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# Introduction

## Bhakti Is the Essence of All Scriptures

ŚRĪ JĪVA GOŚVĀMĪ wrote *Bhāgavata Sandarbha*, a set of six books called *Tattva*, *Bhagavat*, *Paramātmā*, *Kṛṣṇa*, *Bhakti*, and *Prīti Sandarbhas*, as a comprehensive analysis of *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. According to him, *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* delineates three topics, namely, *sambandha*, *abhidheya*, and *prayojana*. *Sambandha* refers to the ontological relation of the *jīva* as well as of primordial nature (*prakṛti*) with the Absolute Reality (*para-tattva*), *abhidheya* means the recommended method to actualize this relation, and *prayojana* means the end state to be attained through perfection of the method. The first four books in Śrī Jīva’s anthology delineate *sambandha*, while the fifth and the sixth describe *abhidheya* and *prayojana*, respectively.

The concept of *sambandha*, or “relation,” naturally includes *sambandhī*, “the intended object of such a relation,” with whom the individual self is intrinsically related as the part to the whole. The *sambandhī* is identified as Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the highest manifestation of Absolute Reality. The *abhidheya* is devotional service, *bhakti*, and the *prayojana* is love for Kṛṣṇa, *prīti*. These three topics are introduced in *Tattva Sandarbha* and form the themes of the remaining five *Sandarbhās*. *Bhagavat Sandarbha* delineates the nature of Bhagavān in general, who is the ultimate manifestation of Reality as the supreme transcendence. *Paramātmā Sandarbha* explains the relation between the individual living being and Paramātmā, as well as between Paramātmā and the cosmos. Paramātmā is the same Reality in His feature of supreme immanence. *Kṛṣṇa Sandarbha*

establishes Śrī Kṛṣṇa as the original complete form of Bhagavān and as the source of all other *avatāras*. With this analysis, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī completes the description of *sambandha-tattva*.

The present *Sandarbha*, which is the fifth volume in the anthology, deals with *abhidheya*, the prescribed method to actualize our relation with Bhagavān. Based upon the study of *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, this method is ascertained as *bhakti* to Kṛṣṇa. The author systematically demonstrates that although there are descriptions of *karma*, *yoga*, and *jñāna* in *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, it is ultimately *bhakti* alone that is identified as the true and complete method. *Bhakti* has never been established as the *abhidheya* so systematically and emphatically as in this book. Earlier, *bhakti* was generally considered only as one among a set of spiritual processes that include *karma-yoga*, *jñāna-yoga*, and *aṣṭāṅga-yoga*. Moreover, it was usually taken as a precursor to *jñāna*, which ultimately leads to liberation. Rarely was it recognized as an independent process by itself. In contrast to this, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī asserts that *bhakti* is the only *abhidheya* worth following and that all other processes are futile without it, like the thrashing of empty husks to obtain rice. Other practices have lasting significance only if they are graced by *bhakti*.

In the beginning of *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, sage Śaunaka posed six questions to his teacher, Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī. One of the questions was about the quintessence of the practices described in the Vedic scriptures, the application of which would bring complete peace and fulfillment of the self (*ātmā suprasīdati*, *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* 1.1.11). In response to this, Śrī Sūta affirmed that only unmotivated, unobstructed *bhakti* to Kṛṣṇa can result in complete peace and spiritual fulfillment. Thus, in the very beginning of *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, its essential subject matter is specified as pure *bhakti* to Kṛṣṇa. The remainder of the book expands on the theme of *bhakti*. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī composed *Bhakti Sandarbha* to make this fact explicit.

*Bhakti Sandarbha* is thus an elaborate analysis of *bhakti* as it has been presented in *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. The *bhakti* theology merits study in its three aspects, namely, the object of devotion (Bhagavān), His relation with the individual self, who is the subject or the

performer of devotion, and the intrinsic nature of devotion itself. These three are interrelated and interdependent. Most Vaiṣṇava teachers have focused on the delineation of the first two theoretical aspects, although it is the third aspect that is the center of their teachings regarding practice. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī gives an introduction to these three topics in *Tattva Sandarbha* and then elaborates upon them in the next five *Sandarbhas*. The first topic is covered in *Bhagavat* and *Kṛṣṇa Sandarbhas*, the second topic, in *Paramātma Sandarbha*, and the third, in *Bhakti* and *Pṛīti Sandarbhas*. In *Bhakti Sandarbha*, he discusses the practical aspect of *bhakti*, focusing primarily on *bhakti* as a method and thus specifying its nature and practice. In *Pṛīti Sandarbha*, he elaborates on the emotive aspect of *bhakti* and shows how it is relished as *rasa* by qualified devotees.

## Bhakti As the Remedy to Human Suffering

Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī begins *Bhakti Sandarbha* by pinpointing the root cause of the living being's suffering in this world. He says that although by nature a *jīva* is conscious and thus superior to matter, yet it is marred by ignorance in regard to the Absolute Reality. This ignorance has no beginning, and thus it is not initiated by any action or intent either of the *jīva* or Bhagavān. It is the basis of the turning of regard away from Bhagavān and *bhakti*, technically known as the state of *bhagavad-vaimukhya*. This non-recognition of one's authentic identity leads to misidentification with the body as the self. This further results in attachment to objects that are pleasing to the mind and senses and aversion to objects that are displeasing. These two — attachment (*rāga*) and aversion (*dveṣa*) — are the fundamental affects of the human mind, and they give rise to further emotions, such as anger, fear, greed, grief, and depression. The end result of all these is suffering and bondage to material life.

Since the root cause of suffering is ignorance of Bhagavān, naturally the solution is awareness of Him. This awareness ensues from *bhakti*, which begins by turning one's regard toward Bhagavān (*bhagavad-sāmmukhya*). In this manner, *bhakti* eradicates the

root cause of all suffering. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī shows that the import of all scriptures is in *bhakti*. This is certainly true for *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, which was composed specifically for this purpose. He undertakes a lengthy analysis to show that the topic of discussion between all the primary teachers and students in *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* is *bhakti*.

## Bhakti As the Complete Method

A perfect or complete method should be suitable for all and not limited only to a certain class of people. It should not depend on any other process and should bring about immediate experience of the Complete Reality, which is Bhagavān. Paramātmā and Brahman, which are the intended goals of *yoga* and *jñāna*, respectively, are but partial manifestations of Bhagavān. For a process to be complete, it must also be perpetual and not come to an end after granting its result. Moreover, it must be within the scope of one's life experience and not something that one realizes only in the hereafter. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī shows that it is *bhakti* alone that meets all these criteria.

It should be noted that although Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī establishes *bhakti* as the method, or *sādhana*, it is not *sādhana* in the traditional sense. Generally, *sādhana* is understood as the cause for its outcome, known as *sādhya*, just as milk is the cause for yogurt. *Bhakti* is not *sādhana* in this sense, because the outcome of *bhakti* is also *bhakti* and not anything else. Moreover, *bhakti* as a method is not a material undertaking that leads to a transphenomenal result. Rather, *bhakti* is transphenomenal even in its practice stage. It descends or is transmitted to a qualified practitioner by the grace of an already accomplished devotee. Consequently, *bhakti* is termed as a method (*sādhana*) specifically in the sense of its own self-manifestation in a practicing devotee.

*Bhakti* as a method is not sectarian. Since it involves the simple turning of regard toward the Absolute, it is not dependent on birth, gender, or age. In *Bhagavat* and *Paramātmā Sandarbhas*, it is described that the one Absolute Reality manifests as Brahman



to the *jñānis*, Paramātmā to the *yogīs*, and Bhagavān to the *bhaktas*. Since Bhagavān is the most complete manifestation of Reality and the source of Brahman as well as Paramātmā, the awareness of a *bhakta* is superior to that of a *jñānī* or a *yogī*, meaning that it includes and transcends the latter two.

Before *Bhakti Sandarbha* was written, *karma* and *jñāna* were the prevalent paths. Most people participated in the *varṇāśrama* system, and heaven (*svarga*) was the most cherished goal. Some rare individuals took to the path of renunciation, *jñāna*, which aims at realizing one's identity with Brahman. For such *jñānis*, *bhakti* was a mere aid to Brahman realization. Even great Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas*, such as Śrī Rāmānuja and Śrī Madhva, propagated *bhakti* as a means for *mukti* in the form of entry into Vaikuṅṭha. On the authority of scriptures, however, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī conclusively established *bhakti* as the means as well as the end, superior even to the different types of *mukti*. Knowing well that *bhakti* was not generally accepted as an independent path in contemporary society, he devoted a major part of this book to this effect.

Above all, *bhakti* is the intrinsic potency of Bhagavān and thus proceeds directly from Him. Through the medium of a perfected devotee, the same potency is manifested in the heart of a qualified practicing devotee. Thus, *bhakti* is a direct flow of the intrinsic potency and is also the sole method to realize the highest manifestation of Reality, Bhagavān. For these reasons, it is the most complete *abhidheya*.

## The Nature of Bhakti

After establishing *bhakti* as the complete method, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī discusses the nature of *bhakti*. *Bhakti*, being the intrinsic potency of Bhagavān, has the power to purify even by slight contact. It removes all inauspiciousness, obstacles, and fear and destroys reactions to all past and present *karma*. It bestows fearlessness and uproots ignorance, which is the cause of suffering and bondage. *Bhakti* entails both knowledge as well as action. Since *bhakti* is

beyond the *guṇas* of nature, the knowledge and actions that ensue from *bhakti* are also nonmaterial. *Bhakti* is self-manifest, conscious, and blissful in nature, and awards love for Bhagavān. It is not dormant within a *jīva* but descends by the grace of a pure devotee. Even a semblance of *bhakti* can award *mukti*. The only thing that can thwart *bhakti* are offenses. For this reason, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī elaborates upon them and their effects on a practitioner.

One of the fundamental characteristics of *bhakti* is that it is causeless. Being transphenomenal in nature, it cannot be attained by any material action. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī shows that *bhakti* is attainable only by the association of a devotee. Even the grace of Bhagavān is secondary to the will of His devotee. Out of love for His devotee, Bhagavān remains under the control of His devotee. Moreover, He is untouched by any material misery and is ever absorbed in beatific pastimes with His devotees. Being thus transcendently situated, He is entirely beyond the range of empathy with the material suffering of the *jīvas*. Śrī Jīva draws this conclusion by pointing out that empathy with another's suffering is a transformation of the heart that occurs only when there is contact with that person's suffering, which is simply not the case for Bhagavān, as much as darkness is absent in the effulgence of the sun. A devotee who has attained perfection on the path of *bhakti*, however, can empathize with the conditioned living beings, because such a devotee still retains the memory of material suffering, although he himself is situated beyond it. Thus, *bhakti* is transmitted only by Bhagavān's devotees existing in the material world, who do so out of compassion for the plight of suffering humanity. By this reasoning, the author stresses the importance of association with devotees, *sat-saṅga*.

## Levels of Bhakti

Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī states that highly realized or perfected beings (*mahāntas*) among the *sat* are of two types: those who have realized Brahman and those who have attained *prema* for Bhagavān. The latter category has three further divisions: those who have attained

spiritual bodies as associates of Bhagavān, those who are altogether free of material desires, and those who still retain subconscious seeds of desire albeit in an inactive state. The intensity of a devotee's love determines his or her vision. For the benefit of neophytes, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī describes the characteristics of various levels of devotees and makes three divisions of them on the basis of their intensity of love for Bhagavān.

Śrī Jīva further explains that the love of a devotee can take the mood of a servant, a friend, a parent, or an amorous lover, each of these being successively superior in terms of the completion and intensity of their love. Association with a specific devotee nurtures a corresponding devotional faith, mood, and attraction for a particular form of Bhagavān. This defies the misconception that *bhakti* is inherent in the *jīva*. Śrī Jīva also describes how the association with a devotee takes effect in progressive stages along the path of *bhakti*. In enumerating the various limbs of *bhakti* in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī specifies taking shelter of a guru as the first and foremost. In *Bhakti Sandarbha*, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī elaborates on the process of accepting a guru. He identifies three primary types of gurus in accordance with their roles — namely, the *śravaṇa*, *śikṣā*, and *mantra-gurus*.

