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Introduction

Overview of the Six Sandarbhas

PRĪTI SANDARBHA is the last of the *Six Sandarbhas*, which are collectively known as the *Bhāgavata-sandarbha* or *Ṣaṭ-sandarbha*. The first five in order are the *Tattva*, *Bhagavat*, *Paramātmā*, *Kṛṣṇa*, and *Bhakti Sandarbha*. In the first *Sandarbha*, namely *Tattva Sandarbha* (*Anuccheda* 50), Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī provided a succinct overview of the complete anthology, pointing out that in these *Six Sandarbhas*, the three primary topics of *sambandha*, *abhidheya*, and *prayojana*, as propounded in the authoritative text of *Śrīmad Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, are delineated in sequential order.

The first four *Sandarbhas* — *Tattva*, *Bhagavat*, *Paramātmā*, and *Kṛṣṇa Sandarbha* — treat the first primary topic of *sambandha-tattva*, which Jīva Gosvāmī specifies as “the truth regarding the dynamic relation between the referring text (*vācaka*) and the Subjective Reality to which it refers (*vācya*).” This relation is not merely propositional, involving a set of tenets to be intellectually grasped and accepted on faith as metaphysical truth. Rather, the relation is direct and participatory. As the reader’s attention is drawn into moment-to-moment involvement with the ideational truths disclosed through the self-revealing words of the *Bhāgavata*, the direct experience of one’s own authentic self, the world, Ultimate Reality, and the interwoven relation between them is radically disclosed and transformed. Thus, the first four *Sandarbhas* firmly ground the practitioner in a core view of life that is progressively

refined, enhanced, and accentuated, and which serves as the existential metaview¹ through which the practice can then be enacted in earnest.

In the *Tattva Sandarbha*, the Absolute Reality (*tattva*) is first defined in a quintessential statement of the *Bhāgavata* (1.2.11) as “nondual consciousness” (*advaya-jñāna*), which is self-disclosed in three distinct features as Brahman, Paramātmā, and Bhagavān, in direct correspondence with the existential metaview held by the practitioner. The first three *Sandarbhas* discuss these three features in detail. Among them, Bhagavān is shown to be the most complete disclosure of the nondual *tattva* from a comparative analysis of the ontological status of each of these three features and the existential domains of Being over which they preside. Although Bhagavān manifests in innumerable divine forms, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the original form, Svayaṁ Bhagavān. This is the subject matter of *Kṛṣṇa Sandarbha*, the fourth volume, which reexamines all the core truths regarding Bhagavān in the light of this original, utterly complete disclosure.

The fifth book, *Bhakti Sandarbha*, treats the second of the three primary topics — namely, *abhidheya*, “the effective means prescribed by the *Bhāgavata* to enable the direct disclosure of Bhagavān.” As with the shaping of the practitioner’s relational metaview (*sambandha-jñāna*), the practice (*sādhana*) is to be taken up in a participatory fashion involving the physiological, cognitive, affective, and volitional aspects of the self — in short, the totality of the self. This consummate involvement (*sādhana*) is neatly summed up by Jīva Gosvāmī in the single term *sāmmukhya*, “the turning of one’s intentful regard toward Reality,” which forms the essence of all spiritual practice. If this turning of attention is richly informed by the relational metaview disclosed in the first four *Sandarbhas*, then the practice becomes correspondingly self-revealing of the

¹ The word “metaview” here refers to the profound internalized recognition of fundamental truths that serves to regulate and transform both cognitive and affective processes in an overarching manner to optimally fit the practitioner to the practice and the Ultimate Reality that is thereby disclosed.

very same Reality. This is the true nature of the interwadded relation that exists between *jñāna* and *bhakti* on the path of devotion. In *bhakti*, *jñāna* is not mere theoretical or propositional knowledge but existential metaframing of the practitioner’s cognitive-affective apparatus that directly bears upon and is reciprocally impacted by the involvement in *sādhana*.

This brings us to the third of the three primary topics — namely, *prayojana*, “the completion state to be attained through realization of the means,” which is elaborated in the final volume of the series, *Prīti Sandarbha*. Because of the integral relation that exists between the three core principles of *sambandha*, *abhidheya*, and *prayojana*, the completion state to be attained is determined both by the practitioner’s relational metaview (*sambandha-jñāna*) and by the direct participatory involvement (*sādhana*), or turning of one’s intentful regard (*sāmmukhya*), that is correspondingly informed. Thus, in regard to the complete disclosure of the nondual *tattva* as Bhagavān, Jīva Gosvāmī argues that the end state to be attained (*prayojana*) cannot be simple liberation (*mukti*), for the liberated state is merely the existential ground in which the play of divine love (*prīti*) is made possible in the highest sense. From this starting point, in which *prīti*’s radical encompassment and transcendence of *mukti* is clearly shown, Jīva Gosvāmī goes on in this volume to illuminate the intrinsic nature, dynamic effectivity, and transcendental aesthetics of divine love with astonishing detail and insight.

Profound Well-being Devoid of Misery Is the Foundational Goal

In Jīva Gosvāmī’s investigation into the ultimate goal attainable by human beings (*prayojana*), he first defines this goal in the most basic and universal terms as the state of happiness or “profound well-being” (*sukha*) uninterrupted by misery (*duḥkha*). By beginning the investigation here, he frames the discussion in pragmatic terms, addressing the crisis of meaning faced by all human beings,

irrespective of the temporal or cultural settings. Had the discussion begun by immediately professing an abstract or otherworldly goal, its relevance would not have been perceived to be universal or efficacious in nature. Starting from the implicit embodied disposition to seek a state of profound well-being divorced from misery, Jīva Gosvāmī systematically builds his case, demonstrating that this state culminates exclusively in divine love (*prīti*).

In this vein, it is abundantly evident that life is full of both pains and pleasures. Everyone — rich or poor, young or old, male, female, or eunuch — experiences both of these conditions without exception. The natural instinct of every living being is to seek a state of sustained well-being and to become free from all dangers and miseries (*sukha-prāpti-duḥkha-nivṛttiś ca*). This instinct is most developed in human beings. All our efforts, conscious or unconscious, are directed toward that end. Thus, everyone's most pressing aim in life (*puruṣārtha*), on which all philosophers, theologians, and even common people can agree, is the attainment of sustained well-being bereft of the experience of suffering. If we experience pain, we naturally endeavor to become relieved of it. And when relieved of the pain, we then yearn for happiness. Thus, attaining freedom from pain is our first concern.

According to Vedānta philosophy, the sufferings faced by human beings are of three categories, namely, *adhyātmika*, or those that derive from our own body and mind, such as physical ailments and mental distress; *adhibhautika*, or those that are caused by other living beings, such as ferocious animals, bugs, mosquitoes, and enemies; and *adhidaivika*, or those that result from natural calamities, such as earthquakes, tsunamis, hurricanes, floods, famine, cloudbursts, and lightning. Human beings have always striven to cope with these problems and endeavored to become free from or reduce their sufferings. With the advancement of science and technology, much success has been achieved in counteracting disease, defending ourselves against natural enemies, and providing protection from natural calamities. Yet, the overall condition of humanity is far from satisfactory. Scientific advancement has not yet accorded a complete solution to human suffering. Even if a

particular type of problem or suffering is dealt with successfully, others emerge to the surface.

Correspondingly, there is no permanent source of happiness. Undoubtedly, technology has provided a better standard of life and varied ways of enjoying it. Yet, the level of happiness in general has not increased. Rather, with the complexification and depersonalization of life brought by scientific advancement, the levels of stress, mental anxiety, and existential angst have only increased. Moreover, the material pleasures awarded by various gadgets are temporary and do not address the true crisis of meaning faced by human beings. People, in general, are still left with a sense of emptiness within. Thus the technological solution to the acquisition of happiness and dispelling of suffering is seen to be deficient at the very root, reducing the state of existential well-being to the condition of having many temporary pleasurable items.

Next to be considered is the solution offered by conventional religion. Most major religions of the world advocate a system of belief along with an accompanying set of rituals and practices that are meant to ensure the attainment of heaven, where life is full of happiness and without any suffering. Some philosophers prescribe the path of self-abnegation in this life. They advocate the shunning of sensual pleasures and promise a life of eternal bliss after death. The fact is, however, that no material undertaking can award an unending result. If the cause is temporary and limited, the effect cannot be permanent and unlimited. Moreover, the entire material creation itself is subject to cyclical periods of manifestation and dissolution, and thus the heaven being promised, which is merely the highest plane of the cosmos, cannot be a permanent place.

On this note, Śrī Kṛṣṇa affirms that when a living being's stock of pious credits is exhausted through enjoyment in heaven, he or she returns to the mortal world (GĪTĀ 9.21). Furthermore, heaven is not completely free from suffering. Scriptures such as the Purāṇas inform us that sometimes even heaven is attacked and captured by a class of ungodly beings called *asuras*. At such times, even Indra, the lord of heaven, is compelled to run away to a safe haven.

Besides, inequality in the standard of luxury and pleasure exists even in heaven, which leads to pride among those more privileged and envy among those less advantaged. This too is the basis of suffering. Consequently, even the attainment of heaven is shown to be an inadequate and impermanent solution to the problem of suffering.

Inquiry into Life's Ultimate Goal

Taking the above discussion into consideration, we must look for a solution that is not fraught with these deficiencies. That solution is systematically elaborated by Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī in *Prīti Sandarbha*. He first analyzes that the root cause of suffering is the beginningless prior absence of direct knowing of the Absolute (*anādi-tattva-jñāna-abhāva*). This absence in the cognitive framework defines the basic psychological constraint of the *jīvas* in the conditioned state. This constraint, however, can be removed through the inculcation of wisdom, or immediate knowing of the Absolute. Thus, to address the problem of suffering at its root, the solution lies in the immediate cognition of the Absolute (*tattva-sākṣātkāra*), which frees the agents from all identification with misery and situates them in a state of perpetual, unconditional well-being. Consequently, at the most fundamental level, direct realization of the Absolute (*tattva-sākṣātkāra*) is the most pressing need and thus the real goal of human life (*puruṣārtha*), coessential with *mukti*. This is the foundation of Jīva Gosvāmī's argument on which he erects the edifice of *prīti*.

The next step in the procedural analysis is to examine more precisely exactly what is implied by the term *tattva*, since this is the very object that is meant to be realized. It was explained in *Bhagavat Sandarbha* (Anucchedas 2–4) that one Absolute Nondual Reality (*parama-advaya-tattva*) is self-disclosed in three features as Brahman, Paramātmā, and Bhagavān. So the question naturally arises, what are the distinguishing features that define these three disclosures while still preserving their essential unity as one Nondual Absolute? Associated with this consideration is the question as to

whether a hierarchical order of Being pertains between these three disclosures.

The traditional approach of the impersonal nondual wisdom schools, which argue on the basis of formal logic, is to deny all qualification (*viśeṣaṇa*) in the Absolute. At first glance, this *a priori* constraint seems necessary to avoid the dualism that would otherwise pertain between the Absolute as essential substance (*vastu*) and the various qualities (*guṇas*) by which It would thereby be delimited (*upādhita*). From this perspective, Brahman, the unqualified Absolute, would be the highest disclosure of the nondual *tattva*. Jīva Gosvāmī, however, reframes the question from the very root, demonstrating that this argument is subject to the error of mistaking the Absolute's transcendental qualification (*aprākṛta-viśeṣaṇa*) for the qualifications that pertain to the realm of formal logic and worldly experience (*prākṛta-viśeṣaṇa*). In other words, this argument itself imposes a limitation on the Absolute in the very attempt to ensure Its freedom from limitation. By categorically depriving the Absolute of all qualification, Its transcendental qualification, which sustains and discloses Its nondual essentiality, is thereby also denied.

Employing the terms *viśeṣaṇa*, *viśeṣya*, and *viśiṣṭa*, Jīva Gosvāmī turns the traditional view on its head, arguing that Brahman is nothing other than the one nondual *tattva* stripped of the disclosure of Its intrinsic transcendental qualification. Consequently, as the unqualified Absolute, Brahman is merely the *viśeṣya*, or that feature of the Absolute that awaits (and conceals) the disclosure of Its qualification. Thus, although Brahman, as the Absolute, is certainly complete (*pūrṇa*), It is embedded in a yet higher existential order of completion. On the other hand, Bhagavān is the *viśiṣṭa*, the same nondual *tattva* intrinsically self-endowed with Its own transcendental qualification and thus self-disclosed in Its own original state of utter completion (*pūrṇatama*). From this perspective, Bhagavān is clearly the highest and most complete disclosure of the nondual *tattva*. Connecting this argument to his original point, Jīva Gosvāmī shows that the immediate intuition of Bhagavān (*bhagavat-sākṣātkāra*) is superior to and inclusive of the

sākṣātkāra of Brahman and Paramātmā. Consequently, after first establishing *tattva-sākṣātkāra* as the *puruṣārtha*, he then specifies the direct realization of Bhagavān (*bhagavat-sākṣātkāra*) as the real goal to be attained.

Taking the argument a step further, Jīva Gosvāmī next makes the point that the immediate intuition of Bhagavān (*bhagavat-sākṣātkāra*) is made possible only by endowment with *prīti*, which discloses Bhagavān's essential nature (*svabhāva*) as the supreme ground and object (*āspada*) of unconditional love (*nirupādhi-prīti*). Without *prīti*, even the direct vision of Bhagavān amounts to no more than a semblance of true seeing (*sākṣātkāra-ābhāsa*), as in the case of those of impure hearts such as Duryodhana and Jarāsandha, who saw Kṛṣṇa directly but remained inimical toward Him. Their seeing was as good as not seeing at all. Consequently, by way of this systematic investigation, the ultimate goal to be attained (*parama-puruṣārtha*) is established as *prīti* for Bhagavān.

To summarize the conclusion in mathematical terms, Jīva Gosvāmī sets forth the following formula: *parama-tattva-sākṣātkāra* = *paramānanda* = *parama-puruṣārtha*. In this regard, he undertakes a comparative analysis of the various grades of bliss, beginning from the bliss of material prosperity (*martyānanda*) to that of the realization of the self (*ātmānanda*), the apperception of the unqualified Absolute (*brahmānanda*), and culminating in the bliss of the immediate intuition of Bhagavān (*bhagavat-sākṣātkāra*), which is shown to be all-exceeding both in magnitude and aesthetic quality. Bhagavān's very own essential constitution (*svarūpa*) is that of supreme unadulterated bliss (*paramānanda* or *kevalānanda*), and He can be attained only by *prīti*, which is devoid of all ulterior motive. Thus, *prīti* is not only the means of attainment but also the very end to be attained. Since, however, *prīti* is not commonly understood, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī writes the last of the Six *Sandarbhās* to elucidate its true nature.

Prīti Is Superior to Mukti

In India, liberation (*mokṣa* or *mukti*) is traditionally considered the highest *puruṣārtha*. Strictly speaking, however, *mukti*, literally meaning “freedom, deliverance, or release,” is a purely negative term, signifying the cessation of the experience of misery. It does not directly denote a positive state of bliss, here meaning a transegoic state of beatitude beyond the mere eradication of suffering. This negative type of *mukti* is specified as the goal by those who adhere to the philosophical schools of Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika, Sāṅkhya, Yoga, and Advaita Vedānta. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī argues, however, that in order to be complete, the end state to be attained (*parama-puruṣārtha*) must be of the nature of bliss and not merely the cessation of misery. To validate his point, he specifies the following five divisions of *mukti* based on the evidence of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*: the transpersonal liberation of conscious identity or unity with the Absolute (*sāyujya*), the attainment of Bhagavān’s own divine abode (*sālokyā*), endowment with divine opulence comparable to that of Bhagavān (*sārṣṭi*), attainment of a divine form similar in constitution to that of Bhagavān (*sārūpya*), and perpetual abidance in the proximity of Bhagavān (*sāmīpya*).

Among these five, the first, namely *sāyujya*, is the type of impersonal liberation that is most commonly referred to by the word *mukti*. *Sāyujya* has two divisions — absorption of one’s conscious identity in Brahman (*brahma-sāyujya*) and absorption of one’s conscious identity in Bhagavān (*bhagavat-sāyujya*). Neither of these is recommended by Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī because the merging of conscious identity in either manifestation of the *tattva* imposes a categorical limitation on the range of direct participatory involvement with the *tattva* in its utter completion as Bhagavān. Being grounded in the state of radical nondistinction (*kevala-abheda*), this type of *mukti* denies all possibility of *prīti*. In both types of *sāyujya*, the liberated individual is freed from all material suffering. In *brahma-sāyujya*, there is no explicit experience of bliss. In *bhagavat-sāyujya*, however, there is a faint experience of bliss by virtue of the identification with Bhagavān. But this too is abhorred

by devotees, who long only to please Bhagavān through ever newly unfolding loving reciprocation and not to appropriate His bliss.

Among the four types of personal liberation, *sāmīpya* is considered preeminent because the external direct manifestation of Bhagavān (*bahih-sākṣātkāra*) is predominant therein. True devotees, however, do not hanker for any of these types of liberation because they are intent only on rendering loving service to Bhagavān. Moreover, *mukti* is naturally included in *prīti*. A devotee may sometimes accept one or more of the four types of *mukti* if they assist in one's service to Bhagavān. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī affirms that *mukti* is attained only by the *sākṣātkāra* of Bhagavān, and this is possible only by means of *prīti*. Thus, he rightly concludes that *prīti* is superior to *mukti*.

