḥ.
tiryāḥ nr-pitr-devānāṁ sambhavo yatra karmabhīḥ.
manvantaresu bhagavān bibhram satvaṁ sva-mūrtibhiḥ.
kalenā’nugatā’leṣa āste tāṣṭāṁ dinā’tyaye..
tam evānupadihyante lokā bhūr-ādayas trayāḥ.
niśāyāṁ anuvṛttayāṁ nirmukta-śaśi-bhāskaram.
tri-lokāḥ dahyāmāṇāyāṁ lakṣāyā samkṣaraṇā‘gānāā.
tānaḥ tri-bhūvanam sadyāḥ kalpa ‘ntaiddhāta-sindhavaḥ.
plāvayantyukaṭa’topa-cand’a-vatertormayaḥ.
antāḥ sa tasmin salile āste’nantā’sano hariḥ.
yoga-nidrā-nimilā’kyāḥ stūyamāno janā’layaih.

\textsuperscript{21} RV 10.129
\textsuperscript{22} RV 10.121

3.11.25, 26, 27ab, 28cd, 29, 30ab, 31, 32
before he created the three worlds, the upper regions had to be conceived. Such regions also served as answers to the various types of moral deeds performed by the beings on the earth.

Brahmā’s longevity runs up to one hundred years made of cosmic days and nights, noted above. Half of this span of life is called “parārdha” (the grand half). Brahmā’s longevity therefore is made up of two such grand halves (dvi-parārdha). On the first day of the first grand half Brahmā was born as “śabda-brahman”. His birthday was marked as “brāhma-kalpa”. He appeared in the cosmic lotus the next day known accordingly as “pādma-kalpa”. The first day of the second grand half is known as “varāha-kalpa” in that God has assumed the form of a boar to liberate earth and its light (Vedas) from cosmic deluge marked by the dissolution of the three worlds (naimittika-pralaya). 23

According to the Bhāgavata, Brahmā was, as we shall see later on 24, “śabda-brahman” as the intelligent principle underlying Mahat, the first category to emerge from Prakṛti. Brahmā was “śabda-brahman” in that he represented the element of “kriyā-sakti” or the vital breath (mukhya-prāṇa) of Mahat, which serves as the source of the primordial sound (śabda), “om”, and also in that Brahmā stood for Mahat that further bursts into creation, both subtle and gross (brahman). It took as long a period as a kalpa for Mahat to attain through its evolutionary process the stage of five gross elements condensed into the cosmic egg (anda). Such egg is also conceived as a lotus (padma), a speck of finitude against the limitless spirit (Viṣṇu). Marked by this lotus, in which Brahmā settled for the purpose of creation of the worlds, he was called “padma-

23 asyā’pi paramāyur vayaḥ-latam.
yad aṛdham āyuṣas tasya parārdham abhidhiyate.
pūrasya’dau parārdhaya brāhma nāma mahān abhūt.
kalpo yatrābhavat brahmā śabda-brahmēti yam vidūḥ...
tasyaiśnte ca kalpo’bhūd yān pādman abhikāsate.
yad dhārer nābhi-sarasā əśīt loka-saroruham...
āyaṁ tu kathih kālpo doityasya’pi bhārata.
varāha iti viśhyālo yatrā sit śūkaro hariḥ...
24 Ch. 14 pp. 333-35.
yoni” (lotus-born). Brahmā was thus the creator in two senses: He was the presiding deity of Mahat, the source of subtle creation; and, he was also in the cosmic egg or the lotus, the source of gross creation. Both Mahat and the egg (or the lotus) are said to be golden because both had dispelled the cosmic gloom that features deluge—prakṛti in the case of Mahat and naimittika in the case of the egg or the lotus. The gloom in relation to naimittika-pralaya is the precursor of the egg or the lotus. As “kriyā-śakti” it was the continuance of the undeciphered sound “om” and as “dravya-śakti” (material aspect) it was all-encompassing mist (nihāra). Brahmā had to leave his addiction to the indistinct sound (om), the offspring (daughter) of his own self, when penetrating the cosmic mist the cosmic egg (or the lotus) could emerge for the creation of the gross physical worlds. Corresponding to this physical differentiation out of the mist, then came the four Vedas out of “om”. As the emergence of the worlds and the wisdom treasured in the Vedas are ultimately derived from the preeminence (varāha) of God whose power Bramā has borrowed for creation, the “pādma-kalpa” gave place to “varāha-kalpa”, after first grand half was completed.

Thus, the Bhāgavata conceives three hierarchical grades of Time in relation to man, gods and Brahmā, the creator of the three worlds; and, such grades are based on the longevity of man, gods and Brahmā. The longevity of gods and Brahmā, infinitely longer than that of man, seems to have been founded on the longevity of man, running up to one hundred years. As

25 soṣayiṣṭāb’dhi-sāle aṇḍa-koṣo nir-ātmakaḥ.
sāgraṇ vai varṣa-sāhhasram anuvāsitaḥ tam ḫvaram...
tasya nābher abhūt padman śahasṛ’khoru-didhiḥ.
sara’-jaṇa-nikāyauko yatra svayam abhūt svārāt...
sa’nupraviṣṭo bhagavatā yaḥ śete salilā’śaye.
loka-saṅsthām yathā-pūrvaṁ nir-mame saṅsthāyā svayā... 3.20.15-17
26 vācaṁ duhitaram tanuṁ svayambhūr haritīṁ maṇaḥ.
a-kāmām cakame kṣattāṣa sa-kāma iti nāḥ śrutam...
praja-pati-patis tanvam tatyāja vriḍiṭas tadā.
tāṁ dīo jaghur ghorāṁ nihārāṁ yad vidus tamaḥ... 3.12.28, 33
27 kadācid dhyaṇyataḥ svaṣṭrur vedā āsanaḥ catur-mukhāt.
kathāṁ svakṣyāmyaham lokāṁ samavetān yathā purā... 3.12.34
28 dīo varāhāṁ aruṣaṁ karpadinaṁ
tvaṣṭāṁ rūpāṁ namaś ni ṣuvaṁmahe. RV 1.114.5

Here “dīo varāhāṁ” refers to Rudra who occupies an eminent place in heaven, being the god of storm with lightning.
year is the unit of man’s longevity, similarly yuga is the unit of the higher grades of time, viz, manvantara, kalpa and dvi-parārduha. As the time, the sun takes to cross an atom, is taken to be the lowest limit, so the longevity of Brahmā is taken to be the uppermost limit. What happens, then, when Brahmā spends up the whole gamut of his life? The answer is to be sought in the Bhāgavata conception of “pralaya” (deluge).

Time had initiated the original act of disturbance in the equilibrium of the tripartite Prakṛti, before creation started. That act has been endlessly repeating itself since that moment. If change be another name for death then creation bears in it the element of death. In the constant flux of phenomenal existence is visible the tide of time. Things are changing at every moment and there lies the hand of death, the principle of Time.29 This is what the Bhāgavata calls momentary destruction (nitya-pralaya) which does not require additional cause excepting Time itself. The periodical destruction (naiśīttika-pralaya), on the other hand, occurs when the three worlds merge in Brahmā.30 But this is mere sleep of Brahmā after the day’s work. A time comes when Brahmā’s life comes to its end. Then all creation, both gross and subtle, dissolves into Prakṛti, the primordial matter. This is what the Bhāgavata calls “prāktika-pralaya”.31 Here Time restores the lost equilibrium of the three guṇas.32 At this dissolution, Time sweeps away all material creation including the abode of Brahmā, Satya-loka; and, this happens at the expiry of “dvi-parārduha”.33 According to the Bhāgavata, salvation also is a kind of deluge. Man obtains in course of time the intuitive vision of his higher

29 śvam év kālo’nimiso janañām āyur lavā’dyavayavaiḥ kṣniṣo. 7.3.31ab
30 eṣa naiśīttikaḥ praktaḥ pralayo yatra viśva-sṛk. nete’nantā’saṇo viśvam ātma-sāt-krṣya cā’tma-bhūḥ. 12.4.4
31 dvi-parārdhe tuvatikrānte brahmaṇaḥ pamaṇesāhah. tadā prakṛtyāḥ sapta kalpante pralayāya vai... eṣa prāktiko rājan pralayo yatra liyate. aṇḍa-kojas tu samghaṭo vighaṭā upasādite... 12.4.5, 6
32 layaḥ prāktiko hyesa puruṣa’vaktayar yadda. saktayeḥ sampraliyante vivalaḥ kāla-vidruteḥ... 12.4.22
33 sthānam madiyaṁ saha-viśvam etat kriṭasāne dvi-parārdha-saṁjñe. bhrā-bhaṅga-mātreṇa hi samādhihakṣoh kāla-ṭmano yasya tiṛṭhavīṣyat... 9.4.53
Self and thus extricates himself from his empirical personality (Ahām-kāra). He then realises his nature untrammeled by any limitations.\(^{34}\) As liberation is marked by the state of absolute annihilation of empirical life it is called “ātyantika-pralaya”. According to the Bhāgavata, then, deluge is fourfold:—nitya, naṃittika, prāyitika and ātyantika.\(^{35}\) Time brings about all these types with the difference that whereas in the first three types, Time continues its work to bring about fresh creation, in the fourth case it ceases to operate once for all; for, a liberated soul enters eternity that transcends time-space scheme. Again, as the first three types merely suggest change, great or small, in man’s empirical life, Time in relation to these three types may be said to conduce to man’s bondage while in relation to the fourth type it apparently leads to emancipation.\(^{36}\)

So, until emancipation Time steadily pursues man’s mundane career. From the minutest particle down to the cosmic progenitor (Brahmā) all are under the sway of Time.\(^{37}\) As an irrevocable force it operates on all and tantalises all efforts of resistance.\(^{38}\) Like a string it binds the world, \(^{39}\) like current it carries all alike in its midstream,\(^{40}\) like a shepherd it regulates its herd of creation, both living and non-living, and like wind sweeping away clouds, straw, cotton or dust, it makes everything drifting along its own course. It is a part of this drifting that man comes in contact with man and moves away from

\(^{34}\) yadaivaṃ etena viveka-hetinā
māyā-māyā-hamkaraṇātmā-bandhanam.
chitta-cetinātmānubhavo-vatiṣṭhate
tam āhūr ātyantikam aṅga samplavam...
12.4.34

\(^{35}\) nityo naṃittikaś caiva tathā prāyitiko layaḥ.
ātyantikaś ca kathitaḥ kālasya gaitri idṛṣṭi...
12.4.38

\(^{36}\) viryāṇi tasyāḥ kīla-dēha-bhājām
antar-bahih pūrṣa-kīla-rūpāḥ.
prayacchato mṛtyum utāṃśtaṁ ca
māyā-manuṣyasya vadasva vidvan...
10.1.7

\(^{37}\) sarvaṁ kīla-kṛtaṁ manye 1.9.14 vide also 11.6.15, 1.11.6

\(^{38}\) bhūteṣu kālasya gaitri darśayann ā-pratikriyām 1.8.4cd
vide also 1.13.19, 8.21.22, 9.10.22

\(^{39}\) tad idam kīla-rajānam jagat paśyanti sūryaḥ.
8.11.8ab

\(^{40}\) kālo bhavān ākṣipatiśa viśvat
sroto yathāntaḥ-patitya gabhiraṁ.
8.17.27cd
him. The law of Time stimulates man's action. When Time smiles on man he is able to override the greatest of obstacles. Otherwise, the cold hand of death abruptly removes him from the scene of his performances. Time helps man to forget his past. Time, ranging from atom (paramāṇu) to dvi-parādhā, is the great wheel of Viṣṇu which the Lord employs for killing evil forces. As the sun is the great divider of time it is no wonder that the Bhāgavata would conceive year, a fragment of Time, in terms of a wheel on the analogy of the solar disc. The beautiful wheel (sudarśana-cakra) at one of the hands of Viṣṇu thus symbolises God's association with Time while he operates upon the cosmic process. Indeed the Bhāga-
vata takes Time to act as the medium of the influx of divine grace. Time is also described as the glance (nimeśa) of the world-soul.

But, the inexorability of Time is fraught with difficulties.
The Bhāgavata extols the supremacy of Destiny (Daiva) with equal emphasis. Destiny is also said to govern all human behaviour and to prevail over all. Time and Destiny may forge a compromise if we hold the view that interaction between Time and Destiny regulates the life of man. And, if we take both Destiny and Time to be expressions of the Divine, then God who rules both over matter and the individual spirit may be said to include both Destiny and Time in His being. Nevertheless, from the practical point of view a difficult problem stares us in the face. If Time and Destiny determine the empirical life and all that such life means, then they are bound to rule out the scope of free will which, on all hands, seems to be the free gift from God. Such determinism reduces man to a helpless machine. The Bhāgavata does not seem to take such a limited view. When the Bhāgavata affirms that man reaps the benefit of his own action it thereby seems to take due cognizance of the free will of man left to choose his own course. What man does in consequence of this choice is credited in his favour as Destiny. Thus, if man is regulated by his Destiny he is no less free to build up that Destiny. Freedom and determinism appear to be two facets of life, which are as opposing to each other as mutually complementary. Life is thus a dialectic which is finally solved when man transcends it or when God’s will intervenes.

If Time is the motivating force not only within creation but also before creation started, its nature has to differ from that of creation. Creation has a beginning and an end but Time enduring through both these stages of creation must have none of them in itself. Creation is liable to change but Time as the great changer must be free from it. So Time is a reality

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54 kālena daiva-yuktena jānan vidrāvitaṁ jagat 10.54.14cd
55 daiva-dhiṇesu kāmeṣu daiva-dhīnāḥ svayaṁ pumān. 3.3.23ab vide also 4.11.24

adṛṣṭa-paramo janaḥ 10.5.30b

56 etad bhagavato rūpaṁ brahmaṇāḥ paramātmanoḥ.

57 sva-kṣta-bhuk pumān 10.54.38d

58 a-mogha-vāṇchitaḥ (hariḥ) 3.4.29
that knows no beginning, end or change.50 One might say somewhat paradoxically that Time is free from the limitations of time. It is eternal60 though as the dynamism of God it may be looked upon as an emergence from God.61 Everybody submits to Time excepting the liberated souls who enter the state of immortality and thus transcend the barrier of Time.62 The Bhāgavata is prepared to extend this privilege to the god-filled souls on the earth as well.63

50 so’nanto’nta-karaḥ kālo’nādir ādi-kṛt āvyayaḥ. 4.11.19 vide also 3.29.45

51 kālātmanoṣ ca nityatvāt 7.3.10c

52 vide above 3.11.38 ref. 53

53 sa eṣa sākṣat purvaḥ purāṇo
na yatra kālo viśaṭe na vedāḥ. 8.12.44cd vide also 9.4.67

54 Śrīdhara comments on 3.21.18: kāla-cakram... jagad ākṛṣṭya dhō... vad api... tvad-bhaktānām āyur ācchidya dhāvan na bhavati
CHAPTER XII

THE PRINCIPLE OF ACTION

The condition which, next to Time, operates at the beginning of the cosmic process is Action (Karman). When guṇamayī Ātma-māyā (Prakṛti), under the stress of Time, Action and Nature (Śvabhāva) and with the overall control of God, solidifies itself into the subtle and gross universe, then also, Action is directly responsible for the production of happiness and sorrow which consists in the empirical life of the individual soul. From the metaphysical point of view the soul is absolutely unrelated to empirical life; because, being one with God it is transcendental reality. The root of empirical life lies in Avidyā, the false knowledge which, on the one hand, rules out the vision of Reality, and, on the other, brings about a false identification of the Soul with the non-soul—the gross and the subtle bodies.¹ The soul develops, as a consequence, a sense of individualism (ahānītā) and ascribes to itself the properties of the non-soul.² The sense of individualism expressed in terms of “I and Mine” (ahān-mame) sets up a dichotomy between God’s creation and the world of dream created by individualistic imagination.³ The individual soul seeks to fulfil its desires through its world of dream. It resorts to appropriate actions to realise its purpose, reaps their benefits of pleasure and pain which lead in their turn to the enhancement of empirical cravings. Under their domination the individual soul ceaselessly engages itself to action which finds its fulfilment through innu-

¹ idam mano vai
karma’tmakaḥ yenaśarīra-bandhaḥ.
evam manah karma-vasam prayuṅkte
avidyayā’tmanypadhiyamāne. 5.5.5cd, 6ab vide also 7.2.47, 7.7.47

² prāṇendriya-mano-dharmān ātmanayadhyasya nir-guṇaḥ.
śete kāma-lavān dhyāyaṃ mamā’ham-śī karma-kṛt.. 4.29.25

³ sa vāsanā’tma viṣayoparakte
guṇa-pravāho viṣṇuḥ sa dharmāma.
ibhṛat pretaḥ nāmabhiḥ rūpa-bhedam
antar-bahiṣṭvaḥ ca purais tanoti.. 5.11.5
merable births and deaths. In this way empirical life is perpetuated for the individual soul.

Empirical life involves the engagement of the mind in the objects of the world. As usual, Time, Action and Nature give rise to disproportionate distribution of the three guṇas which constitute the essence of the mind. The respective guṇas originate corresponding actions, sāttvika, rājasa or tāmasa, leading respectively to divine, human and animal births. The moral virtues like restraint of mind (śama), restraint of sense organs (dama), tolerance (titikṣā), meditation (tapas), truth (satya) and the like are the sāttvika modes of the mind. Desire (kāma), hectic efforts (īhā), exhibition of powers (vīrya) etc. stand for the rājasa modes. Anger, greed, falsehood and the like represent its tāmasa expressions. The individual soul meets the world with any of these modes marked by the predominance of one of the three guṇas, with slight admixture of the other two guṇas. Besides these, the individual soul brings the ego (abhimāna) as a whole (sannītāpa) to bear upon all empirical behaviours. Thus ordinary experience takes either of these two forms:—"I am peaceful" and "Peace abides in me". When a person feels attracted to the three pragmatic ends—dharma (ordinary morality), artha (profitable ends) and kāma (material pleasures), his mind exposes sāttvika mode in relation to dharma, rājasa mode in relation to artha, and tāmasa mode towards objective pleasures. A closer analysis will reveal that the quality of dharma itself depends upon the quality of sattva, the latter quality being determined by the nature of admixture of the other two guṇas. Thus the dharma consisting in the performance of daily and occasional duties without selfish motive is predominantly sāttvika; it is less so when with a noticeable element of rajas, dharma is directed to selfish

4 trṣṇāṇaḥ bhava-vāhinyā yogaiḥ kāmair a-pūryayā. karmāṇi kāryamāṇap‘ham nānā-yoniṣu yogitaḥ... 7.13.24
5 drṣṭya-svabhavaśaya-karma-kālaṁ ekādaśāḥmi manasā viṅkarāḥ. sahasraśaḥ lataśaḥ kośiśaś ca kṣetra-jña-to na mitho na svataḥ syuḥ... 5.11.11
6 mano guṇān vai sṛjate baliyas tataś ca karmāṇi vilakaṣṭāṇāni. śukāni trṣṇāṇyatho lohitāni tebhyāḥ sa-varṇāḥ śṛtayo bhavanti... 11.23.43
actions (kāmya-karman); and dharma is at its minimum when
tamas is allowed to prevail, e.g., in the domestic duties. Although all these types of dharma rise against the sāttvika background of the mind, yet because of their qualitative varia-
tions, dharma can be described as sāttvika, rājasa and tāmasa.7
Not only the mind reveals its tripartite nature but all necessary
accessories for action, such as, the materials, time, place, rites,
agents and the rest, expose the same constitution.8 In fact,
real or imaginary, whatever falls within the purview of the
cognitive process, direct or indirect, elicits a corresponding sub-
jective response. The individual soul embroiled in the series
of such response is said to live the empirical life.9
Indeed empirical life involves a vicious circle. Action
dormant in the mind as subliminal tendencies (vāsanā) excites
the constituent guṇas of the mind. The guṇas harness the
organs to the objects of pleasure.10 The sense-organs and the
action-organs are subjected to frantic operation to ensure the
presence of one object or the other11 in uninterrupted chain.
The Bhāgavata has taken all these facts into consideration to
classify the mental modes on the basis of their origin effected

7 śamo damages titikṣekṣā tataḥ satyāṁ dayā śmṛtiḥ.
tuṣṭiṣ tuṣyōṣṭṛṣṛṣhṛ śraddhā āṣhr dhāri dayā dhīṁ svā-nirōṣṛṣhīḥ...
kāma ihā madās trṣṇā stambha āśīr bhīdā sukham.
madotbhā hoṇaḥ yāhāḥ prītir hāṣyaṁ vīryaṁ balodīyamaḥ...
krodo bhōbhōṁtām hīṁsā yācāṇā dambhāṁ klamāṁ kalīḥ.
śoka-mohau viśādārtītī niḍrāśaṁ bhīr anudyamaḥ...
sattvasya rajasā caitās tamaṁ cānūpūrvaśaṁ.
vṛttayō varṇita-prāyāḥ sannipātām aṣṭo śṛṇu...
sannipātas tvaham-iḥi mametyuddhava yā maṁ
vyāvahāraḥ sannipātō mano-mātrendriyaśubhiḥ...
dharma cārthe ca kāme ca yadyasau pariniṣṭhitāḥ.
guṇāṇāṁ sannikarṣo'yaṁ śraddhā-rati-dhanāṁvahāḥ...
pravṛtti-laksṇe niṣṭhā pumāṁ yari gṛhāṁrame.
svā-dharma cānuditśheta guṇāṇāṁ samiṁhī hi sā...
achte 11.25.2-8 Śrīdhara comments:— kāmyadharma-grhāsakti-swadharmā rajas-
tamaṁ-sattva-mayā ātyarthāḥ.
8 dravyaṁ deśāṁ phalāṁ kālo jñānam karma ca kāraṇāh.
śraddhāvasthaṁ kṛtṛ niṣṭhā traiṁguṇyaṁ sarva eva hi...
achte 11.25.30
9 etāh samśayaṁ puno guṇa-karma-nibandhanāḥ.
ayene nir-jītaṁ saumya guṇā jivena citta-jāḥ...
achte 11.25.32 abcd
10 duḥkhāṁ sukham vyātiriktaṁ ca tīrṇam
kāloppannāṁ phalāṁ āvyanakti.
ālīṅga mahā-racitaṁntar-ulma
sva-dhēnaṁ samśīt-cakra-kūṭāḥ...
achte 5.11.6
11 sarve kramā punordhana manasindriya-gocarāḥ.
āyānti bahūso yānti sarve sa-manasa ānāṁ...
achte 4.29.68
by the impact of external objects through organs. The objects of the world are of ten categories corresponding to the ten types of organs, five cognitive and five conative. The mental modes are accordingly of ten categories. And if we add to them the generic reactions of the mind (viz, "I" and "Mine") the types of modes come to twelve. The individual soul is called "purusa" because of its identification with the "I" mode. This means that empirical life is an imposition on the soul. Purusa, because of the imposition of mental modes on it, enjoys pleasure and pain. As a result material hunger increases, giving rise to fresh actions.