## Definition of Bhakti

Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī explains that the word *bhakti* is derived from the verbal root  $\sqrt{bhaj}$ , which means “to serve.” This mood of service to Bhagavān is thus understood to be the *svarūpa-lakṣaṇa*, or the intrinsic characteristic, of *bhakti*, defining *bhakti* in terms of its constitutional makeup. Service is to be carried out with one's entire being, which includes the body, mind, and speech. Service can be motivated by a desire for the fruit or without any such motive. Service that is performed exclusively for the pleasure of Bhagavān without any desire for material or spiritual benefit is considered as the best. From this definition, it is clear that *bhakti* is not limited to any specific action. All actions performed by way of the mind, body, and speech can be part of *bhakti* if executed for

the pleasure of Bhagavān. Even actions such as sleeping, bathing, or attending to one's physical needs can be indirectly included in *bhakti*, because they are necessary for maintaining good health and a stable mind. By way of comparison, the extrinsic characteristic of *bhakti* (*taṣastha-lakṣaṇa*) is concerned not with *bhakti*'s constitution but with its effects — namely, that it can fulfill all aspirations of a devotee and can bestow even the direct realization of the Absolute in Its three aspects of Brahman, Paramātmā, and Bhagavān. Taken together, the *svarūpa* and *taṣastha-lakṣaṇas* of *bhakti* form its complete definition.

## Divisions of Bhakti

Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī divides *bhakti* into three classes, namely, *āropa-siddhā*, referring to the attribution of *bhakti* to the act of offering prescribed Vedic duties or worldly actions to Bhagavān; *saṅga-siddhā*, practices that do not belong to *bhakti* proper but that become so through association with *bhakti*; and *svarūpa-siddhā*, actions that are directly constituted of *bhakti* by their very nature. *Svarūpa-siddhā-bhakti*, even if undertaken by an ignorant person, can deliver the ultimate result. These three categories of *bhakti* have two further divisions of *sakaitavā* (with ulterior motive) and *akaitavā* (devoid of ulterior motive). If one executes devotion with the sole purpose of attaining love of God, such devotion is *akaitavā*. If, however, one harbors some other motive as the goal, it is called *sakaitavā*.

*Āropa-siddhā* basically amounts to the offering of one's *karma* to Bhagavān. *Saṅga-siddhā* is a mixed form of devotion. The mixture could be with *karma*, or *jñāna*, or both. *Karma-miśrā saṅga-siddhā* is of three types, namely, *sakāmā* (with a desire for material enjoyment), *kaivalya-kāmā* (with a desire for liberation), and *bhakti-mātra-kāmā* (with a desire for *bhakti* alone). *Jñāna-miśrā saṅga-siddhā* is undertaken either with a desire for liberation (*kaivalya-kāmā*) or with a desire for *bhakti* alone (*bhakti-mātra-kāmā*). These types of devotion are tainted with the material *guṇas*. In contrast, however, *svarūpa-siddhā-bhakti*, also called *akiñcanā*, is completely

transcendental. It is causeless and unobstructed. The mind of a devotee who is established in *svarūpa-siddhā-bhakti* naturally flows toward Bhagavān. This category of *bhakti* is constituted of direct devotional practices, such as hearing, chanting, and remembering the name, form, attributes, and pastimes of Bhagavān.

*Svarūpa-siddhā-bhakti* has two primary divisions, namely, *vaidhī* and *rāgānuṅgā*. *Vaidhī-bhakti* is impelled by scriptural injunctions. It includes the practices of surrender (*śaraṇāpatti*), service to pure devotees (*sat-saṅga*), and the nine primary limbs of devotion, beginning with hearing and singing the name, form, qualities, and *līlās* of Bhagavān. In modern times, people are averse to the very idea of surrender. They think that by surrendering to a guru or Bhagavān, they would lose their independence. Surrender is considered a weakness of character and oppressive. As a consequence, everyone wishes to be free and independent. In reality, however, as long as human beings are conditioned by their *karma*, there is no true independence. They remain slaves of their mind and senses. Under such circumstances, it is pure delusion to think that one is independent. *Bhakti*, on the other hand, liberates the practitioner from the conditioning of *karma* and awards true freedom. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī explains that surrender involves the resolve to act favorably and to desist from doing anything unfavorable to Bhagavān, to have faith that Bhagavān will offer protection, to accept Him as one's protector, to submit oneself to Him, and to embrace the spirit of humility. Surrender is the basic foundation of *bhakti*.

Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī stresses the association of and service to pure devotees of Bhagavān. He makes it clear that association with devotees is an independent means of attaining perfection. In India, traditionally it is a custom to have *darśana* of *sādhus*. One of the purposes and advantages of visiting holy places like Vṛndāvana is to obtain the association of devotees, since devotees commonly reside there. This is also the intention behind religious festivals, such as *kumbha-melā*, where *sādhus* from all over India gather and set up camp to avail their association to pilgrims.

The primary limbs of *bhakti* practiced by devotees are nine, popularly called *navadhā-bhakti*. These include hearing, singing, and remembering the name, form, qualities, and pastimes of Bhagavān, service to His feet, worship of the deity, offering obeisance, considering oneself as a servant, considering oneself as a friend, and self-surrender. Of all these limbs, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī specifically emphasizes the importance of *kīrtana* in the present age of Kali. *Nāma-japa* and *nāma-kīrtana* are the specialty of the followers of Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Between the two divisions of *bhakti*, namely, *vaidhī* and *rāgā-nūgā*, the latter is superior. It is the hallmark of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas. *Rāgānugā* is based upon natural attraction for Bhagavān, just as the senses are naturally attracted to their corresponding sense objects. The eternal associates of Bhagavān are naturally attracted to Him eternally. Their devotion is called *rāgātmikā*, referring to those whose authentic self is permeated by *rāga* for Bhagavān. Since these associates are naturally and eternally endowed with such constitutional devotion, their *bhakti* does not fall under the category of practice, *sādhana*. On the other hand, the *bhakti* of those who have developed a liking (*ruci*) for such *rāgātmikā-bhakti* — although not yet having attained *rāga* — and who follow the mood (*bhāva*) of a specific *rāgātmika-bhakta*, is called *rāgānugā*, lit., “*bhakti* that follows the way of *rāga*.”

*Rāgānugā* is much more powerful than *vaidhī*, because it is based on natural attraction. It does not depend on any scriptural injunction. Because dhārmic people in general are accustomed to have faith in and follow scriptural injunctions, it is difficult for them to comprehend *rāgānugā-bhakti*. They consider any act not prescribed by scripture as adhārmic. Anticipating a possible objection to *rāgānugā* from this point of view, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī shows how *rāgānugā-bhakti* is the essence of *dharma*. Although it is not impelled by scriptural injunctions, it is certainly not opposed to scripture. Just as love is not a feeling that can be enjoined or forced upon another person, so too *rāgānugā-bhakti* cannot be thrust upon someone by scriptural injunctions. Rules are made for those who are not naturally inclined to follow *dharma*. But rules serve no

purpose for a person endowed with natural attraction. The behavior of such a person naturally accords with scriptural rules, even without the need of being impelled by them.

Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī makes the point that *rāgānuṅā-bhakti* is primarily for Kṛṣṇa in Vraja. The eternal residents of Vraja are the exemplars for *rāgānuṅā-bhakti*. There are four devotional moods in which the Vraja residents relate with Kṛṣṇa, namely, as a servant, a friend, a parent, or an amorous lover. Out of these, the lovers are the best. Among them, Śrī Rādhā is supreme. Rādhā's love for Kṛṣṇa is the epitome of *bhakti*. This is the essential message of *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. Attaining the love that follows Rādhā's *bhāva* is the highest perfection of human life. In *Prīti Sandarbha*, the final volume of the anthology, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī examines this love in an elaborate manner, basing his analysis particularly on the Tenth Canto of *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*.

## A Brief Summary of Bhakti Sandarbha

The book is divided into 340 *anucchedas*. Each *anuccheda* is pivoted around a principal verse from the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī does not give any titles to the *anucchedas* or make any explicit divisions or chapters, but he does provide numerous clues throughout the text regarding the thematic division of topics. On the basis of these clues that have been carefully gleaned from the text, the titles and chapters have been formulated for the easy comprehension of the reader. As mentioned by Śrī Jīva himself in the beginning of *Anuccheda 179*, the whole book is conceived as having three divisions. The first division comprises *Anucchedas 1-178*. It deals with the topic of *bhakti* as the complete method of spiritual attainment (*abhidheya*). It is further divided into three chapters — namely, the establishment of *bhakti* as the complete *abhidheya* (*Anucchedas 1-120*), the essential nature of *bhakti* (*Anucchedas 121-164*), and pure devotion, which culminates in natural attraction for Bhagavān (*Anucchedas 165-178*).

The second division consists of *Anucchedas 179-213*. It deals primarily with the supreme nature of the devotees of Bhagavān, who

are identified as the sole cause of attaining *bhakti*. This division also contains three chapters. In the first chapter (*Anucchedas* 179–187.1), Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī shows that *bhakti* is obtained only by the association of devotees. There is no other means of acquiring *bhakti*. In the second chapter (*Anucchedas* 187.2–202.2), he describes the characteristics of three gradations of Bhagavān’s devotees, dwelling in particular on those of the most highly elevated devotees. In the third chapter (*Anucchedas* 202.3–213), Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī demonstrates the *sādhaka*’s stages of progression along the path of *bhakti* that occur only by the grace of devotees.

The third and final division of the book consists of *Anucchedas* 214–340. In this part of the book, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī elaborates on the practice of *bhakti*. It can be divided into five chapters. The first chapter (*Anucchedas* 214–216) gives a brief introduction to the subject of direct worship. It also defines the intrinsic and extrinsic nature of *bhakti*. The second chapter (*Anucchedas* 217–234) describes the three categories of *bhakti* referred to above, namely, attributive (*āropa-siddhā*), associative (*saṅga-siddhā*), and inherent (*svarūpa-siddhā*). It also describes three types of *bhakti* enacted by practitioners who are still under the influence of the three material *guṇas*. In the third chapter (*Anucchedas* 235–309), Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī mentions two divisions of inherent *bhakti*, namely, *vaidhī* and *rāgānuṅā*. The first of these is described in this chapter, and the second, in the fourth chapter (*Anucchedas* 310–338). The fifth chapter (*Anucchedas* 339–340) simply consists of the author’s concluding remarks. Śrī Jīva stresses the importance of keeping one’s realizations confidential. They should not be disclosed to anyone. In the last *anuccheda*, he summarizes the various stages on the path of *bhakti*, beginning with the association of devotees. The stages of development may vary from person to person. He concludes the exposition of *bhakti* with a prayer to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.



## Salient Principles Established in Bhakti Sandarbha

1. *Bhakti* is the means as well as the end.
2. *Bhakti* is superior to *mukti*. The bliss of *bhakti* is superior to the realization of Brahman.
3. The living entity's natural constitution is to be a servant of Bhagavān. Therefore, *bhakti* is for all, regardless of birth, gender, age, or nationality.
4. *Bhakti* is the most natural process for the living beings.
5. *Bhakti* is not limited to any specific act, such as hearing and chanting about Bhagavān. It is all-inclusive.
6. The complete vision of the Absolute is possible only by *bhakti*. The processes of *jñāna* and *yoga* provide only partial disclosures.
7. *Bhakti* establishes a relation with Bhagavān.
8. Without *bhakti*, the practices of *karma*, *jñāna*, and *yoga* cannot bestow their respective results. *Bhakti*, however, is supremely independent, and hence it does not depend on any other process to award its result.
9. *Bhakti* is not inherent in the living beings. It descends by the grace of a devotee or Bhagavān.
10. *Bhakti* is the intrinsic potency of Bhagavān, distinct from the extrinsic as well as the intermediary potencies.
11. *Bhakti* controls even Bhagavān, meaning that He becomes devoted to His *bhakta*.
12. *Bhaktas* are the topmost human beings, superior even to *brāhmaṇas*. Even a moment's association with a *bhakta* is superior to liberation.
13. *Ahaṅgrahopāsana* is not recommended for *bhaktas*.
14. *Praṇava* is the *mahā-vākya* for the *bhaktas*.
15. *Sat-saṅga*, or association with a pure devotee, is the root cause of attaining pure devotion. *Sat-saṅga* uproots the living entity's beginningless ignorance and grants immediate awareness of Bhagavān.
16. *Śrāddhā* is the only qualification required for the execution of devotion.
17. *Śrāddhā* is not a limb of *bhakti* proper but an attribute of a devotee.

18. A *bhakta* transcends the *adhikāra*, or eligibility, for the path of *karma*. Thus, a *bhakta* does not incur any sin if he gives up his *nitya* and *naimittika* duties. He does not need to undergo any atonement.
19. Offenses are the greatest obstacle on the path of devotion.
20. Continuous chanting of the name eradicates offenses.
21. Even a semblance of *bhakti* destroys all sins and can grant union with Bhagavān. *Brahma-jñāna* cannot lead to such a result.
22. The *devas*, such as Śiva, should not be worshiped as independent gods but as devotees or as existential seats of Bhagavān's abidance. They should never be disrespected.