Prīti Defined

A subject is substantiated by specifying its definition and the pragmatic means for its significance and scope to be “real-ized” — both in the sense of “comprehended” and “made real.” Consequently, after establishing *prīti* as the ultimate goal of human life (*parama-puruṣārtha*) — the sole truly significant object that supplies meaning to all other pursuits — Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī sets forth the formal definition of *prīti*. It is crucial to grasp this definition in order to understand the elucidation of *prīti* that follows in the remainder of the book. First, however, we must consider the problem posed by the conventional view of love, an indispensable reference frame that nonetheless tends to obscure genuine discernment of what is meant by *prīti*.

In general reference, the word *prīti* simply means “love,” which is a very common word used by all people. Yet the commonly held notion of love is not the same as what is implied by the word *prīti* in its technical sense as defined by Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī. Indeed, his definition of the term is a very subtle and difficult concept to grasp. There are a few reasons for this. First, love is quite possibly the most popular word in any language, universal in its application. When a word is overused, it tends to lose its original sense. It is

comparable to repeatedly eating the same dish of food. Eaten every day, even a favorite dish loses its charm and appeal. On account of this overfamiliarity, almost everyone uses the word “love” without paying attention to its meaning. Although people use it regularly or hear it being used, they normally never reflect on its true import. Every word has one or more meanings. According to the *Nyāya-siddhānta-muktāvalī*, the meaning of a word is generally understood through the following methods:

1. From grammar (*vyākaraṇa*). For example, we know the meaning of the word “went” as the past perfect form of the verb “to go.”
2. From analogy (*upamāna*). We may learn the meaning of the word “lime” by hearing that it is similar to a lemon.
3. From a dictionary (*koṣa*), such as the Oxford Student Dictionary.
4. By hearing the authoritative statements of others (*āpta-vākyā*), as when parents teach their children about the various bodily parts, such as the nose and eyes.
5. Through social interactions (*vyavahāra*). For example, a person may not know what an iPad is, but when visiting a friend, he hears the friend ask his wife, “Please bring my iPad.” When she hands him the instrument, the person sees it directly and understands the meaning of the word.
6. By the elucidation of the meaning of a word (*vivṛteḥ*). For example, a person reads or hears that a planet is a heavenly body that orbits the sun.

Surprisingly, however, we use many words in our daily lives without knowing the precise definition or meaning. We may not have understood the meaning by any of the above methods. Rather, we may hold only a vague idea of the meaning of many words regularly employed. “Love,” indeed, is such a word.

Another reason for our difficulty in understanding love is that we think we already know what it is. As a result, we make no effort to examine it more critically. Or, if it is being elaborated, we do not pay attention to it. Everyone claims to have some experience of love. The status of love that Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī explains here, however, is categorically distinct from whatever we may have experienced. In fact, we have never experienced anything like what he

describes. Thus, we have absolutely no idea about it. But we can easily misunderstand it by projecting upon it our material notion of love.

For these reasons, Jīva Gosvāmī endeavors to elucidate the true nature of *prīti*. To provide a basis for discussing his formal definition of *prīti*, he first cites the following verse from *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*. In spite of the complication involved, it is seen even here that *prīti*'s unique status can be effectively demonstrated only in contradistinction to worldly love: "May unceasing love (*anapāyini prītiḥ*), such as those bereft of discernment have for the objects of worldly experience, never slip from my heart, engaged as I am in constant remembrance of You" (*Viṣṇu Purāṇa* 1.20.19).²

This is a verse spoken by the great devotee Prahlāda to Śrī Nṛsiṃhadeva. He provides an example by way of reference to the worldly affection (*prīti*) that ordinary people have for sense objects. An example is linguistically defined as an ideational structure that is intelligible both to the instructor as well as the uninformed audience. Examples aid in understanding an unknown object or phenomenon by way of reference to that which is already known. In the present case, however, the example can also be a hindrance because the *prīti* that is known is material (*prākṛta*), whereas the *prīti* that is under investigation is transcendental (*aprākṛta*). Since these two types of *prīti* belong to two entirely distinct categories of Being, the comparison between them can only be in terms of the identity of their defining characteristic and not in terms of their essential constitution. Consequently, in his explanation of this verse, Jīva Gosvāmī first emphatically makes the point that the two types of *prīti* share a oneness in terms of their defining characteristic (*lakṣaṇaikya*). In spite of this, however, he goes on to say that the two types of *prīti* are categorically distinct since the material *prīti* is a functional capacity of the extrinsic potency (*māyā-śakti-vṛtti*), whereas the transcendental *prīti* is a functional capacity of Bhagavān's own intrinsic potency (*svarūpa-śakti-vṛtti*). This distinction must be carefully kept in mind throughout the

² *yā prītir avivekānām viṣayeṣv anapāyini*
tvām anusmarataḥ sā me hṛdayān nāpasarpatu (māpasarpatu)

discussion. Otherwise, one type of *prīti* may be misunderstood for the other.

This brings us at last to Jīva Gosvāmī's formal definition of *prīti*. He first makes the point that the word *prīti* signifies both "a state of profound happiness" (*sukha*) — which includes joy (*mut*), delight (*pramoda*), exuberance (*harṣa*), and bliss (*ānanda*) — and "a state of fondness" (*priyatā*), which includes affection (*bhāva*), tenderness (*hārda*), and friendliness (*sauhṛda*). He then defines happiness (*sukha*) as a particular state of consciousness (*jñāna-viśeṣa*) that is rooted in the feeling of elation (*ullāsa*). Fondness (*priyatā*), on the other hand, is defined as a particular state of consciousness (*jñāna-viśeṣa*), the very essence of which is a favorable disposition toward its intended object (*viṣaya-ānukūlya-ātmaka*), without any self-serving motives for personal satisfaction. Additionally, this state of consciousness is pervaded by a feeling of elation (*ullāsa*) caused by the immediate experience of love's object (*tad-anubhava*), which itself proceeds from the yearning to attain it (*tat-sprhā*). The foundation of this elation, however, is the core attitude of agreeableness toward love's object (*tad-ānukūlyānugata*), because it is the root even of the yearning to attain love's object, which sets the causal chain of affectivity in motion. Whatever is pleasing to the beloved also gives pleasure to the lover, resulting naturally as a concomitant effect of *prīti*. Consequently, even though *priyatā* also includes the affective state of happiness (*sukham*), it is distinguished from and superior to it.

The state of fondness (*priyatā*), which is *prīti*'s primary defining characteristic, is essentially rooted in the selfless disposition to bring about the happiness of the beloved. For this reason, it transcends the state of happiness (*sukha*) by disregarding all considerations of one's personal happiness. The fact that the beloved is happy brings happiness to the person who extends love. But even such concomitant happiness may occasionally become an obstacle if it then impedes the initiative to please the beloved through continuous loving service. The true lover disdains any such happiness. Indeed, the lover does not even desire to obtain the beloved for her own pleasure if this desire hinders in any way the happiness of

her beloved. In this case, the perpetuated state of separation from the beloved does not cause distress to the lover because the very thought of the beloved's happiness brings joy to her heart.

On the other hand, if the beloved is happy and this brings joy to the lover's heart, even this joy is not independently relishable but is grounded in the recognition that happiness is being afforded to the beloved. Thus the happiness experienced in love is not the same type of happiness one experiences by contacting pleasurable sense objects. It is a different standard of happiness. In fact, externally, it may even occasionally appear like suffering, as in the case of the separation between the *gopīs* and Kṛṣṇa. Thus in love, although one's concern is exclusively for the happiness of one's beloved, bereft of any conscious desire for personal satisfaction, the lover is nonetheless afforded a distinct quality of joy that transcends the normal type of happiness experienced in general.

This type of *prīti* is not to be found in material relations. Although worldly love may externally appear similar to spiritual love, it is always self-centered because it is based on the egoic identification with the material body. The word "self" in the term "self-centered" refers not to the authentic self (*ātmā*) but to the body-mind complex, which is a phenomenological construct. Accordingly, material love is a functional capacity belonging to material nature (*prakṛti*). Spiritual love, however, is a functional capacity of Bhagavān's own intrinsic potency. It is conscious and perpetually evolving, and its very nature is bliss. It is bereft of all vested interest and awards complete fulfillment to the living beings. Having once attained it, nothing further remains to be obtained. Although it is not inherent in the constitutional makeup of living beings, it can be sympathetically imbibed through the grace of a highly realized devotee or Bhagavān. The cowherd damsels of Vraja are the supreme ideal of this *prīti*.

To build on his above explicit definition of *prīti* and significantly extend it, Jīva Gosvāmī then specifies the partial and complete manifestations of *prīti*. In this regard, he undertakes a critical examination of the various graded stages of incomplete love based on an analysis of the intent (*tātparya*) involved in the loving act and

the degree to which other attachments may still be present (*anyā-saṅga*). The key point being made in this examination is that in the most profound sense, *prīti* has *prīti* alone for its intended aim (*tātparya*). From the stage of *prīti*'s explicit arising (*prakaṭodaya-avasthā*), in which no more than a semblance (*ābhāsa-mātra*) of other attachment is to be found in the agent, *prīti*'s manifestation is said to be complete (*samyak*). By thus explicitly clarifying what he means by *prīti* through this critical analysis, Jīva Gosvāmī lays the foundation for its relevant discussion in the remainder of *Prīti Sandarbha*.

Developmental Unfolding of *Prīti*

Up to this point in this introduction, we have briefly examined the first two of the four major themes in Jīva Gosvāmī's presentation of *Prīti Sandarbha*. The first major theme is concerned with establishing *prīti* as the *parama-puruṣārtha* in the most universal terms (*Anucchedas* 1–60). The second major theme is concerned with providing a precise definition of *prīti* that serves as the basis of its ongoing elucidation (*Anucchedas* 61–83). The third major theme deals with the developmental unfolding of *prīti* (*Anucchedas* 84–109), and the fourth, with the examination of *prīti* as *rasa* (*Anucchedas* 110–429). In this schematic design, the first three topics lay the groundwork for the discussion of the final topic, which occupies the greater portion of the book. As a convenience to the reader, this thematic division of topics is concisely shown in the “*Prīti Sandarbha* at a Glance” schematic diagram found in the appendix. This diagram serves as an effective navigational tool to make evident how the major topics, along with their subtopics are interknit to form a synthetic whole.

In discussing *prīti*'s developmental unfolding (*Anucchedas* 84–109), Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī first delineates the eight graded stages of *prīti* — namely, *rati*, *prema*, *praṇaya*, *māna*, *sneha*, *rāga*, *anurāga*, and *mahā-bhāva*. In this connection, he then discusses the different integrated self-concepts (*abhimānas*) with which the liberated devotees are endowed in response to the disclosure to them of

a specific essential nature (*svabhāva-viśeṣa*) of Bhagavān. In this regard, he shows the developmental unfolding of the integrated self-concept (*abhimāna*) from its most rudimentary form in the *jñāni-bhaktas* to its radically complete form in Kṛṣṇa's amorous lovers (*kāntās*). Then, to link the gradation of *prīti* to that of the devotees' *abhimāna*, he specifies the extent of *prīti*'s manifestation in the different categories of liberated devotees, from the *jñāni-bhaktas* to the *preyasīs*.

In the context of the same discussion, Jīva Gosvāmī emphasizes the importance of Bhagavān's own *abhimāna* in regard to the *parikaras* and the critical role played by *mamatā* and *abhimāna* in the intensification of *prīti*. Without assuming the identity (*abhimāna*) of a lover, there can be no extension of love, and without the profound sense of relatedness by which one looks upon love's object as "mine" (*mamatā*), *prīti* remains enfeebled. Finally, to bring a sense of completion to this entire discussion, Jīva Gosvāmī explains the gradation of *bhāvas* in the *parikaras* from the *dāśya-bhaktas* up to the amorous lovers (*kāntās*). Among the latter, the Vraja-devīs are shown to be supreme, and among them, Rādhā is the foremost. A key factor that serves as the basis of discussion throughout this section is the analysis of the two aspects of Bhagavān's intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*), namely *aīśvarya* and *mādhurya*. It is the *parikaras*' experience of either of these two features or some combination of both that determines the qualitative nature and magnitude of their *prīti*.

The Establishment of Prīti As Rasa

This brings us at last to the culminating topic of this book and, indeed, of the *Sandarbhās* as a whole — namely, the elaboration of *prīti* as transcendental aesthetic delight (*aprākṛta-rasa*, Anucchedas 110–429). From the time of Bharata Muni, the original systematizer of the *rasa* theory in his *Nāṭya-śāstra*, up to Abhinavaguptā, the fourth major commentator on Bharata's seminal work, *bhakti* was not accepted as a *rasa* by the secular aestheticians. Consequently, Jīva Gosvāmī's first strategy in this section is to establish the validity of *bhakti* as a *rasa* with reference to the same criteria set by the recognized authorities in the field of secular aesthetics (Anucchedas 110–111.7).

In this regard, Jīva Gosvāmī specifies that the criteria of eligibility for the enablement of *rasa* are of three varieties — namely, “fundamental fitness” (*svarūpa-yogyatā*) of the primary constituent (*rati*) to function as the *sthāyi-bhāva* of the aesthetic experience (*rasa*); “fitness of the supportive components” (*parikara-yogyatā*) to nourish the *sthāyi-bhāva* into a relishable sentiment, here referring to the *vibhāvas*, *anubhāvas*, and *vyabhicāri-bhāvas*; and “fitness of the agent” (*puruṣa-yogyatā*) to function as the existential support for the manifestation of *rasa*. By systematically demonstrating that *bhakti* fulfills all these criteria by its essential nature, Jīva Gosvāmī affirms that there can be no objection to its admittance along with the eight or nine *rasas* accepted by the secular aestheticians.

Having accomplished this first essential task, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī then takes a radical step and completely turns the standard view of aesthetics on its head. By examining the qualitative nature (*vastu-vicāra*) of the emotive components of the secular *rasa*, he demonstrates that these components themselves are incapable of giving rise to the otherworldly bliss (*alaukika-sukha*) that is the hallmark of *rasa*. In this vein, he argues that in the case of *laukika-rati*, its supportive components beginning with its determinant causes (*kāraṇas*), due to their phenomenal character (*laukikatva*), are incapable of their own accord to nourish *rati* through their respective functions, beginning with enabling *rati* with the fitness

to sprout in the form of subtle relish (*vibhāvana*). Moreover, the *rati* of secular aesthetics is itself unstable (*asthāyi*). Its stability is only in the form of the observer's psychic predisposition (*vāsanā*) to empathize with the emotion being portrayed based on previous experience of the same emotion. Thus in *laukika-rasa*, it is due only to a master poet's skill in artistic composition that the emotive components are elevated to an otherworldly status (*alaukikatva*) and thus become fit (*yogya*) to nourish *rati*. In the case of *bhagavat-prīti*, however, the supportive components are transcendental (*alaukika*) and essentially constituted of wonder (*adbhuta-rūpatva*) by their very own intrinsic nature. Thus in the most fundamental sense, *bhagavat-prīti-rasa* is the only genuinely transformative aesthetic experience by its very constitution.

The Emotive Components of Bhagavat-prīti-rasa

Having completed his critical analysis of the standard *rasa* theory, which provides ample justification for the acceptance of *prīti* as *rasa*, Jīva Gosvāmī begins the discussion of *bhagavat-prīti-rasa* in earnest. He first lays the foundation for the elucidation of the individual *rasas* that come later by presenting a general overview of the emotive components of *prīti-rasa* (*Anucchedas* 111.8–158.6). In this regard, he discusses in order the two divisions of *ālambana-vibhāva* (*viṣaya* and *āśraya*), *uddīpana-vibhāva*, the two divisions of *anubhāvas* (*udbhāsva* and *sāttvika*), and the *sañcāri-bhāvas*, illustrating each with examples from the *Bhāgavata*. In this section, Jīva Gosvāmī's main concern is with the elaboration of the excipients (*uddīpanas*) of *prīti-rasa*, which he breaks down into five categories — namely, Kṛṣṇa's divine attributes (*guṇas*), the native community to which He belongs (*jāti*), His transcendental acts (*kriyā*), personal paraphernalia (*dravya*), and sacred occasions related to Him (*kāla*, such as *Janmāṣṭamī* and *Ekādaśī*). These same five categories of *uddīpanas* will be examined again later in specific reference to the five primary *rasas*. Jīva Gosvāmī concludes this entire section by stating that *bhagavat-prīti-rasa* is essentially constituted

of the conjunction (*saṁvalana*) of the emotive components thus described.

Gauṇa-rasa

Having presented a general overview of the emotive components of *bhavadat-prīti-rasa*, Jīva Gosvāmī then takes up the discussion of the individual *rasas*, beginning with the seven secondary (*gauṇa*) *rasas* (*Anucchedas* 158.7–174.1). He humorously justifies his decision to treat the *gauṇa-rasas* first by stating that this is in keeping with the principle “that one should save the sweets for last” (*madhureṇa samāpayet*). The seven secondary *rasas* in order are wonder (*adbhuta*), humor (*hāsyā*), chivalry (*vīra*), fury (*raudra*), terror (*bhayānaka*), abhorrence (*bībhatsa*), and pathos (*karuṇa*). The five primary (*mukhya*) *rasas*, which are discussed at the end of the book, are to be understood as devotion predominated by the immediate intuition of Bhagavān (*jñāna-bhakti-maya*), divine servitude (*bhakti-maya*), parental affection (*vātsalya*), friendship (*maitrī-maya*), and amorous love (*ujjvala*).