Mental modes, whether considered as threefold—sattvika rajas and tamasa—or twelvefold, as indicated above, are empirical in the sense that they are all stimulated by the sense of egoity—"I" and "Mine". To arrive at this conclusion the Bhagavata examines at some length some of the older Theories regarding the origin of pleasure and pain. Neither the gross body nor the presiding deities of its different parts, it contends, can be the source of pleasure and pain, for, having no reference to the soul, they fail to explain the suffering of the soul. It cannot be said, on the other hand, that the soul has in itself the germ of suffering; for, then, the soul can never hope for redemption. Similarly, Time is not the cause of sufferings because Time is soul itself. The evil star (graha) or Action fails to be adequate explanation because the star may influence the body but it can have no bearing on the soul. Action also suffers from the same defect. It is grotesque to conceive that Action in one aspect has alliance with the soul, while, in another aspect, it has alignment with the body. Action cannot be the meeting ground of aspects radically different in nature. So, willynilly, the source of pleasure and pain has to be traced to the sense of egoity, brought about by the false identification of

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12 gandha\'k\'riti-spar\'sa-rasa-\'av\'ami
visarga-ratyartityabhijalpa-\'ilap\'ah.
eka\'dala\'m su\'kara\'n\'am mameti
\'a\'yyam aha\'m du\'\'ada\'lam eka \'ahuh... 5.11.10
13 yath\'a yath\'a vikriyate gum\'ak\'to vi\'karoti va.
tath\'a tathop\'adras\'ta\'m\'a t\'ad-y\'\'t\'iti anuk\'\'aryate... 4.29.17
14 deha\'dibhir daiva-tantrair \'\'ama\'h sukham ikatah.
du\'\'kh\'a\'tyayam ca\'\'nisasya kri\'ya mogha\'h kta\'h kta\'h... 7.13.30
the soul with the non-soul. It follows that the mind by itself is neither good nor bad. It courts the chain of bondage when labouring under various modes, or rather to go their source, under Avidyā. So, the Bhāgavata, in the wake of Patañjali, recommends the suppression of mental modes, but it is aware that spiritual awareness (samādhi) is the end that one should strive for, because, being the direct vision of Reality, samādhi dispels Avidyā in all its bearings. For instance, a Jivanmukta—the enlightened soul still living in the physical body—disinterestedly witnesses the parade of phenomenal experiences inevitably brought about by his previous actions which have now borne fruit. Instead of coming in succession as hitherto—before they all appear together before his integral vision, like

38 janas tu hetuḥ suka-duḥkhayoś cet
kim ātmanāś cāтра hi bhaumayoś tat.
jihvāṁ kvacit sandaśati svadādhis
tad-vedanāyāṁ katamāya kupyet...
duḥkhasya hetur yadi devatās tu
kim ātmanas tatra vikārayos tat.
yad anigam anigena nihanyate koacit
krudhyeta ksmai puruṣaḥ svadehe...
ātmā yadi syat suka-duḥkhha-hetuḥ
kim anyatas tatra nija-svabhāvah.
nahyātmano'nyad yadi tan msāḥ syat
krudhyeta ksmān na sukhān na duḥkham...
grahā nimitam suka-duḥkhayoś cet
kim ātmano'sya janasya te vai.
grahair grahayaivā vadanti pīdāṁ
krudhyeta ksmai puruṣas tato'nyaḥ...
karma'stu hetuḥ suka-duḥkhayoś cet
kim ātmanas tad hi jañā'jadeive.
dehas tvacit-puruṣo'yaṁ suparṇah
krudhyeta ksmai nahi karna-mūlam...
kālas tu hetuḥ suka-duḥkhayoś cet
kim ātmanas tatra tad-ātmako'sav
nā'ga'ner hi tāpo na himasya tat syat
krudhyeta ksmai na parasya dvandvam...
na kenaivy kuṭ'pi kathaścānśya
dvandvopāraṇaḥ paraṁ paraśya.
yathā'hamahā samśityi-rūpiṇāḥ syād
evaṁ prabuddha na bibhete bhūtaḥ... 11.23.50-56

39 dānaṁ svadharmo niyamo yamaś ca
śrutāṁ ca karmāni ca sad-vratāṁi,
sarve mano-nigraha-lakṣaṇāntāṁ
paro hi yogo manasaḥ samādhiḥ... 11.23.45

40 mukto'pi tāvad bhīṣyāṁ svā-deham
ārābham ainann abhimāna-śunyaḥ.
yathā'nhubbhūtam pratiyāta-nidrāḥ
kintvāntya-dehāya guṇān na vṛkte... 5.1.16
a shadow over the moon.\textsuperscript{18} At last, with the exhaustion of all actions comes beatitude, the disembodied liberation achieved with the help of the mind. Hence the mind is the instrument of both bondage and liberation.\textsuperscript{19}

Action dwells, according to the Bhāgavata, in the mind which is a part, though the most important one, of the psychic or subtle body. Such body consists in sixteen principles—five sense organs, five action organs, mind-ego-intellect, and five subtle elements.\textsuperscript{20} That such a body does exist, distinct from the gross body, is evidenced by the fact that one does experience pleasure and pain even in dream when the gross body lies completely inactive.\textsuperscript{21} The same body persists even after death when the individual soul transmigrates from one body to another to enjoy the fruits of action.\textsuperscript{22} As the disorderly activities of the sense organs presuppose a mind as the principle of harmony, so varying types of mental modes arising in a certain order imply determinate actions in previous births.\textsuperscript{23} Moreover, the novel experiences in dream or hallucination, which can by no way be related to anything known in the present birth unmistakably point to previous births.\textsuperscript{24} Indeed just as the present indicates the past and the future, so the present birth suggests previous births and those that are still

\textsuperscript{18} sattvaika-niṣṭhe manasi bhagavat-pārśva-vartini.
tamas candamasivedaṁ uparājāvaṁbahāsate... 4.29.69
\textsuperscript{19} tāvāṁ ayaṁ nyavahāraḥ sadāvīṁ
kṣetra-jīva-sāksya bhavati sthūla-sākṣmaḥ.
tasmād mano liṅgam ado vadanti
guṇa-guṇatvasya parāvarasya... 5.11.7
\textsuperscript{20} paṇcabhiḥ kurute svārthāṁ paṇca vedātha paṇcabhiḥ.
egartu ーター _then  trin svayam sāpta-dāsōṁute... 6.1.50
\textsuperscript{21} vide also 6.15.25
\textsuperscript{22} layānam imam utṣyāya ṣvasantam ṣvuruḥ yathā.
karmātmāniḥ khitam bhūnte tāḍśinetareṇa vā... 4.29.61
\textsuperscript{23} yenaiva-rabhate karma tenaiva-mutra tat ṣumāṁ.
bhūnte hyayavadhānena liṅgena manasā svayam... 4.29.60
\textsuperscript{24} yathānumiyate cittam ubhayair indriyehiḥ.
evam prāg-deha-jān karma laṅkṣaye citta-vṛttibhiḥ... 4.29.63
\textsuperscript{25} nānuḥkiṁ ṭva caṁna dehanādṛṣṭam a-iṣṭam.
kadācid upalabhya yad-rūpam yādṛg ḥtmanī... tenāṣya ṭāḍṛṣṭam rājan liṅgino deha-sambhavam.
sraddadhatsvaṁ naṁbhuḥto-ṛtho na maṇḍ śṛṣṭum arhati... 4.29.64-65
Empirical experience, confined to the objects of the present birth, is too feeble to penetrate through the veil of the present to the past and the future. The limitation of cognition should not therefore be construed as the negation of previous and future births. As fire dormant in wood suddenly bursts into conflagration, so some specific action attains maturity immediately before death and determines the next birth. With the rest of the stock of action the individual soul transmigrates. Like a leech it holds fast to the next body before it quits the present form. Here the Bhāgavata is evidently drawing upon the Brhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad.

The Brhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad in one of its oft-quoted passages declares that when a man departs from one physical body to another, “vidyā” and “karman” pursue him. By the word “vidyā” the Upaniṣad understands “śraddhā” (spiritual faith) and “satya” (truth); and, a wise man is he who adheres to spiritual faith and truth. The Chāndogya-Upaniṣad extends the meaning of the word “vidyā” by including “pañcāgni-vidyā” and “Hiranya-garba-upāsana” in its fold. “Karman”, in this context of transmigration means, according

25 mana eva manuṣyaṁ pūrva-rūpāṇi śaṁsati. bhaviṣyaṁ ca bhadrāṁ te tathāiva na bhaviṣyaṁ. 4.29.66

vide also 6.1.47

26 yathājñān tamaśā yūkta upaśte vyaktam eva hi. na vedā pūrvaṁ aparāṁ naśta-janma-smṛtis tathā. 6.1.49

27 agner yathā dāru-viṣya-yogayor adṛṣṭato’nyan na nimittaṁ asti. evaṁ hi jantoṁ api dur-vibhāyaṁ
śarira-saṁyoga-viṣya-hetuḥ. 10.1.51

28 yathā tṛṇa-jalaukeyaṁ na paśayatpayāti ca. na tyajen mriyamāṇo’pi prāg-dehābhimatiṁ janāḥ. 4.29.76

vide also 10.1.40

29 tad yathā tṛṇa-jayāyukā tṛṇaṣṭāntaṁ gato’nyam ēkramam ēkramya ētmānam upāsaṁkaratyevam eva’yan ētmadāṁ śariraṁ nihatyā’
vidyāṁ gamayītva’nyam ēkramam ēkramya’ātmānam upāsaṁkarati
BU 4.4.3

30 tāṁ vidyā-karmaṇī samanvārathete BU 4.4.2

31 ye ca’mi arāpye śraddhāṁ satyam upāsate BU 6.2.15

32 Commenting on Ch U 5.10.1-2 Śaṅkara remarks that people eligible for “deva-yāna” (the path of gods) may be householders or recluses. The former must be the knowers of “pañcāgni-vidyā” and the latter must have taken to the worship (upāsanā) of Hiranya-garba (satya); Pañcāgni-vido gṛhaṁsthitāḥ; ... vān-prasthāṁ pariṇā- jakāś ca satyam brahma hiranya-garbaḥ’khyam upāsate...
to the Brihadāranyaka-Upaniṣad, “yajña” (sacrifice), “dāna” (gift) and “tāpas” (religious austerity which perhaps includes here any act of religious merit). By the word, “karman” the Čhandogya understands “iṣṭa” (sacrifice), datta (gift) and “pūrta” (social welfare). It thus appears that according to both the Upaniṣads, two of the earliest of their kind, “karman” came to be conceived under two well-defined categories—Vedic and secular or quasi-religious deeds. They could therefore be conveniently called “iṣṭa” and “pūrta” respectively. In fact the Čhandogya-Upaniṣad has used the collective term “iṣṭāpūrta” to cover all types of action. The Bhāgavata uses the word “pravr̥tta” to cover the cases of both the Vedic and secular actions envisaged by the Čhandogya. The usage of the term “pravr̥tta” is based on the common denominator of both the types of actions, viz, the presence of a selfish motive to be realised here or hereafter. On the other hand, “vidyā (elaborated in the Katha-Upaniṣad) and Hiraṇya-garbha-upāsanā was replaced by the term “brahma-vidyā” meaning Upaṇiṣadic knowledge. The Bhāgavata uses the word “nirvr̥tta” to mean such knowledge (marked by the absence of selfish motive), consisting in “vidyā” “tāpas” and “yoga-samādhi”.

Although the Bhāgavata has classified action along traditional lines, yet it rises subsequently to the high altitude of the supreme spiritual act: If man has to abide by the directions of the Vedas let him do so. Let him perform according to his capacity the duties enjoined. He is allowed to perform any of them—nitya or naimittika or kāmya. But, only with a profound sense of surrendering the fruits of his action, let him proceed to his duties. In this supreme act of surrender both pravr̥tta and nirvr̥tta actions are converted into the unity of spiritual worship of God. The Bhāgavata calls this “kriyā’dvaita” i.e., the spiritual act that discards the duality of pravr̥tta and nirvr̥tta actions. Supported by the other two monisms, namely, “bhāvā’dvaita” (i.e., the vision of the Ultimate Background

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23 atha ye yajñena dānena tāpasā lokān jayanti te dhūmam abhisam-bhanti BU 6.2.16
24 pravr̥ttaṁ ca nirvr̥ttaṁ ca dvividhaṁ karma vaidikam. āvartate pravr̥ttena nirvr̥ttena’śnute’mr̥tam... 7.15.47
25 na karmabhis tāṁ gatim āpnuvanti vidyā-tapo-yoga-samādhi-bhājām. 2.2.23cd
with appearances of objectivity), and "dravyādvaita" (i.e., all-embracing altruism which breaks through the dichotomy between "I" and "Mine" on the one hand and the rest of the world on the other), "krityādvaita" ensures final release of the labouring soul after the present gross body has fallen off (sadyomukti). The soul is then awakened to its pristine glory when the three dreams viz., the difference of cause and effect (the world of plurality), difference between one action and another, and the difference between the selfish world and the world of God, are warded off.\(^\text{36}\)

A person may attain this highest knowledge on the earth; and, out of supreme detachment he may court disembodied release just after death. Or, maybe such a person may possess the curiosity of tasting divine pleasures and may accordingly defer release for some time. Or, maybe he possesses knowledge of a high degree which requires further refinement before he can attain salvation. Or, perhaps he is absolutely given to action but then after the attainment of heavenly pleasures he is suddenly awakened to spirituality. But if the worse comes to the worst, he may not attain knowledge and after heavenly pleasures falls back upon the earth to begin his religious career once again. Or, he may do no moral or immoral action but just performs the secular deeds required for his subsistence. Or,—and this is the last alternative—he may turn into a devil and commit all sorts of sins.

Of these possibilities, the possessor of the highest knowledge attended with supreme detachment does not transmigrate at all. As indicated above, immediately after his gross body has gone he attains final beatitude. At the other extreme, the devil has to enter any or all of the twentyone or twentyeight types of hell as retributive measures.\(^\text{37}\) The performer of secular acts

\(^{35}\) syāt śādṛṣṭya-bhrāmas tāvad vikalpe sati vastunaḥ. jāgrat-svāpūrthiḥ yathā svapne tathā vidhi-niśedhataḥ... bhāva-dvaitāṁ kriya-dvaitāṁ dravyādvaitāṁ tathā'śvāṁ. vartayan svā'śvānubhūtyaṁ trīṁ svapnāṁ dhunute munih... kārya-kāraṇa-vastuvaikya-darśanaṁ pāta-tantu-vat. a-vastuto'ād vikaḷpasya bhāva-dvaitāṁ tad ucyate... yad brahmaṇi pare sāksāt sarva-karma-samarpanam. mano-vāk-tanubhīḥ pārtha kriya-dvaitāṁ tad ucyate... ātma-jāya-sutā'ś dinam anyeṣāṁ sarva-dehinām... yat svā'śvētha-kāmayor aikyaṁ dravyādvaitāṁ tad ucyate... 7.15.61-65

\(^{37}\)Description of different types of hell: 3.30.19-34, 5.26.7
will undergo on the earth the cycles of births (not necessarily human) and deaths. Even a secular act has an admixture of merit or demerit or both and that determines his succeeding birth or births.\(^{33}\) For the rest is prescribed either the path of the Fathers (pitr-yāna, also called daksīna-mārga) or the path of the Gods (deva-yāna or uttara-mārga). Those who are addicted to kāmya (or pravrīta karman) go to pitr-yāna while those pursuing nitya and naimittika (i.e., nivrīta karman) proceed to deva-yāna.\(^{30}\) Of the two paths, pitr-yāna is confined to the three worlds, Bhū, Bhuva and Svār.\(^{30}\) It is also liable to a number of limitations. In the first place, people travelling by this way are to return, as a rule, to material existence.\(^{41}\) Secondly, all the three worlds are dissolved at the time of naimittika-pralaya.\(^{42}\) Thirdly, as these worlds as well as the physical body—the instrument of enjoyment—are transitory and as the sense-organs fare no better, happiness derived from these is no good\(^{43}\) for it is bound to end in great disappointment and frustration.\(^{44}\) Deva-yāna, then, is the only way worth-having. Broadly speaking, by karman one goes to pitr-loka, the abode of Fathers; and, by vidyā one secures deva-loka, the abode of Gods.

Reference to the two paths is found as early as the Rg-

\(^{33}\) kuśāla-kuśālā mātrāḥ karmāṇāḥ gatayās tvimāḥ.

\(^{30}\) pravrītaḥ ca nivrītaḥ ca lāstrām pāñcāla-samijñitam.

\(^{40}\) yogeśvarāṇāṁ gatim āhur antar-bahis tri-lokyāḥ pavana'ntarātmanām.

\(^{41}\) Yadā cā'hindra-layyāyāṁ bete'nanta'sana hariḥ.

\(^{42}\) Yadarthā iha karmāṇī vidvanmānyasaṁ karah.

\(^{44}\) Kleśa-bhūryalpa-sārāṇi karmāṇī vi-phalāni vā. 8.5.47ab
This suggests the antiquity of the two concepts. In spite of the all-absorbing interest in rituals during the Brāhmaṇa-period, speculations started as to the existence of the path of Gods beyond that of the Fathers and the Satapatha indulges in some details of the path of Gods. Among the earliest Upaniṣads, both the Brhadāraṇyaka and the Chāndogya offer further details of the two paths together with the path of descent in the case of pītṛ-yāṇa. While the Brhadāraṇyaka and the Chāndogya lay emphasis on the description up to Soma-loka—the common resting place of both the Gods and the Fathers—the Kauśitaki-Upaniṣad concerns itself primarily with the description of the path of Gods beyond Soma-loka which it calls the door of heaven. Lastly, the Brahma-sūtra attempts to systematise the loose threads into unity of thought although this meant adding new interpretation to the old concept. Ignoring minor details the outline of the two paths may be sketched as on page 271.

The conception of the two paths is one of the finest specimens of the evolution of thoughts from the Rg-Veda to the Upaniṣads. The Rg-Veda declares that “dharma” in its earliest form meant “yajña” (sacrifice). In its simplest form “yajña” means the offering of a gift on fire in favour of a god, and, as the daily oblation on fire by a householder conforms to this simple form of “yajña”, dharma appears to have begun its career from the modest performance of daily oblation, called Agni-hotra. Cātur-māṣya was akin to Agni-hotra with the difference that while Agni-hotra was to be performed everyday, Cātur-māṣya required performance on the full-moon day of every four months. Agni-hotra and Cātur-māṣya appear to have had many things in common varying mainly in point of the time of performance. Looked at from this point of view Cātur-māṣya might be regarded as an extension of Agni-hotra. But

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45 eha yātāṁ pathibhir deva-yāṇaiḥ RV 3.58.5
pra me panthā deva-yāṇā adūṣan RV 7.76.2
panthānām anu pravidvān pītṛ-yāṇam RV 10.2.7
46 JB 1.17.18, 42, 44, 49-50
SB 2.5.5.8-9
47 BU 6.2.15-16 ; ChU 5.10.2, 4, 5, 4.15.5, 5.10.2
48 etad vai svargasya lokasya dvāraṁ yac candramāṁ KauU 1.2
49 yajñena yajñam ayajanta devās tāni dharmāni prathamānyūjan
RV 10.90.16
THE PRINCIPLE OF ACTION

THE TWO PATHS

THE PATH OF GODS

(deva-yāna)

Ascent

Viṣṇu-loka

Brahmā-loka

Indra-loka

Varuṇa-loka

Agni-loka

Soma-loka (svarga-dvāra)

Sūrya

......

ākāśa

väyu

......

pitr-loka

saṁvatsara

uttara-ayana

śukla-pakṣa

ahan

arcis

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......

dakṣiṇa-ayana

krṣṇa-pakṣa

råtri

dhūma

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such simple form of “yajña” was soon institutionalised. It gradually became a detailed affair with at least four priests to manage it. In other words, “yāga” developed into “iṣṭi”, requiring now the services of four priests.⁵⁰ The Hotṛ or invoker recites the verses to invite and praise the gods; the Udgāṭṛ or singer chants the Sāman; the Adhvaryu or executor performs all sacrificial acts while the Brahman or high priest maintains overall superintendence. From the practical point of view the Adhvaryu was the most important figure. The Adhvaryu sought the technical guidance from the Yajur-Veda in which the requisite mantras from the Rg-Veda were arranged in the order they are to be used at the sacrifice. The treatment of the topics in the Vājasaneyi-Saṃhitā (i.e., the collection of the Sukla-Yajur-Veda) suggests⁵¹ the classification of the sacrifices as it also indicates their relative prominence. The Saṃhitā treats Darśa-Pūrṇamāsa, Agni-hotra, Cātur-māsyā, Soma and Paśu sacrifices one after the other. The Bhāgavata has adopted the same classification of sacrifices (iṣṭa).⁵² The Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa, the commentary on the Sukla-Yajur-Veda, and the most important of all the Brāhmaṇas, maintains the supremacy of Darśa-Pūrṇamāsa and gradually the other types of sacrifices began to be regarded as its mere variations (vikṛti). This position is duly noticed by Aiśvalāyana who observes that all iṣṭis, sacrifices in which an animal is offered and those in which soma is offered are explained by the Pūrṇamāsa iṣṭi.⁵³ All these lead to the conclusion that by the time of the Śrauta-sūtras, Darśa-Pūrṇamāsa represented all institutional sacrifices performed with havis, soma or paśu.

But the era of sacrifice was gradually replaced by a different kind of thinking. Already in the Āraṇyakas the shifting of emphasis from physical act to contemplation was noticeable but the process reached its climax in the Upaniṣads. The spirit of the Upaniṣads possessed as much of reaction as of assimilation. The Upaniṣads asserted the superiority of knowledge (vidyā),

⁵⁰ Kane explains “iṣṭi” as follows:—“An iṣṭi means a sacrifice in which the sacrificer employs four priests” HDS Vol II Part II p. 1009
⁵¹ VS Books 1-8
⁵² darśa ca pūrṇa-māśai ca cātur-māsyām paśuḥ sutaḥ.
etad iṣṭāṁ pravṛttākhyam 7.15.48cd, 49a
⁵³ HDS Vol. II Part II p 1009
a new kind of dharma, to the conventional dharma so far confined to the meticulous performance of Vedic rituals. But soon the process of adjustment began. Vedic dharma of ritualism found a new name in “Karman” and the symbolistic transformation of the physical acts (e.g., horse-sacrifice) which had already begun in the Brhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad, the earliest and the direct descendant of the Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa, overhauled the earlier thoughts centred round Darśa-Pūrṇamāsa and the result was the new emphasis upon the two paths—the path of Gods and the path of Fathers. This emphasis accommodated both knowledge (vidyā) and dharma consisting in Vedic ritualism (karman). While the householders performed karman, the vānaprasthins and the recluses resorted to vidyā, as a rule.

The Rg-Vedic passage “apāma somam amṛtā abhiṣma” (We shall drink soma and be immortal.)\textsuperscript{44} inspired the priests to perform sacrifice for the sake of immortality; and, as this immortality was linked up with soma such immortality was taken to be the privilege of a person who could secure the abode of the moon; for, soma was understood to mean the moon. Thus the ideal of sacrifice was the attainment of the moon (candra-loka). Now, sacrifices in general were, as indicated above, Darśa-Pūrṇamāsa, at their core. Darśa-Pūrṇamāsa was to be performed either for life or for thirty years till one becomes old, or, according to the Dākṣāyaṇa tradition recorded in the Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa\textsuperscript{45} everyday for a year. The Dākṣāyaṇa tradition seems to have directly influenced the conception of the two paths under consideration. Although, as the names suggest, Pūrṇamāsa sacrifice and Darśa sacrifice should be expected to be performed on the full-moon day and the new-moon day respectively yet in practice the principal function of offering the oblation on fire would come the next day i.e., on the first day of the dark half in the case of Pūrṇamāsa and on the first day of the bright half of the case of Darśa. This implies that the full-moon days, like the new-moon days, did not receive any offering. This vacuum is partially relieved by the īṣṭi called Cātur-māya, a part of the Darśa-Pūrṇamāsa. Cātur-māya constitutes three rites, Vaiśvadeva, Varuṇa-praghāsa and

\textsuperscript{44} RV 8.48.3

\textsuperscript{45} SB 2.4.4.1-6
Sāka-medha. On the full-moon day of Caitra an offering of cooked food is made to all gods (Vaiśvadeva). Four months later, on the full-moon day of Śrāvaṇa offering is made to Varuṇa (Varuṇa-pragḥāsa) and still four months later, on the full-moon day of Mārgaśīrṣa an offering is made to Indra. Just as Cātur-māśya would converge with Pūrṇamāsa so Piṇḍa-pitr-yajñā in which offerings were made on the dakṣiṇa agni in favour of Fathers, was a part of Darśa.56

So, according to the Dāksāyaṇa tradition, when once started on the first day of the dark half, Pūrṇamāsa would continue everyday till a day before Amāvasyā is reached. Then there is rest for a day (i.e., the Amāvasya day). From the first day of the bright half, Pūrṇamāsa is alternated by Darśa, which will continue in the same way as Pūrṇamāsa. So, the two fortnights (śukla and krṣṇa) are the alternating spans of Darśa and Pūrṇamāsa. The rites of Darśa and Pūrṇamāsa are to be repeated for a year (saṁvatsara) which, like the two halves of a month (śukla and krṣṇa), consists in two halves (uttara-ayana and dakṣiṇa-ayana), marked by the change of the position of the moving earth in relation to the sun. As Darśa-Pūrṇamāsa had started from the first day of the dark half of the month, it will finish its yearly course on the eve of the full-moon day. Hence on that finishing day Pūrṇamāsa only will be performed and no Darśa.

At the middle of the altar, gārhapatiya agni is established. To the east of it āhavaniya agni is instituted while at the south-east from the gārhapatiya is the place for dakṣiṇa. In relation to dakṣiṇa, then, āhavaniya lies at the north. While offering to the gods is generally done on āhavaniya, the same to the Fathers is done on dakṣiṇa. In Pūrṇamāsa, offering is done especially to Agni, Soma and Prajāpati; in Darśa, on the other hand, besides the same gods, Indra is also propitiated. But Darśa-Pūrṇamāsa is not concerned with these gods only. All the gods and Fathers are greeted and fed.57

Two parallel rites viz, Pūrṇamāsa and Darśa were taken by the Upaniṣadīc thinkers to suggest the two paths, referred

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56 KSS 4.1.
57 The materials utilised for the exposition of Darśa-Pūrṇamāsa sacrifice are culled from Keith’s RPVU and Kane’s HDS
THE PRINCIPLE OF ACTION

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to in the Rg-Veda. Agni was the starting point of both in that oblation on fire was the means of attaining both of them. But as the path of Gods ensured release it was taken to be the path of light and was naturally associated with the full-moon sacrifice. On the other hand, the path of Fathers was considered to be transitory and suggested return to this earth after the merits are well-nigh exhausted. Eternity by action was thus a relative status. Real eternity was obtainable by knowledge only as propounded by the Upaniṣads. So the path of Fathers became associated with darkness and so with Darśa. As flame and smoke are related to fire and as flame offers light and smoke gives darkness, so the path of the Gods and the path of Fathers were described as the path of flame (arcir-mārga) and the path of smoke (dhūma-mārga) or simply, as the white (śukla) and the black (kṛṣṇa) paths respectively. Association of Pūrṇamāsa with āhavaniya, the northern fire, and of Darśa with daksīna, the southern fire, originated the names Uttara-mārga and Daksīna-mārga. As the yearly course of Darśa-Pūrṇamāsa, according to the Dāksāyana tradition, ended with Pūrṇamāsa, so on the path of the Gods fell saṁvatsara; but it is wanting in the case of the path of Fathers. Saṁvatsara, as we have already seen in the context of Time, is closely associated with the sun, and so, the path of Gods lies through the sun. Thus, through the sun the path of Gods leads to the first abode of pleasure, Soma-loka, the most covetted region of what the path of Fathers extolled as immortality. In the path of Fathers, the Chāndogya takes pītr-loka after daksīna-ayana; then vāyu, then ākāśa and then Soma-loka are described to fall one after the other. Mention of vāyu and ākāśa suggests that Soma-loka falls within the three worlds though it may be the limit of the latter. But pītr-loka and the Soma-loka are two different realities according to the Chāndogya. Darśa-pūrṇamāsa had provided for common feast both for Gods and Fathers. That provision is maintained in the conception of Soma-loka where, as the Kauṭitaki-Upaniṣad asserts at the very outset, both Gods and Fathers meet and have to meet. Persons given to kāmya-karman stay here for long long time, enjoy all sorts of pleasures

38 vide Chapter XI p. 250
herein as long as the merits of their action continue to bear fruit; and, afterwards, with the residue of their merits they fall upon smoke that forms a part of the cloud. Encased in the subtle body and fortunately unconscious, the descending souls thus enter shower that may grow crops. Such crops may be consumed by a male and so the soul may reside in his semen; and, if the man marries and both of them are fertile, such semen may give rise to rebirth. But every stage is endangered by precarious chance including the possibility of a stillborn baby.\(^{59}\)

In the scheme of Darśa-Pūrṇamāsā the sacrificial fire is obviously important. The physical fire was thought to be the earthly existence of the fire in heaven (deva-loka). Beside the god of fire, Varuṇa and Indra still enjoyed great prominence which was their privilege in the Ṛg-Veda. But, above all, stood Prajāpati; and Ṛg-Vedic Hiranya-garbha was sometimes thought to be above Prajāpati while other times identical with him. The Kaushitaki takes them to be two persons\(^{60}\) but later on both were amalgamated into the concept Brahmā, the creator of the three worlds. As early as the Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa\(^{61}\) Agni, Indra, and Varuṇa were possessors of divine abodes and a person could enjoy their company. But beyond those abodes lay the highest region (paramam sthānam), the supreme goal (paramā gatiḥ). This description was taken to mean, as for example, by the Kaushitaki, that Agni-loka, Varuṇa-loka, Indra-loka and lastly Brahmā-loka were hierarchical planes. In later literature these four regions seem to have been recognised under the names, Mahas, Jana, Tapas and Satya lokas respectively. These four abodes constitute the abodes of Gods (deva-loka).