## Importance of Bhakti Sandarbha

To engage in *bhakti*, one has to have the proper understanding of one's relation with Bhagavān. One has to know that one is an integrated part of Bhagavān and not absolutely identical with Brahman, as is understood by the radical nondualists (the Advaita Vedāntīs). Although the living beings and Bhagavān are one in terms of consciousness, a distinction exists between them not only in the phenomenal state but even in the liberated state. The relation between them is thus one of transrational oneness and distinction (*acintya-bheda-abheda*), which is the inherent nature of the relation between potency (*śakti*) and potent source (*śaktimān*). This in brief is the "integral nonduality" propounded in *Śrīmad Bhāgavata*. Pure *bhakti* is not possible without this understanding.

With this view in mind, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī composed the earlier *Sandarbhās* to elaborately explain the relation between the *jīva* and Bhagavān. These *Sandarbhās* are meant to be studied in the order given by the author, otherwise the complete understanding of Reality will remain beyond the practitioner's grasp, which will in turn obscure the practice of *śuddhā-bhakti*. And if *bhakti* is thus obstructed or adulterated, it will not directly disclose Bhagavān and *prema* to the practitioner, which is the whole purpose of undertaking the investigation into Reality in the first place. In Śrī Jīva's ordered exposition, *Bhakti Sandarbha* stands out as the pivot or the

center of all the *Sandarbhās*. The first four provide the theoretical underpinnings that lead to it, and the last one elucidates its outcome in the form of divine love (*prīti*). *Bhakti Sandarbha* is also the most practically oriented out of the complete set, because it provides the method to be followed in one's life. As far as a *sādhaka* is concerned, the other five offer only a theoretical understanding, which is however essential for authentic practice. Thus, although each of the other *Sandarbhās* have their own specific role and importance, ultimately it is only *Bhakti Sandarbha* that is the beacon light in one's day-to-day life. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance for a sincere *sādhaka*.

For the reasons just stated, anyone who is serious about becoming a pure devotee of Bhagavān, especially of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, must study *Bhakti Sandarbha* thoroughly. Along with *Bhakti Sandarbha*, it will also be beneficial to study the Eastern division of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī's *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*. This will provide an in-depth understanding of pure devotion, which is not an easy subject to comprehend. These two books are complementary and cover most of the theoretical and practical aspects of devotion. *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* deals with the practical as well as with the emotional aspect of *bhakti*. The Eastern division enumerates the first aspect and the remaining three divisions, namely, Southern, Western, and Northern, deal with the second aspect. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī, however, deals with these two aspects of *bhakti* separately in *Bhakti Sandarbha* and *Prīti Sandarbha*, respectively. What is described in a very terse form in the Eastern division of *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* has been elaborated in *Bhakti Sandarbha*. The former, being composed in *śloka* form, has its limitations, and needs the help of a commentary to understand the subject matter. *Bhakti Sandarbha* is not subject to the same limitation. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī makes the subject easier to comprehend.

*Bhakti Sandarbha* places *bhakti* on the highest pedestal, which it rightly deserves. Earlier, *bhakti* was considered only as a means for liberation. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī, however, on the strength of scriptural authority, establishes that *bhakti* is the supreme process as well as the ultimate goal. All other processes cease after delivering their

respective results, but *bhakti* continues even beyond *videha-mukti*, or ultimate liberation. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī goes on to say that without the grace of *bhakti*, all other processes are impotent. *Bhakti*, being the intrinsic potency of Bhagavān, is complete by itself and does not depend upon anything. It was propagated by Bhagavān Himself at the beginning of creation. Whatever a person wishes to attain — material or spiritual — can be attained through *bhakti*. Everyone is eligible to engage in *bhakti* irrespective of their status, gender, age, nationality, or education. Only *bhakti* awards direct realization of Bhagavān. Indeed, Bhagavān becomes controlled by His devotee.

All auspicious qualities become naturally manifest in a devotee. The realization of Brahman is possible only by the grace of *bhakti*. Even a semblance of *bhakti* can award liberation. The only obstacles to *bhakti* are the offenses, and therefore they must be conscientiously avoided. They have been elaborately discussed in *Bhakti Sandarbha*. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī also describes the influence of offenses. This is highly practical knowledge for a practitioner. One can examine one's own mind to see if one is progressing or regressing because of offenses. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī also offers advice as to how to mitigate the offenses committed in the past or in the present life. *Bhakti* is the most blissful process both in the stage of practice as well as in the perfected stage.

These characteristics of *bhakti* highlighted in *Bhakti Sandarbha* are unique. It is crucial to understand all these points to uproot all doubts about the nature and efficacy of *bhakti*. Because of the popularity of other paths in the past, a *sādhaka* may have deeply formed *saṁskāras* about the importance of other processes and may, thus, knowingly or unknowingly harbor doubts or lack faith in *bhakti*. Doubts and lack of faith dampen one's enthusiasm to engage in *bhakti* wholeheartedly. Worse yet is that one may act in an offensive manner that will completely obstruct one's progress. It is thus of the utmost importance for a sincere *sādhaka* to study *Bhakti Sandarbha*. It is recommended that a serious practitioner should study a part of this book regularly, just as one would commit to other devotional practices, such as chanting the names of Kṛṣṇa. By doing so, one's understanding of *bhakti* becomes more and more refined,

which results in a corresponding increase in the purity and fixity of one's practice. This is the whole point of *Bhakti Sandarbha*.

## Division of the Book into Two Volumes

Because of the length of this work, *Bhakti Sandarbha* has been divided into two volumes, the first volume containing parts one and two of Śrī Jīva's text, and the second, the third and final part. The second volume also contains all the references, including glossary, subject index, verse index, and bibliography. Due to this division, it has been necessary to adopt a concordant numbering system wherever page references are given in the two books. A Roman numeral (either I or II), followed by a period, is placed before the page number to indicate in which volume the reference occurs. In volume I, this system was necessary only for the "Contents at a Glance" page, where these numerals appear in the right hand column. In volume II, the same system has been applied for the "Contents at a Glance" page and throughout the subject and verse indexes.





## Dedication

*vraja-bhaktireva vedāntaḥ śrī-gaura eva rādhākāntaḥ  
prakhyāpito yena rāddhāntaḥ rātvidam mudam tasya svāntaḥ*

Loving service to Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the mood of the Vraja *gopīs* is the ultimate conclusion of all the Vedas and Vedic literature. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is indeed Kṛṣṇa, the beloved of Rādhā. May this book delight the heart of my guru, who clearly disclosed this unequivocal truth unto me.

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED to my guru Śrī Śrī 108 Śrī Śrotriya Bhagavad-niṣṭha Śrīmad Haridāsa Śāstrī Mahārāja Nava-tīrtha, an ideal example of a devotee and *ācārya*.

I bow down at the holy feet of my Gurudeva. He taught me with great love most of the works of Śrī Rūpa, Sanātana and Jīva Gosvāmī, and other Gauḍīya *ācāryas*. The *Ṣaṭ Sandarbhas* were the first works I studied under him. He was a great admirer of the Gosvāmīs, not only through words but by being a strict adherent of their teachings. He was a living example of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava theology and philosophy. Thus, I learned from him not only during his discourses, but also through being with him, seeing him deal with various life situations, and serving in the *gośālā* and elsewhere. It is he who inspired me to propagate this knowledge by making it available in English.







1 Bhakti Is the Complete Abhidheya



## Maṅgalācaraṇa

तौ सन्तोषयता सन्तौ श्रीलरूपसनातनौ ।  
दाक्षिणात्येन भट्टेन पुनरेतद् विविच्यते ॥ १ ॥

FOR THE PLEASURE of the two sages, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, I am rearranging this book, compiled by Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, who was born in South India.<sup>1</sup>

तस्याद्यं ग्रन्थनालेखं क्रान्तव्युत्क्रान्तखण्डितम् ।  
पर्यालोच्याथ पर्यायं कृत्वा लिखति जीवकः ॥ २ ॥

Some parts of his book were in order, some were out of order, while others were incomplete or missing. After thorough deliberation, Śrī Jīva now writes [*Bhakti Sandarbha*] in the appropriate order.<sup>2</sup>



<sup>1</sup> *tau santoṣayatā santau śrīla-rūpa-sanātanau  
dākṣiṇātyena bhaṭṭena punar etad vivicyate*

<sup>2</sup> *tasyādyam granthanālekham krānta-vyutkrānta-khaṇḍitam  
paryālocyātha paryāyam kṛtvā likhati jivakaḥ*

These two verses are placed at the beginning of each *Sandarbha*; see *Tattva Sandarbha* (p. 16-19) for an account of the background setting to which they refer.



# 1 Establishment of Bhakti As the Complete Abhidheya

*Anucchedas 1–120*

Bhakti Is the Complete Form of Sāmmukhyatā

*Anucchedas 1–3.1*

Bhakti Established by All Teachers in Śrīmad Bhāgavata

*Anucchedas 3.2–94*

Bhakti Is the Culmination of All Methods

*Anucchedas 95–98*

Bhakti Established through Negative Inference — Vyatireka

*Anucchedas 99–105*

Bhakti Is for Bhagavān Alone

*Anucchedas 106–107*

Bhakti Established through Disregard for Nondevotion

*Anucchedas 108–110*

Bhakti Is Universal Dharma

*Anucchedas 111–113*

Bhakti Established by the Hermeneutics of Śrīmad Bhāgavata

*Anucchedas 114–120*



# Bhakti Is the Complete Form of Sāmmukhyatā

*Anucchedas 1-3.1*





Anuccheda 1

## Sāmmukhyatā Identified As the Essence of Abhidheya-tattva

१ । अत्र पूर्वं सन्दर्भचतुष्टयेन सम्बन्धो व्याख्यातः । तत्र पूर्णसनातनपरमानन्दलक्षणपर-  
तत्त्वरूपं सम्बन्धि च ब्रह्म परमात्मा भगवानिति त्रिधाविर्भावतया शब्दितमिति निरूपि-  
तम् । तत्र च भगवत्त्वनैवाविर्भावस्य परमोत्कर्षः प्रतिपादितः । प्रसङ्गेन विष्णवाद्याश्चतुः-  
सनाद्याश्च तदवतारा दर्शिताः । स च भगवान् स्वयं श्रीकृष्ण एवेति निर्धारितम् ।

**THE TOPIC of *sambandha* — the relation between the Reality to be known (*vācya*, “the referent”) and the self-revealing sound pattern that discloses it (*vācaka*, “the referring expression”) — was elaborated in the previous four *Sandarbhas*.<sup>1</sup> In those books,**

<sup>1</sup> The meaning of the word *sambandha* given here is taken from Śrī Jīva’s own explanation of the term in *Anuccheda* 50 of *Tattva Sandarbha*. The same applies to the word *sambandhi* that follows. It is to be noted that in *Tattva Sandarbha*, the term *vācya-vācaka-sambandha* was rendered as “the relation of the signified and its signifier.” Here in *Bhakti Sandarbha*, this has been changed to “the relation of the referent and its referring expression.” The reason for this change is as follows. In linguistic theory, a threefold relation is generally admitted between *śabda* (the word, name, or linguistic sign), *artha* (the meaning or mental image of the object), and *vastu* or *padārtha* (the actual object, thing-meant, or the referent). According to this scheme, the *vācaka*, or “signifier,” would refer to the psychical, permanent word or word class (*prākṛta-dhvani*) and not to the physical phonic or articulated word (*vaikṛta-dhvani*), which vanishes as soon as it is uttered. Additionally, the *vācya*, or “signified,” would refer to the mental image of the object (*artha*) and not to the object itself. Consequently, in conventional linguistics, the “signified” and “signifier” are understood as psychical entities, and the relationship between them is subjective, being distinguished from the actual object. This, however, is not what is intended by Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī in his use of the term *vācya-vācaka-sambandha*. According to →

the *sambandhi* — the subjective Reality to be described through elucidation of the relation — was determined to be the Absolute Reality (*para-tattva*), who is complete, eternal, and of the nature of supreme bliss. That Absolute Reality was referred to in accordance with its threefold self-disclosure (*tridhā-āvirbhāva*) as Brahman (the unqualified Absolute), Paramātmā (the Supreme Immanent Self), and Bhagavān (the Supreme Transcendent Personal Absolute).