To distinguish these two categories of *rasas*, Jīva Gosvāmī makes the significant point that the permanent foundational affects (*sthāyi-bhāvas*) of the five primary *rasas* are the primary emotive states (*mukhya-bhāvas*) because they are the refuge (*āśraya*) for the seven secondary *bhāvas*, beginning with wonder (*vismaya*), as well as their permanent substratum (*niyata-ādhāra*). For this reason, the *rasas* corresponding to these five *sthāyi-bhāvas* are also primary (*mukhya*). On the other hand, the seven secondary *sthāyi-bhāvas* are secondary emotive states (*gauṇa-bhāvas*) because they are included within *bhāgavata-rasa* only by virtue of their relation to *bhagavat-prīti* and because they are temporary substrata (*anīyata-ādhāra*), arising only occasionally within the five types of loving devotees. Consequently, the *rasas* corresponding to these secondary *sthāyi-bhāvas* are also secondary (*gauṇa*).

Rasābhāsa

After concluding his description of the seven secondary *rasas*, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī begins his elaboration of the topic of *rasābhāsa* (*Anuccheda*s 174.2–202), which he divides into three categories — namely, *ābhāsatva*, or the occlusion of an appropriate *rasa* by combination with an inappropriate *rasa* or *bhāva*; *rasollāsa*, the exultation of *rasa* by combination with an inappropriate *rasa* or *bhāva*; and *rasābhāsollāsa*, the exultation of a semblance of the aesthetic experience. Among these three, he specifies the occlusion (*ābhāsatva*) of *rasa* as “the obstruction in the relishing of *rasa*” (*bādhyamānāsvādyatvam ābhāsatvam*). This obstruction occurs when the *sthāyi-bhāva* that is being developed into the experience of *rasa* is inhibited by contact with other aesthetic sentiments (*rasas*) that are inappropriate to its fundamental constitution (*rasasyāyogya-rasāntarādi-saṅgatyā*). This topic forms the major point of discussion in this section.

In the course of this examination, Jīva Gosvāmī cites numerous examples from *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* that seem to involve instances of *rasābhāsa*. Because, however, the *Bhāgavata* has been established as the supreme authority in the matter of the disclosure of the Absolute as Bhagavān, who is *rasa* Himself (*raso vai saḥ*), there is no possibility of it containing any impure or occluded *rasas*. Jīva Gosvāmī carefully examines these cases and vindicates them of any potential deficiency. He thereby demonstrates that *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* is free of the defect of *rasābhāsa*.

The Five Primary Rasas

The five primary (*mukhya*) *rasas*, which are essentially constituted of specific varieties of *prīti* for Bhagavān, are discussed in the final subsection of the book (*Anuccheda*s 203–429). Jīva Gosvāmī designates these five *rasas* as follows — *śānta-bhakti-rasa*, *bhakti-maya-rasa* (of three varieties, *āśraya*, *dāśya*, and *praśraya*), *vatsala-rasa*, *maitrī-rasa*, and *ujjvala-rasa*. In his treatment of each of these

rasas, Jīva Gosvāmī discusses in order the objective support (*viṣaya-ālambana*), namely Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the subjective supports (*ādhāra* or *āśraya-ālambana*), the five categories of excitants discussed above under the general *rasa* theory (*uddīpanas*), the intentional ecstatic responses (*anubhāvas*), the involuntary ecstatic responses arising from the state of unalloyed being (*sāttvika-bhāvas*), the transitory emotions (*sañcāri-bhāvas*), the permanent foundational affect (*sthāyi-bhāva*), and the *rasa* in question, illustrating each with examples. The first four *rasas* are discussed in *Anuccedhas* 203–273, with the treatment of each successive *rasa* becoming progressively more elaborated. The discussion of *ujjvala-rasa*, however, is by far the most intricate and comprehensive, taking up the major portion of this entire subsection (*Anuccedhas* 274–429).

Ujjvala-rasa, also called *mādhurya-* or *śṛṅgāra-rasa*, is the culmination of all the *rasas*. Jīva Gosvāmī specifies three divisions of the subjective supports (*ādhāra*) of this *rasa* — namely, the common heroines such as Kumbhā (*sāmānyā*), Kṛṣṇa’s queens who lawfully belong to Him (*svīyā*), and the Vraja-devīs, to whom he assigns both the terms *parakīyā* and *parama-svīyā*. By using the two terms together, his intent is to say that although in the *prakāṣa-līlā* the *gopīs* appear as though wives of other men (*parakīyā*), from the perspective of ontological being (*vastutaḥ*), their belongingness to Kṛṣṇa is of the absolute transcendental order (*parama-svīyā*). The Vraja-devīs, who are in the mood of *parakīyā*, are the supreme subjective supports (*āśraya*) of *ujjvala-rasa*, being endowed with incomparable beauty, a plethora of divine attributes, and exceptional skill in all the aesthetic arts, by which they are optimally suited to please Kṛṣṇa in the most utterly complete fashion.

To round out the topic of the subjective supports (*ādhāra*) of *ujjvala-rasa*, Jīva Gosvāmī then discusses the varieties of heroines among the Vraja-devīs as well as the divisions of their friends and rivals. He states that Kṛṣṇa’s consorts (*vallabhās*) are of three classifications — namely, *mugdhā*, “young and inexperienced,” *madhyā*, “intermediate in youth and experience,” and *pragalbhā*, “mature and highly experienced.” These three classifications of consorts are

determined on the basis of their respective ages and corresponding behavior. Additionally, in accordance with the differences in their basic natures (*svabhāva*), there are three further divisions — namely, *dhīrā*, “composed,” *adhīrā*, “contentious,” and *dhīrādhīrā*, “a mixture of these two dispositions” (i.e., “partly composed and partly contentious”).

As an extension of the same topic, Jīva Gosvāmī makes the point that according to whether the mutual interrelations between the *gopīs* of differing affective dispositions (*bhāvas*) are marked by compatibility (*sādrśya*), slight compatibility (*kiñcit-sādrśya*), indistinct compatibility (*asphuṭa-sādrśya*), or opposition (*virodhitva*), there is a further fourfold division of the *gopīs* as friends (*sakhī*), well-wishers (*suhṛt*), neutral participants (*taṭasthā*), and rivals (*prātipakṣikī*), respectively. In this regard, he clarifies that among the divine sports of Śrī Bhagavān, the essential nature (*svabhāva*) of His amorous play in particular (*śṛṅgāra-kṛīḍā*) is such that by drawing support from an astonishing variety of affective states displayed by His beloveds of diverse natures (*tat-tad-bhāva-vaicitrī*), which conform externally even to adverse emotional responses such as envy, self-conceit, and pride, it nourishes the experience of aesthetic delight (*rasa*). Consequently, even these normally turbulent emotions are of a transcendental nature, categorically distinct from their material counterparts.

In accordance with his standard procedure, Jīva Gosvāmī next treats in order the five categories of excitants (*uddīpanas*), the ecstatic responses (*anubhāvas*), which are of four classifications (*udbhāsvara*, *sāttvika*, *alañkāra*, and *vācika*), and the transitory emotions (*sañcāri-bhāvas*) (*Anucchedas* 289–362). Moving on to the discussion of the *sthāyi-bhāva*, he specifies that *kānta-bhāva* is of two varieties — namely, that which is essentially grounded in the relation of direct union (*sākṣād-upabhogātmaka*), and that which is grounded in the relation of approval of the union of others (*tad-anumodanātmaka*). The first type of *kānta-bhāva* is evident in the direct *nāyikās*, whereas the second type is found in their friends, the *sakhīs* (*Anucchedas* 363–369).

Having elaborated the various emotive components of *ujjvala-rasa*, Jīva Gosvāmī then examines *ujjvala-rasa* itself, which is essentially constituted of the conjunction of all these components (*Anucchedas* 370–429). This is the culminating topic of the entire book and, indeed, of the entire *Sandarbha* anthology. Jīva Gosvāmī first specifies two divisions of *ujjvala-rasa* — namely, *vipralambha*, “separation,” and *sambhoga*, “union,” which he further defines as the psycho-emotive state (*bhāva*) in which the united couple’s enjoyment (*bhoga*) occurs through intimate mutual bonding (*yūnoḥ saṅgatayoḥ sambaddhatā*). He then makes four classifications of the state of separation (*vipralambha*) — *pūrva-rāga* (prior to meeting), *māna* (arising from indignant anger), *prema-vaicittya* (out of “love’s perplexity” or “counterintuitive response”), and *pravāsa* (when the beloved is sojourning far abroad). Accordingly, the state of union (*sambhoga*) is also of four types corresponding to the four types of *vipralambha* after which it ensues.

In his treatment of this topic, Jīva Gosvāmī explicitly brings to light the amorous sentiment (*ujjvala-rasa*) that is relished in each of the four types of *vipralambha* and their ensuing states of *sambhoga*, illustrating each of them with examples from the *Bhāgavata*. He concludes the book in *Anuccheda* 429 with a description of the *sambhoga* and *vipralambha* of Śrī Rādhā in the *rāsa-līlā*. This is elaborated through the statements of the *gopīs* in a key set of verses (SB 10.30.27–34) that disclose Rādhā’s supremacy among them all. Since Śrī Rādhā is the ultimate refuge and direct embodiment of *prīti* for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, it is perfectly appropriate to conclude *Prīti Sandarbha* with this glowing depiction of Her transcendent glory.

Unique Features of *Prīti Sandarbha*

(1) *Prīti Sandarbha* is a unique contribution to the domain of Indian philosophy and religion. The great thinkers of India envisioned four primary objectives of human life (*puruṣārthas*), popularly known as moral integrity (*dharma*), prosperity (*artha*), fulfillment of meaningful life aspirations (*kāma*), and liberation from worldly existence (*mokṣa*). Among them, *mokṣa* is universally regarded as the topmost goal. In *Prīti Sandarbha*, however, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī skillfully demonstrates that *prīti* is far beyond the much sought-after goal of *mokṣa*. Indeed, in this world, what is most sorely lacking is *prīti*. Everyone yearns for unconditional love, and yet hardly anyone experiences it or even knows what it is or how and where to obtain it. The problems of the world, be they social, economic, political, or family-centered, are all rooted in the machinery of ignorance and self-deception, and their sole viable solution lies in *prīti*.

Unfortunately, however, our modern educational institutions do not offer any knowledge or relevant guidance regarding *prīti*. Never in the history of the world has there been such a profusion of freely available knowledge as currently on offer in this age of information technology. Yet never before in history have people been so starved for loving relationships than at present. This is the paradox of modern life. In this book, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī unravels the mystery of *prīti* in a rigorously systematic manner, placing it on the highest pedestal of all human pursuits. If his radically insightful discourse can be grasped and implemented even by 0.01 percent of the population, the world will gain substantial access to the psycho-technology of self-transcendence, to affordances of profound significance and prosperity in all domains of life, and to a stable state of optimal fittedness to the ever-shifting socio-cultural environment and the ever-evolving world, all grounded in the consciousness and dynamics of unconditional love.

(2) Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī provides a precise and comprehensive definition of *prīti* that serves as the basis of *prīti*'s radical reconsideration as the highest form of enlightened awareness, beyond the immediate intuition of the Self or Brahman. Everyone talks about love, but most people have no idea what love actually is. *Prīti* is not just an emotion, a fleeting quality of the mind. Rather, it is a conscious functional capacity constituted of the intrinsic potency of Bhagavān (*svarūpa-śakti-vṛtti*) and is thus transphenomenal by its fundamental nature. *Prīti*, as defined by Jīva Gosvāmī, should not be confused with worldly love, which is based on the identification with the material body. *Prīti* categorically transcends such egoic identification and is thus bereft of all ulterior self-serving motives. Moreover, all wisdom virtues are reciprocally manifested in a person who has become assimilated to *prīti*, which is attained by the grace of Kṛṣṇa or His pure devotee. Having once attained *prīti*, one never loses it, and it goes on evolving, leading the subject unflinching to its Ultimate Source, Bhagavān.

(3) Jīva Gosvāmī's discussion of *prīti*'s developmental unfolding from *rati* to *mahā-bhāva* clearly demonstrates that *prīti* is a conscious entity, multidimensional in its fundamental constitution, and reciprocally adaptable both to the specific agent in which it appears and the existential arena in which its play is exhibited. In this respect, *prīti* reflects Bhagavān's own multifaceted essential nature (*svabhāva*), which discloses a limitless spectrum of Being drawn forth along the two primary developmental lines of His divine majesty (*aiśvarya*) and His enticing mellifluousness (*mādhurya*). It is in direct response to the disclosure of a specific essential nature of Bhagavān from out of this vast spectrum of Being that the devotee's core identity (*abhimāna*) emerges in one of the five primary relational modalities of *śānta*, *dāsyā*, *vātsalya*, *sakhyā*, or *mādhurya*. And the extent and aesthetic quality of *prīti*'s manifestation in the devotee is optimally suited to impel the appropriate empathetic response to Bhagavān's specific loving disclosure. Jīva Gosvāmī thus concludes that from whatever perspective one examines the question, Bhagavān's *svabhāva* alone is the root cause of *prīti* for Him.

(4) In wisdom traditions around the world, the prototype of enlightenment is typically the self-realized sage or mystic philosopher. From this well-founded perspective, it would seem perfectly preposterous to uphold as one's highest ideal of enlightened consciousness a group of simple village girls deeply enamored with a mischievous village boy. And yet it is precisely the *gopīs* of Vraja who are shown to be supreme among all the various types of devotees due to the quality and magnitude of their unconditional love. Thus on the basis of the superiority of the *gopīs' prīti*, which includes and transcends *jñāna*, they are established as the foremost realizers of the Absolute. Even Kṛṣṇa feels indebted to their service and love. And among all the *gopīs*, Śrī Rādhā is supreme.

(5) Another unique feature of *Prīti Sandarbha* is its unequivocal establishment of *bhagavat-prīti* as *rasa*, a multilayered emotional complex of aesthetic delight rooted in love. Most of the Indian wisdom schools do not make any accommodation for affectivity within the scope of the quest for liberation or enlightenment. Emotions are seen as problematic and must be eschewed. The schools of Advaita Vedānta, Yoga, and Sāṅkhya, in particular, advocate extreme renunciation. They consider emotions to be a source of bondage. There are other philosophers and mystics, however, who regard the caring element that is at the core of affectivity to be vital to the process of self-transcendence, being interdependently and reciprocally related to cognitive awakening. The aestheticians, the Vaiṣṇavas, the Śaivites, and the Tāntrikas all include affectivity within the scope of their spiritual practice.

As discussed previously, most of the traditional scholars of *rasa* theory prior to Śrī Rūpa Govāmī and Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī accepted *bhakti* or *prīti* only as an affect (*bhāva*). Because of the rigidly restrictive framing through which they categorized *bhakti*, they did not think it capable of attaining the status of the aesthetic experience (*rasa*). In *Prīti Sandarbha*, however, Jīva Gosvāmī forcefully argues against the objections to *prīti* being admitted as *rasa*. He limits the objection of the orthodox aestheticians to the conditional love (*rati*) that is directed to the *devas* and not to the unconditional divine love that originates from and finds its ultimate repose

in Svayaṁ Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa. In fact, he goes as far as to say that it is only *prīti* for Bhagavān that is genuinely capable of being experienced as *rasa* and not the *laukika-rati* exchanged between worldly heroes (*nāyakas*) and heroines (*nāyikās*). For that matter, the *laukika-rati* itself is incapable of being determined as a permanent foundational affect (*sthāyi-bhāva*) because it is unstable. Since its subjective and objective ground, the *nāyaka* and *nāyikā*, are both temporary, how can *rati* itself be permanent (*sthāyī*)?

(6) In Jīva Gosvāmī's examination of the topic of *rasābhāsa*, the determining factor is the precise nature of the interplay that prevails between incompatible emotive components when they happen to come in contact, leading to the three varieties of *rasābhāsa* previously described (*ābhāsatva*, *rasollāsa*, and *rasābhāso-llāsa*). Since these occurrences are illustrated with examples from *Śrīmad Bhāgavata*, it would seem to suggest that the *Bhāgavata* itself is marred by instances of aesthetic incongruity (*rasābhāsa*). Jīva Gosvāmī meticulously pinpoints and critically examines all such verses, vindicating them of any tinge of factual *rasābhāsa*. This is in keeping with Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī's statement at the conclusion of his discourse on the *Bhāgavata* in which he affirms that *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* is the spotless Purāṇa (*śrīmad-bhāgavatam purāṇam amalam*, SB 12.13.18). Correspondingly, at the very beginning of the book, the author himself, Śrī Vyāsa, declares that this book is simply *rasa* — purely and pervasively — and he exhorts the *rasika* devotees to relish this *rasa* up to the point of liberation and beyond.

(7) Another novel contribution of Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī is his elaboration of the principle that just as Śrī Kṛṣṇa contains within His essential being an unlimited manifold of identical *prakāśa* forms that can all be manifested simultaneously, so too the same principle applies to His divine abode, to His liberated associates, and to the manifest and unmanifest domains of His *līlā*. By this principle, Jīva Gosvāmī demonstrates that Kṛṣṇa's liberated associates, such as the *gopīs* of Vraja, are in eternal union with Him in a separate invisible dimension of being (*prakāśa*), even when they experience separation from Him in the manifest *līlā*.

(8) There are some Vaiṣṇava scholars, such as Śrī Hit Hari-varṁśa Gosvāmī, who advocate the view that Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are inexorably grounded in the state of perpetual union (*nitya-vihāra*). These scholars do not admit that Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa can ever be separated. Jīva Gosvāmī, however, propounds the principle that without separation (*vipralambha*), there is no relish in union (*sambhoga*), just as in the absence of hunger, one does not relish a meal. Most of the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa would not be possible if the concept of *nitya-vihāra* were accepted. Rather, Jīva Gosvāmī's above-mentioned theory of *prakāśa* manifestations is a much more nuanced solution to the question of the causally interactive relation that pertains between the states of separation and union.