In the scheme of Darśa-Pūrṇamāsā, Viṣṇu’s position was unassailable. The Śatapatha frequently identifies him with sacrifice.\(^{62}\) In the Darśa-Pūrṇamāsā, the model of all sacri-

\(^{59}\) abhrāṁ bhūtvā megho bhavati, megho bhūtvā pravarṣati, tā ihaovihi-yavā, jāyante to vai khalu dur-niṣṇāyataram yo yo hyānnam atti, yo retaḥ śiścatti, tad bhūya eva bhavati. ChU 5.10.6; vide also Śaṅkara on this.

\(^{60}\) āgacchati... sa praṃapati-lokaṁ sa brahma-lokam KauU 1.3

\(^{61}\) SB 2.5.5.8-9

\(^{62}\) e.g., SB 1.1.2.13
fices, it is no wonder that Viṣṇu with his three strides will overshadow the entire process including the result of this sacrifice, viz, Soma-loka which formed only a part of Viṣṇu’s body. But Viṣṇu had transcendental existence, the highest abode (parama pada) as the Ṛg-Veda tells us.\(^6\) So, transcending the world of pragmatic existence, one soars to that highest existence which, even according to Śaṅkara, is Viṣṇu-loka.\(^6\)

Against this wider perspective the contributions of the Bhāgavata deserve consideration at this stage. Firstly, the Bhāgavata has elaborated the concept of the three worlds by incorporating in their fold “śisu-māra-cakra” consisting in a host of planets from the sun to the pole star (dhruva).\(^6\) Beyond “śisu-māra-cakra” which is also called “viṣṇu-cakra” lies mahar-loka.\(^6\) Below the earth, again, are seven lower regions one after the other, Atala, Vitala, Sutala, Talātala, Mahātala, Rasātala and Pātāla, inhabited by gods, demons, snakes and so on.\(^6\) Apparently the elaboration of the higher regions as well as the lower came in to accommodate the different kinds of creation mentioned in the context of Time.\(^6\) Secondly, according to the Bhāgavata, Dakṣīṇa-ayana falls as much within the purview of the sun as the Uttar-ayana does and the description of the two paths as the solar path and the lunar path is just an attempt to draw an artificial line between the two. So, even to the path of Fathers belongs the sun.\(^6\) Thirdly, the distinction drawn by the Chāndogya-Upaniṣad between the piṭr-loka and the Soma-loka is somewhat artificial; if, Soma-loka is the goal of the\\n\\n\(^6\) RV 1.154.5
\(^4\) Śaṅkara on BS 4.3.10 comments:—kāya-brahma-loka-pralaya-pratyupasthāpane sati tatraivotpanna-samyag-darśanāḥ santāḥ tad-adhyakṣena hiranya-garbheṣa saha ataḥ param pariśuddham viṣṇoḥ paraṁ padam pratiṭpadyante iti.
\(^5\) 5.23.4-9; Śrīdhara briefly describes this “cakra” as “sūryam ārahhyad dvruvaṁ tatiṁ samāniṣam” etc. The Bhāgavata takes this wheel to be the axle of the three worlds (viśva-nābhiḥ 2.2.25).
\(^6\) tadbhiḥ viśva-nāḥ bhūtāḥ tvatvarttya viṣṇor api añīyasā virajenaṁ tmanakāḥ. namākyam brahma-vidām upāiti kalpaṁ yuṣo yad vibudhā ramante. 2.2.25
\(^7\) avaner api adhastāt sapta bhū-visarpa ekaikalo yojanaṁ yutāṁ tataḥ āyāma-vistareṇa upakṛtiḥ:—atalam, vitalam, sutalam, talātalam, mahātalam, rasātalam, pātālam iti 5.24.7
\(^8\) vide Chapter XI pp. 248-49
\(^9\) daksīṇena pathāryamnaḥ piṭr-lokaṁ vrajanti te. 3.32.20ab
path of Fathers, then pitṛ-loka has to be a kind of Soma-loka. So the Bhāgavata ignores the distinction between the two and affirms the presence of Soma-loka just after Dakṣiṇa-ayana. It may be noted here that Soma-loka is the first region of enjoyment. All other names from arcīs or dhūma down to sūrya do not indicate any region for, as we have seen, they all stand for the different marks of time through which Darśa-Pūrṇamāsa is to be performed. The Brahma-sūtra also saw through the illogicality of their recognition as different abodes and suggested that these names stood for living human souls which helped a transmigrating soul through either of these two paths (ātivāhika-mānava).

Fourthly, the actual boundary line between the two paths has always been an uncertainty. The Rg-Veda merely mentioned the two paths but did not lay down the line of demarcation. It is presumed by posterity that they were two paths and in the context of sacrifice the interpretation was that the path of Gods was meant for one who performed the daily duties like Agni-hotra and occasional duties like Cātur-māṣya and that the path of the Fathers was the destiny of one who performed a sacrifice like Darśa-Pūrṇamāsa with an empirical end in view. As daily and occasional duties were believed to rouse knowledge the two paths became the path of knowledge and the path of action (selfish action) respectively. The Chāndogya saw through the artificial division of the two paths and so affirmed that both the paths led to Soma-loka and this was taken for granted by the Kauśitaki. The Kauśitaki further claimed that even a person who is present at Soma-loka through the path of Fathers can further proceed to Satya-loka, the abode of Brahmā, if he can in the meantime acquire knowledge. The Brahma-sūtra accepts this position of the Kauśitaki with the proviso that the upāsanā for the purpose must be other than “pratikopāsanā” (idol worship). Šaṅkara oscillates to accept the view of this sūtra

90 dravya-sūkṣma-vipākā ca dhūma rātrir apāksayaḥ.
ayanaṁ dakṣiṇaṁ soma ṣaṅkhaṁ-virudhaḥ...
anmaṁ reta iti kṣemaṁ piś-yānaṁ punar-bhavāḥ.
ekaikaiṣyaṁ saṃpuṣṭiḥ bhūtva bhūtvaha jāyate...
7.15.50-51
91 ātivāhikās tal-liṅgāt BS 4.3.4
92 a-pratikaṁ-lambanān nayatiti bādaraṁyaḥ BS 4.3.15
in face of the express statement of the Chāndogya⁷³ that all go to Brahma-loka. Vācaspati, the illustrious commentator on Śaṅkara, suggests an escape in that all go to Brahma-loka but with the difference that a person with pratikopāsanā goes there unattended while others are led the way by an unearthly person (āmānavaḥ puruṣa—an angel).⁷⁴ The Bhāgavata envisages three types of persons in the Satya-loka: (i) those who are there by the selfless performance of daily (nitya) and occasional (naimittika) actions, (ii) those who have practised Hiranya-garbhauptāsanā, a specific type of vidyā prescribed by the Chāndogya, and (iii) those who are the worshippers of Bhagavān (Viṣṇu). According to Śaṅkara all persons enter Viṣṇu-loka together with Brahmā at the end of Brahmā's life. The Bhāgavata is quite unambiguous on this issue. According to the Bhāgavata the only criterion to be applicable to all the three categories, mentioned above, is whether one has been able to obtain the highest enlightenment—the knowledge of identity between the individual soul and Brahman. The performers of daily and occasional actions without selfish motive will therefore have to return to this earth if they do not qualify themselves while they are in Satya-loka by the achievement of the knowledge of identity.⁷⁵ Persons with Hiranya-garbha-upāsanā shall enjoy the pleasures available at Satya-loka and then merge in the essence of Viṣṇu at the end of dvi-parā'ṛdha, the life of Brahmā. They enjoy this privilege in the company of Brahmā.⁷⁶

⁷³ tat puruṣo'mānavaḥ; sa enān brahma gamayati ChU 4.15.5
⁷⁴ Śaṅkara'soscillation is reflected in the following:—nānu a-brahma-kratur api brahma gacchati śrūyate, yathā pañcāgni-vidyāyām—sa enān brahma gamayati—iti? bhavatu, yatra evam āhata-vāda upalabhya te; tad-abhāve tvatsargikena tat-kratu-nyāyena brahma-kratunām eva tat-prāptir netareśam iti gamayati—Śaṅkara on 4.3.15. Vācaspati makes the following remarks on Śaṅkara:—tasmāt pratikā' lambanān vidyā varjīvā sarvān vikārā' labhanān nayati āmānavo brahma-lokaṃ.
⁷⁵ bheda-ṛṣṭyā'bhimānena niḥ-saṁgenā'pi karmāna. karttyota sa-guṇaḥ brahma puruṣaṁ puruṣasabham... sa saṁśajyā punaḥ kāle kaleneśvara-mūrtina. jāte guṇa-uyatikare yathā-pūrvam praJayate... aśvāryaṁ pāraṁṣṭhyān ca te'pi karma-vinirmim. niṣeyā punar āyanti guṇa-uyatikare sati... 3.32.13-15
⁷⁶ evaṁ pariṣṭa bhagavantam anupraviṣṭa ye yogino jīta-marun-manao virāgāḥ. tenaiva sākam amṛtaṁ puruṣaṁ purāṇaṁ brahma pradhānam upayāntyagata'bhimānāḥ... 3.32.10
worshippers of Bhagavān enjoy the pleasures of Satya-loka as long as they wish and they merge, whenever they grow disinterested, into the essence of Bhagavān. 77 Fifthly, the Bhagavata discards the artificial distinction of actions into nitya, naimittika and kāmya; what really matters to determine the quality of action is the motive. So even the nitya-karmans become as bad as the kāmya if they are done with impure mind or with a motive in view. A nitya-karma with a motive makes for the path of Fathers and not for the path of Gods as one might ordinarily expect. 78

Sixthly, the Brahma-sūtra prescribes either of the two paths for all including those who are transmigrating merely for rebirth. 79 The Chāndogya-Upanishad 80 describes the general process of transmigration like this: “asya saumya puruṣasya prayato vāni manasi sampadyate, manāḥ prāne, prānas tejasī, tejaḥ parasyām devatāyām”. Śaṅkara explains this passage to mean: A dying man first loses the activity of his action organs. For instance, he loses the power of speech. Then he loses the power of sense organs. His organ of sight can no longer identify a figure, for instance. But still he is internally conscious. That shows that his mind is still active. Gradually the mind is lulled into inactivity. Still his breath is operative. When breath ceases followed by spasmodic revulsion of his hands and feet, his relatives feel his body and hope for his survival if they find it warm. Gradually warmth fades away and then people say that he has gone to God. The Bhagavata, as interpreted by Śrīdhara, remodels this process in the light of Yogic mysticism and appropriates it as a preparation for entering the path of gods only. Thus it says that the organs merge in mind, mind in speech, speech in speech-sounds, they in om,

77 vāsudeva bhagavati bhakti-yogāḥ prayojitāḥ. janaśrayāt uairāgyam jñānām yad brahma-darśanam... yadā’ya cittam artheṣu sameśvindriya-vṛttibhiḥ. na vigṛhṇāti vaijamyam priyam a-priyam ityuta... sa tadāvī’tmanā’tmānāṁ nih-saṅgaṁ sama-darśanam. heyo-pādeya-rahitam ārūḍhaṁ padam ikṣate... 3.32.23-25
78 ye tuḥā’caḥ-karmasah karmasu śraddhayā’nvitaḥ. kurvanta-pratīṣṭhāṇāṁ nityāṇyāpi ca kṛṣṇaṁ... rajasa kuj̐aḥ-manasaḥ kāmātmāno jītendriyāḥ. daksinena pathā’ryamānaḥ pitṛ-lokaṁ vrajaṁ ci te... 3.32.16, 17ab, 20ab
79 samāna cāśṛtyapakramād amṛtavāṁ cānuposiya BS 4.2.7
80 Ch U 6.8.6
om in bindu, bindu in nāda, nāda in prāṇa and lastly prāṇa in the cosmic soul.\textsuperscript{81}

Seventhly, the Bhāgavata describes the process of merging in Viṣṇu after residence at Satya-loka. The individual soul becomes “viśva”, “taijasa”, “prājña” one after the other and finally becomes the transcendental reality (turīya).\textsuperscript{82} In another context\textsuperscript{83} the Bhāgavata describes how the fourteen worlds including Satya-loka are reduced to the five elements and how in the reverse order the elements and the Sāmkhya categories all merge into A vyakta and then A vyakta merges into the cosmic soul. If degrees of enlightenment be adopted to mark the stages of progressive journey in the path of gods, then we might say that the individual soul as it proceeds farther than Satya-loka first becomes “viśva” when it realises its identity with gross creation. In the same way realisation of identity with the subtle creation and that with A vyakta, the primordial matter, make the soul “taijasa” and “prājña” respectively. Finally, it becomes “turīya” when it achieves the supreme identity with the cosmic soul (Viṣṇu).

In this line of thinking the Bhāgavata has not only fused the Sāmkhya categories in the context of the path of gods but has extended thereby the frontiers of the path of gods to the highest god, Viṣṇu. In this way the path of Fathers and the path of gods have found their highest fulfilment. Thus theology is transcended by sublime metaphysics.

This is, in brief, the modus operandi of the law of action. Its irresistibility and sovereign status sometimes seem to challenge the very existence of God.\textsuperscript{84} But, if we remember that

\textsuperscript{81} indriyāṇi manasyārvau vāci vaikārikāṁ manaḥ.
   vācaṁ varṇa-saṁāṁśye tam oṁkāre svare nyaset.
   oṁkāraṁ bindau nāde tam tam tu prāṇe mahatyaṁum.. 7.15.53

\textsuperscript{82} agniḥ sūryo divā prāhnaḥ śuklo rākottaramaṁ sva-rāṭ.
   viśvo’tha taijasaḥ prājñas turva ātmā samanyāt.. 7.15.54

\textsuperscript{83} 2.2.28-32

\textsuperscript{84} nahi kramaś ced iva mṛtyu-janmanoḥ
   śaririṇāṁ astu tad ātma-karmabhiḥ.
   yāḥ sneha-pālo nīśa-sarga-orddhayē
   svayaṁ kṛtas te tam īmaṁ vivyācasi.. 6.14.55 vide also 10.22.14-23
Karman is only a manifestation of God’s potency then God’s position can be well appreciated. If Soma, the goal of action, is the king (rājan) as the Chāndogya declares, then Brahmā is the monarch (samrāj) of the three worlds (or rather fourteen worlds) and Viṣṇu, the cosmic soul, is then “rāja-cakravartin.” Karman thus speaks of the glory of Viṣṇu, the cosmic soul.

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88 tathā’pi tac-chakti-visarga esāṁ
sukhāya duḥkhāya hita’hitāya.
bandhāya mokṣāya ca mytyu-janmanoh
sarirināṁ samśṭaye’vakaḷpate. . 6.17.23
CHAPTER XIII

COSMOLOGY

Creation, as we have already noticed, is ultimately traced
to Viṣṇu, the second grade of Reality. Before creation Viṣṇu
was absorbed in transcendental trance (yoga-nidrā), reposed
on His innate splendour of sequestered loneliness, absolutely
free from the insistence of distracting forces. But this sense of
divine loneliness (Rāma, Viṣṇu-māyā or eko'hams), marked by
the absence of anything else to behold, made Him feel almost
non-existent.¹ He therefore willed to be many (Ātma-māyā or
bahu syām).² With this divine will to be many, Viṣṇu, the
second grade of Reality, became Brahmaṇ, the first grade of
Reality. Out of this divine will, the principle of heterogeneity,
emerged Māyā, the principle of phenomenality, on the one
hand, and Cīt-śakti, the principle of divinity, on the other.
These two mutually co-operative as well as contradictory poten-
cies gave rise to Purusa (God) out of Brahmaṇ, the first grade
of Reality. As the master of these two potencies, Purusa be-
came the Lord of creation, when Māyā evolved into Kāla
(time), Svabhāva (nature) and Karman (action) on the one
hand, and, Vidyā (knowledge) Avidyā (ignorance) and Prakṛti
or guṇamayī Ātma-māyā (primordial matter) on the other.
So, under the superintendence of Purusa, effected by Cīt-
śakti, creation started from Prakṛti by the joint operation of
Kāla, Svabhāva and Karman thereon.³

According to the Śrīmad-Bhāgavata, Prakṛti or primordial
matter is guṇamayī Ātma-māyā i.e., a potency that belongs to
Ātman (God), serves to delude (māyā) Jīva and is constituted

¹sa vā eṣa tadā draṣṭā nā'paśyad dṛṣyam eka-rāṣ.
menes'antam ivā'tmānaṁ supta-śaktir a-suṣṭa-dṛk. . . 3.5.24
²bhagavān eka āśedam agra ātmātmanāṁ vibhūṣ.
ātmecchā'ngatāvātmā'nā-matyuṣpalakaśaṇaḥ. . . 3.5.23
³kālaṁ karma svabhāvaṁ ca mayeśo māyayaś svayā.
ātman yadṛcchayā prāpatam vibhūṣur upādade. . . 2.5.21
of the three guṇas. Such concept of Prakṛti is understandable if we remember that the Bhāgavata cosmology is derived from the Puruṣa-Sūkta of the Rg-Veda. Creation is described in the Sūkta as the body of Puruṣa who thereby becomes immanent in creation although He has transcended it as well. Such is His majesty (mahiman) or power. So, creation is the demonstration of God's (Puruṣa) power. Being the body of God, the entire creation constitutes His psycho-physical organism. Creation therefore, according to the Bhāgavata, is both a physical (adhibhūta) and a personal (adhyātma) reality. If we consider God as the cosmic Puruṣa and the individual soul as the individual puṇaṣa then adhibhūta and adhyātma aspects of creation, correspond to the body of God and the body of the individual soul respectively. From this standpoint the physical creation (adhibhūta) which appears to be impersonal also becomes personal because such creation forms the body of God, the cosmic Puruṣa, in the same way as the individualistic creation (adhyātma) serves as the body of the individual soul (puṇaṣa). Again, as some of the categories of creation (up to the subtle elements, as we shall presently see) may legitimately claim to be the inner mechanism and as they evolve into the creation of gross elements that combine into perceptible gross bodies (individual as well as cosmic), such categories taken together are regarded as the subtle bodies, both individual and cosmic. The Classical Sāṁkhya of Īśvara-kṛṣṇa ignores the cosmic Puruṣa; and, so, torn off its proper mooring of the Puruṣa-Sūkta, his theory of creation drifts along the course of pure logic which, in due recognition of its inadequacy, ultimately surrenders to Scriptural texts (tasmād api cā'siddham parokṣam āptāgamāt Siddham). Modern scholars like Prof. Seal and Woodroffe have tried to justify the order of creation as well as the creative process in the light of recent scientific investigations, as we shall see a little later.

Prakṛti, conceived as a potency, suggests that its constituent guṇas—sattva, rajas and tamas—are in their essence, nothing but powers. Of the three, sattva is taken to stand for illumination (prakāśa), rajas for activity (kriyā) and tamas for inertia (vraṇa) and weight (gurutva). So, the three guṇas—sattva, rajas and tamas—may be described as jñāna-śakti (the
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power of knowledge), kriyā-śakti (the power of activity) and dravya-śakti (the power of inertia or solidity or mass) respectively. The evolutionary process moves on at every step by the interplay of these types of powers. The Śvetāsvatara-Upaniṣad states that the natural potencies of knowledge (jñāna), activity (kriyā) and physical strength (bala) belong to the Lord. The Bhāgavata seems to have construed this description to refer to Prakṛti consisting of three guṇa-powers.

The Bhāgavata has employed the doctrine of transformation (parināma-vāda), typical of the Sāmkhya system of thought, to explain the evolutionary process. This means that, according to the Bhāgavata, evolutionary creation is nothing but the manifestation or determination of a heterogeneous whole from the indeterminate and homogeneous whole. According to Prof. Seal the process of manifestation falls under three successive stages:—“(1) unequal aggregation with the storing up of energy in a certain collocation under the state of arrest, (2) a stimulus removing the arrest and disturbing the equilibrium, and (3) liberation of energy, moving on to a fresh collocation, fresh aggregation, arrest and equilibrium, and the result of that process is the development of a coherent determine heterogeneous whole in what is essentially an incoherent, indeterminate, homogeneous whole”.

The first step, as stated by Prof. Seal, explains the emergence of the three guṇas (triguna) in unequal aggregation from the indeterminate equilibrium i.e., Prakṛti or A vyakta. But as the first step also involves disturbance of the equilibrium it implies a stimulus which does it. From the Bhāgavata standpoint therefore the first and the second steps may be taken to point to a common stimulus that breaks the equilibrium. Then, there is liberation of energy moving on to a fresh collocation; and, finally, there develops a fresh collocation, fresh aggregation, arrest and equilibrium. According to the Bhāgavata, the process of evolution entails Prakṛti as the material cause; and, Kāla, Svabhāva and Karman operate on Prakṛti as efficient causes. Kāla breaks the equilibrium of the three guṇas, Svabhāva liberates the energy of the guṇas so long under the state of arrest, while

4 ŚU 6.8
5 Seal, p. 23
Karman solidifies the liberated energy into a specific category of creation. In brief, Kāla, Svabhāva and Karman account in succession for three well-defined processes of evolution from one category to another, viz, mass-disintegration, energy-transformation and condensation respectively. These three processes are repeated at every step as evolution proceeds from one category to another; and, then, from the creation of elements (bhūtas) to the elemental creation (bhautika-svātī). Lastly, God is the agent cause of creation. His Cit-sakti maintains the overall supervision while the different cosmic agents from Brahmā downwards engage themselves in the different spheres of creation. So the Bhāgavata-creation presents not only the adhibhūta and the adhyātma aspects but adhiḍaiva as well. In other words creation may be viewed in terms of the evolution of a physical fact (adhibhūta), brought about by the operation of time etc. (kāla-liṅga=vikṛti) on primordial matter; as affecting the individual soul (adhyātma) such fact may also be looked upon as a distracting factor (māyā-liṅga=vikṣepa); but, it may, also be considered as a divine animation (avrūṣa-liṅga=cetanā). Creation is thus a physical fact, a distracting force and, at the same time, a demonstration of spiritual unfoldment.

One more point deserves consideration here before we start the description of the order of creation. If creation is transformation like that of milk into curd, then how can Prakṛti maintain, as it does, a reality of its own, independent of its effects? Such a question suggests a variety of answers. One might say that, according to the doctrine of transformation, the effect is but the manifestation of the material cause itself. Or, one might say that Prakṛti being the inexhaustible source can never be completely transformed. As regards the trans-

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8 kālād guṇa-vyaktaraḥ pariṇāmaḥ svabhāvataḥ. karmano janma mahataḥ puṣyaḥ-ḥiṣṭhitāb abhūt... 2.5.22
9 Śrīdhara on 3.26.21 comments:—
ayam arthaḥ:—adhibhūta-rūpaṇa tasyaiva mahān iti saṁjña, adhyātma-rūpaṇa cittam iti, uṣāya-rūpaṇa vasudeva iti etc.
10 so'pyaṁsa-guṇa-kālātmā bhagavad-ḍṛṣṭi-gocaraḥ. ātmānaṁ vyākaroḍ ātmā vilavasyaśya sīrṣayā... 3.5.28
11 na tasya kālāvaya va pariṇāmād dayo guṇah. anādyanantam avyaktam nityam kāraṇam avyayam... 12.4.19
formation of a limited evolute of Prakṛti into another evolute, Prakṛti perpetually feeds all its evolutes so that they also can maintain their individuality even when they are transformed into some other evolutes. Thus creation may proceed from one step to another by the joint operation of God, Prakṛti, Kāla, Svabhāva and Karman and the process of transformation is compatible with the maintenance of individual reality on the part of the evolutes of Prakṛti although the evolutionary process involves the transformation of such evolutes so that successive evolutes may be brought into existence.

The first evolute to emerge from the three guṇas by the combined operation of Kāla, Svabhāva and Karman is Mahat.¹⁰ As the first differentiation (viṣeṣa) from the undifferentiated, (nirviṣeṣa), guṇamayi Ātma-māyā, Prakṛti or Avyakta, it is described as the seed of the future universe.¹¹ As the first revelation through the cosmic gloom (i.e., the unmanifested or avyakta), it is recognised to have the preponderance of sattva.¹² Mahat is thus conceived as golden (hiraṇmaya)¹³ which by its lustre dispels cosmic darkness. In its adhibhūta or cosmic aspect presenting the physical universe, it is called Mahat (massive); in its adhyātma or the individualistic aspect bearing upon the empirical ego (Jīvātman) it acquires the designation of Citta (intellect); while, viewed as the manifestation of the spirit (adhaśaśa) it is described as Vāsudeva.¹⁴ This last name (Vāsudeva) is employed to the first evolute in consideration of the fact that the spirit that reveals itself through this first evolute is marked by the predominantly sāttvika character of the evolute, which (character) the Bhāgavata calls vasudeva.¹⁵ This first evolute in its adhyātma aspect (i.e., Citta) is held as transparent, unpolluted by empirical tendencies and tranquil; and, all these epithets are possible in Citta due to its preponder-

¹⁰ Vide above 2.5.22 ref. 6
¹¹ viṣvam ātma-gataṁ vyāhjā kaśāsa jāgad-āṅkuraḥ 3.26.20ab
¹² viśīśtātmā 3.5.27c
¹³ mahat-tattvam hiraṇmayaḥ 3.26.19d
¹⁴ yad āhur vāsudevākhyam 3.26.21c
¹⁵ sattvam viśuddham vasu-deva-saṁśītāṁ yad iyate tatra pumāṁ aṅgavartah.
sattve ca tasmin bhagavān vāsudeva
hyadhokṣajo me namasi vidhiyate... 4.3.23
ance of sattva. Hence it can legitimately be called the focal point for the revelation of God (bhagavatāḥ padam). But, in spite of the prominence of sattva, Mahat represents kriyā-śakti as well. In fact, Mahat is the first concentration of rajas so that the evolutionary series may proceed without impediment. Mahat is therefore not only “vijñānatman” i.e., the principle of enlightenment but it stands also for the principle of activity (kriyā-śakti) especially when it gives rise to the next evolved (Ahaṃkāra). We might therefore say that, as the transformation of the three guṇas, the first evolved constitutes all the three potencies—sattva, rajas and tamas—with the difference that sattva stands the highest, rajas next to it and tamas reduced to minimum.