Among these three, the self-disclosure of the Absolute Reality specifically as Bhagavān was also ascertained as preeminent. In the course of these discussions, it was also shown that Viṣṇu and other comparable expansions, as well as the four Kumāra brothers (*Catuḥsana*) and the like, are all *avatāras* stemming from Bhagavān. It was concluded that Svayaṁ Bhagavān — God in His original ownmost Self — is none other than Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

परमात्मवैभवगणने च तत्तटस्थशक्तिरूपाणां चिदेकरसानामप्यनादिपरतत्त्वज्ञानसंसर्गाभावमयतद्वैमुख्यलब्धच्छिद्रया तन्माययावृतस्वस्वरूपज्ञानानां तयैव सत्त्वरजस्तमो-मये जडे प्रधाने रचितात्मभावानां जीवानां संसारदुःखं च ज्ञापितम् ।

In the context of the elaboration of the potencies (*vaibhava*) belonging to Paramātmā, the living entities (*jīvas*) were classified as manifestations of His intermediary potency (*taṭasthāśakti*). This signifies that although they are exclusively of the nature of consciousness, their immediate awareness of their own intrinsic nature is covered by Paramātmā's extrinsic potency, *māyā*, owing to the deficiency in them of directing their intentful regard away from the Absolute Reality (*para-tattva-vaimukhya*), a state of being rooted in the beginningless

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his *acintya-bheda-abheda* metaphysics, *śabda* (“the referring expression,” in this case, “the self-revealing sound pattern of *Śrīmad Bhāgavata*”), *artha* (“the subjective image of the Reality indicated by the words of the text”), and *vastu* (“the Reality Itself or the Referent,” i.e., “Bhagavān”), are inconceivably one and yet distinct. What this implies is that the *śabda* of *Śrīmad Bhāgavata*, being identical with “the Thing-in-Itself,” has the power to directly disclose not only the subjective image of the Reality indicated in the text, but Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself. In the realized state, *śabda*, *artha*, and *vastu* become one. This is the sense in which the term *vācya-vācaka-sambandha* is being used here.

prior absence of awareness of that Reality.<sup>2</sup> By the further influence of *māyā*, they are identified with phenomenal inert bodies, generated out of the primary constituents of material nature, namely, *sattva* (luminosity), *rajas* (dynamism), and *tamas* (inertia). The fact that the *jīvas* are thereby subjected to the misery of conditional existence (*saṁsāra*) was made known on the basis of this understanding.

यथोक्तमेकादशे श्रीभगवता (भा० ११।२२।३३) —

**This condition is summed up by Bhagavān in the Eleventh Canto of *Śrīmad Bhāgavata*:**

आत्मापरिज्ञानमयो विवादो ह्यस्तीति नास्तीति भिदार्थनिष्ठः ।  
व्यर्थोऽपि नैवोपरमेत पुंसां मत्तः परावृत्तधियां स्वलोकात् ॥ ३ ॥ इति ।

The debate as to whether or not the self (*āt mā*) exists distinct from the body is rooted in the comprehensive non-intuition of the self, and as such it is concerned only with dualistic determinations. Although this debate is devoid of intrinsic value, it assuredly does not cease in the case of human beings whose

<sup>2</sup> The exact word used here for the phrase “the prior absence of awareness” is *saṁsarga-abhāva*. This is a term used in the Vaiśeṣika School of philosophy. *Sam̄sarga-abhāva*, which broadly refers to the absence of being of any given object as an existing complex, is of three types: *prāg-abhāva*, “the absence of that which has not yet come into being,” *pradhvaṁsa-abhāva*, “the absence of that which has passed out of being,” and *atyanta-abhāva*, “the absolute absence of being of any posited object.” Among these three, the type of non-awareness referred to here is *prāg-abhāva*, or “the prior-nonexistence of awareness.” This refers to the absence of awareness of a given object or entity before such awareness dawns. In its technical application, *prāg-abhāva* implies that the absence of the object in question, although without beginning, ceases to be once the object is brought forth into being. In the present context, *prāg-abhāva* refers to the prior absence of awareness of the Absolute Reality (*para-tattva*). This signifies that this non-awareness, although beginningless, will come to an end when a particular living entity is awakened to knowledge of the Absolute Reality. Although in the Vaiśeṣika School, the term *prāg-abhāva* is used specifically to denote the prior-nonexistence of an effect to be produced in the future, in the present context, it refers to the absence of awareness of the Absolute that will be manifested later in the company of the wise, because awareness of the Absolute is not produced but brought within the scope of attention.

intentful regard is turned away from Me, the very ground of their existence. (SB 11.22.33)<sup>3</sup>

अतस्तदर्थं परमकारुणिकं शास्त्रमुपदिशति । तत्र च ये केचित् जीवा जन्मान्तरावृत्ततदर्थानुभवसंस्कारवन्तो ये च तदैव वा लब्धमहत्कृपातिशयदृष्टिप्रभृतयस्तेषां तादृशपरतत्त्वलक्षणवस्तूपदेशश्रवणारम्भमात्रेणैव तत्कालमेव युगपदेव तत्साम्मुख्यं तदनुभवोऽपि जायते ।

In light of this fact, the supremely compassionate scriptures offer instruction to end the *jīvas*' diverting of their regard away from the Absolute Reality due to the prior absence of awareness of that Reality. Among all such *jīvas*, some have had experience of the Absolute Reality in past lives, which has left impressions on them lying in a latent form. There are others who, in this very life, have attained a vision of that Reality by the liberal grace of an enlightened being. In the case of both of these types of individuals, as soon as they begin to hear authentic teachings regarding the eternally self-established existent [*siddha-vastu*], designated as the Absolute Reality (*para-tattva*), their intentful regard is immediately and simultaneously drawn toward that Reality, and the direct intuition of the same is brought into being.

यथोक्तम् “किं वा परैरीश्वरः सद्यो हृद्यवरुध्यतेऽत्र कृतिभिः शुश्रूषुभिस्तत्क्षणात्” (भा० १।१।२) इति ।

This state of affairs is indicated in *Śrīmad Bhāgavata*: “At the precise moment that *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* is heard by those who are both eager to hear and graced with experiential awareness of the truth, Bhagavān is immediately captured within the very seat of their consciousness (*hṛdi*). Therefore, what need is there of any other scripture?” (SB 1.1.2).<sup>4</sup>

ततस्तेषां नोपदेशान्तरापेक्षा । यादृच्छिकमुपदेशान्तरश्रवणं तु तल्लीलादिश्रवणवत् तदीयरसस्यैवोद्दीपकं यथा श्रीप्रह्लादादीनाम् ।

<sup>3</sup> *ātmāparijñāna-mayo vivādo hy astīti nāstīti bhidārtha-niṣṭhaḥ*

*vyartha'pi naivoparameta puṁsāṁ mattaḥ parāvṛtta-dhiyāṁ svalokāt*

<sup>4</sup> *kiṁ vā parair īśvaraḥ sadyo hṛdy avarudhyate'tra kṛtibhiḥ śuśrūṣubhis tat-kṣaṇāt*

As a consequence, such people are not dependent on any other instruction. Incidental hearing of other instructions serves only to incite their specific quality of aesthetic relish (*rasa*) in regard to Bhagavān, in the same manner that hearing Bhagavān's *līlās* does so. Such an effect was seen in the case of devotees like Prahlāda and others.

अथान्येषां तच्छ्रवणमात्रेण तादृशत्वं बीजायमानमपि कामादिवैगुण्येन बीजमपि दोषेण प्रतिहतं तिष्ठति (भा० ७।१९।३९) —

नैतन् मनस्त्व कथासु विकुण्ठनाथ सम्प्रीयते दुरितदुष्टमसाधु तीव्रम् ।  
कामातुरं हर्षशोकभयैषणार्तं तस्मिन् कथं तव गतिं विमृशामि दीनः ॥ ४ ॥

इति दीनं मन्यश्रीमत्प्रह्लादवचनानुसारेणान्येषामेव तत्प्राप्तेः ।

For others (*anyeṣām*), [who have no such latent impressions of experiences of the Absolute from past lives and no direct experience of the Absolute in this life], even though the seed of such turning toward and direct intuition of the Absolute can come into being merely by hearing *Śrīmad Bhāgavata*, it remains suppressed by defects such as material desires.<sup>5</sup> The following statement of the illustrious devotee Prahlāda, who considered himself to be wretched, clearly illustrates the condition of the “others” (*anyeṣām*) just spoken of:

O Lord of Vaikuṅṭha! This mind of mine does not take pleasure in hearing narrations about You, because it is polluted by sinful desires, diverted away from the Reality, irrepressible, agitated by lust, and afflicted by excessive elation, lamentation, fear, and worldly hankerings. Such being the state of my mind, how can a pitiable person like me ever come to directly intuit the truth regarding You? (SB 7.9.39)<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> There are two variant readings of Jīva Gosvāmī's statement given here. The first is from the edition of Śyāmalāla Gosvāmī (*bījāyamānam api kālādi-vaiguṇyena bijam api doṣeṇa*) and the second from that of Jadavpur University (*bījāyamānam api kāmādi-vaiguṇyena tad-itara-doṣeṇa*). Both of these readings essentially convey the same meaning as the version given above.

<sup>6</sup> *naitan manas tava kathāsu vikuṅṭha-nātha  
sampsriyate durita-duṣṭam-asādhu tivram →*

एवमेवोक्तं ब्रह्मवैवर्ते—

**This very same condition is spoken of in *Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa*:**

यावत् पापैस्तु मलिनं हृदयं तावदेव हि ।  
 न शास्त्रे सत्यबुद्धिः स्यात् सद्बुद्धिः सद्गुरौ तथा ॥ ५ ॥  
 अनेकजन्मजनितपुण्यराशिफलं महत् ।  
 सत्सङ्गशास्त्रश्रवणादेव प्रेमादि जायते ॥ ६ ॥ इति ।

As long as the heart is polluted by sins, one will not develop firm faith in scripture as a truth revelation and in an authentic spiritual teacher as a truth embodiment. The manifestation of divine love occurs only by hearing scripture in the association of saints as the exceptional fruit of accumulated piety earned over many lifetimes. (*Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa*)<sup>7</sup>

ततो मुख्येन तात्पर्येण परतत्त्वे पर्यवसितेऽपि तेषां परतत्त्वाद्युपदेशस्य किमभिधेयं प्रयोजनं चेत्यपेक्षायां तदवान्तरतात्पर्येण तद् द्वयमुपदेष्टव्यम् । तत्राभिधेयं तद्वैमुख्यविरोधित्वात् तत्साम्मुख्यमेव । तच्च तदुपासनलक्षणं यत एव तज्ज्ञानमाविर्भवति ।

On this account, even though the prime import of scripture culminates in the disclosure of the Absolute Reality, scriptural instructions regarding the Absolute anticipate two more related questions: What is the prescribed means to realize the Absolute (*abhidheya*), and what is the goal to be attained in respect of that Reality (*prayojana*)? Consequently, there is need for instruction on these two topics as the secondary import of scripture. Out of these two, the means (*abhidheya*) involves turning one's intentful regard toward the Absolute (*tat-sāmmukhya*), which is just the opposite of the former attitude of directing attention away from It (*tad-vaimukhya*). This turning of attention is characterized as *upāsana*, lit., “seating oneself reverentially in the

*kāmāturam harṣa-śoka-bhayaīṣaṅgārtam*  
*tasmin katham tava gatiṁ vimṛśāmi dīnaḥ*  
<sup>7</sup> *yāvat pāpāis tu malinaṁ hṛdayam tāvad eva hi*  
*na śāstre satya-buddhiḥ syāt sad-buddhiḥ sad-gurau tathā*  
*aneka-janma-janita-puṇya-rāśi-phalam mahat*  
*sat-saṅga-śāstra-śravaṇād eva premādi jāyate*

presence of the Absolute,” which is the very means by which immediate intuition of that Reality becomes manifest.

The end state to be attained (*prayojana*) is the immediate intuition (*anubhava*) of the Absolute, characterized as the direct witnessing of that Reality, both internally and externally. It is by such immediate intuition that the complete cessation of misery occurs of its own accord.