(9) In *Prīti Sandarbha*, the ritualistic aspect of *bhakti* has been completely ignored. This was already dealt with at length in the previous volume of the anthology, namely *Bhakti Sandarbha*. Here, the emphasis has been laid exclusively on *prīti*, which is manifested in a devotee's heart by the grace of Bhagavān or His unalloyed devotee. Consequently, the entire examination of *prīti-rasa*, beginning from *Anuccheda* 110 till the end of the book, presupposes the existence of *prīti* in the devotees who are under consideration. From this point of view, the discussion of *prīti-rasa* is primarily of theoretical value for those in whom *prīti* is not yet manifest. Yet, as pointed out at the beginning of this introduction, because of the integral and interdependent relation that pertains between *sambandha*, *abhidheya*, and *prayojana*, the theoretical elucidation of *prīti-rasa* significantly impacts the practitioners' relational metaview (*sambandha-jñāna*) at the existential level, which then informs, shapes, and refines the precise nature of their practice (*abhidheya*), leading to the ultimate goal being illuminated in the discussion (*prayojana*). Moreover, by this vivid disclosure of *prīti*'s limitless and variegated unfolding within the transcendental domain of *prīti-rasa*, the intentful yearning for *prīti* is awakened in the heart of sincere practitioners, extinguishing the desire for all other lesser pursuits.

Division of the Book into Two Volumes

Because of the length of this work, *Prīti Sandarbha* has been divided into two volumes. Of the book's four major thematic divisions shown in the "Prīti Sandarbha at a Glance" page in the appendix, the first three divisions and part of the long fourth division are contained in the first volume. The remaining subsections of the fourth division are treated in the second volume, which also contains all the references, including glossary, subject index, and bibliography. Due to the arrangement of the text in two volumes, 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" and "Table of Contents" pages and throughout the subject and verse indexes.



Dedication

*vraja-bhaktir eva vedāntaḥ śrī-gaura eva rādhā-kāntaḥ
prakhyāpito yena rāddhāntaḥ rātv idam 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 Śrottriya 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.



१ Prīti Is the Parama-puruṣārtha

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.¹

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 [*Pṛiti Sandarbha*] in the appropriate order.²

Commentary

*atha natvā mantra-gurūn śrī-gurūn sandarbhārthadān
sandarbheṣu tu ṣaṣṭhasya bhāṣā-ṭīkāṁ karomy aham*

After offering obeisance to my initiating guru and to my instructing teachers, I am writing the translation and commentary to the sixth book of the *Ṣaṣṭ Sandarbhas*.

¹ tau santoṣayatā santau śrīla-rūpa-sanātanau
dākṣiṇātyena bhaṭṭena punar etad vivicyate

² tasyādyam granthanālekham krānta-vyutkrānta-khaṇḍitam
paryālocyātha paryāyam kṛtvā likhati jivakaḥ

ŚRĪLA JĪVA GOSVĀMĪ composed eight verses at the beginning of *Tattva Sandarbha* as the *maṅgalācaraṇa*, or “auspicious invocation,” to the work as a whole. The *maṅgalācaraṇa* to each volume in the rest of the series has only two verses, the first having the same significance as the third and fourth verses of the *Tattva Sandarbha maṅgalācaraṇa*, and the second being the fifth verse verbatim. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī did not compose a new *maṅgalācaraṇa* to introduce the remaining five *Sandarbh*s because he considered the *Ṣaṭ Sandarbha* to form a single book.

Generally, books of philosophical or religious significance begin with a *maṅgalācaraṇa*, because it is said in the *Mahābhāṣya*:

Scriptures that are introduced by a *maṅgalācaraṇa* become popular, and their readers become heroic, enjoy a long life, and attain success in their endeavors. (*Mahābhāṣya* 1.1.1)³

Ṣaṭ Sandarbha, though in fact only one book, i.e., the *Bhāgavata Sandarbha*, “a treatise on *Śrīmad Bhāgavata*,” is divided into six parts. Each of these is taken as a separate volume, but in view of its being a single treatise, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī writes only an abbreviated *maṅgalācaraṇa* for each of the six parts. He does not compose a new invocation but repeats the one provided in *Tattva Sandarbha*.

In the first of these two verses, he again recalls the lotus feet of his teachers, Śrīla Rūpa and Sanātana Gosvāmīs, upon whose order the work was undertaken. In the second, he again expresses gratitude to Śrīla Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, who originally began it. In this way, he invokes the blessings of these masters for the completion of the work. For further explanation, the reader may refer to the commentaries on the third, fourth, and fifth invocatory verses of *Tattva Sandarbha*.



³ *maṅgalādīni maṅgala-madhyāni maṅgalāntāni hi śāstrāṇi prathante vīra-puruṣāṇi ca bhavanti. āyusmat-puruṣāṇi ca.*

1 Sākṣātkāra of the Parama-tattva Is Itself Mukti

Anucchedas 1-9

Mukti As the Sākṣātkāra of Brahman
and Paramātmā

Anucchedas 1-5.9

Mukti As the Sākṣātkāra of Bhagavān

Anucchedas 5.10-9

Mukti As the Sākṣātkāra of Brahman and Paramātmā

Anucchedas 1–5.9

Anuccheda 1

Prīti Is the Supreme Object of Human Attainment

1.1

The Need for Prīti Sandarbha

१ । अथ प्रीतिसन्दर्भो लेख्यः । इह खलु शास्त्रप्रतिपाद्यं परमतत्त्वं हि सन्दर्भचतुष्टयेन पूर्वं सम्बद्धम् । तदुपासना च तदनन्तरसन्दर्भेणाभिहिता । तत्क्रमप्राप्तत्वेन प्रयोजनं खल्वधुना विविच्यते ।

NOW THE TREATISE ON divine love (*Prīti Sandarbha*) is to be written. In this regard, the Supreme Reality (*parama-tattva*), which is the subject matter to be set forth in the scriptures (*śāstras*), has been firmly established previously in the first four *Sandarbhās*, and the method of worship (*upāsanā*) of that Reality has been explained in the succeeding volume [i.e., the fifth *Sandarbha*]. Now, in keeping with the sequential order of the work, the completion state to be attained (*prayojana*) will be examined.

पुरुषप्रयोजनं तावत् सुखप्राप्तिर्दुःखनिवृत्तिश्च । श्रीभगवत्प्रीतौ तु सुखत्वं दुःखनिवर्तकत्वं चात्यन्तिकमिति ।

The purpose of human life is the attainment of happiness (*sukha*) and the elimination of pain (*duḥkha*). It is, however, only in the state of divine love (*prīti*) for Bhagavān that beatitude and freedom from suffering reach their absolute zenith of development (*ātyantika*).

Commentary

PRĪTI SANDARBHA is the final volume of the *Ṣaṭ Sandarbha*, or *Bhāgavata Sandarbha*. As an introduction to the text, it is important to show the correlation, or *saṅgati*, of this book to the previous ones. Correlation is of six types, namely, context (*prasaṅga*), introductory argument (*upodghāta*), cause (*hetu*), occasion (*avasara*), common means (*nirvāhakaikya*), and common result (*kāryaikya*).¹ Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī indicates that now is the right occasion (*avasara*) for writing *Prīti Sandarbha*. Why is that? Because in the introductory volume of the anthology, *Tattva Sandarbha* (*Anuccheda* 9), he wrote that he would first determine the means of valid knowing (*pramāṇa*) to authoritatively ascertain the *sambandha*, *abhidheya*, and *prayojana* of the work as a whole. These topics were suggested in *Anuccheda* 8 in a single verse that represents the seed-conception for the entire *Ṣaṭ Sandarbha*.

In *Anucchedas* 10–28 of the same volume, Śrī Jīva established *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* as the *pramāṇa*, or the highest authority in the matter of the self-disclosure of the core truths of *sambandha*, *abhidheya*, and *prayojana*. Then in *Anucchedas* 29–49, he analyzed the heart of the author of *Śrīmad Bhāgavata*, Śrī Vyāsadeva, and of its first speaker, Śrī Śukadeva, with respect to these three topics. He proposed to prove on the basis of the immediate experience of these two authorities that each individual living being is an intrinsic part of the Complete Whole, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Original Supreme Person (*sambandha*), that *bhakti* is the direct means to actualize this relation (*abhidheya*), and that divine love (*prīti* or *prema*) is the completion state to be attained (*prayojana*) through enactment of the means.

Then, in *Anuccheda* 50, Śrī Jīva declared that he would elaborate on these three topics in six separate treatises to delineate the import (*tātparya*) of *Śrīmad Bhāgavata*. Thereafter, in the final 13 *anucchedas* of *Tattva Sandarbha* and in *Bhagavat, Paramātma*, and

¹ *saprasaṅga upodghāto hetutāvasaras tathā
nirvāhakaikya-kāryaikye ṣoḍhā saṅgatiḥ iṣyate
Vaiyākaraṇa-bhūṣaṇa-sāra-darpaṇa, Rāmarūdrī-anumāna-khaṇḍa*

Kṛṣṇa Sandarbhas, he examined at length the first topic of *sambandha*. With this task completed, Śrī Jīva turned his attention in the fifth volume to the exposition of the means of attainment (*abhidheya*), which he succinctly summed up as *para-tattva-sāmmukhya*, the turning of one's intentful regard toward the Absolute.

Although there are many different means to do so, Śrī Jīva clearly shows that it is *bhakti* alone — and in particular *rāgānugābhakti* — that engenders an embrace of the Absolute in the highest order of ontological and aesthetic completion. Now, in the present volume, Śrī Jīva seizes the moment (*avasara*) to examine the third and final topic, which he calls *prīti*. With this in mind, he writes, “Now, in keeping with the sequential order of the work, the completion state to be attained (*prayojana*) will be examined.”

In *Paramātmā Sandarbha* in particular, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī explained that the natural state of the *jīva* as an integrated part or *śakti* of the Absolute is to be subordinate to Bhagavān. In its conditioned state, however, the *jīva* struggles relentlessly and without success to become the master and enjoyer of the material energy. This conditioning can be dispelled only by means of *bhakti* to Bhagavān. Although there are innumerable forms of Bhagavān, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is shown to be the most complete and hence the supreme object (*iṣṭa-devatā*) of such devotion. The highest attainment in *bhakti* is *prīti*; this is the ultimate good (*śreyas*) that can be attained by a living being.

Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī begins the discussion of the ultimate good with a very simple but profound statement: “The purpose of human life is the attainment of happiness (*sukha*) and the elimination of pain (*duḥkha*).” This is a general statement that everyone can agree with, whether one is a theist, an atheist, or an agnostic, rich or poor, male or female, young or old, healthy or diseased, literate or illiterate, wise or foolish. It is a common platform that no one can dispute. Whatever action a person performs is ultimately driven by the explicit or implicit intention to experience some form of happiness or to counteract suffering.

It may be argued that people generally work hard to earn wealth. They take great pains to do so. Students toil for years to become

qualified to secure employment or a career. People even take great risks to earn money; some even engage in illegal actions while risking their lives to do so. From this perspective, it would appear that the goal is not happiness but money.

The answer to this is that money does not have any utility in and of itself. Money is only a medium of exchange used to obtain some desired object. The object in question might be an immediate source of happiness, such as prepared food, or it may be an item that helps to mitigate one's suffering, such as medicine. On the other hand, the object may be something that indirectly leads to happiness, such as the raw materials for a meal, like vegetables or grains, or it may be a product that indirectly helps to alleviate suffering, such as herbs that are used to make medicine. Accordingly, if we analyze all of our actions, no matter how subtle, we will discover that the intent behind them is to bring us happiness or to dispel our suffering, directly or indirectly. Thus, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī rightly states that these are the twin purposes of all human action.

The attainment of happiness and the removal of suffering are also the goals of all knowledge systems, material or spiritual. As such, there is no conflict in the aims of science and spirituality. The only difference is in their approach to the problem, which is of course, significant. In the case of science and technology, the attainment of happiness and the removal of suffering is aimed at by bringing about an external change, and it is temporary. Spirituality, however, intends to nurture a change from within, and it furnishes a permanent solution. Thus, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī writes: "It is, however, only in the state of divine love (*prīti*) for Bhagavān that beatitude and freedom from suffering reach their absolute zenith of development (*ātyantika*)."

Once love of Bhagavān is attained, one remains situated in unending happiness beyond any contact with suffering. This is so because *prīti*, whose source and object is Bhagavān, is not material. The happiness that one obtains from sensory objects is material, meaning that it derives from the contact of one's senses with their corresponding objects. This contact cannot be everlasting. The two most prominent pleasures in the material world are food and

sex. But one cannot eat unlimitedly or go on enjoying sex without a break. One may also obtain pleasure from fame and power, but these too are impermanent. Famous celebrities are prone to loneliness, depression, and substance abuse, because their fame, power, and luxurious lifestyles ultimately leave them feeling empty.

Besides wealth (*artha*) and the appropriation of sense objects (*kāma*), *dharma* is also considered as an object to be pursued. In *Bhakti Sandarbha* (Anucchedas 3, 5, and 6), it was demonstrated that *dharma* is not the ultimate object of attainment. The true aim of *dharma* is divine love.

It is thus evident that the real *prayojana* is not the pursuit of material knowledge, temporary objects of enjoyment, or even *dharma* but the eternal bliss implicit in divine love for Bhagavān. The former have utility only if they assist the latter. Otherwise, such pursuits become a waste of time and a misuse of the valuable opportunity in the form of human life that could be utilized to attain *prīti*, the highest *prayojana*.

1.2

Absolute Reality Is Essentially Bliss

एतदुक्तं भवति — यत् खलु परमतत्त्वं शास्त्रप्रतिपाद्यत्वेन पूर्वं निर्णीतं तदेव सदनन्तपरमानन्दत्वेन सिद्धम् । श्रुतावपि “सैषानन्दस्य मीमांसा भवति” (तै० २।८।१) इत्याख्यमानुषानन्दतः प्राजापत्यानन्दपर्यन्तं दशकृत्वः शतगुणिततया क्रमेण तेषामानन्दोत्कर्षपरिमाणं प्रदर्श्य पुनश्च ततोऽपि शतगुणत्वेन परब्रह्मानन्दं प्रदर्श्याप्यपरितोषात् “यतो वाचो निवर्तन्ते” (तै० २।१।१) इत्यादिश्लोकेन तदानन्दस्यानन्त्यत्वमेव स्थापितं विलक्षणत्वं च ।

In this regard, the following is to be discussed. The Absolute Reality (*parama-tattva*), which was earlier ascertained as the subject matter to be set forth by the scriptures, was verily concluded to be eternal, unlimited, and of the nature of supreme bliss (*paramānanda*). In the Śruti as well, beginning with the statement: “This, then, is an evaluation of that bliss”

(TU 2.8.1),² ten different amplitudes of bliss have been progressively shown, from that of human beings up to that of Prajāpati [i.e., Brahman], each one a hundred times greater in excellence than the previous one.

Thereafter, the bliss of Parabrahman is stated to be a hundred times greater even than that of Prajāpati. Not content even with this comparison, the Śruti next establishes the limitlessness of Parabrahman's bliss as well as its categorical distinction [from material happiness] in the following statement: "[The bliss of Brahman (*brahmaṇaḥ ānandam*) is that] from which words recoil along with the mind, without ever having reached it [i.e., being powerless to describe or conceive of it]" (TU 2.9.1).³

“को ह्येवान्यात् कः प्राण्याद् यदेष आकाश आनन्दो न स्यात्” (तै० २।७।१) इत्यनेन नाना-स्वरूपधर्मवतोऽपि तस्य केवलानन्दरूपत्वमेव च दर्शितम् । तथाभूतमार्तण्डादिमण्डल-स्य केवलज्योतिर्भवत् ।

And, by the following statement, Parabrahman's essential nature (*svarūpa*) is shown to be bliss alone (*kevalānanda*), even though It has various characteristics (*dharma*s) that are intrinsic to Its essential being (*svarūpa*). In this respect, It is comparable to the sun globe (*mārtaṇḍa-maṇḍala*),⁴ which in spite of having various qualities is [said to be] light alone (*kevala-jyoti*): “If this bliss [i.e., the all-blissful Parabrahman] were not present in space (*ākāśa*) [or in the sky of the heart],⁵ who indeed would

² *saiṣānandasya mīmāṃsā bhavati*

³ *yato vāco nivartante aprāpya manasā saha ānandaṁ brahmaṇo vidvān na bibhēti kutaścana*

⁴ The word *mārtaṇḍa* literally means “a lifeless or inanimate egg,” referring to the universe in its early stage of formation. As a name for the sun, it refers to the sun's appearance in the center of the inanimate egg of the universe, as described in SB 5.20.43–44. The latter verses form part of a vivid description of the cosmology of the terrestrial globe and of the sun's multifaceted attribution. By referring to the sun by this name, Śrī Jīva intends to point out its qualitative diversity. In spite of this, however, the sun is said to be “light alone” (*kevala-jyoti*). Correspondingly, Parabrahman's *svarūpa* is “bliss alone” (*kevalānanda*).

⁵ In his *Śruty-artha-bodhini* commentary on this verse, Śrī Nitya-Gopāla Pañca-tīrtha glosses the word *ākāśa*, lit., “space,” as *parama vyomani hṛdayākāśe*,

be able to live and breathe?” (*ko hy evānyāt kaḥ prāṇyād yad eṣa ākāśa ānando na syāt*, TU 2.7.1).