Woodroffe explains the origin of the first evolve in the following way:—“In actual experience or functioning of the tattvas (Buddhi, Ahaṃkāra, Manas and Indriyas) in the fully evolved world, the knowing process commences with the last subjective principles or the senses. The object of knowledge first knocks at the gate to be introduced within, and to become subject to the inner operating principles, the last of which to so operate is the determining faculty. Thus the mind is through the sense organs affected by the objects which it selects (as Manas), refers to itself the personal experience so enjoyed (as Ahaṃkāra), and then determines (as Buddhi). But in the cosmic evolution of the principles the order is reversed. . . . A logical analysis of experience to which in the functioning of the individual mind reference is made last must necessarily in the cosmic evolution appear first”.

Having thus considered the origin of Mahat, Woodroffe deals with the nature of Mahat in the following vein:—“When Buddhi is born, energy previously undifferentiated assumes a definite direction and posture towards a definite line of evolution. This condition of directedness is aptly expressed by the term, determination (adhyaya-sāya). It is in the nature of cosmic volition. . . . It is massive (mahān), cosmic resolution in which the “how” and the

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16 vat tat sattva-guṇāṁ svacchāṁ śāntaṁ bhagavataḥ padam 3.26.21ab
17 mahatās tu vikuroṇād rajas-sattvopabr̥mhitāt. tamah-pradhānas tvabhavad dravya-jñāna-kriyāṁmakaḥ . . . 2.5.23
18 Woodroffe, pp. 21-22
“what” of operation are yet implicit ... From the point of evolution Buddha is a state of mere presentation, consciousness of being only without the thought of “I” (Ahamkāra) and unaffected by the sensation of particular objects (Manas, Indriyas etc.). In short, abstract from mind every other of the faculties hereafter stated and you have Buddha as their basis. In the individual, it is implicit in everything which is derived from it and includes all intellectual and volitional functions which are not theirs. It is thus the principal tattva. It is the basis of all knowing, feeling and willing. Its special function is determination which is last in the cognitive, affectional and volitional process.

According to Woodroffe, then, Mahat is resolution which, both in its cosmic and individual aspects, lies at the basis of intellectual and volitional functions. This is essentially the view also of the Bhāgavata, as indicated above.

The evolutionary process reaches the second point when Ahamkāra evolves from Mahat, by the operation of Kāla, Svabhāva and Karman thereon. Ahamkāra is described as kriyā-sakti because at this point the emphasis is shifted from sattva to rajas. Ahamkāra is also stated to be tāmasa in so far as the five subtle elements (Tanmātra) which gradually solidify into the gross universe derive directly their existence from it. As in the case of Mahat, Ahamkāra may be viewed from three aspects. In its cosmic aspect, Ahamkāra is the principle of individuation (abhimāna), the appearance of a centre in the cosmic mass (mahat). It is the principle of egoity (asmitā) from the individualistic point of view. And, regarded as the manifestation of a spirit (adhidaiva) it is called Saṃkarsanā; as the direct source of diversity it is conceived as the thousand-headed Puruṣa of the Puruṣa-Sūkta. But these three aspects—adhidaiva, adhyātma and adhibhūta—are also

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38 ibid, pp. 37-38
39 mahat-tattvād viκurvānād bhagavad-vīrya-saṁbhavāt. kriyā-saktir ahaṃkāras trividhaḥ samapadyata. 3.26.23
40 mahatas tu viκurvānāt tamah-pradhānas tvabhavat 2.5.23ac
41 sahastra-sīranam śāksād yam anantaṁ pracaksate. saṃkarsanākhyāmī puruṣām bhūtendriya-manomayaṁ 3.26.25
construed by the Bhāgavata in a different sense in this context. The Bhāgavata equates them with jñāna-sakti, kriyā-sakti and dravya-sakti respectively, all of which find equal prominence when rajas and tamas occupy their rightful place beside sattva.

These three saktis give rise to three sets of creation: Out of jñāna-sakti (also called vaikārika, sahas or adhidaiva) are born Manas (mind) (presided over by Aniruddha, the irresistible) and the ten gods, Diś, Vātā, Arka, Pracetas, the twin Āsvini brothers, Vahni, Indra, Upendra and Mitra that preside over the ten organs—five cognitive and five volitional. From kriyā-sakti (also called tajasa, ojas or adhyātma) emerge the knowledge aspect (jñāna-sakti) and the motivating aspect (prāṇa) that result in the five sense organs and the five action organs respectively. It may be noted here that the term “jñāna-sakti” thus occurs both in relation to the vaikārika and tajasa varieties of Ahamkāra. In relation the vaikārika or sāttvika Ahamkāra it refers to the mind (Manas), the principle of mere speculations (samkalpa and vikalpa). But in relation to tajasa or rājasa Ahamkāra it stands for cognitive organs that produce determinate knowledge of five varieties (recognised by Patañjali), viz, doubt, illusion, valid knowledge, memory and dreamless sleep. Lastly, from dravya-sakti (also called tāmasa, bala or adhibhūta) originate the five subtle elements. If we eliminate the ten gods, mentioned above, from the purview of purely physical creation, then Ahamkāra may be said to produce the mind, the ten organs and the five subtle elements

23 vīryāḥ hiraṃmayaṁ devo māyayā vyasṛjat tridhā.
adhidīvam athādhyātmaṁ adhibhūtam iti prabhūḥ...
2.10.13cd, 14ab

24 dravya-saktīḥ kriyā-saktir jñāna-saktir iti prabhho 2.5.24cd

25 antah-sāraḥ ākāśāt puruṣasya vīcesṭāḥ.
ojah saho balaṁ jaiṁe 2.10.15abc
Śrīdharma comments:—ojah = indriya-saktih ; sahaḥ = manah-saktiḥ ;
balam = deha-saktiḥ.

26 dravya-sphuraṇa-vijñānam indriyāṇām anugrahaḥ.
saṁsāra-stha viṣṇyāsio nīcayaḥ smṛtya eva ca..
svāpa ityucyate buddher laksanām eva ca pritihak.. 3.26.29cd, 30

27 aham-tattvād vikurvāṇād mano vaikārikād abhūt.
vaikārikaḥ ca ye deva artha-bhivyājanam yataḥ..
taijāntīndriyāṇyeva jñāna-karma-mayāni ca.
tramā sa bhuṣu-sūkṣmaḥ dir yataḥ khaṁ śiṅgam ātmanah.. 3.5.30,32
vide also 3.26.23-26
from its sāttvika, rājasa and tāmasa aspects respectively. As consisting in the three powers viz, jñāna, kriyā and dravya, Ahamkāra is said to be dravya-jñāna-kriyātmaka and as the source of three varieties of creation it is called bhūtendriya-manomaya. On the basis of rearrangement of the three varieties of creation, Ahamkāra may also be viewed as the source of subject-object series. As the mind, the “I”-experiencer, Ahamkāra is the agent (kārtya); as the ten organs, it is the instrument (karaṇa); and, as the five subtle elements, it is the object (kārya) of empirical knowledge.  

Woodroffe throws light on Ahamkāra in the following strain:—“From the cosmic standpoint, abhimāna is the name for that stage of evolution, in which Prakṛti first individualises herself. To use physical analogies, it is the appearance of a centre or nucleus or axis of operation in the cosmic stuff... So long as this centre or axis has not appeared we have no beginning of actual evolution of the cosmic dust or vapour into the systems of heavenly bodies.... It is the individualising principle in nature; the cosmic Ego is the subtle state of all the manifold egos, conscious and unconscious whether in sentient beings or material things which make our world of experience... The individual Ahamkāra is the personal consciousness which realises itself as a particular ‘I’, the experiencer. This is the ‘I’ of empirical consciousness”.  

If Mahat is the cosmic resolution, a mere presentation of objectivity without specification, as Woodroffe has suggested, it does require, for the furtherance of the evolutionary process, what Woodroffe calls “an axis of operation”. This specific direction or solidarity is called Ahamkāra, the cosmic ego that represents the totality of empirical existence. Such totality in the nature of things should consist of the knower, the known and the instrument through which the knower establishes his link with the known. In fitness of things, therefore, Ahamkāra, the ego centre, is taken to resolve into the mind (jñāya), the five rudimentary elements (jñeyya) and the ten organs (indriyas) both cognitive and conative that communicate to the knower the message of the objects born of the five rudimentary elements.
elements. To provide for these three sets of creation of mutually varying nature, Ahamkāra is said to undergo three variations, vaikārika, taïjasa and bhūtādi, each of which represents the three guṇas in various proportions, such proportions being determined by the nature of creations they are intended to bring about. Thus vaikārika, taïjasa and bhūtādi have the predominance of sattva, rajas and tamas respectively with the other two guṇas playing subordinate role in each case. In so far as the mind is recognised by the Bhāgavata to reveal God it is naturally taken to emerge from vaikārika.

The emergence of the ten gods from the same source, as stated by the Bhāgavata, deserves some consideration here. The term “deva” literally means “that which reveals” and the Bhāgavata has adopted this meaning when it states that devas are so called because they reveal the objects.\(^30\) In this sense the devas should refer to the ten organs that reveal the objects to the cogniser. But this meaning was a departure from the past in which the term stood for sentient gods like Indra and Varuṇa. Granted that even Indra and Varuṇa were at their core natural phenomena; but, as objects of adoration, they were spiritualised. The Bhāgavata has adopted this doctrine of spiritism so that godhood is not confined to the ten gods that lie behind the ten organs, but is extended to cover all principles of creation from Mahat to the five rudimentary elements (Tanmātra), taken to be inhabited and controlled by different gods. So there were as many of gods as there were principles of creation.\(^31\) Nevertheless, it needs be confessed that in the scheme of material physical creation gods as sentient beings should have had no place. However, as the Bhāgavata has described the ten sentient gods to emerge from the vaikārika variety of Ahamkāra, the ten organs, inhabited by the gods, naturally require a different origin. The Bhāgavata has therefore relegated both the cognitive and the conative organs to the second variety of Ahamkāra, the taïjasa. The inclusion of the cognitive organs as well in the taïjasa type, dominated

\(^30\) ye devā arthā’bhivyakṣanaṁ yataḥ. 3.5.30d
\(^31\) ete devāḥ kalā viṣṇoḥ kāla-māyāṁśā-liṅginaḥ 3.5.38
Sridhara comments:—kāla-liṅgam=vikṛtiḥ; māyā-liṅgam=vikṣepaḥ; āṁśa-liṅgam=četanaḥ; tāni vidyante yeṣu.
by *rajas*, may be justified when we take into consideration the hectic restlessness on the part of both the cognitive and the conative organs to ramble in the objective world. A different origin of the ten organs justifies their external nature as distinguished from that of mind which, as the internal apparatus, is specially privileged to receive the divine spark.

But the inclusion of both the cognitive and conative organs in the same category does not ignore their functional and other differences. The *Bhāgavata* therefore takes the sense organs to originate from cognitive aspect (*jñāna-sakti*) of *taijasa* while the action organs are traced to its conative aspect (*kriyā-sakti*) or *prāṇa*.

In the *Upaniṣads* the word “*prāṇa*” has a couple of connotations. In the wider sense it means the organs both cognitive and conative. But in the narrower sense it means “*mukhya-prāṇa*” i.e., the primary *prāṇa*, to which, according to the *Upaniṣads*, the organs owe their existence. Both the senses have found favour with the *Bhāgavata*. By “*mukhya-prāṇa*” the *Bhāgavata* understands *Mahat* (or *Ahaṁkāra*, its axis of operation), so called, as the *Bhāgavata* points out, because, as the source of all organs, it stimulates them to activity.

In this very context, the *Bhāgavata* has used the term “*prāṇa*” to denote all the organs as well. But in addition to these two senses the *Bhāgavata* has used the word “*prāṇa*” to refer to the five conative organs only. In this way the ten organs are taken to have been derived from the *taijasa* variety of *Ahaṁkāra*. The third variety of *Ahaṁkāra* is *bhūtādi*. This should now engage our attention because evolutionary process is now concerned with this variety only.

The theory of causation adopted by the *Bhāgavata* renders the effect a manifestation of the cause. This means that the material cause is the subtle form of the effect. The chain of

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23 *taijasanindriyāṇyeva kriyā-jñāna-vibhāga-saḥ*. 
*prāṇasya hi kriyā-saktir buddher vijñāna-saktitāḥ*. 3.26.31

24 Ch U 5.1, for example.

25 *prāṇo mahān asuḥ* 2.10.15d
*anu prāṇanti yam prāṇāh prāṇantam sarva-jantusuv*
*apāṇantam apāṇanti nara-devam ivā'ṇugāḥ*. 2.10.16

26 *buddhīḥ prāṇāḥ ca taijasu* 2.5.31b
Śrīdhara comments on this:—*jñāna-kriyā-viśeṣa-rūpāṇi indriyāṇām* api taijasād abhavaṇ ityarthāḥ.
causation which thus follows from bhūtādi is bound up at each stage with subtle and gross forms. The subtle forms are called Tanmātras while the gross are known as Bhūtas. Woodroffe argues in the following way to justify the existence of subtle forms:—"The ordinary man's perception of the paper is of the paper in itself perceived, subject to the limitation of the defects in him... Examining this paper of perception we find (1) that it is gross in the sense that it is patent, (2) that it is particular giving us mere sense particulars, (3) that it is complexus of form, odour etc. i.e., heterogeneous and (4) that it is variable according to the circumstances and instruments of perception. Upon an analysis, the elements which underlie this sense datum, must present, in order to be real, the following characteristics:—(1) they must not be gross but subtle, (2) they must not be particular but generic or universal, (3) they must not be complex and (4) they must not be variable... It is these generic, simple, subtle and standard elements of our particular, complex, gross and variable sense-data which are the tanmātras which again are the material causes of gross, sensible matter or the bhūtas... Being the elements of sense-data, they are necessarily of five kinds."36

The origin of the five Tanmātras and that of their corresponding Bhūtas offer interesting illustrations for the conversion of energy into matter and vice versa. They also demonstrate how the three successive processes involved in each step of evolution, repeat themselves at this point as well. The Bhāgavata has dealt with the question of origin of the Tanmātras and their corresponding Bhūtas in three different contexts. From the first description appearing in the second skandha37 emerge the following conclusions:—(1) One element (Bhūta) gives rise to another element (Bhūta). Thus from bhūtādi is pro-

36 Woodroffe, pp. 63-67
37 tūmātād api bhūtād tirikurvānād abhūn nabhaḥ. asya mātṛā gunāḥ sabdo līngam yad draṣṭr-driyayoḥ... nābhoso'ṇaḥ vikurvānād abhūt sparśa-guṇo'ṇaḥ. para'ṇavāc chadbāvāni ca prāṇa ojah saho balam... vāyor api vikurvānāt kāla-karma-svabhāvanātaḥ. udapadyata vai tejo rūpa-vat sparśa-sabda-vat... tejasas tu vikurvānād aśiḥ ambhā raia'ṇamakam. rūpa-vat sparśa-vac cāmbho ghoṣa-vac ca para'ṇavāt... viśepas tu vikurvānād ambhāso gandhavān abhūt. para'ṇavāyād rasa-sparśa-sabda-rūpa-guṇo'ṇitaḥ... 2.5.25-29
duced the element of ether (Ākāśa). Ether produces wind (Vāyu) which in its turn produces the element of heat (Tejās). The latter element generates water (Āp) of which lastly the element of earth (Prthivī) is born; (2) The effect being just the manifestation of the cause, the latter has to be recognised to endure through the effect. This means that not only ether persists in wind but bhūtādi also is present in it in so far as bhūtādi persists in ether; (3) It follows that in conformity with the doctrine of the manifestation of the quality (guna) of the cause in the effect, the element of heat, for example, acquires not only the quality of touch inherent in wind, the material cause of the element of heat, but it becomes endowed also with the quality of sound that belongs to ether, the material cause of wind. In this way the successive elements possess increasing number of qualities. Thus, while the element of ether has sound, wind has both sound and touch. Similarly, the element of heat possesses colour, touch and sound; water has taste, colour, touch and sound; and, lastly, earth is endowed with odour, taste, colour, touch and sound; (4) The steady increase of the number of qualities in the successive elements implies the innovation, in each case, of a new quality in addition to those that are already existent in the element which produces a particular element under consideration.

But this last conclusion raises an important problem. According to the specific doctrine of causation (sat-kārya-vāda), adopted by the Bhāgavata to explain the evolutionary process, the effect can have no quality which is not already existent in its material cause. How can, then, wind, for instance, have touch which is apparently absent in ether? The same question applies to the other new qualities of the successive elements. The Bhāgavata meets this question by the presupposition of a subtle form of each element, which (subtle form) serves as the intermediary of the causal situation between one element and another. If such subtle form is taken to emerge from the cause-element and is recognised as well to produce the effect-element, then it can be regarded as the intermediate which the cause-element necessarily involves in order to produce the effect-element. Such intermediate form serving as the precursor of a particular element is technically called “Tan-mātra”. The Bhāgavata dés-
éribes in the third skandha, how from bhūtādi, the mass-potency (dravya-sakti), is first born the subtle form of ether (bhūta-sūkṣma); and then, out of this subtle form, the unit-potential (Tanmātra), emerged the element of ether, though the ordinary observer might say that bhūtādi itself produced ether. In the same sense ether is stated to produce wind and so on. This means that an element generates the next element through the production of a Tanmātra i.e., a potential or fluid matter which is further condensed or hardened into kinetic or effective matter. In the same skandha the Bhāgavata has also described the origin of the Tanmātras. It is said that a particular Tanmātra (unit-potential) emanates from its previous Tanmātra combined with the element which the latter Tanmātra has brought into existence. Thus, for example, touch-potential is brought about by sound-potential evolving in conjunction with ether which that sound-potential has produced, and so on.

It follows from this description that the origin of the Tanmātras and the Bhūtas, as we have already noticed in the cases of the evolution of the other categories beginning from Mahat, involves the three processes—mass-disintegration, energy-transformation and condensation. For instance, bhūtādi disintegrates by the operation of Kāla thereon; such disintegration releases the energy arrested in bhūtādi; the released energy then flows to a point with the aid of Svabhāva; finally the

38 tamaso bhūta-sūkṣmadir yataḥ kham. . . .
   nabhaso'nuṣṭaṁ spārśaṁ vikurvan nirmane'nilam.
   anilo'pi vikurvāṇo nabhasorubalāvitaṁ.
   sasārja rūpa-tanmātraṁ jyotir lokaya locanam. .
   anilenānuities jyotir vikurvata para-vikṣitam.
   ādhatā'mbho rasamayaṁ kāla-māyāṁśa-yogataṁ. .
   jyotisa'ṁbhō'nuṣṭaṁ vikurvata brahma-vikṣitam.
   mahāṁ gandha-guṇyaṁ ādhat kāla-māyāṁśa-yogataṁ. .
   bhūtānam nabha-ādinaṁ yad yad bhavya-varaṁvaram.
   teśāṁ paraṁnuamsargad yathāsaṁkhyah guṇān viduḥ. . 3.5.32-37

39 tāmase ca vikurvāṇād bhagavad-virya-coditāt.
   sabda-mātram abhūt tasmān nabhaṁ srotram tu sabda-gaṁ. .
   nabhasaṁ sabda-tanmātraṁ kāla-gatyā vikurvataṁ.
   sparsa'bhavata tato vāyus tuv sparsasya ca sa grahaḥ. .
   vāyos ca sparsa-tanmātraṁ rūpaṁ daiveritād abhūt.
   samutthitaṁ tatas tejas caकṣa rūpa-palāmbhanam. .
   rūpa-mātraṁ vikurvāṇāt tejaso daiva-coditāt.
   rasa-mātram abhūt tasmād ambo jihvā rasa-grahaḥ. .
   rasa-mātraṁ vikurvāṇād amboha daiva-coditāt.
   gandha-mātram abhūt tasmād prthvi ghrāṇas tu gandha-gaḥ. . 3.26.32,
   35, 36, 41, 44
focal point of the flowing energy is condensed into an element by Karman. This shows that a Tanmātra, the subtle nucleus of an element, is brought about by disintegration of the mass (bhūtādi in the first case and an element in other cases), followed by the flow of the liberated energy to a focal point. The production of an element is the result of condensation of the Tanmātra, having reached the focal point.

So, the three operations of Kāla, Svabhāva and Karman are completed when both the Tanmātras and the Bhūtas are brought into existence, as distinguished from their operations in the case of every other category whose creation requires the help of all the three principles, Kāla, Svabhāva and Karman. Yet, both the Tanmātras as well as the Bhūtas have found recognition as separate categories because the Bhāgavata scheme of causation does allow separate enumeration of both the cause and the effect. A Tanmātra, so created, is charged with a quality-potential which is actualised in the element created by that Tanmātra. For example, Ākāśa-tanmātra (the subtle nucleus of ether) is charged with sound-potential (vibration-potential, parispanda) and it finds expression as a specific energy viz, sound-stimulus (actual vibratory motion) in Ākāśa (ether) produced by Ākāśa-tanmātra. The presumption of a Tanmātra with a potential quality thus explains the appearance of a new quality in its successive element.

The principles from Mahat to the five gross elements, thus created under the urge of original stimulus (Cit-śakti) and by the co-operation of Time (Kāla), Nature (Svabhāva) and Action (Karman), now required to be knit into a homogeneous whole providing for psycho-physical organism both in cosmic and individualistic spheres. True, that all the categories, created so far, were ultimately sheltered in the surrounding medium of Avyakta which, as the primordial cause, pervaded all its evolutes, both direct and indirect; and, as the material cause, such Avyakta was the shelter of them all. But the unity leading to organism (āyatana) meant more than mere link between the primordial cause and its effects. So, once again the original stimulus moved Kāla, Svabhāva and Karman to operate upon the categories so that they can be synthesised into an organism.
Employment of original stimulus by God is described by the Bhāgavata as His penetration through the categories,\(^{40}\) and, as a result, emerged organism, both cosmic and individualistic.\(^{41}\)

The first offshoot of this synthetic process took the shape of a lump culled from the five gross elements. Due to its imagined shape and size it was presumed to be the cosmic egg (aṇḍa) and was called “viśeṣa” because it represented the stage of differentiation of the categories, directly giving rise to the different worlds.\(^{42}\) Like Mahat which put an end to the cosmic gloom, this egg was also conceived to be golden that dispelled the gloom of grossly physical vacuum.\(^{43}\) Such egg, of course, was surrounded by the categories, as we have already mentioned above, of which the egg was just a moderate portion. But as this lump was largely earthly\(^{44}\) it was noticeable in the womb of water-element that precedes the earth-element. The Bhāgavata describes how the cosmic egg lay dormant in the womb of cosmic fluidity for long long years amounting to a kalpa and how God lived in it in the company of all empirical egos for the same period.\(^{45}\) At the termination of a kalpa, God charged the lump of matter with his power of animation and so Kāla, Svabhāva and Karman began to function towards the hardening of the cosmic mass into tangible worlds.\(^{46}\)

The Bhāgavata describes this process of hardening, in some detail. At the end of a kalpa God awoke from His slumber

\(^{40}\) iti tāṣāṁ svā-laktināṁ satināṁ a-sametya saḥ. trayo-vimśati-tattvānāṁ gāyaṁ yuga-pād āvīśat... 3.6.1ab, 2cd

\(^{41}\) yadaite’saṁgataḥ bhāvā bhūtendriya-mano-guṇāḥ. yad-āyatana-nirmāne na sekur brahma-vittama...

tadā saṁhṛtya ca’nonyaṁ bhagavac-chakti-coditāḥ. sad-asattvam upādāya cobbhayaṁ saṣṭṛjy hyaḥaḥ... 2.5.32-33

\(^{42}\) tatas tenānubiddhebhya yuktebhya’aṇḍam acetanan. utthitaṁ puruṣo yasmād udatiṣṭhad asau virāḥ...

etad aṇḍaṁ viśeṣākkhyām krama-urddhāra daśottaraḥ. toyādibhiḥ pariṇtāṁ pradhānena-vyayām bahiḥ...

yatara loka-vitāno’yanāṁ rūpaṁ bhagavato hareḥ... 3.26.51-52

\(^{43}\) hiraṁmayād aṇḍa-kopād utthāya saṁleśayat.

tam āvīśya mahādevo bahudhā nir-bibheda kham... 3.26.53 vide also 3.2.10.14

\(^{44}\) viśeṣo bhāvānāṁ bhūmāveṇopalabhyate. 3.26.49

\(^{45}\) hiraṁmayāḥ sa puruṣaḥ sahasra-parivarṣarān. aṇḍa-kopa uśā’ṣu sarva-sattvoparyabhirhitāḥ... 3.6.6 vide also 2.10.11

\(^{46}\) varja-pūga-sahasra’nте tad aṇḍaṁ udakṣeṣayaṁ. kāla-karma-svabhāva-stho jīvo jīvam ajīvayat... 2.5.34
of inactivity and found all creation absorbed in Him. A little portion (the cosmic egg) of the mass of elements sprouted from his naval region. That sprout gradually grew into a cosmic lotus by the operation of time which had at the same time helped the providence of the empirical egos to attain maturity. The golden lotus lit up the whole expanse of cosmic water. The awakening of God, the inner controller, stimulated Brahmā who, at the termination of the previous kalpa, had retired to the essence of God for a period of the same length. Brahmā then cast his eyes all around and found nobody beside himself. Actuated by God, he then took to long penance lasting for one thousand divine years. Strengthened by penance and inner light (ātma-saṁsthā vidyā), Brahmā then appeased elemental disturbances and discovered the lotus which had held him on. Brahmā then resolved to create the worlds out of the lotus. Helped by the energy of God he eventually divided the lotus into three or fourteen worlds.  