तदेतदुभयं यद्यपि पूर्वत्र सिद्धोपदेश एवाभिप्रेतमस्ति यथा “तव गृहे निधिरस्ति” इति श्रुत्वा कश्चिद् दरिद्रस्तदर्थं प्रयतते लभते च तमिति तद्वत् तथापि तच्छैथिल्यनिरासाय पुनस्तदुपदेशः । तदेवं तान् प्रत्यनादिसिद्धतज्ज्ञानसंसर्गाभावमयतद्वैमुख्यादिकं दुःखहेतुं वदन् व्याधिनिदानवैपरीत्यमयचिकित्सानिभं तत्साम्मुख्यमुपदिशति ।

These two topics of means and end were implicit within the prior descriptions of the Absolute known as *siddhopadeśa*,<sup>8</sup> [instructions which do not require injunctions]. Just as a poor man after hearing, “there is a treasure hidden in your house,” endeavors to find it [without being ordered to do so] and then obtains it, a similar intention applies here. Yet, to dispel any laxity in this regard, the scripture again provides explicit instructions regarding these two topics. In this manner, scripture first informs the *jīvas* that it is the directing of their intentful regard away from the Absolute (*tad-vaimukhya*), rooted in the beginningless prior absence of awareness of that Reality, that is the cause of their misery. It then instructs the *jīvas* to turn their regard toward the Absolute (*tat-sāmmukhya*), which is like a treatment meant to nullify the cause of a disease.

<sup>8</sup> According to the Pūrva-mimāṃsā School of thought, the Vedic injunctions, which result in auspiciousness when executed, are called *dharma*. These injunctions inspire or impel a person to act. As such, they are generally expressed in the imperative, optative, or subjunctive moods (referred to by Pāṇini as *loṭ*, *lin*, and *leṭ* respectively), or by use of the potential passive participle (suffix *-tava*). All of these verbal forms imply advice, obligation, or command. Injunctions stated in any of these ways are called *vidhi*. Sometimes, however, a descriptive statement is given that is not a direct order but which naturally inspires one to act, as in the above example. This type of description is known as *siddhopadeśa*.

भा० ११।२।३७—

An example of this type of instruction is seen in *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* in the statement of the sage Śrī Kavi to the king of Videha:

भयं द्वितीयाभिनिवेशतः स्यादीशादपेतस्य विपर्ययोऽस्मृतिः ।  
तन्माययातो बुध आभजेत् तं भक्त्यैकयेशं गुरुदेवतात्मा ॥ ७ ॥

The living entity's non-recognition of its intrinsic nature (*asmṛti*) that occurs through the influence of Bhagavān's extrinsic potency (*tan-māyayā*) is rooted in the perpetual diverting of regard away from Him (*iśād apetasya*). As a consequence of this non-recognition, the *jīva*'s self-concept is reversed (*viparyaya*), meaning that he becomes identified with the body instead. This reversal of identity in turn results in the absorption in that which is secondary (*dvitiyābhiniveśa*), meaning preoccupation with the body and its relations. It is from this absorption in the secondary that fear then arises. Therefore, one whose awareness has been awakened, regarding his spiritual preceptor as a direct embodiment of the Divine and as his dearest self, turns his intentful regard in loving adoration of Bhagavān, through the conscious medium of one-pointed devotion. (SB 11.2.37)<sup>9</sup>

टीका च—“यतो भयं तन्मायया भवेद् ततो बुधो बुद्धिमान् तमेवाभजेदुपासीत ।

Śrīdhara Svāmī comments: “The following objection may be raised. Since fear is a product of ignorance (*ajñāna*), it can be removed only by immediate awareness (*jñāna*). So what is the point of worshipping Parameśvara? To address such an objection, the sage Kavi speaks this verse. He makes the point that because fear is the outcome of Bhagavān's deluding potency (*tan-māyayā*), a person whose awareness has been awakened (*budha*) should turn his intentful regard exclusively in loving adoration of Him.

ननु भयं द्वितीयाभिनिवेशतो भवति । स च देहाद्यहङ्कारतः । स च स्वरूपास्फुरणात् । किमत्र तस्य माया करोति ?

<sup>9</sup> *bhayaṁ dvitīyābhiniveśataḥ syād iśād apetasya viparyayo'smṛtiḥ  
tan-māyayāto budha ābhajet taṁ bhaktyaikayeśaṁ guru-devatātmā*



“A further question may be raised in this connection. The verse states that fear arises out of absorption in that which is secondary (*dvitīyābhīniveśa*), meaning in the body and its relations. This in turn stems from misidentifying the body as the self, which originates from the non-disclosure of the self’s intrinsic nature. So what role does Bhagavān’s *māyā* play in the arousal of fear?

अत आह ‘ईशादपेतस्य’ इति । ईशविमुखस्य तन्माययाऽस्मृतिः स्वरूपास्फूर्तिर्भवति ततो विपर्ययो देहोऽस्मीति । ततो द्वितीयाभिनवेशाद् भयं भवति । एवं हि प्रसिद्धं लौकिकीष्वपि मायासु ।

“In answer to this, Kavi outlines the following sequence of events, beginning with *īśād apetasya*. For the *jīva* whose regard is perpetually diverted away from Bhagavān (*īśa-vimukhasya*), there is an absence of self-recognition (*asmṛti*), meaning the non-disclosure of the self’s intrinsic nature (*svarūpa-aspṛti*), and this occurs through the influence of Bhagavān’s extrinsic potency (*tan-māyayā*). As a consequence of this non-recognition, the *jīva*’s self-concept is reversed (*viparyaya*), meaning that he becomes identified with the body instead. This reversal of self-reference then leads to absorption in that which is secondary (*dvitīyābhīniveśa*) [meaning the body and its relations], and it is from this absorption that fear then arises [as the final link in the chain of events]. The principle of how fear can be aroused due to the misapprehension of reality brought about by delusion is well known even in the case of *laukiki-māyā*, or ordinary magic.

उक्तं च भगवता (गीता ७।१४) —

“Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa also addresses this situation:

दैवी ह्येषा गुणमयी मम माया दुरत्यया ।  
मामेव ये प्रपद्यन्ते मायामेतां तरन्ति ते ॥ ८ ॥ इति ।

This divine extrinsic potency of Mine, constituted of the three *guṇas* of material nature, is very difficult to surmount. Yet

those who take refuge in Me alone can cross beyond this *māyā*.  
(GĪTĀ 7.14)<sup>10</sup>

एकयाऽव्यभिचारिण्या भक्त्या भजेत् । किं च गुरुदेवतात्मा गुरुरेव देवता ईश्वर आत्मा  
प्रेष्ठश्च यस्य तथादृष्टिः सन्नित्यर्थः” इत्येषा ॥ श्रीकविर्विदेहम् ॥

“The verse under discussion [SB 11.2.37] further states that the person whose awareness has been awakened (*budha*) should turn his intentful regard in loving adoration of Bhagavān (*bhajana*) through the medium of ‘one-pointed’ (*ekayā*), or in other words, ‘unswerving’ (*avyabhicāriṇyā*) devotion (*bhaktiyā*). Moreover, such a person should regard his spiritual preceptor as a direct embodiment of Bhagavān, and also as his dearest self (*guru-devatātmā*). One endowed with such vision should worship Bhagavān. This is the intent of the verse.” [Here ends Śrīdhara Svāmī’s comment.]

## Commentary

*praṇamya manasā devaṁ jīva-gosvāmināṁ tathā  
guruṁ śrī haridāsaṁ ca bhāṣā-ṭīkāṁ likhāmy aham*

With my internal regard bowed down to my worshipful deity, unto Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī, and unto my Gurudeva, Śrī Haridāsa Śāstrī, I now write the commentary to Śrī Bhakti Sandarbha.

IN THE FIRST of the Six Sandarbhas, namely, *Tattva Sandarbha* (*Anuccheda* 50), Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī writes: “Hereafter, to systematically and thoroughly delineate this same essential truth (*tātparyam*) of *Śrīmad Bhāgavata*, we shall explain in these Six Sandarbhas the principles of *sambandha*, *abhidheya*, and *prayojana*, one after the other.” Of these three topics, the first, *sambandha*, was elaborately described in the first four volumes. In the present volume, *Bhakti Sandarbha*, Śrī Jīva delineates the second topic, namely,

<sup>10</sup> *daivi hy eṣā guṇa-mayī mama māyā duratyayā  
mām eva ye prapadyante māyām etāṁ taranti te*

*abhidheya*, or the prescribed means to realize the Absolute Reality (*para-tattva*), designated as Brahman, Paramātmā, and Bhagavān.

As a precondition for the investigation into the means (*abhidheya*), Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī first analyzes the root cause of the living beings' conditional existence in the material world. In this regard, he writes in *Paramātmā Sandarbha* (*Anuccheda* 47): “In this way, there are verily unlimited intermediary potencies (*taṭasthā-śaktis*), called *jīvas*. They form two groups. One consists of those whose consciousness is turned toward Bhagavān (*bhagavad-unmukha*) without beginning; the other consists of those whose consciousness is turned away from Bhagavān (*bhagavat-parāṇmukha*)<sup>11</sup> with no beginning. This division is according to whether or not they are intrinsically endowed with experiential awareness, or direct knowing, of Bhagavān.”

The discussion of the means to transcend material conditioning and realize the Absolute (*abhidheya*) is relevant specifically for the second category of *jīvas*. Although purely of the nature of consciousness, they are beginninglessly unaware of their own intrinsic nature. As a consequence of this absence of self-knowing, they become identified with the acquired body-mind complex as the self. The *jīvas*' ignorance of their true identity is without beginning and is thus not caused or originated by any action of either the *jīvas* or Paramātmā. It seems countersensical that a conscious being should be unaware of its own intrinsic nature. However, this state of being is made possible by the influence of Paramātmā's *māyā*,<sup>12</sup> which was

<sup>11</sup> The words *unmukha* and *parāṇmukha* have the same connotation as *sammukha* and *vimukha*, respectively. Literally, these two words mean “facing toward” and “facing away.” What Śrī Jīva intends to say by use of these terms is that there are *jīvas* whose intentful regard is directed toward Bhagavān and who are thus devoted to Him. They are called *unmukha* or *sammukha*. On the other hand, those whose intentful regard is directed away from Bhagavān and who are thus not devoted to Him are called *parāṇmukha* or *vimukha*. Their corresponding states of being — devotedness or nondevotedness — are called *sāmmukhyatā* and *vaimukhyatā*.

<sup>12</sup> Normally, we tend to think of energy as an impersonal force. But the potencies of Bhagavān also have a personal aspect. This was discussed in *Bhagavat Sandarbha* (*Anuccheda* 99). In this respect, *Māyā* is the personified form of the extrinsic potency (*bahiraṅga-śakti*). The words *māyā*, *bahiraṅga-śakti*, *ajñāna* →

discussed in *Paramātma Sandarbha* (*Anucchedas* 48–55). By Bhagavān’s transrational power, *māyā*, although unconscious and inferior by nature, can cover the conscious *jīvas* due to their intermediary status. This state of affairs is depicted by Maitreya Muni while instructing Vidura:

Such is Bhagavān’s extrinsic potency (*māyā*), which contradicts all logic, for [due to its influence] the living entity, who is endowed with conscious capacity in its essential being (*īśvara*) and hence liberated by nature (*mukta*), is made to undergo misery and bondage. (SB 3.7.9)<sup>13</sup>

This beginningless absence of awareness (*jñāna-saṁsarga-abhāva*) is sometimes described as the covering of the *jīva*’s intrinsic consciousness by ignorance, as in the *Gītā*: “The living beings are deluded because their innate consciousness is covered by ignorance” (*ajñānenāvṛtam jñānam tena muhyanti jantavaḥ*, GĪTĀ 5.15). Elsewhere it is depicted as the bewilderment caused by *māyā*:

Bewildered by this extrinsic potency, the individual self, although transcendental to the three *guṇas* of material nature, thinks of itself as consisting of the three *guṇas* and thus undergoes the misery resulting from this identification. (SB 1.7.5)<sup>14</sup>

Ordinarily, we think of a covering as a positive entity — denoted by the term *bhāva* — meaning something existing in its own right. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī clarifies, however, that the beginningless covering of the *jīva*’s innate awareness is not itself a positive existent but a type of nonexistence or absence, called

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(ignorance), and *prakṛti* are used interchangeably.

<sup>13</sup> *seyaṁ bhagavato māyā yam nayena virudhyate*

*īśvarasya vimuktasya kāraṇyam uta bandhanam*

In his *Krama-sandarbha* commentary on this verse, Śrī Jīva glosses the word *īśvarasya*, referring here to the *jīva*, as *svarūpa-jñānādibhiḥ samarthasya*, lit., “of the entity endowed with the capacities of consciousness and so on in its intrinsic nature.” The translation has been rendered accordingly.

<sup>14</sup> *yayā sammohito jīva ātmānam tri-guṇātmakam*

*paro’pi manute’narthaṁ tat-kṛtaṁ cābhipadyate*

Cf. *Paramātma Sandarbha*, *Anucchedas* 88–92.