Commentary

Earlier, in *Tattva Sandarbha* (*Anuccheda* 51), it was affirmed that the Absolute Reality is nondual consciousness (*advaya-jñāna*) and that it is referred to by three names — Brahman, Paramātmā, and Bhagavān. This is the beginning point of Śrī Jīva’s investigation into the ontology of the Absolute (*prameya* or *sambandha-tattva*). To explain these three aspects of the *tattva* and to delineate their characteristics, Śrī Jīva composed the *Bhagavat* and *Paramātmā Sandarbhas*. Then in *Kṛṣṇa Sandarbha* (*Anucchedas* 28–29), he identified the original form of Bhagavān as Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is the direct embodiment of supreme bliss (*paramānanda*), as confirmed by Śrī Brahmā:

How fortunate! How fortunate indeed are the residents of Nanda’s cowherd community of Vraja, for their dear friend is Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the eternal complete Brahman, who is the embodiment of supreme bliss. (SB 10.14.32)⁶

Kṛṣṇa’s form is eternal and unlimited. This is understood from Śukadeva’s narration of the bewilderment of Brahmā, in which he describes the various forms of Viṣṇu manifested by Kṛṣṇa:

Those Viṣṇu forms were all direct embodiments of the “One Taste” (*eka-rasa*)⁷ that is unalloyed being, consciousness, infinitude, and bliss alone. Their infinite glory was certainly beyond the reach even of those whose vision was attuned to the Upaniṣadic revelation [i.e., the followers of the *jñāna-mārga*]. (SB 10.13.54)⁸

“in the supreme sky of the heart.”

⁶ *aho bhāgyam aho bhāgyaṁ nanda-gopa-vrajaukasām*

yan-mitraṁ paramānandaṁ pūrṇaṁ brahma sanātanam

⁷ The term *eka-rasa*, “One Taste,” signifies uniformity and purity, like the sweet taste in a piece of sugar candy.

⁸ *satya-jñānānantānanda-mātraika-rasa-mūrtayah*
asprṣṭa-bhūri-māhātmyā api hy upaniṣad-dṛśām

Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī refers to *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (2.8.1) to establish that the Absolute Reality is of the nature of bliss. There are primarily two ways to experience happiness. The first is derived from the contact of the senses with their favorable sense objects. This type of happiness is ephemeral and ultimately a source of misery, as confirmed by Śrī Kṛṣṇa to Arjuna:

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)⁹

The second type of happiness ensues directly from the Absolute Reality, as stated by Kṛṣṇa:

One whose mind is detached from the external sense objects attains that bliss which is intrinsic to the Self. Such a person, whose self is united with God through devotional absorption, tastes imperishable bliss. (GĪTĀ 5.21)¹⁰

These are the two categories of bliss compared in *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*. It first enumerates the ten different amplitudes of material bliss. The complete passage is as follows:

This, then is an evaluation of that bliss: Suppose there is a young man, who is noble, learned, most expeditious, most strongly built, and most powerful. Imagine that this entire earth, filled with wealth, belonged to him. [The bliss that he would experience] is one unit of human bliss. If this human bliss is multiplied by a hundred, it would equal one unit of bliss of the Human-Gandharvas. This is also the bliss experienced by a knower of the Veda (*śrotṛiya*) who is not overcome by material desires.

If this bliss of the Human-Gandharvas is multiplied a hundred times, it would equal one unit of bliss of the Deva-Gandharvas, as well as that of a knower of the Veda who is not overcome by material desires. If this bliss of the Deva-Gandharvas is multiplied a

⁹ *ye hi saṁsparśa-jā bhogā duḥkha-yonaya eva te
ādy-antavantaḥ kaunteya na teṣu ramate budhaḥ*

¹⁰ *bāhya-sparśeṣv asaktātmā vindaty ātmani yat sukham
sa brahma-yoga-yuktātmā sukham akṣayam aśnute*

hundred times, it would equal one unit of bliss of the Pitṛs, whose world is everlasting, and also that of a knower of the Veda who is not overcome by material desires. If this bliss of the Pitṛs, whose world is everlasting, is multiplied a hundred times, it would equal one unit of bliss of the Ājānaja-devas, and also that of a knower of the Veda who is not overcome by material desires.

If this bliss of the Ājānaja-devas is multiplied a hundred times, it would equal one unit of bliss of the Karma-devas, who attain their *deva* status by Vedic rites, and also that of a knower of the Veda who is not overcome by material desires. If this bliss of the Karma-devas is multiplied a hundred times, it would equal one unit of bliss of the *devas*, and also that of a knower of the Veda who is not overcome by material desires. If this bliss of the *devas* is multiplied a hundred times, it would equal one unit of bliss of Indra, and also that of a knower of the Veda who is not overcome by material desires.

If this bliss of Indra is multiplied a hundred times, it would equal one unit of bliss of Bṛhaspati, and also that of a knower of the Veda who is not overcome by material desires. If this bliss of Bṛhaspati is multiplied a hundred times, it would equal one unit of bliss of Prajāpati (Brahmā), and also that of a knower of the Veda who is not overcome by material desires. And if this bliss of Prajāpati is multiplied a hundred times, it would equal one unit of bliss of Brahman, and also that of a knower of the Veda who is not overcome by material desires. (TU 2.8.1-4)¹¹

¹¹ *saiśānandasya mīmāṃsā bhavati. yuvā syāt sādhu-yuvādhyāyakaḥ. āśiṣṭho dṛḍhiṣṭho baliṣṭhaḥ. tasyeyam prthivī sarvā vittasya pūrṇā syāt. sa eko mānuṣa ānandaḥ. te ye śataṃ mānuṣā ānandāḥ.*

sa eko manuṣya-gandharvāṇām ānandaḥ. śrotriyasya cākāma-hatasya. te ye śataṃ manuṣya-gandharvāṇām ānandāḥ. sa eko deva-gandharvāṇām ānandaḥ. śrotriyasya cākāma-hatasya. te ye śataṃ deva-gandharvāṇām ānandāḥ. sa ekaḥ pitṛṇām cira-loka-lokānām ānandaḥ. śrotriyasya cākāma-hatasya. te ye śataṃ pitṛṇām cira-loka-lokānām ānandāḥ. sa eka ājānājānām devānām ānandaḥ.

śrotriyasya cākāma-hatasya. te ye śataṃ ājānājānām devānām ānandāḥ. sa ekaḥ karma-devānām devānām ānandaḥ. ye karmaṇ devān apiyanti. śrotriyasya cākāma-hatasya. te ye śataṃ karma-devānām devānām ānandāḥ. sa eko devānām ānandaḥ. śrotriyasya cākāma-hatasya. te ye śataṃ devānām ānandāḥ. sa eka indrasya ānandaḥ. →

Based on the above calculations, if the bliss of a healthy young human being who has gained sovereignty over the entire earth is equal to one unit, then the bliss of Brahman would be ten quintillion (10^{18}) times that of such a human being. Within the annals of recorded history, we cannot conceive of any such person. Everything prior to the bliss of Brahman is material happiness. The entire description is given just to give a glimpse of the magnitude of Brahman's bliss. It also hints at the immense capability of human beings because all these states of bliss are available to them.

Śrī Jīva cleverly notes that the Śruti, not being content even with this comparison (*aparitoṣāt*), goes on to say in *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (2.9.1) that the bliss of Parabrahman is beyond all comparison. There are no words to describe it because words can describe only material happiness, which is limited. It cannot be compared to anything within our experience because it is unlimited and of an entirely different category of being. Although the same word *ānanda* (or *sukham*) is used for both material as well as transcendental happiness, they are absolutely distinct in nature.

Bliss is the very nature of the Absolute, as it is said: “Brahman is consciousness and bliss” (*vijñānam ānandaṁ brahma*, BAU 3.9.28). The sun has many attributes, such as heat, shape, size, velocity, gravitational force, and ultraviolet radiation, yet its most prominent quality is light. Similarly, although the Absolute Reality is self-endowed with unlimited attributes, the most prominent among them is bliss, *ānanda*. Existence (*sat*) and consciousness (*cit*) only serve the purpose of experiencing joy.

It is because of the presence of Brahman — who is bliss — within the outer and inner sky (*ākāśa*) that people live and breathe in and out (TU 2.7.1). The meaning of this statement is that we live to obtain the bliss of Brahman. We do not live just for the sake of living. Without bliss, we do not wish to live. Therefore, when a

śrotriyasya cākāma-hatasya. te ye śatam indrasya ānandāḥ. sa eko bṛhaspater ānandāḥ. śrotriyasya cākāmaha-tasya. te ye śatam bṛhaspater ānandāḥ. sa ekaḥ prajāpater ānandāḥ. śrotriyasya cākāma-hatasya. te ye śatam prajāpater ānandāḥ. sa eko brahmaṇa ānandāḥ. śrotriyasya cākāma-hatasya.

person loses all hope of attaining bliss, he or she may feel like committing suicide, and some people actually do so. Whatever we do, our ultimate purpose is to obtain this bliss. From this point of view, everyone is in search of the Absolute, and unless they discover It, they cannot be peaceful and happy.

The *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* declares this truth indirectly:

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)¹²

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, who is bliss personified.

Therefore, everyone in this material world feels incomplete within themselves. This feeling can be mitigated only by obtaining the bliss of Brahman or of *pṛīti*. The desire to procure wealth, power, position, and harmonious relations, is ultimately the urge for supreme bliss. Out of ignorance, people misplace their yearning in material pursuits. When they become frustrated with material aims, they may turn either to drugs and intoxication or sex, or they may become inquisitive about spiritual truth. In any case, the true solution lies in the bliss of the Absolute, and this bliss is divine love, or *pṛīti*.

1.3

Realization of the Tattva Imparts Self-knowing and Freedom from Misery

अथ जीवश्च तदीयोऽपि तज्ज्ञानसंसर्गाभावयुक्तत्वेन तन्मायापराभूतः सन्नात्मस्वरूपज्ञानलोपान् मायाकल्पितोपाध्यावेशाच्चानादिसंसारदुःखेन सम्बध्यत इति परमात्मसन्दर्भादावेव निरूपितमस्ति । तत इदं लभ्यते — परमतत्त्वसाक्षात्कारलक्षणं तज्ज्ञानमेव परमानन्दप्राप्तिः । सैव परमपुरुषार्थ इति ।

¹² *yadā carmavad ākāśaṁ veṣṭayiṣyanti mānavāḥ
tadā devam avijñāya duḥkhasyānto bhaviṣyati*

The individual living being (*jīva*), although belonging to the Supreme Reality by its constitutional nature (*tadīyo'pi*), is overpowered by the latter's deluding potency (*māyā*) due to the *jīva*'s being adjoined to the beginningless prior absence of awareness of that Reality (*taj-jñāna-saṁsargābhāva*). Being thus bereft of awareness of its own essential nature (*ātma-svarūpa*), the *jīva* becomes identified with the limiting adjuncts (*upādhis*) created by *māyā*, and on this account, it is subjected to the beginningless miseries of conditional existence (*saṁsāra*).

This was detailed in *Paramātma* and *Bhakti Sandarbhas*. From this analysis, the following is understood: Awareness of Reality (*taj-jñāna*), characterized as the immediate intuition (*sākṣātkāra*) of that Supreme Reality (*parama-tattva*), is itself identical to the attainment of supreme bliss (*paramānanda*). This indeed is the ultimate object of human attainment (*parama-puruṣārtha*).

स्वात्मज्ञानप्रवृत्तिर्दुःखात्यन्तनिवृत्तिश्च निदाने तदज्ञाने गते सति स्वत एव सम्पद्यते । पूर्वस्याः परमतत्त्वस्वप्रकाशताभिव्यक्तिलक्षणमात्रात्मकत्वादुत्तरस्याश्च ध्वंसाभावरूपत्वादनश्वरत्वम् ।

When the root cause [of conditional existence], namely ignorance of the Supreme Reality, is dispelled, then the appearance (*pravṛtti*)¹³ of authentic self-knowing (*svātma-jñāna*) and the ultimate dissolution of misery (*atyanta-duḥkha-nivṛtti*) take place automatically (*svata eva*). The former [i.e., authentic self-knowing] is imperishable (*anaśvaram*) because it is essentially nothing other than a symptom of the Supreme Reality's

¹³ There is an alternate reading in some editions of *Pṛiti Sandarbha* with the words *svātmajñāna-nivṛtti* appearing in place of *svātma-jñāna-pravṛtti*. In this case, the meaning would be that the removal of the absence of authentic self-knowing ensues automatically from the dispelling of the ignorance of the Supreme Reality. In effect, these two readings amount to the same thing, since the appearance of authentic self-knowing (*svātma-jñāna-pravṛtti*) is identical with the removal of the absence of the same (*svātma-ajñāna-nivṛtti*). The first expresses the occurrence in positive terms (*pravṛtti*), whereas the second does so negatively (*nivṛtti*).

self-disclosure (*parama-tattva-sva-prakāśatā*), whereas the latter [i.e., the ultimate dissolution of misery] is imperishable because misery is then relegated to the state of post nonexistence (*dhvaṁsa-abhāva*) [meaning the permanent absence (*abhāva*) of misery after its destruction (*dhvaṁsa*)].

उक्तं च पूर्वस्याः परमपुरुषार्थत्वम् “धर्मस्य ह्यापवर्ग्यस्य” (भा० १।२।९) इत्यादिना । भा० १।२।१२ —

तच्छ्रद्धधाना मुनयो ज्ञानवैराग्ययुक्तया ।
पश्यन्त्यात्मनि चात्मानं भक्त्या श्रुतगृहीतया ॥ ३ ॥ इत्यन्तेन ।

The following series of verses¹⁴ establish the appearance of authentic self-knowing (*svātma-jñāna-pravṛtti*) as the ultimate object of human attainment (*parama-puruṣārtha*):

Dharma, the intent of which is liberation (*āpavargya*), is certainly not meant for material prosperity (*artha*). Prosperity, which is the unfailing attendant of such *dharma*, is assuredly not meant for the fulfillment of desire (*kāma*); so it has been attested to [by contemplative sages (*munibhiḥ*)].¹⁵ The fulfillment of desire (*kāma*) [meaning the willful appropriation of sensory objects (*viśaya-bhoga*)] is not meant for sensual pleasure (*indriya-prīti*) but only for requisite life sustenance. The purpose of life is to inquire into the Absolute Truth and not to procure the worldly benefits (*artha*) attainable through virtuous or prescribed action.

Those who have directly realized the Absolute Reality declare that alone to be the Absolute Reality (*tattvam*) which is nondual consciousness (*advaya-jñāna*). That Reality is denoted as Brahman, as Paramātmā, and as Bhagavān.

The sages, endowed with resolute faith, directly perceive that very [nondual Reality (*tac ca tattvam*)],¹⁶ the Self [*ātmanam*,

¹⁴ These four verses have been discussed at length in *Bhakti Sandarbha*, *Anucchedas* 6–7.

¹⁵ This and the next bracketed insert are Śrīdhara Svāmī’s comments.

¹⁶ Unless otherwise indicated, this and all other bracketed inserts in this verse are Śrīdhara Svāmī’s comments.

i.e., *paramātmānam*], within their own pure cognitive ground [*ātmani*, i.e., *śuddhe cetasi*]¹⁷ by *bhakti* imbibed through hearing [the self-revealed truth teachings (*vedānta-śravaṇena*)], and invested with immediate awareness and freedom from all attachment. (SB 1.2.9–12)¹⁸

स्वतः सर्वदुःखनिवृत्तिश्च तत्रैवोक्ता “भिद्यते हृदयग्रन्थिः” (भा० १।२।२१) इत्यादिना ।

And the dissolution of all miseries (*sarva-duḥkha-nivṛtti*) that occurs automatically as a concomitant effect [of the realization of Bhagavān] is also described in the very same chapter as follows:

Precisely coinciding with the immediate perception [*sākṣāt-kṛte*]¹⁹ of Īśvara within the core of being (*ātmani*) of such a realized person, the knot of ego in the heart is pierced, all doubts are cut asunder, and the reaction to all *karma* is nullified. (SB 1.2.21)²⁰

श्रीविष्णुपुराणे च (वि० पु० ६।५।५९) —

The same idea is expressed in *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*:

निरस्तातिशयाह्लादसुखभावैकलक्षणा ।
भेषजं भगवत्प्राप्तिरेकान्तात्यन्तिकी मता ॥ ४ ॥ इति ।

The attainment of Bhagavān, which is resolutely fixed (*ekāntā*), unending (*ātyantiki*), and intrinsically of the nature of that

¹⁷ Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī

The pure cognitive ground (*śuddhe cetasi*) refers to the ground of all cognitive operations or the root of attention.