The process of differentiation took, as usual, three different directions—adhibhūta, adhyātma and adhidaiva. The adhibhūta aspect was represented by the creation of the planes of existence. The adhyātma aspect provided for the different locations (adhiśthāna) of the ten organs while the adhidaiva aspect found its fulfilment in the settlement of multifarious gods in different parts of the body. Thus, for instance, face, a part of the body, consisted of (i) the palate (adhyātma aspect—in which the organ of tongue settled), (ii) the different kinds of taste (rasa) (furnished by the planes of existence—adhibhūta aspect) and (iii) the god, Varuṇa, the presiding deity (adhidaiva

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47 so śayiṣṭā'bdhi-salile aṇḍa-koso nir-ātmakaḥ.  
sā'graṁ vai vaṣja-sāhasram anvavāsīt tam iśvaraḥ...  
tasya nābher abhūt padam sahasrārkoru-dīdhiti.  
sarva-jīva-nikāyauko yatra svayam abhūt svaraḥ...  
s'o'nu-pravīṣṭo bhagavatā yaḥ etsyete salilālaye.  
loka-saṁsthāṁ yathā-pūrvaṁ nir-mame saṁsthāyā svayā... 3.20.15-17  
vide also 3.8.10-16, 3.10.4-8

48 sa vai viśva-sṛjāṁ garbhaḥ 3.6.7a  
sa'ḍhyātmakaḥ sa'ḍhidaivaśa sa'ḍhībhūta iti tridhā. 3.6.9ab

49 śīrśo'sya dyaur dhāraḥ padbhyaṁ khaṁ nābher udāpadyāta. 3.6.26ab

50 3.6.12-25
aspect)\(^{51}\); and so on. But in spite of this differentiation the cosmic egg or the lotus was only a clod, a dead inactive mass. It was only when God infused it with His divine presence that mind obtained Him as its controller; and, suffused with ten vital airs the entire mass attained the dignity of a living organism. In this sense the Bhāgavata describes how God diversified himself in three different ways—as one (controller of mind), as ten (the ten vital airs) and as three (adhīyātma, adhibhūta and adhidaiva).\(^ {52}\) So penetration by God of material differentiation made it a living organism\(^ {53}\) which then moved out from the state of chaotic inactivity. God, marked by this stage of infinite diversity, is described as having thousand heads and hands,\(^ {54}\) in short, the Puruṣa of the Puruṣa-Sūkta. In this way the cosmic mass developed into gross body; both cosmic and individualistic, in which categories from Mahat down to the five subtle elements, collectively called the subtle body (sūkṣma-śarīra), were habilitated. The individual soul and Hiranya-garbha became encased in the individualistic and the cosmic bodies respectively, while God was the controller of both.

Seven different parts of the upper half of the cosmic body moulded themselves into seven upper regions, Bhū, Bhuva, Svar, Mahas, Jana, Tapas and Satya,\(^ {55}\) while the seven parts of the lower half of that body reached out into the creation of seven lower regions, Atala, Vitala, Sutala, Talātala, Mahātala, Rasā-

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\(^{51}\) prāṇ mukham nirabhidyata
mukhatas tālu nir-bhinnam jihvā tatropajāyate.
tato nānā-raso jajñe jihvayā yo’dhigamyate... 2.10.17, 18
Śrīdhara comments:—tālu adhiṣṭhānāṁ jihvā indriyāṁ nānā-raso
viṣayaḥ varuṇas ca devatā jñāvyā. evam sarvatra adhiṣṭhānāṁ in-
driyāṁ devatā viṣaya iṣye-catuṣṭayam anuktam apiyāhyam.

\(^{52}\) sa vai viśva-sṛjām garbho daiva-karmā’tmak-akāti-mān.
vibhājātmanā’tmanām skadhā daśadhā trīdhā... 3.6.7

\(^{53}\) cittena hṛdayaṁ caityaḥ kṣetra-jiñāḥ prāvīlād yadā.
virād tadaiva puruṣaṁ suśīlab udatiṣṭhata... 3.26.70

\(^{54}\) sṛṣṭāgre mahad-ādini sa-vikāryanukramāt.
ṭebhyyo virājya udṛkhyā tam anu prāvīlād vibhūḥ.
yam āhur ādyaṁ puruṣaṁ sahasraṅgyur-bhāhukam.
yatra viśva ime lokāḥ sa-vikalpam ta āṁte... 3.7.21-22

\(^{55}\) bhūr-lokaḥ kalpiṣṭaḥ paddhyāṁ bhuvar-loko’sya nābhitaḥ.
hṛdā svuv-loka urasā mahar-loko mahātmanaḥ...
griśvalaṁ jana-loko’sya tāpo-lokaḥ stana-dvayaḥ.
mūrdhabhiḥ satya-lokas tu brahma-lokaḥ saṁtanaḥ... 2.5.38, 39
tala and Pātāla. The upper regions are placed one above the other and the lower regions one below the other. The old Rg-Vedic concept of the three worlds Bhū, Bhuva and Svar is also recognised by the Bhāgavata as another version of the planes of existence.

The Bhāgavata indulges in details of these regions. It offers a description as to how gradually man appeared on the face of earth and how he eventually evolved civilisation. To show that the existence of earth is a bondage for man, the Bhāgavata starts with the creation of Avidyā. Then, Brahmā created six types of immovable, twenty types of animals and eight classes of vaikyta gods. Brahmā thereafter set his hand to human creation for the propagation of his progeny. He first created spiritual hermits like Sanatkumāra etc. but they retired to forest. Brahmā was naturally disappointed and he then created Nārada etc., recognised as progenitors (prajā-patis). Encouraged by the result of this creation Brahmā produced Manus and gave them human form. Henceforth progeny began to increase by leaps and bounds, effected by the mutual co-operation of opposite sexes. Gradually the four Vedas and the four castes were brought into being and this triumph of Brahmā won for him the title of “śabda-brahman”.

Between Bhū and Bhuva (i.e., the abode of the sun) fall abodes of Rāhu, Vidyādharas, Siddha-cāraṇas, yakṣa-rākṣasa-

56 tat-kaṭyānī cātalam kāṭpam urubhyāṁ vitalaṁ bibhōḥ.
57 jāṅubhyāṁ sutalam śuddhaṁ jāṅghābhīyāṁ tu talātalam...
58 mahā-talaṁ tu gULphābhīyāṁ prapādābhīyāṁ rasaṭalām.
59 pāṭalāṁ pāda-talata iti loka-mayaḥ pūmān... 2.5.40, 41
60 bhūr-lokaḥ kalpitaḥ pudbhīyāṁ bhuvar-lokośya nābhitaḥ.
61 svar-lokaḥ kalpito mūrdhna iti vā loka-kalpana... 2.5.42
62 sasarja echāyāyāvidyāyā pānca-parvāṇam agrataḥ. 3.20.18ab
63 3.10.19, 20
64 3.10.21-25
65 3.10.28, 29
66 sanakaṁ ca sanandaṁ ca sanātanam athātma-bhūḥ.
67 sanatkumāraṁ ca munī niṣkriyān ārdhva-retasaḥ... 3.12.4
68 athābhidhyāyatāḥ sargaṁ daia putrah prajājāire.
69 marleśc atrayāngirasau pūlāstyaḥ pulahāḥ kratuḥ.
70 bhṛgur vasiṣṭho daśāṣa ca daśamas tatra nāradaḥ... 3.12.21ab, 22
71 tadā manuṁ sasarjānte manasa loka-bhāvanāṁ. 3.20.49cd
72 tadā mithuna-dharmeṇa prajā hyethāmbabhūvire 3.12,54cd
73 3.12.41, 46, 47
bhūta-preta-piśācas, placed one below the other so that the ghosts and the evil spirits are nearest to man.67 Between Bhūva and Svār i.e., above the sun and below the high heaven (Svār) are placed Śukra, Budha, Ravi, Bṛhaspati and Śaṅkaraśana one above the other.68 Beyond them are the abodes of the hermits, extending to the length of eleven lacs of yojanas.69 Beyond the region of the hermits is another expanse of eleven lacs of yojanas ending in Dhrūva (the pole star). Several regions fall within this space.70 Dhrūva is stable.71 It is in fact the axis of constellations which continue their aerial journey till a kalpa.72 Dhrūva-loka is the last limit of the three worlds.73 Dhrūva with the enormous group of stars is mystically described as “śīu-māra-cakra”74. Within the three worlds, in the southern direction, below the earth and above water is the abode of Fathers (Agniśvāttā etc.). The king of this region is the god of death. Twentyone or twentyeight types of hell belong to this region.75

The three worlds of empirical enjoyment are separated from the higher regions by a boundary mountain called Lokā-loka’cala. It is so called because the light of all the luminaries that illumine the three worlds fails to reach the upper regions, due to this mountain. Thus while half of this mountain re-

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67 adhastāt savituḥ... svartbhānuḥ... tato’dhastāt siddha-cāraṇa-
vidyādharaṇām... tato’dhastāt yakṣa-rakṣaṇa-piśāca-preta-bhūta-
gāpañām... tato’dhastāt iyaṃ prthiño. 5.24.1-5
68 atha ha dhāvan nabho-maṇḍalam... sa(sūryaḥ) ha bhuṇjīta... evaṁ
candraṁ arka-gabhastibhy āpariṣṭāt... tata āpariṣṭād uṣānāḥ... tata āpariṣṭād budhaḥ... ata ārdhvaṁ anākāraḥ... tata āpariṣṭāt... bṛhaspatiḥ... tata āpariṣṭāt śaṅkaraḥ 5.22.7-16
69 tata uttarasmad ṣaṭayaḥ ekādaśa-yojanāntare upalabhyaṁ 5.22.17
70 tasmāt Ṙatras tryoḍaśa-lakaṇa-yojanāntarato... dhrūvaḥ 5.23.1
71 sa hi... sthānur evaḥ vaṣṭambhāḥ śvareṇa vihitāḥ 5.23.2
72 bha-gaṇa grahādayo dhrūvam evaḥ lambya... a-kalpaṁ antaṁ āpariṣṭāh
krāmati 5.23.3
73 sūryadīnām dhrūvaḥ-pavargānāṁ jyotir-gaṇānāṁ... gabhastayaḥ evaṁ
cināṁ trīn lokāṁ ādītanvānāḥ... 5.20.37
74 kecī dvd jotir-anikāṁ śīu-māra-samsthānena... anuvartanāṁ
5.23.4
75 narākā nāma... antarāle eva trī-jaṭayās tu dīlī dákpīṇasyām
adhastāt bhūmer āpariṣṭāc ca jalāt. yaśyām agniśvātāyaṁ pitr-
gaṇāḥ... yatra ha vāva bhagavan pitr-rajo vāivasvataḥ... tatra haike
narakān eka-viṁśatim gaṇāyanti... aṣṭāviṁśatir narākāḥ... 5.26.4-7
receives light the other half does not. On the other side of Loka’loka’cala, the regions of the Yogins—Mahas, Jana, Tapas and Satya—are laid out one above the other. But the Bhāga-vata does not seem to have much to say about them excepting that they are the destiny of pure beings, free from fear, full of bliss and so standing for the spiritual welfare. People who have the privilege to go in these regions enjoy the benefits thereof to their heart’s content for as long as a kalpa with the modification that at Satya-loka, the highest region, the period of enjoyment is extended to the maximum of dvi-parā’rdha.

Below the earth are situated the seven lower regions where demons, serpents and the like reside. There being no sun, the division of day and night does not exist in those regions. In Atala resides Bala, the son of the demon, Maya. In Vitala lives Lord Śiva with His wife, Bhavāni while in Sutala dwells Bali, in bondage, where God acts as his door-keeper. Mahātala is the region of serpents and Rasātala is inhabited by Daityas, Dānavas and Pañis. In Talātala resides Maya demon under the protecting arms of Mahādeva, free from the

lokā’loka iti samākhyā yaad enanā’calena loko’lokaś ca’ntar-vartinā’va-sthāpyate. sa loka-traya’nte parita śivařeṇa vihiṣa... yjotir-ganā-nāṁ gabhastayaḥ... yasmāt na kada’cit parācinā bhavitum utahante
5.20.36-37

tataḥ parastād yogesvara-gatīṁ viśuddhām udāharanti 5.20.42

amṛtāṁ kṣemam abhayam tri-mūrdhno’dhāyi mūrdhasu 2.6.19ed

tad viśva-nābhiṁ teativarttya viṣṇor aṁīyasā virajenā’tmanaikaḥ. namākṣyaṁ brahma-vidāṁ upaiti kalpāyuṣo yad vibudhā ramante... 2.2.25

yad dvai-parādhyam tad u pārameśhyam 2.2.26d

avaner adhastāt sapta bhū-viśvarā ekaikaio yojanā’yutā’natreṇa āyāma-vistareṇopakāṭāḥ—ataḥam vitalam sutalam talā’talām mahā-talām rasā-talām pātalam iti 5.24.7; vide also 5.24.8-21 for details.

yatra ha vāva na bhayam aho-rātra’dbhiḥ kāla-viḥāgair upalakṣyate 5.24.11

athā’tele maya-putro’suro balo nivasati 5.24.16
vitale haro bhagavān .. bhavānyā saha mithunibhūya āste 5.24.17
sutale balīḥ 2.24.18 vide also 8.22.32
yasya .. nārāyaṇo dvāri gadā-pāṇir avatīṣhate.. 5.24.27
mahā’tele sarpaṇāṁ .. gaṇaḥ 5.24.29
rasātale daiteyā: dānavāḥ paṇayaḥ 5.24.30
terror of Sudarśana. Lastly, in Pātāla dwells Vāsuki, the foremost of the serpents. All these regions are suspended on the great Saṅkaraṇa (the law of gravitation?).

To offer an idea of the staggering dimension of the cosmic egg (brahmāṇḍa) the Bhāgavata gives some details of the earth that constitutes only a minor part of it. The earth consists of seven great islands each of which possesses huge regions (varṣas), border mountains (maryāda-gīrīs), rivers and beings that people these regions. The first of these islands is Jambu-dvīpa consisting of nine varṣas and border mountains. Each varṣa is as long as nine thousand yojanas, leaving Bhadrāśva and Ketuṃāla, each of which is thirty-four thousand yojanas long. Jambu-dvīpa consists of the following regions:—Ilāvṛtā-varṣa, Bhadrāśva-varṣa, Hari-varṣa, Ketuṃāla-varṣa, Ramyaka-varṣa, Hiraṇmaya-varṣa, Uttara-kuru, Kimpuruṣa-varṣa and Bhārata-varṣa. The islands other than Jambu-dvīpa are inhabited by people who possess natural longivity, sense organs, vitality, strength, intellect and power. The other islands are Plakṣa-dvīpa, Sālmāli-dvīpa, Kuśa-dvīpa, Krauṇca-dvīpa, Śāka-dvīpa and Puṣkara-dvīpa.

If we apply the term “subtle creation” to the categories from Mahat to the five subtle elements, we shall see that Mahat, the starting point of subtle creation, is but the affirmation of Divine Will (Ātma-māyā) to be many. Thus Divine Will evolving through Māyā and guṇamayī Ātma-māyā takes gradually the form of cosmic resolution to be many. Such resolution is concretized into a centre (ahām) of operation further
dissolving itself into the cognizer, the instruments of cognition and the objects to be cognized. The objects to be cognized are further differentiated into the planes of existence including the individual bodies for the suffering souls. But the planes of existence find recognition as a living organism of Hiranya-garbha, the cosmic soul, in the same way as the individual bodies are living organisms of the individual souls.

In the description of the process of differentiation of the "gross creation" consisting in the planes of existence and the individual bodies, the Bhāgavata has apparently drawn upon the Puruṣa-Sūkta of the Rg-Veda. The description of the Bhāgavata is however not a mere restatement of the old position but a reconstruction which has imbued the Sūkta with new significance. For example, the "vīraḥ" of the Sūkta (tasmād vīraḥ ajayata) is the cosmic egg (aṇḍa) to the Bhāgavata; and, Brahmā, the creator of the gross universe, is called "Hiranya-garbha" because he emanated from the golden womb of the cosmic egg. With unique insight into the dawn of Vedic thoughts, the Bhāgavata equates "Hiranya-garbha" with the sun. It seems to conjure up those remote days of creation when the golden light of the sun first penetrated through the dead clod of the cosmic egg (mṛta aṇḍa) and so the sun was called mārtanda. The sun shone upon the cosmic egg for thousands of years; and, then, in course of time when the destinies of the individual souls had attained maturity, it differentiated the cosmic egg into the different planes of existence with variegated lives fluttering thereon. It was no wonder then that the sun should have the due recognition as the life-giving principle i.e., the cosmic soul. In the process of the further crystallization of thoughts the sun was elevated to the status of Brahmā and then to the status of God, the inner controller of Brahmā. The analogy between God, the Puruṣa, and the physical sun, brought in by the Bhāgavata to illustrate the nature

108 yasmād aṇḍaṁ vīraḥ yajña 2.6.22a
109 hiranya-garbha iti yad hiranyaṇḍa-samudbhavaḥ 5.20.44
mṛteṇḍe eṣā etasmin yad abhūt tato mārtanda iti vyapādeṣaḥ 5.20.44
110 sūryena hi vibhajyante diśaḥ khaṁ dyaur mahi bhidā. svarga-pavargau narakā rasaukāniṣi ca sarvāḥ. deva-tiryag-manuṣyānāṁ sarīspa-khaga-virudhāh. sarva-jīva-nikāyānāṁ sūrya ātmā dṛṣyā litreṇaḥ. 5.20.45-46
of the inner controller, 111 gives us one again a glimpse of the long-forgotten link between God and His crude prototype, the physical sun. The sun is thus the basis of the Puruṣa of the Puruṣa-Sūkta and its permeation of the cosmic egg after being born of the latter makes it plausibly the "adhi-puruṣa" of the same Sūkta (virājo adhi pūrusaḥ). 112 Life, man and his civilization are all gifts from the sun.

Another illustration of creative imagination which the Bhāgavata has brought to bear upon the interpretation of the same Sūkta is its conception of the fourteen worlds from the passage: "tripād udati puruṣaḥ". The three worlds were already recognised by the Sūkta; the Bhāgavata took this passage to mean the other three worlds—Jana, Tapas and Satya—besides the recognition of Mahās in the word "ūrdhva" of the same Sūkta. 113 The description of the earth and the different constellations above the earth are new matters not to be found in the Sūkta and they throw light upon the ancient geographical and astronomical speculations respectively. But the concept of the upper worlds beyond the three worlds were still in a nebulous stage, lacking details. The seven lower regions present a picture of the admixture of popular myths and beliefs. But it is surprising that the Bhāga-
vata would be recognising Saṁkarṣaṇa (the principle of attraction or gravitation) to hold all the worlds together.

Creation, cosmic and individualistic, finds its fulfilment in the development of physical bodies and corresponding to each of them is a conscious principle. Behind the subtle crea-
tion there was God reposed on causal waters (kāraṇārṇava) as behind the gross creation lay the same Person on element waters (the water element) on which floated the cosmic lotus or the cosmic egg or the womb (garbha). God was "Nārā-

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111 svadhiṣṭhānam pratapita prāṇo bahūḥ ca pratapatisya vac.
evam virājam pratapimān tapatyantar-bahūḥ pumān. 2.6.17

112 trayaoviḥlahi-tattvānāṁ gaṇam yugapad āvīsat. hindrapanāh sa pūruṣaḥ. 3.6.2cd, 6a

113 padeṣu sarva-bhūtāni pramāṇaḥ sthūli-pado viduh. amṛtāṁ kṣetram abhayam trī-mūrdhno'dhūyī mūrdhasu. 2.6.19
“yāṇa” because, having created waters, He entered them;¹¹⁴ and, Brahmā was Hiranya-garbha because he was within the cosmic lotus (i.e., (1) Mahat, in relation to the subtle creation, and (2) the physical mass brought about by the five gross elements). The individual bodies were integrated into the cosmic body just as the different conscious principles (devas) were merged in the essence of Brahmā. The cosmic body is traced to the cosmic egg, that to guṇamaya Ātma-māyā and that to God.¹¹⁵ Similarly, Brahmā merges into the being of God. In this way, both the sentient and the insentient belong to the essence of God who then shines on with His glory that declares the triumph of Divine Sport.

¹¹⁴ puruṣo'ṇdaṁ vinirbhidya yadā'sau sa vinirgataḥ. 
ātmano'yanam anvichann apo'srāksic chucit śucit...
tāsvāvātītī svā-srīfāsu sahasraṁ āparivatsarān. 
tena nārāyaṇo nāma yad āpaḥ puruṣodbhavāḥ...

².10.10, 11 cf. 5.20.23

¹¹⁵ etāvān eva aṇḍa-kōṣaḥ, yaś catur-dasadhā purāṇaṁ vikalpiṇa udgīyate. 5.26.38
Chapter XIV

The Individual Soul

Creation, impinging upon our ordinary experience, poses a practical question. Does creation in all its details represent the totality that the progressive journey of human consciousness can aspire to achieve? Does the world of science satisfy the demand for a philosophical interpretation of Nature? To put it in a clearer form: Should we accept the world as it appears to us, or, should we go beyond the verdict of common experience in search of a unity capable of lending meaning and significance to the discordant variety that we see and feel around us? If we accept the world at its face value we surrender ourselves to crude materialism. If, on the other hand, we dive deeper and can discover the world-ground that unifies the fibres of pragmatic details, we save ourselves by the liberating gospel of idealistic philosophy. This means that we re-trace our way back to the first principle, the harmony lost in the wilderness of worldly perplexity.

The Bhāgavata advises to launch upon the sustained search for Reality that lies within (puruṣa) the physical universe (Nature) and also within the ego-centres, (different bodies). In other words it advises to seek Reality both through the macrocosm and the microcosm. According to the Bhāgavata, to crown this exploration with success one should take the help of the Vedas that have incorporated the direct revelation (pratyakṣa) of the seers, and also of cogent logic (anumāna). Cosmogonical passages from the Upaniṣads bear testimony to the fact that creation, in its entirety, started from Brahman or Ātman, is sustained by it and will finally dissolve into it. The

\[ \text{ātmano gurur ātmaiva puruṣasya viśeṣataḥ.} \]
\[ \text{yat pratyakṣānunmānbhāyāṁ śreyo'ścānavanuvindate... 11.7.20} \]

\[ \text{BU 1.4.1., TU 3.1., Ch Ú 6.2.1. etc.} \]
Bhāgavata has envisaged these passages to bear upon the issue. In its attempt to establish the soul (Ātman) as distinct from physical existence with the aid of logic, the Bhāgavata focusses its attention upon a scrutiny of the human framework. Man’s mind, sense organs and intellect that are usually employed to reveal an external object are by themselves unable to do so because, like the external object that requires something else for its revelation, mind etc., being equally dead clods, should require something else for their own revelation. So, the act of revelation on the part of the internal and external organs of man presupposes a reality that reveals its own self as it reveals all including the organs of man. The reality which thus deserves due recognition is called the soul. Similarly one might argue that the mechanism (mind etc.) which operates in the act of revelation of an external object is by itself the instrument (karaṇa) of knowledge; and, as an instrument, it always postulates an intelligent agent. So, the inner and outer organs of man depend for their operation upon an intelligent agent and such agent is the soul. Śrīdhara reminds us that such logic is not intended to give the impression that the soul is known solely by inferential knowledge; but only that it raises the presumption of the soul as a reality distinct from human body.

The Bhāgavata, however, chooses to fall back upon the logic adduced by the major Upaniṣads like the Brhadāraṇyaka and the Chāndogya to establish the soul and its distinction from body. It is the universal experience of everyday life that man undergoes three states of consciousness—waking state (jāgrat), sleep (svapna) and dreamless sleep (suṣupti). In the waking state man acquires knowledge through the external sense organs—the eyes, the ears and so on. In sleep the ex-

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8 atraiva mṛgayāḥ puṇḍraḥ...
sarga-sthāna-samāmnāyair vimśādhīn aśatvāraḥ...
7.7.23c, 24c
4 bhagavān sarva-bhūteṣu lākṣaṇaḥ svātmanā hariḥ.
dṛṣṭaḥ buddhāvibhīn draśṭā laṅkṣaṇaiḥ anumāpakaḥ.
2.2.35
5 atra māṁ mṛgayantyadādha yuktā hetubhir iṣvaram.
grhyamāṇaiḥ guṇaiḥ liṅgair a-grāhyam anumāṇatāḥ...
11.7.23
6 na caitāvātā ānumānika ātmeti mantavyam; dehādi-
vayatīrīktavām padārtha-kudāhi-mātrasyāvānumānanena
vivakṣātāvātā—Śrīdhara on 11.7.23.
1 BU 4.3.9-15, Ch U 8.10-12.
ternal organs are lulled into inactivity; yet man has experience in dream, brought about by his mind. In deep sleep dreams disappear and all diversity seems to dissolve into a unity. This state of dreamless sleep need not be taken as the extinction of man. For, when he comes back to the waking state after a while, he recollects profound happiness experienced in deep sleep. How could he have such recollection unless he himself had the firsthand experience of happiness in dreamless sleep and how could such firsthand experience be possible unless he himself existed at that time? This suggests that man as their experiencer endures through all the states of consciousness while the states alternate among themselves, one for the other. The alternation between two states with man persisting in both of them is obviously noticed at the juncture of sleep and waking. One can then palpably feel the transition of man from one state to another.