*prāg-abhāva*. According to the Nyāya School of philosophy, nonexistence (*abhāva*) is of two types, namely, *saṃsarga-abhāva*, “the absence of being of a posited object,” and *anyo’nya-abhāva*, “the mutual absence of being of two different objects in regard to each other.” The first type has three further divisions, known as *prāg-abhāva* (antecedent nonexistence), *pradhvaṃsa-abhāva* (subsequent nonexistence), and *atyanta-abhāva* (absolute nonexistence). In this *anuccheda*, the word *saṃsarga-abhāva* refers to *prāg-abhāva*, or “prior-nonexistence.”

Prior-nonexistence is the nonexistence of a posited object, quality, or action before it comes into being. This antecedent absence of the item in question is without beginning, but it comes to an end as soon as the item is produced or brought forth into manifestation. The *jīva* in the conditioned or bound state is beginninglessly impaired by the prior-nonexistence of awareness of the Absolute Reality, which includes awareness of the *jīva*’s own intrinsic nature. In simple terms, this amounts to saying that a bound or conditioned *jīva* is ignorant of the Absolute Reality as well as of himself, and this ignorance has no beginning. As a consequence of this state of non-recognition of authentic being (*asmṛti*), the *jīva* becomes identified with the body-mind complex, which is an external covering and a product of the three *guṇas* of *māyā*.

Ignorance thus has two functional capacities. The first operates in a negative or concealing capacity as the beginningless absence of awareness of Bhagavān and the self. The second, which is an outcome of the first, operates positively by projecting an erroneous self-concept. The second is sometimes termed as *avidyā* (*Yoga-sūtra* 2.3) or *ajñāna* (*GĪTĀ* 5.15). As a consequence of these two functions of ignorance, the *jīva*, under the influence of *māyā*, finds its intentful regard directed away from Bhagavān, the Nondual Personal Absolute.

Śrī Jīva refers to this state of perpetual distractedness away from the Reality (*vaimukhya*) as the *jīva*’s defect or incompleteness (*chidra*) and concludes that this is the cause of its being influenced

or covered by *māyā*. Although the *jīva*'s ignorance, its being covered by *māyā*, and its bondage and material suffering are all beginningless and, hence, not subject to a cause and effect relation in the normal sense, they are depicted as such for our general understanding. The implication behind the reference to ignorance as a covering is that bondage is not intrinsic to the *jīva* and can thus be dispelled. This is confirmed by Śrī Kṛṣṇa to Uddhava:

The description of the living being as bound or liberated is from the perspective of the material *guṇas*, which are subordinate to Me, and not from the perspective of Reality. Because the *guṇas* are rooted in *māyā*, there is neither bondage nor liberation. This is My conclusion. (SB 11.11.1)<sup>15</sup>

While impaired by the prior absence of awareness of the Absolute Reality (*para-tattva-jñāna-saṁsarga-abhāva*), the *jīva* identifies with the mind and physical body, which are products of *māyā*. *Māyā* is constituted of the three *guṇas*, namely, *sattva* (luminosity), *rajas* (dynamism), and *tamas* (inertia). Under the influence of these three *guṇas*, people adopt different systems of belief regarding the self, the world, and truth in general. This is described in the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> chapter of *Bhagavad Gītā*. Owing to the identification with the *guṇas* and their products, a person remains turned away (*parāṇimukha*) from Bhagavān and engages in various types of arguments and debates. It is not possible, however, to ascertain the Reality by mere argumentation.

In *Tattva Sandarbha* (*Anuccheda* 9), Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī pointed out that a conditioned human being is unable to directly intuit Reality through the perceptual or cognitive apparatus. Because of the limitations of sensory and inferential knowledge, a person's statements about Reality can never be conclusive. Many theories have been posited about the primordial cause of the cosmos or the nature and origin of being, but there is no definitive consensus. As long as the immediate apprehension of the self is absent in such investigations, the deliberation itself is devoid of intrinsic value, because

<sup>15</sup> *baddho mukta iti vyākhyā guṇato me na vastutaḥ  
guṇasya māyā-mūlatvāt na me mokṣo na bandhanam*

it is concerned only with dualistic determinations. This is directly stated by Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa to Uddhava in the verse cited in this *anuccheda* (SB 11.22.33).

Elsewhere in *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* (SB 6.4.31), Dakṣa also acknowledged that because of the different potencies operating in the form of the *guṇas*, various scholars put forward opposing theories and remain in a state of perpetual bewilderment. As long as one does not direct one's intentful regard toward the Supreme Reality and surrender to Him, such debates and theories find no conclusion. Therefore, *śāstra* instructs wholehearted submission to the Supreme Reality, Bhagavān.

The *śāstra* discloses the cause of the *jīva*'s bondage and how to transcend it. But unless one is graced by a realized devotee of Bhagavān, *nirguṇa-śraddhā* in the *śāstra* as a truth revelation finds no occasion to be born. Indeed, it is seen that there are many people who study *śāstra* and can even lecture on it eruditely, yet they remain caught in the mire of *māyā* (*adhītya api śāstrāṇi bhavanti murkhāḥ*). Śrī Kṛṣṇa has such people in mind in making the following reproachful statement:

You are grieving for those who are unworthy of grief, and yet speaking as though learned. Those who are truly wise lament neither for the dead nor for the living. (GĪTĀ 2.11)<sup>16</sup>

After making evident the root cause of the *jīva*'s bondage for which the guidance of *śāstra* is required, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī discusses two ways in which the *śāstra* can be received in accordance with the two levels of eligibility of the recipient. The first mode of reception is found in those who have been favored with the grace of a realized devotee. From the very moment they hear the truth revelation of *śāstra*, in particular of *Śrīmad Bhāgavata*, their intentful regard is immediately drawn toward Bhagavān and they are even graced with the immediate intuition of Him. In *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* (1.1.2), cited in this *anuccheda*, Śrī Vyāsa refers to such people by the word *kṛtibhiḥ*, "those endowed with experiential awareness of

<sup>16</sup> *aśocyān anvaśocas tvaṃ prajñā-vādāmś ca bhāṣase gatāsūn agatāsūmś ca nānuśocanti paṇḍitāḥ*

the truth.” This category of eligible recipients contains two further divisions:

1. Those who have had direct experiences of Bhagavān in past lives but in whom the impressions of those experiences became somehow covered, which led to another birth.
2. Those who in the present life have obtained a direct vision of Reality by the powerful grace of a realized devotee and who are free of all obstacles.

Both of these types of individuals do not need to perform any *sādhana* to attain spiritual perfection. They are comparable to dry grass, which is immediately ignited by the slightest contact with fire. Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī is an example of such a person. From the very moment of his birth, he was immovably established in Brahman. Later, upon first hearing a few verses from *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* describing Kṛṣṇa’s beauty and compassionate nature, *prema* for Bhagavān was at once awakened in him, and he became beloved to all the devotees (*viṣṇujana-priya*), setting aside his fixity in Brahman. This was described in *Tattva Sandarbha* (*Anuccheda* 29).

Such people do not require instructions to engage in any specific devotional act. If, however, they do hear instructions or inquire from realized devotees, then it serves only to incite the aesthetic relish in their hearts. An example of this is found in the First Canto, 19<sup>th</sup> chapter of *Śrīmad Bhāgavata*. The passage relates that Vyāsa (the father and teacher of Śuka) and Nārada (the teacher of Vyāsa), both delighted in hearing the narration of *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* from their junior, Śukadeva.

The second mode of receiving *śāstra* is evidenced in those who have not been graced with any experience of the Absolute either in past lives or in this life and whose intentful regard is still essentially oriented away from the Reality. Although they too may hear or even study *śāstra*, they cannot receive it as a direct revelation of truth. Because of the identification with a culturally-constructed self and point of view, they are unable to have complete faith in the meaning of *śāstra* or in the instructions of an authentic



teacher. The impressions embedded in the unconscious from their past experiences related to the complete spectrum of material pursuits cover their discriminating faculty and thus their vision (GĪTĀ 2.67).<sup>17</sup> Even after repeatedly hearing enlightened teachings, they are unable to grasp the truth (GĪTĀ 2.29),<sup>18</sup> or they remain full of doubts (*saṁśayātmā*), incapable of turning their regard resolutely in unalloyed *bhakti* toward Bhagavān (GĪTĀ 4.40).<sup>19</sup>

Just as iron filings covered with mud may not be drawn toward a magnet, consciousness covered by a network of material desires is not influenced by hearing the *śāstra*. If, however, the mud that covers the iron filings is cleaned away, then the filings begin to be drawn toward the magnet. Similarly, as the self-concept is gradually refined by hearing *śāstra*, the heart becomes attracted to hearing and other devotional acts. Bhagavān personally cleanses the heart of a person who hears the *śāstra*, such as *Śrīmad Bhāgavata*, with full faith (SB 2.8.5).<sup>20</sup> The real obstacles to be overcome are offenses, which all boil down to various forms of inattention or disregard pertaining to the very Reality who is to be regarded. Offenses to the name of Bhagavān are especially detrimental. Bearing this in mind, one needs to hear the *śāstra* and also carefully avoid offenses. The topic of offenses will be discussed later in *Anuccheda* 153.

In support of the above conclusion, Śrī Jīva cites *Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa*, which states explicitly that without attentively hearing scriptural teachings (*śāstra-śravaṇa*) in the association of authentic devotees (*sat-saṅga*), divine love (*prema*) cannot be manifested in the heart. In this regard, Śrī Kapila said:

In the association of authentic devotees, the discussions (*kathā*) naturally come to focus upon Me [Bhagavān]. Such discussions are not only laden with full awareness of My unlimited majesty,

<sup>17</sup> *indriyāṇāṁ hi caratām yan mano'nuvidhīyate  
tad asya harati prajāṇāṁ vāyur nāvam ivāmbhasi*

<sup>18</sup> *śrutvāpy enaṁ veda na caiva kaścīt*

<sup>19</sup> *ajñāś cāśraddadhānaś ca saṁśayātmā vinaśyati  
nāyaṁ loko'sti na paro na sukhaṁ saṁśayātmanaḥ*

<sup>20</sup> *praviṣṭaḥ karṇa-randhreṇa svānāṁ bhāva-saroruham  
dhunoti śamalaṁ kṛṣṇaḥ salilasya yathā śarat*

but they serve too as an inebriating tonic for both the ear and the heart. By service and attention to such discussions, faith, spiritual attraction, and divine love quickly and sequentially unfold for Me [Bhagavān Hari], the very embodiment of the path of liberation. (SB 3.25.25)<sup>21</sup>

Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī writes that the primary intention of *śāstra* is to delineate the Absolute Reality (*para-tattva*), as Kṛṣṇa says, “By all the Vedas I alone am to be known” (GĪTĀ 15.15); and “The Vedas designate Me as the ultimate truth aimed at in all its divisions” (SB 11.21.43).<sup>22</sup>

In this regard, however, dialectical knowledge alone is insufficient. *Śāstra* must also instruct the aspirant in the means (*abhidheya*) by which one can come to realize the Absolute Reality, and in the completion state (*prayojana*) to be arrived at as the outcome of such direct seeing. If someone is diagnosed as having cancer and reads that a particular herb can cure him, he will naturally be anxious to obtain it and will also endeavor to do so or to find out how it may be procured. There is no real need to explicitly tell him to seek out the herb and take it. Still, to inspire the weak-minded patient, the medical texts may specifically lay down such an instruction. They may even cite endorsements of past patients who benefitted from the herb in order to further encourage him and give him the incentive to go about obtaining it.

Similarly, just by hearing the delineation of the Absolute Reality, an eligible and authentic seeker would be moved to realize It directly and to become established in the perpetual peace and bliss of the Absolute’s own intrinsic nature. Yet, recognizing humanity’s apathy in regard to the Absolute and their attraction for readily available sense pleasures, the *śāstra* mercifully provides instructions on the means of realization (*abhidheya*) and the ultimate goal (*prayojana*).

Because the root cause of suffering is the state of perpetual

<sup>21</sup> *satāṁ prasaṅgān mama vīrya-saṁvido bhavanti hṛt-karṇa-rasāyanāḥ kathāḥ taj-joṣaṇād āśv apavarga-vartmani śraddhā ratir bhaktir anukramiṣyati*

<sup>22</sup> *mām vidhatte’bhidhatte mām vikalpyāpohyate tv aham etāvān sarva-vedārthaḥ śabda āsthāya mām bhidām*

distractedness away from the Absolute (*tad-vaimukhya*), the solution is to turn one's intentful regard toward the Absolute (*tat-sāmmukhya*). This brings about cognizance of the Absolute, culminating in direct experience. Consequently, the means (*abhidheya*) is to become favorably and attentively disposed to Bhagavān (*sāmmukhya*), and the completion state (*prayojana*) is permanent establishment in the direct witnessing of Bhagavān internally and externally. This alone brings an end to all misery.