¹⁸ *dharmasya hy āpavargyasya nārtho'rthāyopakalpate nārthasya dharmāikāntasya kāmō lābhāya hi smṛtaḥ kāmasya nendriya-prītir lābho jiveta yāvatā jivasya tattva-jijñāsā nārtho yaś ceha karmabhiḥ vadanti tat tattva-vidas tattvaṁ yaj-jñānam advayam brahmeti paramātmēti bhagavān iti śabdyate tac-chraddadhānā munayo jñāna-vairāgya-yuktayā paśyanty ātmani cātmānaṁ bhaktyā śruta-grhitayā*

¹⁹ Śrīdhara Svāmī

²⁰ *bhidyate hṛdaya-granthiś chidyante sarva-saṁśayāḥ kṣiyante cāsyā karmāṇi dṛṣṭa evātmaniśvare*

supreme bliss which casts aside all other forms of happiness, is considered [by learned authorities (*paṇḍitaiḥ*)]²¹ to be the remedy [for the threefold miseries of material existence (*tri-viddhasyāpi duḥkha-jātasya*)]. (VP 6.5.59)²²

श्रुती च “आनन्दं ब्रह्मणो विद्वान् न बिभेति कुतश्चन” (तै० २।१।१) इति ।

And in the [*Taittirīya*] Śruti as well, it is said: “One who has realized the bliss of Brahman does not fear anything” (TU 2.9.1).²³

Commentary

An objection can be raised to the proposal that one needs to attain the Absolute by way of divine love (*prema*) in order to attain bliss and freedom from misery. Because the *jīva* is an intrinsic part of the Absolute (*tadīya*), which is fundamentally of the nature of bliss, it naturally follows that some portion of the bliss of the Absolute must also be inherent within the *jīva*, since the part is endowed with the nature of the whole. Such being the case, what need is there to seek the Absolute or the state of divine love? Love already exists as a dormant potential inside the *jīva*, but at present it is covered by *māyā*. This appears to be confirmed by Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself in the following correlated statement:

The knowing capacity (*jñāna*) of the *jīvas* is covered by ignorance (*ajñāna*), and thus they are bewildered. But for those whose ignorance has been dispelled by immediate awareness of the Self — their awareness (*jñāna*) reveals the Supreme Absolute, just as the sun illuminates the world. (GĪTĀ 5.15–16)²⁴

²¹ The word *paṇḍitaiḥ* here and the words *tri-viddhasyāpi duḥkha-jātasya* in the next bracketed insert are drawn directly from the preceding verse (VP 6.5.58), to which this verse is syntactically connected.

²² *nirastātīśayāhlāda-sukha-bhāvaika-lakṣaṇā bheṣajam bhagavat-prāptir ekāntātyantiki matā*

²³ *ānandaṁ brahmaṇo vidvān na bibhēti kutaścana*

²⁴ *ajñānenāvṛtaṁ jñānaṁ tena muhyanti jantavaḥ jñānena tu tad ajñānaṁ yeṣāṁ nāśitam ātmanaḥ teṣāṁ ādityavaj jñānaṁ prakāśayati tat-param*

In response to this line of argument, it is asserted that a part does not necessarily share all the qualities of the whole. Human hair and nails are parts belonging to the whole that is the individual, but they do not possess consciousness. You can trim them without feeling any pain. Furthermore, the principle that a part possesses the qualities of the whole applies only when the qualities of the whole are homogeneously distributed, as in the ocean. This principle, however, is inapplicable in the case of composite objects like a house — doors have different qualities from the bricks. Different parts of the house have different qualities, but the house possesses all the qualities of its parts and something more in addition. One can live in the house, but not in a door or a brick. Even in the case of the ocean, in which there is a uniform distribution of qualities, a drop does not contain all of the ocean's qualities. One can swim, surf, and dive in the ocean, but not in a drop.

As regards the *jīva* in particular, since by constitution it is an atomic part only of the *taṭastha-śakti*, it is not endowed with the qualities of the *bahiraṅga*- and *antaraṅga-śaktis*. Neither the *prākṛta-guṇas* of *prakṛti* nor the *aprākṛta-guṇas* of *prīti* are present in the *jīva* because these belong to the *bahiraṅga*- and *antaraṅga-śaktis*, respectively. Additionally, because the *jīva* is atomic in magnitude, the happiness that belongs to its own *svarūpa* is also infinitesimal. Moreover, this happiness is not of the same existential grade as that which ensues from immediate awareness of the Absolute, Bhagavān, who is unlimited. In fact, the happiness in the *svarūpa* of the *jīva* amounts to the absence of all suffering. This was discussed in *Paramātmā Sandarbha* (*Anuccheda* 28).²⁵ The happiness one experiences in dreamless sleep is nothing but cessation of all suffering. To top it all off, the *jīva* is in ignorance, or covered by *ajñāna*.

Śrī Jīva writes that the *jīva*'s ignorance (*ajñāna*) is a type of absence (*abhāva*) that is without beginning, technically known as the beginningless prior absence of awareness of the Supreme Reality (*parama-tattva-saṁsargābhāva*). Although the *jīva* is purely

²⁵ *tatra tasya jaḍa-pratīyogitvena jñānatvaṁ duḥkha-pratīyogitvena tu jñānatvaṁ ānandatvaṁ ca.*

spiritual by nature, it is aware neither of its own intrinsic identity nor of the Supreme Reality. Rather, the *jīva* is identified with its acquired body-mind complex. Since the *jīva*'s ignorance of its true identity is without origin, it is not caused by any action of its own, of the *tattva*, or of anyone else.

The *jīva*'s state of conditioning by ignorance seems illogical — how can a conscious being not know its true identity? This, however, is possible by the influence of *māyā*, as was discussed in *Paramātma Sandarbha* (Anucchedas 48–55).²⁶ By the inconceivable power of Bhagavān, *māyā* can cover the intermediary potency, despite being inferior to it. This is affirmed 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 [by nature] is the ruler and liberated, experiences impoverishment and bondage. (SB 3.7.9)²⁷

This beginningless ignorance is sometimes described as the *jīva*'s knowledge being covered by ignorance, as in the *Gītā* (*ajñānenāvṛtaṁ jñānaṁ tena muhyanti jantavaḥ*, 5.15), or as its bewilderment by *māyā*, as in Vyāsadeva's *samādhi* vision, described in the beginning of the *Bhāgavata*:

Bewildered by this extrinsic potency, the individual self, although transcendental to the three *guṇas* of material nature, thinks of itself as consisting of them and thus undergoes the misery resulting from this identification. (SB 1.7.5)²⁸

²⁶ Normally, we conceive of energy as an impersonal force. But the energies of Bhagavān also exist in personified forms. This was discussed in *Bhagavat Sandarbha* (Anuccheda 99). Thus, *māyā* is the personified form of the extrinsic potency (*bahiraṅga-śakti*). The words *māyā*, *bahiraṅga-śakti*, *ajñāna* (ignorance), and *prakṛti* (primordial nature) are used interchangeably.

²⁷ *seyaṁ bhagavato māyā yaṁ nayena virudhyate*
īśvarasya vimuktasya kārpaṇyam uta bandhanam

²⁸ *yayā sammohito jīva ātmānaṁ tri-guṇātmakam*
paro'pi manute'narthān tat-kṛtān cābhipadyate
For more details regarding the *jīva*'s conditioning by *māyā*, see *Paramātma Sandarbha*, Anucchedas 88–92.

Normally, we think of a covering as a positive existent, denoted in Indian philosophy by the term *bhāva*. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī explains, however, that the beginningless covering of the *jīva* is not a positive entity but a type of absence, called *saṁsarga-abhāva*. According to the Nyāya School of philosophy, absence (*abhāva*) is of two types, namely *saṁsarga-abhāva* and *anyo'nya-abhāva*. The first of these has three further divisions, called *prāg-abhāva* (prior or antecedent absence), *pradhvaṁsa-abhāva* (post or subsequent absence), and *atyanta-abhāva* (absolute absence). The word *saṁsarga-abhāva* in this *anuccheda* refers specifically to *prāg-abhāva*, or prior absence, implying that the absence in question will eventually come to an end.²⁹

In general terms, antecedent absence (*prāg-abhāva*) refers to the nonexistence of an object, quality, or action before it comes into being. This absence is without beginning, but it comes to an end as soon as the object, quality, or action is produced or manifests. In the case of the conditioned or bound *jīva*, the prior absence being spoken of is that of awareness of the Absolute Reality, which includes awareness of the *jīva*'s own true identity. Thus the implication is that a bound or conditioned *jīva* is ignorant of the Absolute Reality as well as of itself, and this ignorance has no beginning.

In this state of ignorance, the *jīva* considers itself to be the body-mind complex, which is an external covering (*upādhi*) and a product of the three *guṇas* of *māyā*. Due to being adjoined to the prior absence of awareness of the Absolute Reality (*taj-jñāna-saṁsarga-abhāva-yuktatvena*), and being bereft of awareness of its own essential nature (*ātma-svarūpa-jñāna-lopāt*), the *jīva* identifies with and becomes absorbed in the mind and physical body, which are products of *māyā* (*māyā-kalpita-upādhi-āveśāt*). Ignorance thus has two

²⁹ The term *abhāva* denotes nonexistence, nullity, absence, non-entity, and negation. In Kaṇāda's Vaiśeṣika system, *abhāva* is the seventh category of knowables (*jñeya*) and the counter-entity to the other six ontological existents, beginning with substance, quality, and action. In Nyāya, *prāg-abhāva* is a particular form of the category of nonexistence, which is of three kinds: prior (*prāg*), posterior (*pradhvaṁsa*), and absolute (*atyanta*), corresponding respectively to the absence prior to production, absence after destruction, and absolute or necessary negation of existence.

aspects. The first is negative, involving the beginningless absence of awareness of Bhagavān and the self. The second is an outcome of the first and takes the form of mistaken knowledge about oneself. The latter is sometimes termed as *avidyā* (*Yoga-sūtra* 2.3) or *ajñāna* (*gītā* 5.15). The *jīva* who is thus influenced by *māyā* is devoid of devotion to Bhagavān, the Nondual Personal Absolute. This beginningless absence of knowing is determined as the cause of the *jīva*'s being influenced or covered by *māyā*.

Māyā is constituted of three *guṇas*, namely *sattva*, or “luminosity,” *rajas*, or “dynamic force,” and *tamas*, or “inertia.” Under the influence of these three *guṇas*, people uphold different belief systems regarding knowledge, agency, and the world around them. This is described in the beginning of the 17th chapter of *Bhagavad Gītā*. A person under their influence remains turned away (*parānimukha*) from the Absolute and suffers the outcome of his or her *karma*. Although ignorance, bondage, and material suffering are all beginningless and thus do not have a cause-and-effect relation in the normal sense, they are depicted as such for our understanding.

The implication behind the specification of ignorance as a “covering” (*āvaraṇa*) is that bondage is not intrinsic to the *jīva* and can thus be dispelled (*SB* 11.11.1). When a *jīva* is invested with devotion by the causeless grace of a devotee, his or her beginningless ignorance (*saṁsargābhāva*) comes to an end. This results in immediate awareness of the Absolute and of one's own self (*svātma-jñāna-pravṛtti*), as well as the absolute cessation of all suffering (*atyanta-duḥkha-nivṛtti*). This occurrence is accompanied simultaneously by the attainment of bliss (*SB* 11.2.42–43). This bliss in the form of devotion or divine love is the supreme aim of human life (*parama-puruṣārtha*).

Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī states that both the attainment of knowledge as well as the cessation of misery are unending. The reason for the former is that it is a manifestation of the intrinsic potency of Bhagavān, which can never be subdued by *avidyā*, *ajñāna*, or *māyā*. Consequently, once awareness of Bhagavān makes its appearance, it

will never come to an end. This was described in *Bhagavat Sandarbha* (Anucchedas 21–23). The cessation of misery is also unending because misery is then relegated to the state of “post nonexistence” (*pradhvaṁsa-abhāva*), meaning the permanent cessation of misery after its destruction. Just as prior absence is beginningless but comes to an end, post absence has a beginning but no end.

For example, before a clay pot is made, it has prior nonexistence or antecedent absence (*prāg-abhāva*). This prior absence has no beginning but comes to an end as soon as the pot is produced. If the pot is then demolished, it passes into the state of post absence, or nonexistence after destruction (*pradhvaṁsa-abhāva*). This post absence has a beginning but will never come to an end, since the exact same pot can never again come into being. Accordingly, when misery is destroyed by awareness of the Absolute, there ensues an absence of misery, which will never reappear.

Next, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī cites Śūta Gosvāmī’s statements (SB 1.2.9–12 and 21) to show how immediate realization of the *tattva* is the supreme goal of life and how it automatically brings an end to all misery. The verse from *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (6.5.59), spoken by sage Parāśara to Maitreya, confirms the same conclusion. The *mantra* from *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (2.9.1)³⁰ states that once a person realizes the bliss of Brahman, there is no more fear. Fear is caused by identification with the body-mind complex, which results from ignorance of the Absolute, as described by sage Kavi:

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

³⁰ This *mantra* actually appears twice in *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (2.4.1 and 2.9.1). The only difference in the two citations is that the first reading ends with the word *kadācana* (“at any time”) in place of *kutaścana* (“from anything”). Here, Jīva Gosvāmī quotes only the second line of the verse, having cited the first line a little earlier. So the entire verse would read as follows: “One who has realized the bliss of Brahman, from which words recoil along with the mind without ever having reached it, does not fear anything [at any time].”

of identity in turn results in the absorption in that which is secondary (*dvitīyābhīniveśa*), 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)³¹

Awareness of Brahman thus eradicates the root cause of fear.

1.4

Mukti Entails Svarūpa-sākṣātkāra

एष एव च मुक्तिशब्दार्थः संसारबन्धच्छेदपूर्वकत्वात् । यथोक्तं श्रीसूतेन (भा० १२।४।३४) —

And this indeed [the immediate intuition of the Supreme Reality (*para-tattva-sākṣātkāra*)] is the meaning of the word *mukti*, because this realization is preceded by the cessation of material bondage, as Śrī Sūta said:

यदैवमेतेन विवेकहेतिना मायामयाहङ्करणात्मबन्धनम् ।
छित्त्वाच्युतात्मानुभवोऽवतिष्ठते तमाहुरात्यन्तिकमङ्गं सम्प्लवम् ॥ ५ ॥ इति ।

When, in this manner, the knot of empirical ego (*māyā-maya-aṅkaraṇa*), that binds the self is cut with the sword of discernment, and one becomes firmly established in immediate cognition (*anubhava*) of the infallible Paramātmā, that state, O dear King, is called “ultimate dissolution” (*ātyantika-samplavam*). (SB 12.4.34)³²

अच्युताख्ये आत्मनि परमात्मन्यनुभवो यस्य तथाभूतः सन्नवतिष्ठते यत् तमात्यन्तिकं सम्प्लवं मुक्तिमाहुरित्यर्थः ।

³¹ *bhayaṁ dvitīyābhīniveśataḥ syād īśād apetasya viparyayo'smṛtiḥ tan-māyayāto budha ābhajet taṁ bhaktyaikayeśaṁ guru-devatātmā*

³² *yadaivam etena viveka-hetina māyā-mayāhaṅkaraṇātma-bandhanam chittvācyutātmānubhavo'vatiṣṭhate tam āhur ātyantikam aṅga samplavam*

The state of a person who is thus permanently established in immediate cognition (*anubhava*) of the Self (*ātmani*), meaning “the Supreme Immanent Self” (*paramātmāni*), who is known by the name Acyuta, “the infallible one,” is called “ultimate dissolution” (*ātyantika-samplavam*), or in other words, *mukti*.

अथ “मुक्तिर्हित्वान्यथारूपं स्वरूपेण व्यवस्थितिः” (भा० २।१०।६) इत्येतदपि तत्तुल्यार्थमेव । यतः स्वरूपेण व्यवस्थितिर्नाम स्वरूपसाक्षात्कार उच्यते तदवस्थानमात्रस्य संसारदशायामपि स्थितत्वात् । अन्यथारूपत्वस्य च तदज्ञानमात्रार्थत्वेन तद्वानौ तज्ज्ञानपर्यवसानात् ।

In this regard, we may now consider the following assertion: “Liberation (*mukti*) means to be established in the self’s true essential nature (*svarūpa*), after abandoning identification with all that it is not” (SB 2.10.6).³³ This statement is identical in meaning to the one just cited [SB 12.4.34], because establishment in the self’s essential nature (*svarūpa-vyavasthiti*) is defined as the immediate intuition of the same (*svarūpa-sākṣātkāra*).

This specification is necessary because bare establishment in one’s *svarūpa* [bereft of its realization] is the status of existence even in the state of material bondage. Additionally, because identification with “all that the self is not” (*anyathā-rūpa*) is nothing other than ignorance of its own *svarūpa*, the abandonment of that ignorance is synonymous with the realization of its *svarūpa*.

स्वरूपं चात्र मुख्यं परमात्मलक्षणमेव । रश्मिपरमाणूनां सूर्य इव स एव हि जीवानां परमोऽंशिस्वरूपः ।

Moreover, the word *svarūpa* primarily denotes Paramātmā, because He alone is the supreme whole (*parama-aṁśi-svarūpa*) of whom the living entities are but parts, like the sun in relation to its particles of light.

यथोक्तं ब्रह्माणं प्रति श्रीमता गर्भोदशायिना (भा० ३।१।३३) —

This was stated by Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu to Brahmā:

³³ *muktir hitvānyathā-rūpaṁ svarūpeṇa vyavasthitiḥ*

यदा रहितमात्मानं भूतेन्द्रियगुणाशयैः ।
स्वरूपेण मयोपेतं पश्यन् स्वाराज्यमृच्छति ॥ ६ ॥ इति ।

When one directly perceives the self (*ātmānam*) as devoid of the five gross elements, the senses, the *guṇas*, and the inner receptacle of thoughts and feelings, and as accompanied (*upetam*) by Me, its own essential ground of being (*svārūpa*),³⁴ one attains self-resplendence or autonomy of the self (*svārājya*).³⁵ (SB 3.9.33)³⁶

उपेतं युक्तमित्येवाक्लिष्टोऽर्थः । जीवस्वरूपस्यैव गौणानन्दत्वं दर्शितम् । “तस्मात् प्रिय-
तमः स्वात्मा” (भा० १०।१४।५४) इत्युक्त्वा “कृष्णमेनमवेहि त्वमात्मानमखिलात्मनाम् ।
जगद्धिताय सोऽप्यत्र देहीवाभाति मायया” (भा० १०।१४।५५) इत्यनेन ।

The word *upetam* [qualifying “the individual self” (*ātmānam*)] means “accompanied (*yuktam*) [by Me],” which alone is not a forced interpretation.³⁷ The *svārūpa* of the *jīva* has been shown by Śrī Śuka to be secondary in its endowment with bliss in

³⁴ Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī glosses the word *svārūpeṇa*, qualifying the pronoun *mayā* (“by Me”), as “the Potent Source (*śaktimān*), who is the ground of being (*āśraya*) of the *jīva-śakti*.” Śrī Virarāghava takes the same word to mean “[by Me] whose essential being (*svārūpa*) is constituted of existence, consciousness, and infinity (*satyaṁ jñānam anantam*).”