What then is the lesson to be derived from the endurance of man through all the three states of consciousness and the changeability of one state in favour of the other during the same period? The lesson is bound to be like this: As the lamp endures through the flickering flames, or as water persists through the stream, or, as the same tree continues to exist through the innumerable fruits which it yields from year to year, so the same undivided soul runs through the three states of consciousness. The logic of persistence (anvaya) of man in exclusion (vyatireka) of states is therefore useful to establish the soul of man as different from his body.

8 yo jagare bahir anukṣaṇa-dharmino’rthān bhūṅkite samasta-karanair ādhyatma tadā prakāśan.
svaotpam satita upasamharate sa ekāh smṛtyanuvāyāt tri-guṇa-vyāpti-dṛṣṭ indriyena... 11.13.32
9 yena prasūptaḥ puruṣah svāpaṃ vedā’tmanas tataḥ.
sukhaḥ ca nir-guṇam brahma tam ātmānām avahi mām... 6.16.55
10 ubhayaṁ smarataḥ puruṣaḥ prasūpa-pratibodhayoh.
anvati vyatireketa saj jñānam brahma tataḥ param... 6.16.56
11 supti-prabodhayoh sandhyāvāmano gatim ātma-dṛṣṭ.
piyān... 7.13.5
12 yathā’rjunaṁ srotasāṁ ca phalānām vā uanaspateḥ.
tathāvārṣa-bhātānāṁ vayo’vasthādayāṁ kṛtāḥ... 11.22.44
13 ātraiva mṛgyaḥ puruṣaḥ
anvaya-vyatirekena vivekenolatātmanā... 7.7.23 c, 24 ab
(a) the soul is different from the body,\textsuperscript{14} and that (b) it witnesses the three states of consciousness.\textsuperscript{15} It reveals the three states in the same way as fire kindles a piece of log which it consumes.\textsuperscript{16} So, the analysis of the three states of man leads us to the conclusion that man is not just the body, gross or subtle. What uncritical mind calls ‘man’ is really the ‘soul’ of man; Soul, then, is other than both—man’s gross body and his subtle body.\textsuperscript{17} It is more than what life (mukhya prāṇa) is. The soul is in fact the ground against which the pragmatic existence of man, including his three states of consciousness, is to be negated\textsuperscript{18}.

The ground behind the physical world and the ground of the three states of consciousness limited in a particular body are ultimately one and the same. The Vedas and the arguments represent two different approaches—one intuitional and the other discursive—but both refer to the same reality. The Bhāgavata affirms this truth when, in the wake of the Upaniṣads, it declares perfect identification between the cosmic soul, the world-ground, and the individual soul, the ground of the three states in a particular centre of consciousness (i.e., a body).\textsuperscript{19} It is the identification of the individual soul with Brahman and vice versa.\textsuperscript{20} The Bhāgavata extols this reciprocal identity to be the summit of realisation.\textsuperscript{21} The Bhāga-vata thus reaffirms Upaniṣadic monism clothed in the Doctrine of the soul, associated with the name of the great Yājñavalkya.
Although we have reached the soul through two different methods—one intuitive and the other empirical—yet the latter lacks the strength of an independent method for reaching its goal. Mere dialectic defeats its own end. The \textit{Upaniṣads} therefore take recourse to logic merely to elaborate truth achieved by direct revelation. Logic being thus merely interpretative, truth is the special privilege of direct revelation. One therefore has to be sure about the relative importance of the \textit{Vedas} and the arguments. In compliance with the empirical method propounded in the \textit{Bṛhadārāṇyaka-Upaniṣad} the \textit{Bhāgavata} also has recognised the utility of the indirect method of negation (\textit{neti neti}) in order to show what the soul is not. But the \textit{Upaniṣads} are quite aware of their responsibility of offering a positivistic interpretation of the nature of the soul. The \textit{Bhāgavata} has carefully culled different \textit{Upaniṣadic} statements on this issue and has beautifully described the soul in terms of twelve aspects. The soul, declares the \textit{Bhāgavata}, is eternal (\textit{niyita}), immutable (\textit{avyaya}), pure (\textit{suddha}), one (\textit{eka}), witness (\textit{kṣetra-jñā}), the shelter of all (\textit{āśraya}), unchanging (\textit{a-vikriya}), self-luminous (\textit{sva-dṛś}), the primordial ground of causation (\textit{hetu}), all-pervasive (\textit{vyāpaka}), non-attached (\textit{a-saṅga}) and perfect (\textit{anāvṛta}). The \textit{Bhāgavata} has asserted the same in several other contexts.

The evidence of the \textit{Upaniṣads} as to these twelve aspects of the soul may be corroborated by the conclusions arrived at above with the aid of the empirical method. The conclusions we have arrived at are: (1) the soul is different from the body, (2) it is the witness of the different states of consciousness, and (3) it is the ground of empirical negation. If we combine the first and the third conclusions we shall find that the difference between the soul and the body is based on the contrast between their mutual natures. Now, the nature of the body being already known to us we can naturally imagine the nature of the soul by way

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{BU 2.3.6}
  \item \textit{atraiva myrgaḥ puruṣo neti netityatat tyajan... 7.7.23 ed}
  \item \textit{ātmā nityo'vyayaḥ suddha ekaḥ kṣetra-jñā āśrayaḥ. a-vikriyaḥ sva-dṛś hetur vyāpako'saṅgyanāvṛtaḥ... 7.7.19}
  \item \textit{4.20.7, 7.2.22, 10.47.31, 12.5.8, 3.26.3 etc.}
\end{itemize}
of contrast with that of the body. Similarly, other features of the soul might follow from its witnessing character. First of all, the soul is the ground of creation as it is the ground of human body. It is, then, the cause of creation, solely responsible for the unfoldment of the cosmic process. In other words, it is the self-contained cause (hetu) which, independent of any other condition, brings the world into existence. Naturally, like the earth persisting through all earthen wares the soul pervades all (vyāpaka) just as ether does. Like earth, again, serving as the shelter of earthen wares, the soul is the shelter of all creation (āśraya). As the diversity of earthen wares rises and falls against the unity of earth, so the diversity of creation does the same against the unity (eka) of the soul. Yet, as the presupposition of creation, the soul per se is the non-attached reality (a-saṅga) there being then no second to be attached to. Reposed on its intrinsic glory the soul is therefore pure (suddha) and not in any way liable to birth and death (nitya and arya), the inevitable destiny of creation including the body however super-fine that might possibly be. In fact, the soul, in contrast with the ever-changing creation, is not liable to any change (a-vikriya). Being free from all limitations the soul is thus the perfect being (anārtha). The perfection of the soul means that the soul is pure being (satya or nitya). Lastly, the soul as the witness implies its self-luminous nature (sva-drś). The soul is the divine light that by its native splendour enlightens all. We cannot go beyond the soul in search of light; for, at the end one has to stop somewhere to declare the native light of the so-called ultimate reality and that ultimate reality is no other than the soul. To complete the picture, the Bhāgavata declares that the soul is not only pure being and pure knowledge but it is pure bliss as well. To the Bhāgavata, then, the soul is pure being, pure knowledge and pure bliss.
The presupposition of the soul to explain creation suggests the transcendental nature of the soul. This means that per se the soul is one without a second. How can such non-dual soul explain duality which the concept of creation necessarily involves? The Bhāgavata draws upon the concept of Māyā to explain this duality. The Rg-Veda had declared that one Indra appears to be many through his magical powers. The Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa reiterated this truth. The Brhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad invoked the same to explain creation; and, Indra was taken to mean Brahma, the infinite. With infinite powers (māyābhiḥ) Brahma could not but be infinite. The Bhāgavata has exploited this well-established tradition to interpret how one became two. In the context of expounding the Sāṁkhya doctrine, the Bhāgavata declares that there was at the outset pure consciousness without a second (a-vikalpitam). But, as the outcome of Māyā (māyā-phaḷa-rūpeṇa) one was bifurcated into the subject and the object. Thus the great (bhyat) truth (satya) split itself, as it were, into being and becoming called Puruṣa and Prakṛti respectively, although by itself the great truth is beyond both of them.

It was, then, Māyā of Indra (Brahman or the soul) or the majesty (mahīman) of the Great Puruṣa, that Indra (Brahman, Ātman or Puruṣa) appeared as Puruṣa and Prakṛti, the subject and the object, the being and the becoming. But, as appearance does not correspond to reality, Indra (Brahman, Ātman or Puruṣa) still remained settled in non-duality, that is, beyond Puruṣa and Prakṛti. The appearance of duality in perfect harmony with non-duality is accepted by the Bhāgavata.

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31 indro māyābhiḥ, puru-rūpo iyate... RV 6.47.18
32 SB 14.5.5.19
33 BU 2.5.19. After the mention of Indra the Upaniṣad states: tad etad brahma.... ayam ātmā brahma.
34 atha te sampavakyāmi sāṁkhyaṁ pūrvar vinīścitam. yad vijñāya ātmān sadyo jāhyād vaikalpitam bhramam... 11.24.1
35 āśī jñānam atho artha ekam eva-vikalpitam. yadā viveka-nipuna ādau kṛta-yuge'yuge...
tan māyā-phaḷa-rūpeṇa kevalāṁ nir-vikalpitam. viṃ-samo'gocaraṁ satyaṁ advidhā samabhavat bhyat...
tayor ekataro hyarthaḥ prakṛtiḥ sbhayātmikā.
jñānam tvanyatamo bhāvaḥ puruṣaḥ so'bhidhiyate... 11.24.2-4
when it says that the soul allows itself to be apprehended as two although by itself it has transcended both.\textsuperscript{36} And, such harmony is possible due to the supra-logical character of Māyā.\textsuperscript{37} Māyā, creates the duality of the subject and the object,\textsuperscript{38} and as far back as human intelligence can go such duality has been there, although being the creation of Māyā it is imaginary and cannot therefore claim the finality of truth.\textsuperscript{39} The duality of Puruṣa and Prakṛti should have been of uncompromising nature because of their mutually contradictory character. Yet, due to Māyā, again, these two meet and creation follows as a result.\textsuperscript{40}

The meeting of Puruṣa and Prakṛti consists in their superimposition of each other’s nature\textsuperscript{41} and the result of this meeting is the birth of the empirical soul (Jiva). Just as bubbles arise out of the combined operation of water and wind, so the empirical souls came into existence from Puruṣa, when Prakṛti, due to its conjunction with Puruṣa, operated thereon.\textsuperscript{42} The Bhāgavata has tried to explain the emergence of the empirical souls on the analogy of reflection (pratibimba) and also of limitation (avaccheda). As man is reflected in a mirror or in another person’s eyes\textsuperscript{43} or in water\textsuperscript{44} so Brahmān (Puruṣa) reflects itself in Prakṛti and this reflection is the empirical soul. Or,
just as the ether bound by a pitcher appears to be different from the ether outside it, so the empirical soul appears to differ from Brahman.45 That the Bhāgavata is inclined to these two analogies is borne out by the fact that it mentions both of them in the same context at one place.46 According to the Bhāga-
vata, Puruṣa or rather the Great Puruṣa is reflected in intellect, the first manifestation of Prakṛti. Being predominantly transparent (sattvika), intellect is immensely suitable for receiving the reflection of the Great Puruṣa; and, this reflection is the empirical soul. The empirical soul being the reflection on intellect, the latter is called the sheath (kośa) of the former.47 For the same reason, Jīva is described as the swan of the lake of intellect.48 In the wake of the Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa49 the Bhadārānyaka-Upaniṣad describes the soul as a migratory bird that has found new settlement in different bodies.50 As intellect varies from person to person, so Jīva, the reflection-puruṣa, appears to be different in each intellect.51 Thus circumscribed, Jīva is called the part (aṁśa) of the Great Puruṣa.52 We might take this “aṁśa” to mean that the Great Puruṣa descended in the composite body (pura)53 and was called Jīva. The Bhadārānyaka-Upaniṣad passage that the soul became many in each form may be construed in this light.54 Duality between Jīva and the Great Puruṣa disappears only when intellect, the

45 ghāṣe bhinne ghāṣakāśa ākāśaḥ syād yathā purā.
   evaṁ dehe mṛte jīvo brahma sampḍyate punaḥ... 12.5.5
46 eka eva paro hyātā sarveṣāṁ api dehinām.
   nāneva ghṛyate mūḍhār yathā jyotir yathā nabhaḥ... 10.54.44
47 ........ hṛdayaṁ jīva-kolam 4.22.26 c
48 evaṁ sa mānasa haṁso haṁsenā pratibodhitāḥ... 4.28.64 ab
49 SB 14.5.5.18
50 BU 2.5.18
51 aṁśaṁ indriyārthaṁ ca paraṁ yad ubhayor api.
   satyālaye upādhau vai punāṁ paśyati nānyad... 4.22.28
52 svā-krta-pureṣvamīśavahir-antar a-saṁvaraṇam.
   tava puruṣam vadanṭyakhila-sakti-dhrtoṁśa-kṛtam... 10.87.20
53 puruṣam puraṇjanaṁ vidyāt yad vyanaktyātmanāṁ puram.
   eka-dui-sri-catus-pādam bahu-pādam a-pādam... etc. 4,29.2-25
54 rūpaṁ rūpaṁ prati-rūpo babhūva. BU 2.5.19
condition of this duality, is annihilated by supreme knowledge. According to the Bhāgavata, then, Jīva is the Great Puruṣa circumscribed by intellect.

In fact, the Bhāgavata draws upon the Upaniṣadic tradition to delineate the nature of the empirical soul. The cosmogonic hymn of the Rg-Veda had recognised the revelation of Reality in the "hṛd" of man. Following this, the Chāndogya-Upaniṣad has stated that "hṛdayam", a synonym of "hṛd", is so called because the soul is perceived in "hṛd" (hṛdi ayam iti). The Bhāgavata understands by the term "hṛdaya" the inner mechanism (antaḥ-karaṇa) consisting of mind (Manas), intellect (Buddhi), egoity (Ahamkāra) and reflection (Citta).

Mind etc. are not independent realities but are different aspects of the inner mechanism. The Great Puruṣa reflected on this inner mechanism is called the empirical soul. But in so far as, in the scheme of the Bhāgavata, Citta or the act of reflection is the highest among the fourfold activities of the inner mechanism, the soul is said to be reflected on Citta. In other words, the inner mechanism in its act of reflecting the soul

55 yadā ratir brahmaṇi naiṣṭhikī pumān ācāryavān jñāna-viraga-ranikāsā. dahatayaviryaṁ hṛdayam jīva-kośam paṅcātmakam yonim itovthito'gniḥ... dagdhālasyo mukta-samasta-tad-guṇo naiṣṭāmano bahir antar vicaṣṭe... parātmanor yad vyavadhānam purastāt svapne yathā puruṣas tad-vināṣe... 4.22.26-27
56 aham-mātyā bhāṣitayā svaa-bhāśā puruṣaḥ. 10.20.19
57 sato bandhum asati nīr-avindan hṛdi pratiśyā kavayo maniṣṭa... RV 10.129.4
Obviously this passage inspired the Bhāgavata to write:— mukta-liṅgaṁ sad-ādhaṁ asatī pratiṣṭhaye, sato bandhum asac-cakṣuḥ sarvāniṣṭāṁ advayam... 3.27.11
58 sa vā eṣa ātmā hṛdi; tasya etad eva niruktam— hṛdi ayam iti Ch U 8.3.3.
59 atthāṣya hṛdayam bhinnam hṛdayan mana utthitam. manasaś caṇḍamā jato buddhir bhuddher girāṁ patiḥ. ahamkāras tato rudraś cītāṁ caityaś tato'bhavaḥ... 3.26.60 cd, 61
60 mano-buddhir ahamkāraś cittam ityantarātmakam. catur-dhā lakṣyate bhedo vṛttyā lakṣaṇāra-papayā... 3.26.14
61 hṛdayam manasaḥ candro nodatiṣṭhat tadā virāṭ. buddhyā brahmā'pi hṛdayam nodatiṣṭhat tadā virāṭ. rudro'bhimatyā hṛdayaṁ nodatiṣṭhat tadā virāṭ. cīttena hṛdayaṁ caityaṁ kṣetrajñaḥ pratiśad yaddā virāṭ tadaiva puruṣaḥ salilād ud-atishhata... 3.26.68 cd, 69, 70
(the Great Puruṣa) is called Citta. So, according to the Bhāgavata, the individual soul is the reflection of the Great Puruṣa on inner mechanism.

The conclusions that emerge from the aforesaid nature of the empirical soul are: (1) the empirical soul, being the mere shadow of the real soul, is nothing but the real soul, (2) the real soul being one, all empirical souls are in fact one and same reality, (3) in spite of their fundamental oneness the empirical souls appear to be different from one another due to the mutual difference of the inner mechanisms in different gross bodies, (4) being the reflections on inner mechanisms they continue to be embroiled in pragmatic existence as long as the inner mechanisms do not disappear with the dawning of knowledge and (5) as long as the conditions of difference i.e., the inner mechanisms continue to exist the empirical souls appear not only different from one another but also different from the real soul, the Great Puruṣa.

The Bhāgavata recognises the unity of the soul when it declares that the Great Puruṣa, the ground of all creation, appears to be many in relation to different bodies just as fire does in different woods or the life breath does in its distribution in different parts of the body or the all-embracing ether does in connection with different objects. It is the same soul that pervades all from the gross fourteen worlds to the unmanifest. The appearance of difference of the same soul in different bodies is entirely due to the differentiation of the three guṇas. The soul may therefore be described to partake of two different, nay, apparently antagonistic characters, the transcendental and the empirical. As the transcendental, the soul remains absolutely unsoiled by the impurities of Prakṛti although it always dwells therein. But, as the empirical, it is steeped in Prakṛti

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"yathā'nalo dāruṣu bhinna iyate
yathā'nilo deha-gataḥ prthak sthitāḥ.
yathā nabhaḥ sarva-gataṁ na sajjate
tathā pumān sarva-guṇārāyaḥ paraḥ... 7.2.43 ; vide also 3.28.43

"parāvareṣu bhūteṣu brahmānta-sthavarādiṣu:
bhautikeṣu vikāreṣu bhūteṣvahā mahāṣu ca.
guṇeṣu guṇa-sīmye ca guṇa-oyatikare tathā.
eka evo pariṣevā bhagavān iṣvaro'vyayaḥ... 7.6.20-21

"grhyamānais tvam agrāhyo vikāraḥ prakṛter guṇaiḥ,
ko nuśāhahati vijnātam prak-siddham guṇa-samvṛtyah... 10.10.32"
and disowns its own self in favour of a fictitious one.\textsuperscript{65} If the empirical soul can legitimately be described as the vital force (Jīva) that instills life in body, then the transcendental soul should all the more acquire that designation (Jīva) because the empirical soul is, at its core, nothing but the transcendental soul. The Bhāgavata therefore uses the term “Jīva” in relation to the Great Puruṣa as well, that enlivens all creation.\textsuperscript{66}

If, on the other hand, the empirical aspect and the transcendental aspect are looked upon to refer to two different realities, this leads us to the well-known concept of two birds, often referred to in the Vedic literature.\textsuperscript{67} Following this tradition the Bhāgavata describes how the two birds, namely, the empirical soul and the transcendental soul are perched upon the same tree (i.e., the human body) of which one, the empirical, goes on tasting the fruit thereof while the other, the transcendental, merely looks on.\textsuperscript{68} The Bhāgavata has further elaborated this difference between the two souls. While the transcendental soul is eternally free (nitya-mukta), pure (pariṣuddha), omniscient (vibuddha) real (ātman), immutable (kūṭastha), the eternal Puruṣa (ādi-puruṣa), the sovereign (bhagavān) and the master of the three guṇas (tryadhīṣa), the empirical soul is in bondage (though liable to liberation by the grace of God), impure, ignorant, unreal, liable to changes, originates, is labouring under limitations and is sub-

\textsuperscript{65} prakṛti-stho'pi puruṣo nā'jyate prakṛtera guṇaiḥ. a-vikārād a-karṣṭaṁ nir-guṇatvāj jalārkavat...
sa eṣa yarhi prakṛter guṇesvabhiviśajjate. ahamkāra-vimūḍhātmā kartā'ham iti manyate... 3.27.1-2

\textsuperscript{66} evam yoni-gato jīvaḥ sa nityo nir-ahamkṛtaḥ. eṣa nityo'vyayaḥ sūkṣma eṣa svarūpaḥ svat-dyak. ātma-māyā-guṇair viśvam ātmānaṁ sṛjate prabhūḥ...

\textsuperscript{67} tvam iliṣe jagatas tataḥsu ca praṇena mukhyena pātiḥ prajānām... 7.3.29ab

\textsuperscript{68} RV 1.164.20, AV 9.9.20, Mun U. 3.1.1. etc.

\textsuperscript{69} suparṇāśvetaḥ sadṛśau sakhyāvau yadṛchayaitu kṛta-nidau ca vṛkṣe. ekas tayoḥ khādati pippalānām anyo nir-anno'pi balena bhūyān...

ātmānām anyaḥ ca sa ēva vidvān a-pippalādo na tu pippalādaḥ. yo-viśyayā yuk sa tu nitya-baddho vidyāmaya yāḥ sa tu nitya-muktaḥ... 11.11.6-7
jected to the three guṇas. These characters of the empirical soul should be understood on the analogy of reflection and its prototype. While the reflection-moon seems to tremble with the ripples, the prototype-moon in the sky shines on, unaffected. Similarly the reflection-soul (i.e., the empirical soul) is caught by the attributes of the world while the prototype-soul (the real soul, the Great Puruṣa) remains settled in its native glory.

Nevertheless as the empirical soul is but real soul, so the worldliness of the empirical soul cannot be real. As the tremor of water is attributed to the tree that has cast its shadow on water, or, as the moving eyes attribute their own movement to the earth, so worldliness is ascribed to the empirical soul. Just as rice is boiled by the heat of the pot on which it is placed, so the empirical soul is affected by the states of physical existence. That is how the agency which really belongs to the inner mechanism is ascribed to the soul as the rolling of the head is attributed to the earth.

The foregoing paragraphs may be summed up as follows:—

(1) The ultimate ground of both the physical world and the bodies is the soul, (2) the soul is one, pure consciousness and pure bliss, (3) although the non-dual reality, the soul bifurcates itself into the subject and the object, called Puruṣa and Prakṛti, through its intrinsic power called Māyā, (4) Puruṣa or rather the Great Puruṣa reflected upon the inner mechanism (antah-karana) is called Jīva, the empirical soul, (5) as there is identity between reflection and its prototype and yet as they

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svaṁ nitya-mukta-parisuddha-vibuddha ātmā
kūṭa-sthā ādi-puruṣo bhagavāṁs tryadhiśāh.
yad buddhyavasthūtim a-khaṇḍitayā svac-ṛṣṭyā
draśā sthiṣṭaśvadhā-makho vyatirikto āsāe... 4.9.15

yathā jale candrāmasaḥ kampādīs tat-kṛto guṇaḥ.
dṛṣṭayeṣaṁ api draśṭura ātmano'nātmana guṇaḥ... 3.7.11

yathāṁbhāsa pracakala taraṇaḥ api caiva.
caṇḍaḥ bhṛityamāgama dṛṣṭaye caśātva bhūḥ...
evaṁ guṇair bhṛityamāpe manasvayākalaḥ pumān.
yāt tat-samyakām bhadrasyaḥ hyāgavo bhūgaṁ āvām... 7.2.23-24, 11.22.54

sthālayo-tapaḥ payasoḥ tāpaḥ
tat-tāpas taṇḍula-garbha-randhiḥ.
dhenaśvāsāya-sannikarṣā
tat-saṁśīṛḥ puruṣasyānurodhāḥ... 5.10.22

yathā bhrāmarikā-ṛṣṭyā bhrāmyativā mahiṣyate.
vitte kartari tatratām karavāhaṁ-dhiṣaṁ smṛtaḥ... 10.46.41
appear as different from each other, so the empirical soul is identical with the real soul although the former appears different from the latter, (6) because one and same soul is described as reflection and its prototype, one might say by combining both the reflection and its prototype that the soul as reflection is immanent in creation while as the prototype the soul transcends it as well. This last conclusion may be applied to the cosmic sphere as well. One might say that Puruṣa, the personal God, as reflection on Prakṛti is immanent in the universe while as the prototype of the same reflection, He has transcended Prakṛti. Taking the empirical soul and God together one might then say that the soul is immanent as well as transcendent both in macrocosm and microcosm, and (7) all this is possible because of Māyā.

Māyā, as distinguished from Cit-śakti, the principle of knowledge, is the principle of illusion. It is mere appearance without any correspondence to reality.⁷⁴ Illusion, as we know from ordinary experience, involves first the concealment of the true nature of an object and secondly its appearance as something else. A case of illusion would therefore require:—(1) a real object to serve as the substratum of illusion, (2) concealment of the true nature of that real object, i.e., revelation of that object just as an object and non-revelation of it in terms of its distinctive qualities, (3) somehow the existence of an object which is other than the real object, the substratum of illusion and (4) the appearance of the real object in terms of the other object i.e., the appearance of the real object as a counterfeit reality which the real object is not. These conditions may conveniently be applied to explain the operation of Māyā.

The Bhāgavata has recognised Māyā, as we have already noticed, to evolve into two principles—Avidyā and Prakṛti—the first to provide for the concealment of the true nature of the soul and the second to bring into existence the empirical world which can serve as the counterfeit self of the soul. The appearance of worldliness on the part of the soul is therefore based upon the ignorance of the true nature of the soul⁷⁵ serving as

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⁷⁴ mṛga-trṣṇāṁ yathā bālā manyanta udakāśayam.
   evaiṁ vaikārikāṁ māyāṁ a-yuktā vastu ca kṣaṭe...
   10.73.11

⁷⁵ ātma-grahaṇa-nirbhātāṁ paśya vaikalpikaṁ bhramam...
   11.22.57cd
the substratum of the illusion of duality.\textsuperscript{76} This obliteration of the true nature of the soul, brought about by Avidyā, constitutes the very basis of empiricaty of the soul.\textsuperscript{77} Avidyā consists in the ignorance which shuts out the knowledge that the soul being the world-ground is different from the world just as earth against which the earthen wares rise and fall is different from the earthen wares.\textsuperscript{78} Loss of this knowledge has been described as suicide\textsuperscript{79} or taking poison\textsuperscript{80} and is the root of all sorrows.\textsuperscript{82} When Prakṛti, consisting of the three guṇas appearing against Brahman in the same way as light, floating cloud and darkness do in the sky, creates the subtle and gross universe, Avidyā ascribes this universe to the soul which then appears as the objective world.