This is very simple to comprehend and a logical solution to the problems of human life. As long as one fails to recognize, accept, and act upon this fact, one will continue to suffer, and so will humanity as a whole. *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* expresses the same truth in an obverse manner (*vyatireka*):

Only when human beings are able to roll up the sky like leather will they, though unaware of the self-effulgent Paramātmā, reach an end to their suffering. (ŚU 6.20)<sup>23</sup>

The implication here is that just as it is impossible to roll up the sky like a piece of leather, so too a human being's suffering cannot come to an end without direct knowing of the Supreme Reality.

This is also the intent of sage Kavi's instruction to King Nimi, cited in this *anuccheda* (SB 11.2.37). Kavi, however, puts one more condition on the practitioner's inner regard — namely, *guru-devatātmā*. One whose awareness has been awakened (*budha*) should worship Bhagavān while considering his guru as a direct manifestation of Bhagavān (*devatā*) and as his dearest self (*ātmā*). Without taking shelter of a genuine guru, one will remain conditioned by one's own mind and empirical self-concept (*ahaṅkāra*). One of the fundamental characteristics of the ego (*ahaṅkāra*) is that it is averse to change, as expressed in the *Gītā*: "Even those in knowledge act in accordance with their own acquired nature" (GĪTĀ 3.33).<sup>24</sup> The attempt to transcend one's conditioning without

<sup>23</sup> *yadā carnavad ākāśaṁ veṣṭayiṣyanti mānavāḥ  
tadā devam avijñāya duḥkhasyānto bhaviṣyati*

<sup>24</sup> *sadr̥śaṁ ceṣṭate svasyāḥ prakṛter jñānavān api  
prakṛtiṁ yānti bhūtāni nigrahaḥ kiṁ kariṣyati*

the help of a guru is like trying to fly a plane without a pilot. For this reason, scriptures emphasize the need of an authentic and realized guru. Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī counts taking shelter of a guru as the first step on the path of *bhakti* (BRS 1.2.74).<sup>25</sup> The principle of accepting a guru is common to all Eastern wisdom traditions and a distinct feature of Indian culture.

In the compound *guru-devatātmā*, the word *devatā* implies a sense of reverence toward the guru, while the word *ātmā* signifies an attitude of love. Without reverence, one will not take the words of one's teacher seriously; without love, one will hold to a separatist point of view, which is synonymous with *vaimukhyam*. Thus, a student needs to maintain respect for the teacher and at the same time be established in unity of heart with him or her. Embracing such an attitude, one should worship Bhagavān. Then only will it be possible to transcend *māyā*, as confirmed by Śrī Kṛṣṇa (GĪTĀ 7.14). Otherwise, one will struggle with his senses like a person on a boat out at sea without a captain (SB 10.87.33).<sup>26</sup> Without devotion, even great sages whose regard is turned away from Bhagavān cannot become free of their conditioning (SB 3.9.10).<sup>27</sup>

Here, in the beginning of the investigation into the means, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī defines the *abhidheya* in the most universal terms as *sāmmukhyatā*, the turning of one's regard toward the Absolute. In one word, this captures the essence of all *sādhana*s on all paths whatsoever. Additionally, he defines the *prajoyana* in corresponding terms as *anubhava*, or the immediate intuition of the Absolute characterized as the direct witnessing (*sākṣātkāra*) of that Reality, both internally and externally. This indeed results in the cessation of all suffering. These all-inclusive definitions are posited

<sup>25</sup> *guru-pādāśrayas tasmāt kṛṣṇa-dīkṣādi-śikṣaṇam  
viśrambheṇa guroḥ sevā sādhu-vartmānuvartanam*

<sup>26</sup> *vijita-hṛṣīka-vāyubhir adānta-manas-turagaṇi  
ya iha yatanti yantum ati-lolam upāya-khidah  
vyasana-śatānvitāḥ samavahāya guroḥ caraṇaṇi  
vaṇija ivāja santy akṛta-karṇa-dharā-jaladhau*

<sup>27</sup> *ahny āprtārta-karaṇā niśi niḥśayānā nānā-manoratha-dhiyā kṣaṇa-bhagna-nidrāḥ  
daivāhatārtha-racanā munayo'pi deva yuṣmat-prasaṅga-vimukhā iha saṁsaranti*  
In the Gita Press edition, we find the word *ṛṣayaḥ* in place of *munayaḥ*.

at this initial stage bearing in mind that the most fundamental realization of the Absolute is that of nondual awareness (*advaya-jñāna*). Later, however, Śrī Jīva will demonstrate that *bhakti* is the most complete form of *sāmmukhyatā* and hence the true *abhidheya*. Likewise, he will show that since *prīti* involves the most complete direct vision of Reality, it is the ultimate end state to be attained (*prayojana*) — Bhagavān being the highest disclosure of *advaya-jñāna*.

Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī provides the example of a magician and his magic to help us understand the importance of devotion to Bhagavān. If a person, being impressed by the magic show of a clever magician, tries to understand the trick behind the magic by his own intelligence, he will never come to know it. But if he approaches the magician with humility and reverence, then the magician may reveal his tricks to such a person. Similarly, *māyā* is the deluding potency belonging to Bhagavān, and conditioned beings are bewildered by her. Without taking shelter of the master of *māyā*, one can never transcend her influence and come to know the reality. For this reason, *śāstra* recommends that the living entities turn their attention toward Bhagavān with devotion as the panacea for their ignorance and its consequent suffering.

In the next *anuccheda*, the author explains that *bhakti* is the most natural and thus the easiest mode or form of *sāmmukhyatā*.



Anuccheda 2

## Sāmmukhyatā in the Form of Bhajana Is the Abhidheya

२ । किं च (भा० २।२।६) —

**ADDITIONALLY, in the following statement of Śrī Śukadeva [the turning of one's regard toward the Absolute (*tat-sāmmukhya*) in the form of *bhajana* is disclosed as the means (*abhidheya*):**

एवं स्वचित्ते स्वत एव सिद्ध आत्मा प्रियोऽर्थो भगवाननन्तः ।  
तं निर्वृतो नियतार्थो भजेत संसारहेतूपरमश्च यत्र ॥ ९ ॥

[Being thus fixed in nonattachment to phenomena,] having one's intentful regard resolutely focused on Him, and being absorbed in the bliss of the immediate experience of Him, one should worship Bhagavān, who is immanently self-existent within the interiority of one's own consciousness, who is the Self, the most beloved, ontologically real, and eternal. It is through such worship (*bhajana*) that the cause of material bondage [*avidyā*] automatically ceases. (SB 2.2.6)<sup>1</sup>

टीका च — “तदा तेन किं कर्तव्यम् ? हरिस्तु सेव्य इत्याह ‘एवं विरक्तः सन् तं भजेत’ । भजनीयत्वे हेतवः ‘स्वचित्ते स्वत एव सिद्धः’ । यत आत्मा अत एव प्रियः । प्रियस्य च सेवा सुखरूपैव । अर्थः सत्यः । न त्वनात्मवन् मिथ्या । भगवान् भजनीयगुणश्च अनन्तश्च नित्यः । य एवम्भूतस्तं भजेत ।

<sup>1</sup> *evaṁ sva-citte svata eva siddha ātmā priyo'rtho bhagavān anantaḥ  
taṁ nirvṛto niyatārtho bhajeta saṁsāra-hetūparamaś ca yatra*

Śrīdhara Svāmī comments as follows on this verse: “Then what is to be done by a person [who has understood that ultimate value is not to be attained through the pursuit of material enjoyment]? In response, Śukadeva asserts that it is Bhagavān Hari who is worthy of our heedful service [and not the body]. The word *evam*, ‘in this manner,’ [referring to the previous verses] means ‘being thus fixed in nonattachment’ (*virakta*), one should worship Bhagavān. The grounds for acknowledging Bhagavān as the entity who is truly worthy of our adoration (*bhajana*) are stated in the verse: He is immanently self-existent within the interiority of one’s own consciousness (*sva-citte svata eva siddhaḥ*), for He is the Self (*ātmā*). As such, He is the most beloved (*priyaḥ*), and service to one who is dear is indeed pleasing. He is the truly abiding substantive (*arthaḥ*), meaning that He is ontologically real (*satyaḥ*), and not false like the non-self (*anātmā*). He is Bhagavān, meaning that He is replete with qualities that establish Him as worthy of worship. Furthermore, He is without end (*anantaḥ*), meaning that He is eternal (*nityaḥ*). Because He is intrinsically self-endowed with such characteristics, one is meant to worship Him.

नियतार्थश्च निश्चितस्वरूपः । तदनुभवानन्देन निर्वृतः सन्निति भक्तेः स्वतः सुखात्मकत्वं दर्शितम् । किं च यत्र यस्मिन् भजने सति संसारहेतोरविद्याया उपरमो नाशो भवति” इत्येषा । अत्र चकारात् तत्प्राप्तिर्ज्ञेया ॥ श्रीशुकः ॥

“The compound *niyatārthaḥ*, ‘with fixed intent,’ means that one’s disposition should be decisively focused (*niścīt-svarūpa*), and [being immersed in such *bhajana*,] one is naturally joyful (*nirvṛtaḥ*), because of the bliss of the immediate experience of Bhagavān. This demonstrates that *bhakti* is intrinsically of the nature of delight. Moreover, ‘in this matter’ (*yatra*), meaning ‘by this worship,’ ignorance (*avidyā*), which is the cause of material bondage, automatically ceases or is dissolved.” [Here ends Śrīdhara Svāmī’s comment.]

In this verse, the word *ca*, “also,” implies the attainment of Bhagavān [in addition to the dissolution of ignorance].

## Commentary

THE PRESENT VERSE is spoken by Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī to King Parīkṣit as a recommendation to worship Bhagavān. In the preceding verses, he had described the futility of material pleasures. On hearing the advice to worship Bhagavān, a conditioned human being may feel as if he or she is being coerced to do so. Such a person may be inclined to seek out some other way to overcome ignorance and suffering. This type of resistance is commonplace, because the condition of having one's regard directed away from God (*vaimukhyam*), rooted in the prior absence of awareness of Him, is the very cause of our material existence.

The human mind is loath to change, especially if it requires giving up the ego and the false sense of independence. Every conditioned being is beginninglessly oriented in this way, and thus, it seems to be a part of our very nature. As a consequence, we are not inclined to surrender and worship. Surrender appears to be foreign to our nature, and thus, we experience an instinctive resistance toward it. In reality, however, this resistance results from the superimposition of an acquired identity upon the true self, and as such it is our basic disease.

If a person comes to the point of intuiting that this condition is not our constitutional state, it indicates that his psyche has already been impacted by beneficial association in this or a past life. The tenacity of our aversion toward surrender and worship only reflects the perilous nature of our diseased condition. Just as a person suffering from fever loses his taste for food, so too a person under the influence of *māyā* is disinclined to embrace a devotional disposition in regard to Bhagavān. In this *anuccheda*, through reference to SB 2.2.6 and Śrīdhara Svāmī's commentary, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī points out the grounds for determining Bhagavān as the entity who is truly worthy of our worship (*bhajanīyatva*). In doing so, he also demonstrates that the reverential turning of regard toward Bhagavān (i.e., *bhajana*) is the most natural engagement for all living beings. The following points are made based on the words of the verse:



1. Bhagavān is always already immediately available. No extraneous effort is required to find Him, for He is immanently self-existent in one's own heart (*sva-citte svata eva siddhaḥ*). One does not have to go anywhere else to worship Him. He is the closest person to us.
2. Bhagavān is our very Self (*ātmā*). This means that we cannot exist without Him, just as we cannot survive without the life-breath. Thus, He is naturally dear to us, being the source of our existence, the very Self of the self.
3. He is both loving and beloved (*priya*). If, in spite of possessing the above qualities, He did not have a loving disposition, it would be drudgery to worship Him. He reciprocates in love, and that is the most wonderful quality He possesses.
4. Bhagavān is the truly abiding substantive (*artha*), which means that He is ontologically real (*satya*). This signifies that He is unchanging throughout all phases of time. In this material world, we direct our love toward people, animals, or objects, all of which are subject to change and eventual passing away. Moreover, we may come to realize that they are not what we thought them to be. Such is not the case with Bhagavān. Since He is both real and unchanging, love directed toward Him attains the highest unceasing fulfillment.
5. He is Bhagavān. In *Bhagavat Sandarbha* (*Anuccheda* 3), the word *bhagavān* was shown to refer to that entity who is intrinsically self-endowed with controlling potency, inconceivable power, fame, wealth, knowledge, and detachment. People are naturally attracted to anyone who has any one of these qualities or a few of them in combination. Bhagavān has all of these qualities naturally and unlimitedly. He can never be deprived of them. In the material world, people may have some of these qualities, but they are always limited and temporary. Nobody is eternally beautiful or wealthy. Even higher beings, like Brahmā or Śiva, do not possess such qualities independent of Bhagavān. He is the ultimate source of the *devas* (*GĪTĀ* 10.2, 10.8).
6. Bhagavān is unlimited (*ananta*), which Śrīdhara Svāmī glosses as "eternal." This signifies that He is beyond time and space. That Bhagavān is unlimited means that He can reciprocate simultaneously with an unlimited number of devotees. We do not have

to compete or be jealous of others. Jealousy is a common feature in material relations because of people's limited resources or limited capacity to reciprocate.