³⁵ Śrīdhara Svāmī glosses the word *svārājya* as “liberation” (*mokṣam*). Śrī Jīva interprets the same word as referring to the four devotional forms of liberation beginning with *sārṣṭi*, while Śrī Vallabhācārya interprets it as “the immediate experience of the bliss of one’s own essential being” (*svārūpānandānubhavam*). Śrī Giridhara defines it as “self-determination” (*svenaiva rājate*), meaning freedom from the influence of *karma* (*akarma-vaśyatvam*).

³⁶ *yadā rahitam ātmānaṁ bhūtendriya-guṇāśayaiḥ
svārūpeṇa mayopetaṁ paśyan svārājyaṁ ṛcchati*

³⁷ Śrī Jīva’s comment here stands in contradistinction to that of Śrīdhara Svāmī, who has given an Advaitavāda interpretation to this verse, glossing the word *upetam* as *ekī-bhūtam*, “[having realized the self as] united or one in identity [with Me].” Śrīdhara’s overall explanation is as follows: “When one directly perceives (*paśyan*) the self (*ātmānam*), meaning the pure living being (*śuddha-jīvam*) standing for the ‘you-principle’ (*tvam-padārtha*) as one in identity (*upetam*, i.e., *ekī-bhūtam*) with Me (*mayā*), the ‘that-principle’ (*tat-padārthena*), and the self’s own essential ground of being (*svārūpeṇa*) — meaning its very Self (*svasya ātma-bhūtena*) — one attains autonomy (*svārājya*), meaning liberation (*mokṣam*).” The etymology of the word *upeta*, however, is *upa* + *i* + *kta*, in the sense of “having come (*ita*, i.e., *gata*) near to (*upa*, i.e., *samīpe*),” and its primary dictionary meaning is →

the following passage. After saying, “Therefore, for all embodied beings, it is one’s own self (*ātmā*) that is supremely dear” (SB 10.14.54),³⁸ he concludes with this statement:

You should know this Kṛṣṇa to be the Self (*ātmā*) of all selves.
For the benefit of the cosmos, He too appears in this world as if
an embodied being by the influence of His *māyā*. (SB 10.14.55)³⁹

जीवपरयोरभेदवादस्तु परमात्मसन्दर्भादौ विशेषतोऽपि परिहृतोऽस्ति । अत एव निरधार्यच्छ्रुतिः “रसो वै सः । रसं ह्येवायं लब्ध्वानन्दी भवति” (तै० २।७।१) इति ।

The philosophy of absolute or radical nondistinction (*abheda-vāda*) between the *jīva* and Paramātmā has been specifically refuted in *Paramātmā Sandarbha* and elsewhere. Therefore, the conclusive statement of the Śruti [regarding the secondary nature of the *jīva*’s bliss and the distinction that holds between the *jīva* and Paramātmā] is as follows: “He [Parabrahman] is indeed *rasa* [the existential ground of bliss (*ānandamaya-svarūpa*)], and only on attaining this *rasa* does the *jīva* become blissful” (TU 2.7.1).⁴⁰

“accompanied by” or “associated with” (*yuktam*). Hence, although Jīva Gosvāmī does not mention Śrīdhara Svāmī by name, his comment that the word *yuktam* is the only unforced meaning (*akliṣṭa-artha*) of the word *upetam* insinuates that Śrīdhara’s gloss is forced.

³⁸ *tasmāt priyatamaḥ svātmā sarveṣāṃ api dehinām*

³⁹ *kṛṣṇam enam avehi tvam ātmānam akhilātmanām
jaḡad-dhitāya so’py atra dehivābhāti māyayā*

⁴⁰ *raso vai saḥ. rasaṁ hy evāyaṁ labdhvānandī bhavati.*

Here the distinction between the *jīva* and Paramātmā is clearly indicated, because the former is “the attainer” (*prāpaka*) whereas the latter is “the attained” (*prāpya*). If the *jīva* and Paramātmā were absolutely one, no such relation would be possible.

Commentary

The true meaning of *mukti* or *mokṣa* is to become free from the beginningless prior absence of awareness of the Absolute and of one's own self. The removal of this ignorance is synonymous with the immediate intuition (*sākṣātkāra*) of the Absolute. As a concomitant effect of this realization, one is liberated from all types of miseries without any possibility of their reappearance. *Pañcadaśī*, a famous work on Advaita Vedānta by Vidyāraṇya, defines *mukti* in similar terms:

Just as a dream is not given up without the awareness that one is dreaming, so too *mukti* is attained only by the immediate intuition of Brahman and not by any other means. (*Pañcadaśī* 6.210)⁴¹

Śukadeva offers another definition of *mukti* cited in this *anuccheda*: “Liberation (*mukti*) means to be established in the self's true essential nature (*svarūpa*), after abandoning identification with all that it is not” (SB 2.10.6). This definition of *mukti* seems to lay stress on a different factor than the one given above, but Śrī Jīva clarifies that there is no contradiction between them. “To be established in one's true essential nature” (*svarūpa-vyavasthiti*) means to realize directly who and what one really is (*svarūpa-sākṣātkāra*).

This is possible when one has become free from beginningless ignorance, which can occur only through immediate experience of the Absolute. Otherwise, everybody is situated in their own essential being (*svarūpa*) even in the state of ignorance. Where else can one be situated? If this criterion alone amounted to liberation, then everyone should be liberated according to Śukadeva's definition. But this is certainly not the case. Consequently, establishment in one's *svarūpa* means to be aware of both oneself and of the Absolute.

It should be understood, furthermore, that awareness of one's *svarūpa* is not possible without awareness of the Absolute. This is because the *jīva* is an integrated part of the Absolute, and knowledge of a part is incomplete without knowing its relation to the

⁴¹ *muktis tu brahma-tattvasya jñānād eva na cānyathā
sva-prabodhaṁ vinā naiva sva-svapno hīyate yathā*

whole. According to Śukadeva, the Absolute is the substratum or support (*āśraya*) of everything.⁴² Knowledge of the superstratum, or in other words, of the supported, is not possible without knowledge of the support, just as knowledge of sunlight is incomplete without knowledge of the sun. For this reason, establishment in one's own *svarūpa* signifies direct awareness of both the self as well as the Absolute, or Paramātmā.⁴³

Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī makes a crucially important distinction in this regard. He says that the primary ground of being (*svarūpa*) of the *jīva* is Paramātmā. This is to say that awareness of the finite self alone is insufficient to free one from beginningless ignorance. On this basis, Śrī Jīva concludes that the bliss that belongs to the *jīva's svarūpa* — meaning the *jīva* in itself without reference to the Supreme — is secondary. The primary bliss is attained from the *svarūpa* of Paramātmā, who is the whole.

From this, it is understood that those who pursue a spiritual process independent of *bhakti* cannot hope to attain *mukti*. Mere self-realization will not grant ultimate liberation, nor will it award unending, unlimited bliss. A *jīva* is atomic in magnitude in contrast to Paramātmā or Bhagavān, who is comparable to an unlimited ocean. Accordingly, the bliss of self-realization without direct experience of Bhagavān has to be recognized as meager. All this has been discussed at length in *Paramātmā Sandarbha*.

The following objection may be raised to this argument. There is no difference between the *jīva* and the Absolute. The *jīva* is nothing but the Absolute conditioned by the *upādhi* of the body, just as a portion of space (*ākāśa*) is enclosed in a pot. When the pot is broken, then the portion of space that was formerly delimited by the pot merges into exterior or indivisible space. Similarly, when the *jīva* is freed of its conditioning, it becomes one with Brahman.

⁴² See *Tattva Sandarbha* (*Anuccheda* 59, 61).

⁴³ In *Paramātmā Sandarbha* (*Anuccheda* 39), it was explained that the *jīva* is a part only of Paramātmā, and not of Bhagavān directly. Additionally, the *jīva* cannot be a part of Brahman, because Brahman, being devoid of qualification, is without parts. If, however, the *jīva* is sometimes described in such terms, then the word *brahman* should be taken as referring to Paramātmā.

Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad thus proclaims: “One who knows Brahman verily becomes Brahman” (*brahma veda brahmaiva bhavati*, 3.2.9). Following this line of argument, the opponent may object to the idea that self-realization alone is incomplete and hence not equivalent to realization of the Absolute.

Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī writes that this idea of the absolute oneness between the *jīva* and Brahman has been refuted earlier in *Paramā-tma Sandarbha* to which the reader is referred. It is further contradicted by the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (2.7.1) statement that declares Bhagavān to be *rasa* and that it is only on attaining this *rasa* that one becomes blissful. A distinction is certainly to be admitted between the one who attains *rasa* (the *prāpaka*) and the *rasa* that is attained (the *prāpya*). The two cannot be absolutely identical, otherwise to speak of attainment would lose all meaning. Moreover, the word used in this Upaniṣadic statement is *labdhvā*, “on attaining,” and not *jñātvā*, “on knowing.” If the intention were to advocate absolute nondistinction between the *jīva* and Brahman, then it would have been necessary to say, “on knowing.”

1.5

Attainment of the Whole As Brahman or Bhagavān

अत्रांशेनांशिप्राप्तिश्च द्विधा योजनीया ।

In this regard, it should be added that the attainment of the Whole (*aṁśī*) by the part (*aṁśa*) is of two types:

(क) तत्राद्या ब्रह्मप्राप्तिर्मायावृत्त्यविद्याविद्यानाशानन्तरं केवलतत्त्वरूपशक्तिलक्षणतद्विज्ञानाविर्भावमात्रम् । सा च स्वस्थान एव वा स्यात् । क्रमेण सर्वलोकसर्वावरणातिक्रमानन्तरं वा स्यात् । उपासनाविशेषानुसारेण ।

(1) The first is the attainment of Brahman, which amounts to the self-disclosure (*āvirbhāva*) only of the consciousness (*vijñāna*) of the Complete Whole. This *vijñāna*, which is exclusively an aspect of the Absolute’s intrinsic potency (*svarūpa-śakti*), makes

its appearance after *māyā*'s functions of ignorance (*avidyā*) and knowledge (*vidyā*) have been destroyed. According to the specific means of worship (*upāsanā*) undertaken, this attainment is possible either in the practitioner's immediate condition (*svasthāna*), or gradually, after crossing beyond all worlds (*lokas*) and all coverings of the universe.

(ख) द्वितीया भगवत्प्राप्तिश्च तस्य विभोरप्यसर्वप्रकटस्य तस्मिन्नेवाविभवेन विभुनापि वैकुण्ठे सर्वप्रकटेन तेनाचिन्त्यशक्तिना स्वचरणारविन्दसान्निध्यप्रापणया च ।

(2) The second is the attainment of Bhagavān, who, although omnipresent (*vibhu*), is not manifest to all. Hence, His attainment occurs by His self-disclosure only to a particular individual. Alternatively, although Bhagavān is omnipresent, by virtue of His transrational potency (*acintya-śakti*), He is fully manifest specifically in Vaikuṇṭha. His attainment thus occurs when He takes an eligible practitioner into His personal presence in Vaikuṇṭha.

तदेवं स्थिते सा च मुक्तिरुत्क्रान्तदशायां जीवदृशायामपि भवति । उत्क्रान्तस्योपाध्यभावेऽपि तदीयस्वप्रकाशतालक्षणधर्माव्यवधानस्यैतत्साक्षात्काररूपत्वात् जीवतस्तत्साक्षात्कारेण मायाकल्पितस्यान्यथाभावस्य मिथ्यात्वावभासात् सैषा मुक्तिरेवात्यन्तिक-पुरुषार्थतयोपदिश्यते (भा० ४।२२।३५) —

Such being the case, *mukti* can occur both after death (*utkrāntā-mukti*) and also while in the living condition (*jīvan-mukti*). [In the first type of *mukti*,] although the person who has given up the gross and subtle bodies is free of all limiting adjuncts (*upādhis*), it is the removal of the obstructions to the Absolute's self-revealing nature that is the cause of Its immediate perception (*sākṣātkāra*).

[In the second type of *mukti*,] by virtue of the immediate intuition (*sākṣātkāra*) of the Absolute, the adept while living directly perceives the illusory nature of the mistaken self-concept that is a product of *māyā*. So, because of the unobstructed *sākṣātkāra* of the Absolute in the former case and the direct disclosure (*avabhāsa*) of non-reality (*mithyātva*) in the second, *mukti*

[of both types] is instructed as the ultimate goal of human attainment by Śrī Sanat-kumāra to Pṛthu:

तत्रापि मोक्ष एवार्थ आत्यन्तिकतयेष्यते ।
त्रैवर्ग्योऽर्थो यतो नित्यं कृतान्तभयसंयुतः ॥ ७ ॥

इति श्रीपृथुं प्रति श्रीसनत्कुमारेण ।

Even among these [four *puruṣārthas*], it is *mokṣa* alone that is designated as the ultimate goal, because the other three goals of *dharma*, *artha*, and *kāma* are ever accompanied by the fear of death. (SB 4.22.35)⁴⁴

श्रुतिश्च “येनाहं नामृता स्यां किमहं तेन कुर्याम्” (बृ० २।४।३) इति ।

And the Śruti also says: “What shall I do with that by which I will not become immortal?” (BAU 2.4.3).⁴⁵

Commentary

In *Tattva Sandarbha* as well as in *Bhagavat Sandarbha*, it was explained that the one *tattva* is self-disclosed in three features, as Brahman, Paramātmā, and Bhagavān. Among these three, the sphere of influence of Paramātmā, who is the Immanent Self and Supreme Regulator, is primarily in regard to *prakṛti*, the extrinsic potency of Bhagavān. Consequently, during the periods of cosmic dissolution, when *prakṛti* is in a dormant state, Paramātmā remains unmanifested in the state of *yoga-nidrā*. Additionally, in the transcendental domain, Bhagavān Himself assumes the status of Paramātmā. For both of these reasons, Paramātmā cannot be the ultimate object of worship (*iṣṭa-devatā*), since the necessary criterion for the latter is eternal manifestation.

All this was explained in *Paramātmā Sandarbha* (*Anuccheda* 1). On this consideration, only Brahman and Bhagavān can be the true

⁴⁴ *tatrāpi mokṣa evārtha ātyantikatayeṣyate*
traivargyo'rtho yato nityaṁ kṛtānta-bhaya-saṁyutaḥ

⁴⁵ *yenāhaṁ nāmṛtā syāṁ kim ahaṁ tena kuryām*

objects of attainment for one seeking ultimate liberation. With this in mind, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī here states that the conscious part (*aṁśa*) can attain the Whole (*aṁśī*) in one of two ways, either as Brahman or as Bhagavān.

In the first case, Śrī Jīva explains that the attainment of Brahman amounts to no more than the self-disclosure only of the consciousness feature (*cit* or *samvit*) of the Absolute, occurring upon the dissolution of ignorance. In this regard, he points out that *māyā*, or *ajñāna*, has two divisions, called *vidyā* and *avidyā*, as Śrī Kṛṣṇa informs Uddhava:

O Uddhava, know that *vidyā* and *avidyā* are My two beginningless potencies. They are a product of My *māyā* and cause the bondage and release of the embodied beings. O highly intelligent one, bondage through beginningless *avidyā* and its alternative [i.e., liberation (*mokṣa*)] through *vidyā* exist for the *jīva* alone, who is indeed one of My parts. (SB 11.11.3–4)⁴⁶

The *vidyā* function of *māyā* dispels *avidyā*, but this alone does not free one from conditioning, because *vidyā*, which is also a function of *māyā*, remains operative. Only if one receives the grace of the Supreme Reality, the *parama-tattva*, can one become free of *vidyā*, at which point, *brahma-jñāna*, or “the immediate intuition of Brahman,” becomes manifest. Therefore, one should not think that *brahma-jñāna* is mere knowledge about Brahman gained from the study of Vedānta. It is a manifestation of the intrinsic potency (*svarūpa-śakti*) bestowed by the grace of Bhagavān. Just as the sun’s rays emitted from the sun globe remove darkness and at the same time reveal the sun itself, so too, when the intrinsic potency of the *tattva* is transmitted into a particular *jīva*, it dispels its *avidyā* and reveals Brahman.