The objective world may be viewed, as it has been viewed by the Bhāgavata, either as a totality or as individual units. The soul appearing as bound to the totality is Hiraṇya-garbha and the same appearing as limited to an individual unit is man. So, all living beings from Hiraṇya-garbha down to man are included in the category of empirical souls.\textsuperscript{83} The entire creation from Mahat to the fourteen worlds constitute the empirical form, the counterfeit self of Hiraṇya-garbha, and the same in its individualistic aspect, from Buddhī to the gross body, provides the counterfeit self of man. In the light of the reflection-theory, Hiraṇya-garbha, as the reflection on Mahat,

\textsuperscript{76} deha ādyantavān esa dravya-prāṇa-guṇātmakah. átmānyavidyayā kiptaḥ sansārayati dehinam. . . 10.54.45

\textsuperscript{77} anādyavidyopahatātma-saṁvidāh tan-mūla-saṁśāra-pariśramāturāḥ . . . 8.24.46 ab

\textsuperscript{78} bhūvi bhauṁāni bhūtanī yathā yaṁtyayayanti ca. naśyam ātmā tathāteṣu viparyeti yathāiva bhūḥ . . yathā naśvam-vido bhedo yathā ātmā-viparyayāḥ. deha-yoga-viyo gau ca saṁśītaḥ na nīvartate . . . 10.4.19-20

\textsuperscript{79} na bata ramanīyakho asad-upāsanayātmaka-hanah. . . 10.87.22c

\textsuperscript{80} yas tvāṁ visṛjate mārttya ātmānām priyam iṣvaram. viparyayendriyāhāṁ viṣaṁ atyaṁtaṁ tiṣajah. . . 10.63.42

\textsuperscript{82} lokāḥ svayam śreyasi naśa-drśṭir yo’rthāṁ samiheta nikāma-kāmaḥ. anyonya-vairāḥ sukha-leśa-hetor ananta-duḥkhāṁ ca na veda mūḍhaḥ. . . 5.5.16

\textsuperscript{83} hamsāvahāṁ ca tvāṁ ca’rya sakhyāyau mānasāyanau. abhūtāṁ antarā vaukaḥ sahasra-parivatsarān. . . sa tvāṁ vihāya māṁ bandho gato grāmya-matir mahim. vicaraṁ padam adrāksiḥ kayācīn nirmitiṁ striyā. 4.28.54-55
loses the sense of his identity with the Great Puruṣa or rather the Vāsudeva Vyūha, his prototype, and falsely thinks himself identified with Mahat and all its evolutes. In the same way, the individual soul (man, for instance) forgetting his real nature that he is the transcendental soul falsely imagines that he is Buddhi, the individualistic form of Mahat, and all that its evolutes are. It may be noted here that the individual soul, whether Hiranya-garbha or man, is said to have been created in the sense that being reflection he has to presuppose the existence of Mahat or Buddhi, on which reflection occurs; and, because Mahat or Buddhi is a product of the unmanifest (Avyakta) therefore the reflection on Mahat or Buddhi is liable to be called a product. Yet, as the empirical soul (Hiranya-garbha or man) is none else than the real soul, it is eternal reality. Until the dawning of consciousness, empirically continues. During creation the reflection is manifest, since Mahat is then manifested. During cosmic deluge when all dissolves into Prakṛti (the unmanifest), Mahat still receives the reflection of the great Puruṣa, in its causal form (kārāṇāvastha). As empirically is contemporaneous with the state of reflection, empirical life of the individual soul continues even at deluge so that cosmic deluge does not mean emancipation of the individual soul.

Now let us read the implication of the range of empirically, indicated above. The centre of this empirically is the knowledge of the subject as the object—of the real “I” (Ātman) as the counterfeit or empirical “I” (aham).\(^{\text{83}}\) In the light of the reflection-theory the knowledge of counterfeit “I” is a state of the inner mechanism (antah-karaṇa) and it follows the state of reflection of the soul on the same. As the Bhāgavata calls the state of reflection Citta (or Mahat) and the knowledge of “I” Ahaṁkāra, it legitimately describes Ahaṁkāra to have evolved from Citta or Mahat. The Bhāgavata states\(^{\text{84}}\) that the

\(^{\text{83}}\) nāyaṁ veda svam ātmānaṁ yac-chaktyāḥam-dhiyā hatam... 8.3.29ab

\(^{\text{84}}\) aham-ityanyathā-buddhir pramattasya yathā Ĥridi. utsarpati rajo ghorāṁ tato vaikārikaṁ manah... rajo-yuktasya manasaḥ saṁkalpaḥ sa-vikalpakah. tataḥ kāmo guṇa-dhyānād duḥ-sahāḥ syād ṛṣi dur-mateḥ... karoti kāma-vaiśa-gaḥ karmāṇyavijitendriyaḥ. duḥkhoḍarkāṇi saṁpālyaṁ rajo-vega-vimohitaḥ... 11.13.9-11 vide also 4.22.30-31
knowledge of “I” provokes rajas in the inner mechanism and as a result the latter concentrates (saṁkalpa) on the objective world and indulges thereafter in speculations (vikalpa). The state of saṁkalpa is Buddhī and that of vikalpa is Manas. The Bhāgavata concept of the inner mechanism is to be understood as consisting of these four successive states: the state of reflection, the state of “I”-consciousness, concentration on worldly objects and indulgence in material speculations. In terms of categories the first is called Mahat or Buddhī, the second Ahamkāra, the third and the fourth combined into a single category called Manas. Worldly speculations are concretized into definite desires (kāma) which for their fulfilment involve the empirical soul in all sorts of actions (Karman). Karman determines the nature of different bodies to which the empirical soul transmigrates for enjoying the fruits thereof. A scrutiny into the nature of enjoyment will unravel the relentless story of sorrows, inexhaustible in variety and forms, ceaselessly eating into the vitals of the empirical soul, no matter however divine such soul may possibly be.

The instrument through which the empiricity of the soul is actualised in the shape of pleasure and pain deserves some consideration here. “I”-consciousness (ahaṁ-dhī), the centre of empiricity, stands for the superimposition of the non-soul on the soul, brought about by Avidyā. “I”, as we have seen, is Ahamkāra (egoity); and, according to the scheme of the Bhāgavata, Ahamkāra evolves into mind, five sense organs, five action organs and five subtle elements—sixteen in all. As there is identity between the material cause and its effects, Ahamkāra may be said to have distributed itself in sixteen forms. As the non-soul means this “I”, the superimposition of

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83 buddhi-bhramio rajo-gupaḥ... 10.10.8b
84 manaḥ srjati vai dehān guṇān karmāṇi cātmanah.
tan manaḥ srjate māyā tato jīvasya saṁśritiḥ... 12.5.6
85 labhā nimittam avyaktāṁ vyaktāyaktam bhavatytu.
yathā-yoni yathā-bijaṁ suabhāvena baliyasā... 6.1.54
86 ahyāptārta-karāṇa nīti nīh-sayānā
nāma-manoratha-dhiyā kṣaṇa-bhagna-nidrāḥ.
davādhātārtha-racanā ṣayo̯pi deva
yusmat-prasaṅga-vimukhā iha saṁsaraṇti...
3.9.10, vide also 3.30-31, 5.13.2-10
87 ajñāna-probhavāham-dhiḥ. 10.4.26c
the sixteenfold “I” on the soul gives rise to the concept of “śoḍaṣa-kala puruṣa”. In the exposition of the view that recognises seventeen categories, the Bhāgavata takes the soul to be the seventeenth category besides these sixteen. The mind reaches the fivefold external object through the five sense organs and the five action organs; and, the soul derives pleasure and pain therefrom through its association with the mind. This sixteenfold “I” serving as the coil round the soul is called body (deha) and the soul runs the whole gamut of pleasure, pain and all sorts of feelings that impinge themselves upon it (soul) by virtue of its (I’s) tremendous (mahat) force consisting of the three guṇas. “I” is called “liṅga” (sign) because, according to the Bhāgavata, the diverse activities of the organs including the mind point to the unity called Ahamkāra which, in its turn, signifies the soul, just as the radiation-sun on the wall points to the reflection-sun in water, which, in its turn, signifies the real sun in the sky. This “I”, liṅga or subtle body has been described as the wheel (cakra) of the Great Puruṣa (aja) and the distribution of Ahamkāra into sixteen forms is taken to stand for the sixteen spokes geared to this wheel. The Bhāgavata takes Jīva to consist in the reflection (cid-ābhāsa) associated with the sixteenfold “I”, and, if we

90 san-khyāne sapta-dāsake bhūtāmātrendriyaṇī ca.
pañca pañcaika-manasa ātmā sapta-dasa smṛtaḥ... 11.22.22
91 pañcabhiḥ kurute svārthaḥ pañca vedātha pañcabhiḥ.
ekas tu śoḍaṣena trīn svayaṁ sapta-dāsaṁśnute... 6.1.50
92 bhūtendriya-mano-liṅgaṁ dehān uccāvacān 7.2.46
93 tad etat śoḍaṣa-kalāṁ liṅgaṁ śakti-trayaṁ mahat.
dhate’nu-saṁśyāṁ puṁśi harṣa-śoka-bhayārtti-dāṁ... 6.1.51
94 liṅgaṁ vyapohet kuśalo’haṁ-ākhyam... 5.5.13d
95 yathā jala-stha abhāṣaḥ sthala-sthenā’vadriyate.
svābhāṣena tathā sūryo jala-sthena divi sthitāḥ...
evaṁ tri-yṛd ahamkāro bhūtendriya-mano-mayaṁ.
svābhāṣaṁ lakṣyito’nena sadābhāṣena satya-dṛk... 3.27.12-13
96 ajasya cakram tvajayeryamāṇam
mano-mayaṁ pañca-dāśāram ālu.
tri-nābhi vidyuv-calam aṣṭa-nemi
yad akṣaṁ āhus tam ṛtaṁ ṛpaṇde... 8.5.28
97 chando-mayaṁ yad āja-yāpita-śoḍaṣāraṁ
samāra-cakram āja ko’titaret tvad-anayaḥ... 7.9.21cd
98 evam pañca-viḍham liṅgaṁ tri-yṛt śoḍaṣa-viśeśitam.
esā cetanayā yukto jīva ityabhidhiyate 4.29.74
vide also 4.20.12, 3.31.14
take into consideration the dormant state of Jīva even at deluge when Mahat exists in Praṇīti in causal form, the concept of Jīva should include the association of Praṇīti or Pradhāna as well.\textsuperscript{99} If, on the other hand, we take the term “Jīva” to mean the soul then because of its false association with Mahat etc. Jīva is said to acquire the designation of Sūtra, Mahat etc.\textsuperscript{100}

The subtle body stores all worldly experiences of Jīva in the shape of subliminal tendencies (kāma) rightly described as “ḥṛdaya-granthi”, knots of the inner mechanism.\textsuperscript{101} As insatiable\textsuperscript{102} and ever-growing lust, kāma robs the balance of the mind which then is enslaved to the natural propensities of the organs.\textsuperscript{104} The surrender of judgment to the dictates of instinct gives rise to the sense of possession (mamātva). Round the centre of the gross physical form is knit an immediate environment, the family.\textsuperscript{105} Closely connected with “I”, the subtle body, this circle with gross body as the centre and worldly possessions as the circumference may be called “mine”. For the welfare of this “mine” Jīva resorts to all sorts of actions. As marriage is the starting point of this ‘mine’ it is said to be the knot of mind.\textsuperscript{106} Like the silk-worm encased in its own cobweb, Jīva invites its own death by means of Karman\textsuperscript{107} which inevitably provides for the encasement of Jīva in gross physical

\textsuperscript{99} bhūtendriyāntaḥ-karaṇāḥ pradhānāḥ jīva-saṁjñātāt. ātmā tathā prthag draśṭā bhagavān brahma-saṁjñātāḥ...

\textsuperscript{100} sattvaṁ rajas tama iti tri-urdu ekam ādau sūtraḥ mahān aham iti pravadantā jīvam...

\textsuperscript{101} 11.3.37ab, vide also 11.28.16

\textsuperscript{102} bhṛtya-lakṣaṇa-jiñāsur bhaktāṁ kāmeśvacakodayat.

\textsuperscript{103} bhaṇān saṁsāra-biṣeṣu ḥṛdaya-granthiṣu prabhā...

\textsuperscript{104} 7.10.3

\textsuperscript{105} na jātu kāmaḥ kāmanām upabhogena lāmyati.

\textsuperscript{106} haviṣā kṛṣṇa-vartmeva bhūya evaṁbhivardhate...

\textsuperscript{107} 9.19.14

\textsuperscript{108} yāvanto vipaśyāḥ pṛṣṭhāḥ trilokyāṁ ajitendriyam.

\textsuperscript{109} na śaknuṇantā te sarve pṛti-pūrayitum nṛpa...

\textsuperscript{110} 8.19.21

\textsuperscript{111} nośrāheḥ kṛṣṇaḥ kṛṣṇa-dhīḥ kāma-karma-hataṁ manāḥ.

\textsuperscript{112} roddhāṁ pramāṇihīṁ cākṣūr hriyāmānam itas-tataḥ...

\textsuperscript{113} 10.40.27

\textsuperscript{114} neha cātyantam-saṁśāsaḥ karyacit kenacit saha.

\textsuperscript{115} rājaṁ svanāpi dehena kimu jāyātmajādibhiḥ...

\textsuperscript{116} 10.49.20

\textsuperscript{117} puṣṭaḥ striyā māthuṇāḥ-bhāvām etāṁ tayor mitho ḥṛdaya-granthih āhuḥ.

\textsuperscript{118} ato ṝṛṣa-kṛṣṇa-sūtā-pāva-vīltair janaiṣa mohōyām aham-mameti...

\textsuperscript{119} 5.5.8 vide also 4.29.53-54

\textsuperscript{120} dehyajñaśita-saṅkāri gṛha-pāca-vṛcchanaṃ kārṇaṇām kāryate.

\textsuperscript{121} kośa-kāra ivāmaṇam karmāṇāccchādyā mahāya...

\textsuperscript{122} 6.1.52
forms. Such confinement leads to the concept of “saṃsāra”. According to the Bhāgavata, “saṃsāra” is a complex situation for the empirical soul. The Bhāgavata compares it with a lamp (dīpa) with Karman as the oil (taila), the mind as the reservoir of oil (tailādhaṇa), the body as the wick (vartti), the empirical soul as fire (agni-saṃyoga) and the flame (dīpa) as the ultimate result. The gist of the analogy is that the empirical soul feeds on Karman resting in the mind and associated with the gross body; and, such feeding on becomes actualised when Karman finds fruition in the gross body in the shape of pleasure and pain. So, revolving in the wheel of “saṃsāra” the empirical soul is subjected to the continuous process of pleasure and pain. The further analogy of “saṃsāra” with a tree, suggests that both the types of bodies, the gross and the subtle, become involved in this process of “saṃsāra” i.e., the enjoyment of happiness and sorrow.

The crux of this “saṃsāra” is the subtle body. As long as a particular gross body continues to exist, the subtle body, encased within the gross body, provides for the three states of the empirical soul—the waking, the dreaming and the dreamless sleep. In the waking state the external sense organs operate and the mind contacts external objects through them. In dream mind alone functions. But even in dreamless sleep mind (antaḥ-karaṇa) does exist in the form of its material cause (Prakṛti). The existence of mind even in dreamless sleep explains recollection of happiness on the part of the empirical soul when the latter comes back to the waking state. How could

108 atāḥ kāyam imām vidvān avidyā-kāma-karmabhiḥ. ārabdha iti naivāsmin pratibuddho’nusajjate... 4.20.5
109 snehādhiṣṭhāna-varttyagni-saṃyogo yāvad iyate. tävad dīpasya dīpatrām evam deha-kyto bhavaḥ... 12.5.7 abed
110 saṃsāra-cakra etasmin jantur ajñāna-mohitaḥ. bhṛāmyan sukhaḥ ca duṣkhaḥ ca bhuikte sarvatra sarvadā... 6.17.18
111 yasminn idāṃ pratam aśeṣam otaṁ paṭo yathā tantu-vitāna-saṃsthāḥ. ya esa saṃsāra-taruḥ puruṣaḥ karmātmakaḥ puspā-phale prasūte... dus asya bije sata-mulas tri-nilāḥ paṇca-skandhaḥ paṇca-rasa-prasūtiḥ. dasaika-lākho dvi-sūparṇa-nidas tri-valkalō dvi-phalo’rkaṁ praviṣṭaḥ... 11.12.21-22; also 10.2.27
112 jāgrat svapnaḥ suṣuṭtaṁ ca guṇato buddhi-vṛttayaḥ... 11.13.27ab
the mind reproduce the experience of happiness unless it existed in dreamless sleep to register that experience? The Bhāgavata therefore says that although in dreamless sleep “I” seems to be non-existent yet even then “I” has to be admitted to explain recollection.\textsuperscript{113} With the cessation of that particular gross body the subtle body does not cease to exist but casts away this gross body in favour of a new one to which it then transmigrates for the purpose of fruition of the residuary actions inhering in the inner mechanism. In fact, immediately before death some specific actions ripen and they determine the nature of the next birth. Such actions operate upon the material nucleus, (the subtle elements), that forms a part of the subtle body, as we have already seen. As a result, the subtle elements evolve into the five gross elements that build up the gross body. The subtle elements then not only serve as the ground of the organs and the inner mechanism which, being extra-elemental (a-dravya), do require such a material ground to subsist in, but they also provide materials for the creation of the gross body. The soul follows this subtle body in its transmigration,\textsuperscript{114} due to the fact that superimposition (sāmya) of the subtle body on the soul has obliterated the sense of its separate existence.\textsuperscript{115} Death of the particular gross body casts a veil over the past,\textsuperscript{116} and so, in spite of the continuity of the subtle body beyond that particular gross body, it is not felt as such.\textsuperscript{117} As long as this subtle

\textsuperscript{113} añđeśu peliśu taruśvaviniściteśu 
prāpo hi jīvam upadhāvati tatra tatra 
samne yad indriya-gaṇe'hami ca prasupte 
kūtastha āśayam rī te tad anu-smṛṭir naḥ... 11.3.39

\textsuperscript{114} yato yato dhāvati daiva-coditaṁ 
mano vikārātmakam āpa pañcasu. 
guṇeṣu māyā-ṛcitaṁ dehyasau 
prapadyāmanāḥ sa ha tena jāyate... 10.1.42 vide also 11.22.37

\textsuperscript{115} evaṁ guṇair bhrāmyamāṇe manasyavikalaḥ pumān. 
[yāti tat-sāmyayaṁ bhadre hvalīngo līṅgavān iva... 7.2.24

\textsuperscript{116} svapne yathā pāyati deham ādhaṁ 
manorathenaḥhinivaśita-cetanaḥ. 
dṛṣṭa-frutābhyaṁ manasa-puṇyaṁ 
prapadyate tāt kim aśi hyaṇamśṛtiṁ... 10.1.41

\textsuperscript{117} nāham-mameti bhāvo'yaṁ 'puruse vyavahihyate. 
yāvad buddhi-mano'ksārtha-guṇa-vyūho hyanādimān... 
suptīr mūrcchopadāpēṣu pravāyana-vighātataḥ. 
nehate'ham-iti jīnāmaṁ mṛtyu-pravāryayor api... 
garbhe bālye'pyapaśukalyāṇa ekāśita-vihaṁ taddā. 
līṅgaṁ na dṛṣṭye yuṇah kuhvaṁ candramaso yathā... 4.29.70-72
body continues to exist the empirical soul indulges in fresh actions in fresh gross bodies and these actions constitute new stock in the mind, providing for fresh inroad to other gross bodies, high and low. Thus the empirical life of the soul maintains unbroken continuity.

Yet, empirical life is not the inevitable destiny of the soul. As we have already seen, Jiva per se is the soul and as such is unpolluted with empirical life. Jiva per se is the witness of the three states of the mind and does not form a part of worldliness. Empirical life, as we have seen that as well, is derived from Avidyā. In fact, Māyā, as Prakṛti, creates the world of cognition, while, as Avidyā, veils the true nature of the soul and falsely ascribes this created world to the soul. This superimposition of the non-soul upon the soul, represented by “I”-consciousness is the root of empirical life. A close scrutiny of the non-soul will expose that the non-soul is as false as superimposition itself.

The Bhāgavata takes the appearance of the world in the soul as a case of “vaiśākha bhrama” i.e., illusion resulting in difference (vikalpa). The world of difference appearing against the non-dual reality of the soul, the pure consciousness, is a figment of imagination, a dream, an operation of the fire-brand (alāta-cakra), an imaginary town in the sky or

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118 yāval liṅgānvito hyātmā tāvat karma nibandhanam. tato viparyayaḥ kleśo māyā-yogonuvartate... 7.2.47
119 kṣetra-jña etā manaso vibhūtir jivasya māyā-racitayā nityāḥ. āvīr-hitāḥ kvāpi tirohitās ca saddho vicaṣṭe hyavisuddha-kartuḥ... 5.11.12
120 samsāras tamasāḥ kṛtaḥ... 11.23.59 d
121 evam anvikṣamānasya katham vai kalpiko bhramaḥ. manaso hyā tiṣṭheta vyominiśākrodaye tamaḥ... 11.24.28
122 tasmāl lokam imam rājan svapna-māyā-mana-ratham. vikṣya... 10.49.25
123 yenendriyārthān dhyāyeta mṛṣa svapnavad utthitaḥ. tan nirundhyād indriyāni vinidraḥ pratyaśpayata... 10.47.32
124 ikṣeta vibhraram idaṁ manaso vilāsāṁ driṣṭam vināśam ati-lolam alāta-cakraṁ. vijñānam ekam urudheva vibhāti māyā svapṇas tridhā guṇa-visarga-kṛto vikalpaḥ... 11.13.34
125 yo māyāyā viracitaṁ nijayātmanidam khe rūpa-bhedam iva... 4.1.55 ab
a mirage. This description applies to all external objects. In fact, all Sāṃkhya categories, subtle and gross, offer the illustration of a gigantic illusion against the non-dual reality of the Absolute. True, that the world appears before our ordinary experience but still it is illusory in the sense that it has no reality of its own. It appears to be real and is even capable of performing practical utility only because it has borrowed the reality of the soul against which it appears. Had the world had intrinsic reality it would have been as self-revealing as the soul itself. Like a piece of cloud appearing and disappearing against the sky, the world appears against the soul and is again negated against the same. The world with such transient existence can by no means be called to be real. It is therefore hopeless to think the world of three guṇas as real.

The examination of the nature of the world of difference will bear this point out. Creation, both in its cosmic aspect (i.e., as Nature), and in its individualistic aspect (i.e., as the individual body), is said to be a composition (saṃghāta). Such composition cannot be just a collocation of parts; for then, removal of that composition by catching hold

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286 etat padam taj jagad-ātmanaḥ paraṁ sak[yd vibhāvam savitur yathā prabhā 4.31.16 ab
287 aham payo jyotir athā-nilō nabhō mātrāṇi devā māna indriyāṇi ca. kartā mānā ityakhilāṁ ca-ca caram tvayyadīvitiye bhagavan ayam bhramaḥ 10.59.30
288 arthe hya vidyamāne'pi saṁśṭir na nivaśate. dhyañyato viśayān asya svapne'narthāgamo yathā 11.22.56 vide also 3.7.18
289 yathā satadānanādyabhāvāt sa-mūla iṣṭo vyāvahāra-mārgaḥ 5.10.21 cd
290 ya ātmano dṛṣya-guṇeṣu sand iti vyavaśyate sva-vasyatrekato'bhudāḥ vinānuvādani na ca tan maṇiśtam samyag yatas tyaktaṃ upādādat pumān 10.3.18 vide also 10.70.38
291 vikāraḥ khyāyamāno'pi pratyag-ātmānaṁ antaraḥ. na nirūṣya'styaṅgur api syāc cē cē-same atmavati 12.4.29
292 yasmin idam viracitam vyomnīva jaladāvaliḥ. nāneva bhāti nābhāti svapna-māyā-mano-rathāḥ 9.18.49 vide also 6.15.24, 7.15.58
293 idam karirant puruṣasya moha-jām yathā ṇṛthag bhautikam iyate gṛham. yathodakaiḥ pārthīva-tajjasair jānas. kālenā jāto vikṛto vinaśyai 7.2.42
294 dehas tu sarva-saṁghāto jagat tathur iti dvidhā. 7.7.23 ab
of a part would be impossible. But the fact is that we do remove, say, the pitcher by holding it at one corner. It cannot be said that the pitcher is not just the collocation of parts but a whole (avayavin) brought about by the parts. For then, is this whole, brought about by the parts, a completely distinct reality not connected with parts? But this possibility is negated by actual experience. Then, is it related to the parts? If it is, does it subsist in each part? If it does, knowledge of a finger would mean the knowledge of the body. If, on the other hand, the whole is said to inhere partially in a part, then another set of parts has to be recognised to justify such existence of the whole in each part. So, the whole can neither be said to be unrelated nor related to its parts. So the whole is a mere appearance without any substance. The same arguments may be pressed forward to the parts and their parts and so on until we reach the base i.e., the five subtle elements. But even the subtle elements cannot be considered as ultimate because, according to the scheme of the Bhāgavata, they are created out of the inner mechanism which, in its turn, is created by Avidyā (Māyā). Finally, Māyā is traced to the ultimate truth, the soul.