Since Bhagavān is inherently endowed with all these qualities, it is concluded that surrender to and worship of Him naturally establishes one in the state of permanent bliss. We certainly aspire for peace, happiness, and love from all our life endeavors, but we rarely attain them. Material hankering is itself a disturbance to the mind (SB 11.8.44). We feel peaceful and refreshed after a sound sleep, simply because it is devoid of all thoughts and desires. Not only is desire troublesome, but it also ends in suffering. If the desire is fulfilled, we develop attachment to the object of desire and suffer from that. If, on the other hand, the desire is not fulfilled, we suffer from frustration. The second form of suffering is easy to grasp, but the first type requires deeper deliberation, because at face value, it appears to be pleasure. In this regard, Śrī Kṛṣṇa makes the following categorical statement:

O son of Kuntī, all enjoyments born of sense contacts are only sources of misery, having a beginning and an end. Therefore, the wise do not indulge in them. (GĪTĀ 5.22)<sup>2</sup>

Bhagavān is also sometimes referred to as Kāmadeva, or “the Master of all desires.” He is also “the one existent who fulfills the desires of the many” — *eko bahūnām yo vidadhāti kāmān* (*Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 2.2.13). If one becomes devoted to Him, all one's aspirations are completely fulfilled. Kṛṣṇa confirms this fact to Uddhava:

My devotee easily attains all things through devotion to Me. Should he somehow desire them, he can attain even heaven, liberation, or residence in My abode. (SB 11.20.33)<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> *ye hi saṁsparśa-jā bhogā duḥkha-yonaya eva te  
ādy-antavantaḥ kaunteya na teṣu ramate budhaḥ*

<sup>3</sup> *sarvaṁ mad-bhakti-yogena mad-bhaktō labhate'ñjasā  
svargāpavarge mad-dhāma kathañcid yadi vāñchati*

Devotion to Bhagavān is itself bliss and love and thus the highest goal of life, the ultimate *puruṣārtha*. This will be elaborated in the sixth book of this series, *Prīti Sandarbha*. From the above discussion, it is clearly understood that such devotion to Bhagavān brings an end to all ignorance, suffering, and bondage. *Bhakti* is the path to true irrevocable freedom.

When one attains love for Bhagavān, he is blessed with the direct experience of Him, both within and without. A spiritual aspirant who recognizes and has faith in this truth would certainly strive to direct his or her intentful regard toward Bhagavān. It is for this reason that *śāstra* first enlightens us about Bhagavān (through *sambandha-jñāna*) and then explicitly implores us to take to the path of devotion as the means (*abhidheya*).

In the next *anuccheda*, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī establishes *bhakti* as the preeminent means of *sāmmukhya*. To do so, he refers to Sūta Gosvāmī's reply to Śaunaka Ṛṣi. He continues to develop this theme throughout the following eighteen *anucchedas*.



## Sāmmukhyatā Entails Direct Bhakti

### 3.1

#### All Forms of Sāmmukhyatā Culminate in Bhakti

३ । तत्र यद्यपि श्रवणमननादिकं ज्ञानसाधनमपि तत्साम्मुख्यमेव — ब्रह्माकारस्य तस्या-  
नुभवहेतुत्वात् । अत एव तत्परम्परोपयोगित्वात् साङ्ख्याष्टाङ्गयोगकर्माण्यपि तत्सा-  
म्मुख्यान्येव तथा तेषां कथञ्चिद् भक्तित्वमपि जायते — कर्मणस्तदाज्ञापालनरूपत्वेन  
तदर्पितत्वादिना च करणात् ज्ञानादीनां चान्यत्रानासक्तिहेतुत्वादिद्वारा भक्तिसचिवतया  
विधानात् तथापि पूर्वम् “भक्त्याभजेत्” (भा० ११।२।३७) इत्यनेन कर्मज्ञानादिकं नादृतं  
किन्तु साक्षाद्भक्त्या श्रवणकीर्तनादिलक्षणयैव भजेतेत्युक्तम् ।

**PRACTICES** such as hearing and deliberating on scripture, which are also part of the *sādhana* that pertains to the path of *jñāna*, or “self-inquiry,” certainly involve the redirecting of one’s intentful regard toward the Absolute Reality (*tat-sāmmukhyam*), because they are instrumental in the immediate realization of that Reality as the unqualified Absolute (Brahman). Consequently, the disciplines of *sāṅkhya*, *aṣṭāṅga-yoga*, and *karma-yoga* are also methods of directing one’s regard toward the Absolute (*tat-sāmmukhyam*), because they indirectly lead to the same realization. Sometimes these paths may also lead to *bhakti*.

For example, *karma-yoga* is instrumental in attaining *bhakti*, because it consists of following the orders of Bhagavān, as enjoined in scripture, and because the results of such action are offered to Him. *Jñāna*, *sāṅkhya*, and *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* are recommended as supports to *bhakti* inasmuch as they awaken detachment from all that is nonessential. In spite of acknowledging that these other paths do involve the directing of one’s regard

toward the Absolute, it is clear from the earlier injunction to worship with devotion (*bhaktiyā ābhajet*, SB 11.2.37, *Anuccheda* 1) that *karma*, *jñāna*, and so on, are not held in very high regard. Rather, it was stated that one should worship with direct devotion (*sākṣāt-bhakti*), which involves practices such as hearing and giving verbal expression to the glories of Bhagavān.

## Commentary

IN HIS TEACHINGS to Uddhava, Śrī Kṛṣṇa declares that for the well-being of humanity, He has propounded three types of *yoga*, namely, *karma*, *jñāna*, and *bhakti*. He also adds that apart from these three, there are no other means of attaining freedom from material bondage (SB 11.20.6). Among them, *karma-yoga* is beneficial for those whose minds are still attached to material enjoyment, as it gradually leads to the slackening of desire. *Jñāna-yoga* is suitable for those in whom detachment has been awakened and who have no inclination to strive for material pleasure. *Bhakti-yoga* is meant for those in whom faith has been born in the *śāstrika* revelation of Bhagavān, and who are neither completely repelled by nor excessively attached to worldly life (SB 11.20.7-8).<sup>1</sup>

*Sāṅkhya* and *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* are not mentioned by Kṛṣṇa in the list of *yogas*. They are understood to be subsumed under the category of *jñāna*, because the basic qualification for all three, i.e., *jñāna*, *sāṅkhya*, and *aṣṭāṅga-yoga*, is nonattachment to conditional action. The word *yoga* here means “a path, process, or means.” From this description, it is understood that all three paths involve the turning of one’s intentful regard toward the Absolute Reality (*tat-sāmmukhyam*), and thus all of them constitute specific forms of *abhidheya*, or the prescribed means for attaining freedom from suffering. There is, however, a difference in the goal attained by these three *yogas*. *Karma-yoga* leads to heaven, *jñāna-yoga* to realization

<sup>1</sup> *nirviṇṇānāṁ jñāna-yogo nyāsinām iha karmasu  
teṣv anirviṇṇa-cittānāṁ karma-yogas tu kāminām  
yadṛcchayā mat-kathādau jāta-śraddhas tu yaḥ pumān  
na nirviṇṇo nātisakto bhakti-yogo'sya siddhi-daḥ*

of Brahman, and *bhakti* to the immediate perception of and love for Bhagavān.

*Karma-yoga* promotes awareness of Bhagavān through the prescription to offer one's actions to Him and by orienting the performer to fulfill his worldly duties as the sacred order of Bhagavān propounded in scripture. An example of this type of instruction is as follows:

Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer in sacrifice, whatever you donate in charity, and whatever austerity you perform, O son of Kuntī, do all of that as an offering unto Me. (GĪTĀ 9.27)<sup>2</sup>

Since, however, the performer of *karma-yoga* maintains a sense of independent doership and is predominantly oriented toward his or her own enjoyment, Jīva Gosvāmī makes the point that even offering the results of one's actions is essentially indistinguishable from the state of disaffected regard (*vaimukhya*). Hence, *karma-yoga* is only secondarily a form of *sāmmukhya* inasmuch as it leads either to *jñāna* or *bhakti*.

*Jñāna*, on the other hand, is a direct form of *sāmmukhya*, because it focuses attention on the Absolute Reality (*para-tattva*) in Its unqualified feature as Brahman. Moreover, because Brahman is but an aspect of Bhagavān, the means to Brahman realization (i.e., *jñāna*) is also indirectly *sāmmukhya* of Bhagavān. Here, however, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī begins a lengthy discussion to show that of the three *yogas* prescribed by Kṛṣṇa, only *bhakti-yoga* entails the complete form of *sāmmukhya*, and hence it alone is the true *abhidheya*.

In this regard, we may note that in *Anuccheda* 1, Śrī Jīva had analyzed the root cause of the *jīva*'s conditioned state in universal terms as *para-tattva-vaimukhya*, without specifying the *para-tattva* as Brahman or Bhagavān. Correspondingly, the *abhidheya*,

<sup>2</sup> yat karoṣi yad aśnāsi yaj juhoṣi dadāsi yat  
yat tapasyasi kaunteya tat kuruṣva mad-arpaṇam

which is the means to reverse this condition, was identified as *para-tattva-sāmmukhya*. In the same *anuccheda*, he then defined *sāmmukhya* as *upāsana*, without further specifying *upāsana*. It must be born in mind here that *upāsana* (commonly translated either as “meditation” or “worship”) is a term that is relevant both to the *jñāna-mārga* and the *bhakti-mārga*. Used in regard to the *para-tattva*, its root meaning is “to sit (*āsana*) in the presence (*upa*) of the Absolute Reality (*para-tattva*).” Up to this point in the discussion, Śrī Jīva’s language is relevant to all spiritual practitioners regardless of their path, because it refers to the Absolute only in generic terms as *para-tattva* and identifies the means in corresponding terms as the directing of one’s intentful regard toward that Reality (*sāmmukhya*).

Now in *Anuccheda* 3, Śrī Jīva begins to specify that the most complete manifestation of the *para-tattva* is Bhagavān. Correspondingly, the most complete form of *sāmmukhya* is that which discloses the Absolute as Bhagavān, and this indeed is nothing other than *bhakti*. In this regard, *karma* and *jñāna* are to be considered as subsidiary aspects of the means (*abhidheya*) only if they assist one’s *bhakti* in some capacity. In other words, they are useful only when they are mixed with or facilitate *bhakti* and thus support the turning of one’s intentful regard toward Bhagavān.

It was with this intention that the sage Kavi prescribed exclusive devotion to Bhagavān as the solution to the conditioned state of disaffected regard — *bhaktiyā ekayā īśaṁ budha ābhajet taṁ* (SB 11.2.37, cited in *Anuccheda* 1). The adjective *ekayā*, “one-pointed,” signifies exclusive devotion, unmixed with any other *yoga*. The reason why emphasis is given to *bhakti* alone as the means to overcome illusion is that *māyā* belongs to Bhagavān and not to Brahman or anyone else. Only by taking shelter of the master of the deluding energy can one gain freedom from it.

By way of analogy, this is comparable to the predicament of visiting a friend who has a Rottweiler standing guard just inside the gate to the yard. As soon as you enter the main gate, the dog jumps on you, placing its front paw threateningly on your belly. In that moment, even if you call the neighbors or passers-by for

help, it would be of no avail. If, however, you holler for your friend, then as soon as he comes out and orders the dog to stand down, it will do so immediately, all the while wagging its tail in front of its master. *Māyā* is similarly under the control of its supreme master. Accordingly, in the verse quoted in the previous *anuccheda* (*saṁsāra-hetūparamaḥ*, SB 2.2.6), Śukadeva also recommended worship (*bhajana*) of Bhagavān as the means of uprooting the cause of material existence.