The Bhāgavata adduces supplementary arguments to establish unreality of creation: The experience of the effect does not stand without the support of its material cause. But the material cause can be understood without any reference to its effect. This means that the effect has no existence apart

134 kṣityādīnāṁ ihārthānāṁ chāyā na katamā'pi hi.  
na saṁghāto vikāro'pi na prathān nānvito mṛṣā.  
dhātavo'vayavatūc ca tan-mātrāvayavair vinā.  
na syur hystatyavayavinyasann avayavo'ntatah... 7.15.59-60

135 yadā kṣitāveva caraścarasya  
vidāma niśthāṁ prabhavaṇ ca nityam.  
tan nāmatō'nyad vyavahāra-mūlaṁ  
nirūpyatāṁ sat kriyayānumeyam...  
evam niruktam kṣiti-sabda-vyttam  
a-sannidhānāṁ paramāṇavo ye.  
avidyayā manai kalpitās te  
yeśāṁ samūhena kṛto visēṣaḥ...  
evam kṛtena sthūlam āpar ṃyad yat  
asac ca saj jivam aśvam anyat.  
dravya-svabhāvasya-kāla-karma  
nāmā'jayāvehi kṛtaṁ dūtīyaṁ...  
jñānāṁ viśuddhāṁ paramārtham ekam... 5.12.8-11a,  
vide also 5.18.32-33
from its material cause. Duality, presented to the knowledge in terms of substance and its qualities, is false like the duality presented in the same way in dream. Truth is one and so duality is bound to be false, just as the duality of the sun when reflected in water is false. So, just as gold assumes different names and forms though it remains always the same substance, so the soul continues to be one and the same in spite of diversity of names and forms.

It may be argued that the world originating from the soul, which is real, is bound to be real because there should be homogeneity between the cause and the effect. It may be answered that there is no homogeneity between the stick (daṇḍa) and the pot (ghaṭa), if by ‘homogeneity’ is meant the sharing of the same nature. If such homogeneity is confined to the material cause and its effect, yet this conclusion is falsified in the case of a snake originating from a piece of rope and presenting itself in the consciousness of an erring person. If it be said that a piece of rope does not by itself produce the snake but as attended with the ignorance on the part of the erring person, then the same logic may be applied to show that the soul attended with Māyā produces the world. The world did not exist at the outset and it will not do so also at deluge. It appears only at the intermediate stage. So, like gold enduring through its perishing forms, the soul is the only reality while the world is a passing show.

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287 satyaṁ hyāvayavaḥ praktaḥ sarvāvayavināṁ iha. vinārthena pratīyeraṁ pātasyevāṅga tantavaḥ... 12.4.27
288 yat sāmānya-viśeśābhyāṁ upalabhyaṁ sa bhramaḥ. anyonyāpūrṣrayat sarvaṁ ādyantarav a-vastu yat... 12.4.28
289 na hi satyasya nānātvaṁ avidvān yādī manyate. nānātvaṁ chidrayor yadavi jyoṭiṣor vā tayor iva... 12.4.30
290 yathā hiranyam bahudhā samiyate nṛbhik kriyābhīr vyavahāra-vartmaśu evam vacobhir bhagavān adhokṣajo vyākhyāyate laukika-vaidikair janaih... 12.4.31
291 saṁt at idam utthitam sad iti cen nanu tarka-hataṁ vyabhicarīt kau ca kva ca mṛṣā na tathobhaya-yuk. vyavahārye vikalpa iṣitoṃdha-paramparayā bhramayāti bhārati ta uruçittibhir uktha-jaḍān... 10.87.36
292 na yad idam agra āsa na bhaviṣyaḥ ato nidhanād anumitaṁ antaraṁ tuvai vibhāti mṛṣaikarase. ata upaṁiyate draiviṇa-jāti-vikalpa-pathair viūatha-manu-vīlāsam rtam ityavayantyabdhāḥ... 10.87.37
The arguments mentioned above reduce the world to mere names and forms vouchsafed by uncritical tradition, a creation of mind (inner mechanism). This view of the world consisting in names and forms as the creation of the inner mechanism is fundamentally based on the Upaniṣadic thought and the Bhāgavata seems to have imbued it with a new significance. The Chāndogya-Upaniṣad\(^{143}\) describes the intention of the supreme Deity (the soul) at the beginning of creation as follows:—"anena jīvena ātmanā'nupraviśya nāma-rūpe vyākaravāni—I shall manifest the names and forms through this Jīva who partakes of my nature (svarūpa)". The original Jīva, as the Rg-Veda tells us,\(^{144}\) is Hiraṇya-garbhā and, according to the scheme of the Bhāgavata, Hiraṇya-garbhā embodies Mahat, the first manifest principle to evolve from Prakṛti, the unmanifest. All forms, from Ahaṃkāra down to the fourteen planes of existence, are manifested from Mahat. In so far as Hiraṇya-garbhā is the conscious principle behind Mahat, apparently all forms are his creations. When therefore creation is described as the figment of imagination the statement means, in the light of the Bhāgavata, that creation emerged from Mahat, the mind of Hiraṇya-garbhā. In this context it may be mentioned that Hiraṇya-garbhā, in the first of the kalpas, assumed the name of "Śabda-Brahman" and the kalpa is called "Brāhma-kalpa" after the name of Brahma.\(^{145}\) The Bhāgavata recognises that this "Śabda-Brahman" and its prototype, "Para-Brahman" are but the two forms of the soul, Śabda-Brahman being the reflection of Para-Brahman on Mahat.\(^{146}\) The origin of sound that constitutes name, the other aspect of the world, is also closely connected with "Śabda-Brahman".

The Bhāgavata expounds the doctrine of the origin of sounds in the following way:—Brahman, with its mysterious power of diversity, created the first principle. As a form of matter, it is called Mahat and as the vital breath, it is called Mukhya Prāṇa or simply Prāṇa. The nucleus of sound called

\(^{143}\) Ch. U 6.3.2
\(^{144}\) RV 10.121.1
\(^{145}\) pūrvasyādau parārdhasya brāhmaḥ nāma mahān abhūt. kalpo yatārthahavāh brahmā śabda-brahmāt yathā śiddh. . . 3.11.35
\(^{146}\) ahaṁ vai sarva-bhūtāni bhūtātmā bhūta-bhāvanāḥ. śabda-brahma param brahma mamobhe sāvati tanā. . . 6.16.51
"ghoṣa" was constituted by Prāṇa. From "ghoṣa" emerged "nāda", from that "bindu", from that "om", the trinity of three sounds, from that the whole series of vowels and consonants and from that language and different Vedic metres. Then originated the Vedas and then later literature. The mechanisms involved in the different stages through which the primordial sound (ghoṣa) had to pass before it finally found expression as audible sound are: (1) Prāṇa, (2) Manas and (3) Vāg-in-
driya (prāṇendriya-manomaya). In Prāṇa, sound stays in the shape of consciousness of the object; in Manas it crystallizes into a concept or idea which, through the organ of speech, is finally communicated in the shape of audible sound. The same doctrine may be briefly stated as follows:—God gave wisdom to Brahmā and it took the shape of "om". Out of "om" emerged the storehouse of wisdom, the four Vedas. Helped by this wisdom Brahmā created the fourteen planes of existence. As the attainment of wisdom involved long long time Brahmā now entered another kalpa called "Pādma" because he now found himself as Hiraṇya-garbhā seated on the golden lotus.

The Bhāgavata here records the illustrious doctrine of

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147 labda-brahma su-dur-bodham prāṇendriya-manomayam.
    ananta-pāram gambhiram dur-eigahyam samudravat...
    māyopabṛṅhitam bhūmnā brahmaṇā nāma-saktinā,
    bhūteṣu ghoṣa-rūpēṇa viesūrṇevā lakyate...
    yathorṇa-nābhīr ṛddhayād uṇḍām ud-vamate mukhāt.
    ākāśa ghoṣavān prāṇo manasā śparśa-rūpiṇā
dhano-mayaṁ maṁśu-sahasras-padaviṁ prabhuḥ.
    omkārād uṣṭita-sparśa-svaramāntah-ḥuṣṭam...
    visvra-bhāṣā-vitatām Chandobhīti catur-uttaraiḥ.
    ananta-pāraṁ bhūtāṁ stītrākṣiptaṁ svayam...
gatastraṇīg anuṣṭup ca bhūte pāṅktrīr eva ca.
    trisūb jagatyaśca chando hyatyaśya jadag víraṁ...
    11.21.36-41
    vācaṁ varṇa-samānmāyā tam omkāre svare νyastet
    omkārāṃ bindau nāde tamaḥ tu prāpane mahatamam...
    7.15.53;
    vide also 11.12.17-18

148 tene brahma hṛdā ya ādi-kavaye 1.1.1 b

149 labda-brahmatmanas tasya vyaktāvyaktatmanah paraṁ.
    brahmaśabdiḥ hatāt nāṁ-lakṣyupabrṃhitaḥ...
    tato-parām upādāya sa sargaṁ mano dadhe...
    3.12.47, 48 ab.
    Śrīdhara comments:—vyaktā=vaikhiṃ; avyaktā=prasavaḥ; tad-
    ātmanas = tasya brahmaṇaḥ; paraḥ = paramesvaraḥ abhāhī.
    He further says: tato-parām=a-nisiddha-kāmāsaktāṁ tanum; labda-
    brahma-tanu tu sadāsti eva.

150 tasyavānante ca kalpoḥhūd yaṁ pādam abhicaksate.
    yad dharer nābhī-śarasa āsil loka-saro-ruham...
    3.11.36
fourfold speech, propounded by the *Rg-Veda* and confirmed by the *Atharva-Veda*, the *Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa*, the *Taittiriya-Brāhmaṇa* and so on and sometimes associated with a similar conception first propounded by the *Rg-Veda*. Both the passages have been quoted by the *Nirukta* and the *Mahā-bhāṣya*. The doctrine is later on associated with mysticism and the *Bhāgavata* calls it to be an obscure doctrine. *Pāṇiniya-Śikṣā* presents it in a sensible form: Before making a speech, the speaker first visions an experience; then he ponders over it so that it crystallizes into clear concepts; then he engages his organ of speech to give utterance to his ideas or concepts. As a result, we hear sound from the speaker.

The philosophical implication of this doctrine is that sound and sense are the two aspects of the same reality as we can see from the first principle which, as sense, is *Mahat*; and, as sound, is *Prāṇa*. And, as creation is the evolution of *Mahat*, the same conclusion holds true in every detail of creation. If we substitute the words "names and forms" for sound and sense we go back to the position of the *Chāndogya-Upaniṣad* that creation consists in names and forms. If we transcend such tangible creation we get to the soul which, then, as distinguished from creation, is nameless, intangible and formless.

Another question should engage our attention in this context. The *Bhāgavata* describes that the original sound (ghoṣa) which *Prāṇa* represents, is from *Ākāśa*. The *Bhāgavata* recognises elsewhere the origin of *Mahat* from *Ākāśa*. This seems to be in direct conflict with the view hitherto expressed...

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151 *catvāri vāk parimitā padāni* etc. RV 1.164.45
152 AV 9.10.27; SB 4.1.3.17; TB 2.8.8.5
153 *catvāri śrīgā trayo asya pādāḥ* etc. RV 4.58.3
154 *Nirukta* 13.9; ibid 13.7
155 *Mahā-bhāṣya—Paspaśā*
156 *ātmā buddhyā sametārthān mano yunkte vivakṣayā*
157 *manah kāyāṇim āhanti sa prerayati mārutam.*
158 *mārutas tūrāi caran mandrāṁ janayati svaram.*
159 *sodirno mārdhnyabhihato vaktraṁ āpādyā mārūtaḥ.*
160 *varṇān janayate........
161 *Pāṇiniya Śikṣā* verses 6, 7 and 9.
162 *a-labdham a-sparśam a-rūpam* etc. KatU 1.3.15
163 *ākāśād ghoṣavān prāṇaḥ* 11.21.38 c
164 *antaḥ-sarīra ākāśād puruṣasya vicēśtataḥ.*
165 *ojaḥ saho balaṁ jajnē tataḥ prāṇo mahāṁ asuḥ....* 2.10.15
that Ākāśa, even as a subtle element, is derived from Ahamkāra which, in its turn, originates from Mahat. How to reconcile these two views? Śrīdhara has anticipated this apparent inconsistency and suggests the following solution: The five elements in their loose state create the subtle categories: but while they undergo the process of quintuplication (pañcikaraṇa) they create the gross universe. Thus one can reconcile the two theories of creation, one propounded by the Vedānta School and the other by the Śaṅkhya School.\textsuperscript{160} The theory of Śrīdhara is interesting and deserves careful consideration.

The world being thus reduced to mere appearance of names and forms, encasement of the soul in subtle and gross bodies is no exception to it. A real association implies the reality of both the associates. But the world being unreal how can there be real association between the soul and the world, the real and the unreal?\textsuperscript{161} And as empirically of the soul is based upon such association between the soul and the non-soul, birth is like a dream and transmigration is like assuming many bodies in dream.\textsuperscript{162} The threefold experiences of the threefold states, the waking, the dream and the dreamless sleep, are thus imaginary and the transcendental nature of the soul is unpolluted by them.\textsuperscript{163} The experience of the physical attributes is comparable to the experience in dream. Body itself being illusory the as-

\textsuperscript{160} On 11.24.7 Śrīdhara comments:—yadyāpi “tasmād vā etasmād ātmanā ākāśaḥ sambhūtaḥ” ityādi-rūteś, “annamayaṁ hi saumya manaḥ” ityādi-rūteś ca, prathamaṁ bhūtāṁ jāyante, tebhyaḥ ca a-pañci-kyotiḥ bhranādi-kramaṇaḥ sāmāṣṭyātmakaṁ līgu-kavīram, pañcikarteṣaḥ ca brahmāṇāṁ, tasmin vairājas tad-anādī-yāmi līla-vigrahaṁ kṣīrādhi-lāyī śrī-nārāyaṇaṁ, ten-nābhi-padme ca vairājaṁ bhoga-vigrahaṁ catur-ānanaṁ, tato yathāvasāram anyeṣaṁ jīvānam āvibhāca iti prakriyā, tathā’pi cittābhivyakti-pāruṇaka’hām-kāraṁ, tato bhūtendriyādī-ūtyakahāraṁ, iteyataḥ maheśādi-krameṇa ṛṣijīryate.

\textsuperscript{161} nātmano’nyena sam-yogā vā-yogāḥ ca’stataḥ sati. tad-dhetutvāt tat-prasiddheḥ dṛga-rūpābhyaṁ yathā ravaḥ... 10.54.46

\textsuperscript{162} yathā layāna ātmānaṁ vijayān phalām eva ca. anubhunkte’pyasatyarthe tathā’phontyabadho bhavam... 10.54.48

\textsuperscript{163} buddher jāgaraṇam svapnaḥ suṣūṣṭi iti vṛttayaḥ. 7.7.25ab ebhis tri-varnaṁ paryastair buddhi-bhedāh kriyādbhavaḥ. iṣvarāpram ātmano budhyed gandharvas vāyum ivānavayā... 7.7.26
cription of its attributes is equally so. The duties of the castes and stages of life, mundane and celestial fruits of action, thus pale into mere appearance having no bearing upon the soul. In fact, the trinity of the enjoyer, the enjoyment and the enjoyable is unreal as in dream. Just as the cloud originating from and revealed by the sun serves as a veil to the eyes which are a part of the sun, similarly "I" is born of and is revealed by Brahman and yet it shuts the vision of Brahman from the empirical soul which is but a manifestation of Brahman. As the sun appears in all its glory when the cloud shifts away so Brahman is revealed to the empirical soul with the removal of the veil of Māyā. But the veil being unreal there was no real bondage; and, as there was no real bondage so there is no question of liberation. Bondage and liberation are therefore a couple of dreams. We are therefore left with the soul with its eternal splendour that shines over the shadows of all doubts.

164 svāpne yathā śirāl-chedān pañcatvādyatmanāḥ svayam. yasmāt paśyati dehasya tata ātmā hyajo'maraḥ.. 12.5.4
165 sthaulyam kāśiyam vyādhaya ād haya ca kṣut-tṛṇ-bhayam kalir icchā jarā ca. nidrā ratir manyor aham madaḥ śuco dehena jātaya hi me na santi.. 5.10.10
166 a-sattvād ātmano'nyesām bhāvānām tat-kṛtā bhidā. gatayo hetavoḥ cāsya mṛṣā svāpna-dṛśo yathā.. 11.13.31
167 asāvihāneka-guṇa'guṇo'dhvarāḥ ṭhāṇa-viḍhaya-aṇga-guṇa-kriyokti-bhiḥ. sampadyate'bhāsaya-līṅga-nāmabhir viśuddha-vijnāna-ghanāḥ svārūpataḥ.. 4.21.34
168 yathā ghano'roka-prabhavo'roka-darśito hyarkāmī-bhūtasya ca ca kāyaḥ tamaḥ. evam tva hām brāhma-guṇas tad-ikṣoto brahmāṁśaśayātmanā ātma-bandhanaḥ.. 12.4.32
169 ghano yadd'roka-prabhavo vidīryate ca kāṣṭha-svārūpam raviṁ iksate tādā. yadda hyakamkāra upādhir ātmano jijnāsayā nalyati tarhyanusmaret.. 12.4.33
CONCLUSION

So, we have reached the end of the ontological enquiry. In response to the question—"What is the individual soul?"—the Bhāgavata has transcended the question itself to find, paradoxically speaking, a suitable answer in the conception of the Ultimate, the non-dual Reality consisting in pure being, pure knowledge and pure bliss. The perspective presented by the Bhāgavata now merits reassertion and evaluation.

The Bhāgavata has expounded the philosophy of personalism. It commences the ontological enquiry with the individual, the most practical approach from the known to the unknown. Confined to a particular place and time, the individual is a mere point in the vast community of selves, in which he is an indispensable though insignificant link. Spatio-temporal existence in the community of selves, often described as "society", has imposed on the individual unending series of interactions between his own self and other selves in whose society he is placed. These interactions produce in him reactions, adverse or favourable. The ordinary life of the individual is bound up in the chain of reactions described as happiness or sorrow. To ensure a better order of existence or rather peaceful co-existence, the society which means a totality of individuals has tried, ever since the dawn of what is called civilization, to devise certain norms of conduct. These norms, known as values, have changed from time to time to accommodate the needs of man who as dynamic reality has always chosen "pastures anew". So, the norms are not absolute—unchangeable for all times. And, despite these norms which as models of human conduct have lent colour to human history, the instinctive nature of man has always exposed its "teeth and claws behind the sleek exterior" varnished by civilization. The history of man is thus the unending story of stress and strain. Human values that profess to be panacea to all sorts of wrongs are themselves soiled by the personal images of individuals that dabble in them. Accordingly, man worships "the false cult of despiritualized co-operation that cannot for a moment hide con-
flict between various highly organised economic and political interests”.

Challenge of this practical situation evokes the philosophy of personalism. Can there be a spatio-temporal existence in which the individual can discover the thread of unity, in which the fragmentariness and obstinate diversity of ordinary life is transformed into eternal joy and beauty? Such existence need not be negation or exclusion of life but a transcendence that rises above yet includes the given present. In the ordinary life the individual is pledged to activity. To be is to become. In his voluntary effort the individual is governed by knowledge, and pleasure is his goal. One might therefore say that sense of pleasure motivates knowledge which in its turn gives direction to the will to act. And will to act dislodges the individual from his sedentary state of passivity—his bare existence—to the vortex of action. Becoming therefore presupposes three states in hierarchical order: being, knowledge and bliss. Can the individual find his highest fulfilment, by infinite expansion of his basic nature, in a state of existence in which his becoming finds harmony with his joyful and conscious being? In other words, can the turmoil of present existence be transformed into an instrument of the individual, through which the divine ecstasy of his shining being can find harmonious expression?

The first response to this craving for perfection is embodied in the Puruṣa-Sūkta of the Rg-Veda; and, the Bhāgavata has incorporated it in a form chastened by superb refinement through centuries. The Bhāgavata has conceived as the zenith of its ontological exploration the state of absolute non-duality beyond subject-object dichotomy which the dualistic texture of intellect always presupposes. This is the synoptic vision at its climax. Its first condescension to human apprehension is joy (Bhagavat), pure and simple, the spontaneous exuberance of its perfection. From inexhaustible joy, complete in all respects and yet perpetually renewing itself in all possible channels, springs life divine (Paramātman). It is the first expression of creativity as it is the eternal light that guides creativity in its progressive journey. The spatio-temporal existence of the individual finds its replica in the realm of joyous light (Goloka) which, shorn of its pragmatic limitations (kunṭhā), allows the
freeplay of diversity without the efforts and strains that tend to turn all joy and knowledge on the earth into abject dejection and despair.

The world of plurality, the arena of man’s incessant struggle, emerges as a finite expression of the infinite (ananta). Life eternal, before it bursts into finitude, has a lull like that of wind before tempest. This is being (sattā), the presupposition of becoming. It is extension pure and simple and so is conceived as massive (bṛhat), larger than the largest. Out of this emerges the first mass (mahat) representing the divine spirit (yakṣa) in material vesture. The cosmic mind (hiranya-garbha), the divine spirit in material garb, and taken as a spark of divine life (Paramātman) exhibits activity (kriyā-śakti) and knowledge (jñāna-śakti) like divine life itself. That makes possible the emergence of the subtle and gross worlds. The sense organs, conative and cognitive, including mind, their organiser, have all sprung from the cosmic mind; and, five subtle elements, the nucleus of the physical universe, owe their existence to the same. The subtle elements give rise to gross elements that provide the clay for the structure of the physical universe consisting of the fourteen planes as they are described. But the emergence of life on the planes, consequent upon their

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1. The Viṣṇu-Purāṇa defines “Brahman”, the pure being, as follows:—bṛhatvād bṛhānañatvāc ca tad brahma iti gīyate 3.3.22
   In the Vedas (RV 8.56.5; AV 8.8.7) the term “bṛhat” means “large” and the Brāhmaṇa literature maintains that meaning (e.g., TB 2.4.3.9). Śrīdhara on 2.20.5 interprets “bṛhat” as “Brahman”.

2. The Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad describes the first born (Hiranya-garbha) as follows:—mahād yakṣaṁ prathama-jaṁ veda satyaṁ brahmaṁ. 5.4.

3. The Praśna-Upaniṣad describes “prāṇa” (life) to have been directly from Ātman: ātmana eṣa prāṇo jāyate 3.3.

4. The Kaṭha recognises “prāṇa” to be the sustaining principle of creation:—yad idam kiṁ ca jagat sarvam prāṇe ejati niḥṣṛtam 6.2. The Munḍaka also takes everything the expression of “prāṇa”:—prāṇo hyeṣa sa sarva-bhūtaḥ. ātma-krīḍa ātma-ratiḥ 3.1.4.

5. The Munḍaka says:—etasmād jāyate prāṇaḥ maṇaḥ sarvendriyāni ca. khamī vāyur jyotir āpah Ṛṣhivī vīvṛṣa daḥ. 2.2.3

6. The Praśna describes the elements to be the expression of “prāṇa”:—viśnuṁ tamā saha vedaṁ ca sarvaṁ. prāṇa-bhūtāni sampratīṣṭhānī yatra. 4.11
differentiation from a lump, is due to the sun,\(^7\) the physical representative of the cosmic mind which itself is the material expression of life divine.

So, the philosophy of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavata is the philosophy of life, in perfect tune with the Upaniṣads. Divine ecstasy has sought to realize its inherent sweetness by the unfoldment of eternal life in thought and action. Diversity, directly traced to matter, is the expression of spirit and so it is perpetually integrated to the indissoluble unity that the Absolute stands for. Bhagavān Śrī-Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Person, eternal bliss, is thus enbalmed in inevitable embrace with the gopīs, the details of diversity. It is the perfect order of peace, light and bliss, transcending all conflicts and disappointments. The Śrīmad-Bhāgavata has sung the eternal music of the sphere, the beauty of love that shines in its pristine glory through the cloud of everyday existence. Herein the individual can find the clue to his ontological enquiry, the key to unlock the gates of his promised land, the restoration of his lost paradise.

\(^{7}\) VS compares Brahman with the sun: brahma sūrya-samam jyotih 23.48. At another place it traces the sun to Brahman: veda sūryasya brhato jānitram 23.60. The Praśna establishes the link among the divine life (Paramātman), life reflected in matter (Hiranya-garbha) and the sun:—indras tvam praṇa tejasā rudro'si purvakṣitā. tvam antarikṣe carasi sūryas. tvam jyotisām patih. 2.9
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ADDITIONS

Page ii, line 8

Patanjali (200 B.C.) makes the following comments in his Pasphaṣ: mahān hi sabdasya prayoga-viṣayak—catvāro vedāḥ sāṅgāḥ ... itihāsaḥ purāṇam ... (edn. Chatterjee, p. 80). As early as 200 B.C., therefore, the Itihāsa and the Purāṇa found recognition as distinct types of composition.

Page xiii, line 8

By 500 A.D. the Hūnas were on the Indian soil. They were converted to Vaiṣṇavism by 700 A.D.

Page 5, line 5

This interpretation of “tri-pād” Viṣṇu (i.e., of Viṣṇu with three strides) reflects Skandasāmin’s exposition of Yāska 12.19 on the RV 1.22.17:—tredhā nidādhe padam—prātar udaya-girau, madhyandine madhye dyu-lokasya, sāyāhne’sṭa-girau.

Page 205, line 1

The duration of Brahmā’s penance may be calculated in terms of his life as follows:—

four yugas × 1000 = Brahmā’s day (i.e., 12 hours) (12.4.2)

and four yugas = 12000 divine years (vide page 251)

\[ \therefore 12000 \times 1000 \text{ d.y.} = \text{Brahmā’s 12 hours} \]

\[ \therefore 1000 \text{ d.y.} = \frac{12}{12000} \text{ hours} = \frac{12 	imes 60 	imes 60}{12000} \text{ seconds} = 3.6 \text{ seconds.} \]

So, Brahmā spent only 3.6 seconds of his longevity (dvi-parā’rdha) over penance!

Page 298, line 6

The earth and the sky appear oval from an open space. This seems to have stimulated the idea of differentiation of the three worlds—the earth, the air and the heaven—from the cosmic egg.
## CORRECTIONS

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