Liberation (*mukti*), characterized as the immediate intuition (*sākṣātkāra*) of Brahman, can occur in one of two existential states

⁴⁶ *vidyāvidye mama tanū viddhy uddhava śarīriṇām
mokṣa-bandha-karī ādye māyayā me vinirmite
ekasyaiva mamāṁśasya jīvasyaiva mahā-mate
bandho’syāvidyayānādir vidyayā ca tathetarah*

of being. It can occur right here in the living condition, in which case it is called *sadyo-mukti*, or “immediate liberation.” Having attained this condition, the liberated adept is no longer subject to transmigration nor does he or she travel to other worlds after quitting the body. Having realized Brahman, one attains Brahman directly. This is stated in *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (4.4.6⁴⁷ and 3.2.11).⁴⁸

Alternatively, *mukti* can occur gradually while the practitioner moves on to higher spheres, crosses the seven coverings of the universe, and finally attains Brahman. This second variety is called *krama-mukti*, or “gradual liberation.” The attainment of either of these two forms of *mukti* depends upon the specific mode of worship (*upāsana*) adopted by the practitioner. Some are intent upon immediate *mukti* after giving up the body, while others wish to first explore the various spheres in the universe. The former attain Brahman realization here in this lifetime. The latter, however, first travel to higher planes of existence and finally cross beyond the coverings of the universe, at which point they attain the state of establishment in Brahman.

Returning to our original point of discussion, the second type of attainment of the Whole by the part is in the form of the attainment of Bhagavān. Although Bhagavān is omnipresent (*vibhu*), He is not visible to all in this world. He is thus self-disclosed only to specific individuals, such as His appearance in the *yajña* of King Pṛthu or to the boy Dhruva. In His own abode, Vaikuṇṭha, however, He is manifest to all. When a perfected devotee leaves his or her body, Bhagavān carries such a devotee to His abode.

Mukti is thus of two types, called “living liberation” (*jīvan-mukti*) and “posthumous liberation” (*utkrāntā-mukti*). In the *jīvan-mukta* state, a devotee continues to live in the present body while directly perceiving all products of *prakṛti* as temporary and in a state of constant flux. Such a devotee does not identify with the body-mind complex, knowing well that such identification is illusory. In the state of *utkrāntā-mukti*, the devotee becomes free of

⁴⁷ *na tasya prāṇa utkrāmantī brahmaiva san brahmāpyeti*

⁴⁸ *atraiva samavānīyante*

both the gross and subtle bodies. This is defined as establishment in one's own *svarūpa*. Such a devotee obtains a spiritual body by which he or she can experience Bhagavān and His abode without obstruction.

In both states, the devotee is under the custody of the intrinsic potency of Bhagavān. Thus, *māyā* cannot exert any influence over him or her. This *mukti*, and not the one involving the *sākṣātkāra* of Brahman, is the highest goal to be attained. The bliss of *bhakti* is unlimitedly greater than the bliss of Brahman (BRS 1.1.38). This is so because in *brahmānanda*, there is no variety. Moreover, there is no distinction between the experiencer, the experience, and the experienced.

The statement from *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (2.4.3) was spoken by Maitreyī to her husband, the sage Yājñavalkya. Yājñavalkya was a great scholar, who had won many debates in the court of King Janaka in Mithilā. He had two wives, Kātyāyanī and Maitreyī. In the later part of his life, the sage decided to live in seclusion and renounce all his possessions. He intended to divide his property between his two wives. When she heard this, Maitreyī reasoned that if her husband was leaving all his wealth behind, he must have something of superior value. Therefore, she asked her husband: "If I were to inherit this entire earth with all its wealth, would I thereby become immortal?" (BAU 2.4.2).⁴⁹

Yājñavalkya replied in the negative. Maitreyī then questioned: "What shall I do with that by which I will not become immortal?" (BAU 2.4.3). She understood that whatever is temporary cannot be the ultimate object of attainment. The human body itself is temporary, and therefore anything obtained thereby should also be temporary. Yet there is an exception to this rule. One can attain *mukti* by way of the mortal human body. To attain the eternal by a temporary instrument is the best of all possible bargains. Consequently, *Hitopadeśa* advises human beings to endeavor only for that which is permanent:

One who gives up the pursuit of the permanent and strives for

⁴⁹ *yan nu ma iyaṁ bhagoḥ sarvā pṛthivī vittena pūrṇā syāt kathaiṁ tenāmṛtā syām iti*

the temporary, loses both. The temporary will be lost in course of time, while the permanent was already lost to begin with. (*Hitopadeśa* 1.200)⁵⁰

In identical manner, Śrī Kṛṣṇa declares the pursuit of the permanent by means of the temporary body as the essence of all wisdom (SB 11.29.22). It is with this intention that Maitreyī questions what she would do with that which does not lead to immortality, or in other words, liberation (*mukti*).

1.6

Six Characteristics of Prīti

तदेवं परमतत्त्वसाक्षात्कारात्मकस्य तस्य मोक्षस्य परमपुरुषार्थत्वे स्थिते पुनर्विविच्यते ।
तच्च परमं तत्त्वं द्विधाविर्भवति । अस्पष्टविशेषत्वेन स्पष्टस्वरूपभूतविशेषत्वेन च ।

In this manner, having established that *mokṣa* in the form of the immediate intuition (*sākṣātkāra*) of the Absolute Reality (*parama-tattva*) is the supreme object of human attainment (*parama-puruṣārtha*), we will now examine the topic further. The Absolute Reality is self-disclosed in two features — without distinct attributes (*aspaṣṭa-viśeṣa*) and with distinct attributes (*spaṣṭa-viśeṣa*) that are intrinsic to Its essential being (*svarūpa*).

तत्र ब्रह्माख्यास्पष्टविशेषपरतत्त्वसाक्षात्कारतोऽपि भगवत्परमात्माद्याख्यस्पष्टविशेषत-
त्साक्षात्कारस्योत्कर्ष (८१) भगवत्सन्दर्भे (भा० १।५।४) —

जिज्ञासितमधीतं च ब्रह्म यत् तत् सनातनम् ।
तथापि शोचस्यात्मानमकृतार्थं इव प्रभो ॥ ८ ॥

इत्यादिप्रकरणकप्रघट्टकेन दर्शितवानस्मि ।

In this regard, I have shown the superiority of the *sākṣātkāra* of the Absolute with distinct attributes, designated as *Bhagavān* and *Paramātmā*, over that of the Absolute without distinct attributes, known as *Brahman*, in *Bhagavat Sandarbha*

⁵⁰ *yo dhruvāṇi parityajya adhruvāṇi niṣevate*
dhruvāṇi tasya naśyanti adhruvaṁ naṣṭam eva hi

(*Anuccheda* 81), in the context of the discussion centered on Nārada's statement to Vyāsa:

You have thoroughly inquired into and realized that which is known as the eternal Brahman, and yet, O illustrious one, you lament for yourself as if having failed to attain your objective.
(SB 1.5.4)⁵¹

अत्रापि वचनान्तरेर्दृश्यिष्यामि । तस्मात् परमात्मत्वादिलक्षणनानावस्थभगवत्साक्षात्कार एव तत्रापि परमः ।

Here also [in *Prīti Sandarbha*], I will demonstrate the same conclusion using a different set of terms. Consequently, even among [the various direct disclosures (*sākṣātkāras*) of the *para-tattva*], the *sākṣātkāra* of Bhagavān, who encompasses innumerable existential states such as that of Paramātmā, is alone supreme.

(क) तत्र सत्यपि निरुपाधिप्रीत्यास्पदत्वस्वभावस्य तस्य स्वरूपधर्मान्तरवृन्दसाक्षात्कृतौ परमत्वे प्रीतिभक्त्यादिसञ्ज्ञं प्रियत्वलक्षणधर्मविशेषसाक्षात्कारमेव परमतमत्वेन मन्यन्ते ।

(1) In this regard as well, Bhagavān, by His essential nature (*svabhāva*), is the supreme ground and object (*āspada*) of unconditional love (*nirupādhi-prīti*). So, even though it is certainly true that the self-disclosure (*sākṣātkāra*) of His other intrinsic qualities (*svarūpa-dharmas*) is itself supreme (*parama*), it is the *sākṣātkāra* of His specific quality of being the ultimate object of love (*priyatva-dharma*), signified by terms such as *prīti* and *bhakti*, that is considered supreme to the superlative degree (*paramatama*).

(ख) तया प्रीत्यैवात्यन्तिकदुःखनिवृत्तिश्च ।

(2) The ultimate dissolution of misery (*ātyantika-duḥkhanivṛtti*) occurs only by this *prīti*.

(ग) यां प्रीतिं विना तत्स्वरूपस्य तद्धर्मान्तरवृन्दस्य च साक्षात्कारो न सम्पद्यते ।

⁵¹ *jijñāsitam adhitarā ca brahma yat tat sanātanam
tathāpi śocasy ātmānam akṛtārtha iva prabho*

(3) Without this *prīti*, the *sākṣātkāra* of Bhagavān's *svarūpa* and other intrinsic attributes is not possible.

(घ) यत्र सा तत्रावश्यमेव सम्पद्यते ।

(4) In whomever *prīti* is manifest, the *sākṣātkāra* of these is certainly actualized.

(ङ) यावत्येव प्रीतिसम्पत्तिस्तावत्येव तत्सम्पत्तिः ।

(5) The wealth (*sampatti*) of the *sākṣātkāra* of Bhagavān's *svarūpa* and other intrinsic attributes manifests in direct proportion to the wealth of the development of *prīti*.

(च) सम्पद्यमाने सम्पन्ने च तस्मिन् साधिकमाविर्भवति ।

(6) To one in whom the wealth of *prīti* is presently developing as well as to one in whom it is already an accomplished state of being, the wealth of the *sākṣātkāra* of Bhagavān's *svarūpa* and other intrinsic attributes manifests to a greater extent.

तदेतत् सर्वमपि युक्तमेव । परमसुखं खलु भगवतस्तद्गुणवृन्दस्य च स्वरूपम् । सुखं च निरुपाधिप्रीत्यास्पदम् । ततस्तदनुभवे प्रीतेरेव मुख्यत्वमिति । तस्मात् पुरुषेण सैव सर्वदान्वेषितव्येति पुरुषप्रयोजनत्वं तत्रैव परमतममिति स्थितम् । क्रमेणोदाह्रियते —

All this is certainly appropriate. Supreme bliss (*parama-sukha*) is indeed the essential nature (*svarūpa*) of both Bhagavān and His intrinsic attributes. Bliss is the ground (*āspada*) of unconditional love (*nirupādhi-prīti*). Consequently, *prīti* is the primary cause in the matter of the immediate experience (*anubhava*) of the Absolute. As such, *prīti* alone is to be sought in all circumstances by human beings. In this manner, it has been established that the goal of human life (*puruṣa-prayojanatvam*) reaches its utmost superlative degree of expression (*paramatamam*) in *prīti* alone. References [to support the six characteristics of *prīti* listed above] are now given in order:

तत्र “सत्यपि” इत्यादिकम् (भा० ११।२०।३३) —

सर्वं मद्भक्तियोगेन मद्भक्तो लभतेऽञ्जसा ।

स्वर्गपवर्गं मद्भाम कथञ्चिद् यदि वाञ्छति ॥ ९ ॥

इत्यादि श्रीभगवद्वाक्यादौ ।

First, the fact that the *sākṣātkāra* of Bhagavān's specific quality of being the object of love (*priyatva-dharma*) is the supreme goal of human attainment (*parama-puruṣārtha*) is supported by the following statement of Śrī Bhagavān:

By *bhakti-yoga* that is specifically intent on Me, My devotee easily attains all that is available [through other means]. Should he somehow desire them, he can attain heaven, liberation, or My abode. (SB 11.20.33)⁵²

“तया” इत्यादिकम् “प्रीतिर्न यावन् मयि वासुदेवे न मुच्यते देहयोगेन तावत्” (भा० ५।५।६) इति श्रीऋषभदेववाक्ये ।

That the ultimate dissolution of misery (*ātyantika-duḥkha-nivṛtti*) occurs only by *prīti* is supported by the following statement of Śrī Rṣabhadeva: “As long as love (*prīti*) for Me, Vāsudeva, does not come into being, a person cannot be liberated from his bondage to the material body” (SB 5.5.6).⁵³

“याम्” इत्यादिकम् “भक्त्याहमेकया ग्राह्यः श्रद्धयात्मा प्रियः सताम्” (भा० ११।१४।२१) इति श्रीभगवद्वाक्ये ।

Without this *prīti*, the *sākṣātkāra* of Bhagavān's *svarūpa* and other intrinsic attributes is not possible. This is supported by the following statement of Śrī Bhagavān: “For those established in authentic being (*satām*), I am directly apprehensible as the

⁵² *sarvaṁ mad-bhakti-yogena mad-bhaktō labhate'ñjasā
svargāpavargaṁ mad-dhāma kathañcid yadi vāñchati*

From this statement, it is evident that *bhakti* or *prīti* is the *parama-puruṣārtha*, because all goals sought through other means are easily available through *bhakti* alone. No other process can make such a claim. Moreover, since *bhakti* is here established as being directed to Bhagavān alone, the immediate self-disclosure (*sākṣātkāra*) of His specific quality of being the object of *bhakti* and *prīti* (*priyatva-dharma*) is shown to be the foremost of all His intrinsic qualities to the superlative degree (*paramatama*).

⁵³ *prītiṁ na yāvan mayi vāsudeve na mucyate deha-yogena tāvat*

Supreme Self (*ātmā*) and the supreme object of love (*priya*) only by unalloyed *bhakti* endowed with faith” (SB 11.14.21).⁵⁴

“यत्र” इत्यादिकम् “भक्तिरेवैनं नयति भक्तिरेवैनं दर्शयति । भक्तिवशः पुरुषो भक्तिरेव भूयसी” इति माठरश्रुती ।

In whomever *prīti* is manifest, the *sākṣātkāra* of Bhagavān’s *svarūpa* and qualities is certainly actualized. This is supported by the following statement from *Māṭhara-śruti*:

Only *bhakti* leads to Him, only *bhakti* reveals Him. Bhagavān is controlled by *bhakti*; *bhakti* alone is the supreme process. (*Māṭhara-śruti*)⁵⁵

“यावती” इत्यादिकम् “भक्तिः परेशानुभवो विरक्तिरन्यत्र चैष त्रिक एककालः” (भा० ११।२।४२) इति कवियोगेश्वरवाक्ये ।

The wealth (*sampatti*) of the *sākṣātkāra* of Bhagavān’s *svarūpa* and other intrinsic attributes manifests in direct proportion to the wealth of the development of *prīti*. This is supported by the following statement of Kavi Yogeśvara:

Just as with every morsel of food consumed, satisfaction, nourishment, and relief from hunger are experienced by a person engaged in eating, so too *bhakti* [i.e., *prema*],⁵⁶ direct witnessing of Bhagavān [the immediate self-disclosure of His form (*bhagavad-rūpa-sphūrṭi*)], and detachment from objects unrelated to devotion — these three occur simultaneously [in the very moment in which *bhajana* is performed (*eka-kālāḥ bhajanah sama-kāla eva syāt*)] to a person who has taken complete shelter of Bhagavān. (SB 11.2.42)⁵⁷

⁵⁴ *bhaktiyāham ekayā grāhyaḥ śraddhayātmā priyaḥ satām*

Here the implication is that if the self-disclosure (*sākṣātkāra*) of Bhagavān’s *svarūpa* as the Supreme Self (*ātmā*) and the supreme object of love (*priya*) is possible only through *bhakti* or *prīti*, then without *prīti*, this *sākṣātkāra* would not be possible.

⁵⁵ *bhaktir evainaṁ nayati bhaktir evainaṁ darśayati*
bhakti-vaśaḥ puruṣo bhaktir eva bhūyasī

⁵⁶ This and the following bracketed inserts are Śrīdhara Svāmī’s comments.

⁵⁷ *bhaktiḥ pareśānubhavo viraktir anyatra caiṣa trika eka-kālāḥ →*

“सम्पद्यमाने” इत्यादिकम् —

मद्रूपमद्वयं ब्रह्म मध्याद्यन्तविवर्जितम् ।
स्वप्रभं सच्चिदानन्दं भक्त्या जानाति चाव्ययम् ॥ १० ॥

इति वासुदेवोपनिषदि ।

To one in whom the wealth of *prīti* is presently developing as well as to one in whom it is already an accomplished state of being, the wealth of the *sākṣātkāra* of Bhagavān's *svarūpa* and other intrinsic attributes manifests to a greater extent. This is supported by *Vāsudeva Upaniṣad*:

By means of *bhakti* [i.e., *prīti*], the practitioner directly cognizes My form [*rūpam*, i.e., *svarūpam*] as nondual (*advayam*), as absolute (*brahma*), as devoid of beginning, middle, and end, as self-luminous, eternal, conscious, blissful, and imperishable. (*Vāsudeva Upaniṣad* 29)⁵⁸

एवम् “तत् त्वमसि” (छा० ६।८।७) इत्यादिशास्त्रमपि तत्प्रेमपरमेव ज्ञेयम् । त्वमेवामुक् इतिवत् । किं च लोकव्यवहारोऽपि तत्पर एव दृश्यते । सर्वे हि प्राणिनः प्रीतितात्पर्यका एव — तदर्थमात्मव्ययादेरपि दर्शनात् । किन्तु योग्यविषयमलब्ध्वा तैस्तत्र तत्र सा परिवर्ज्यते । अतः सर्वैरेव योग्यतद्विषयेऽन्वेष्टुमिष्टे सति श्रीभगवत्येव तस्याः पर्यवसानं स्यादिति ।

Accordingly, even *śāstrika* statements such as “You are That” (*tat tvam asi*, CHU 6.8.7) should be understood as exclusively indicative of *prema* for Bhagavān, just as it is said [about someone

prapadyamānasya yathāśnataḥ syus tuṣṭiḥ puṣṭiḥ kṣud-apāyo'nughāsam

The implication here is that just as satisfaction, nourishment, and relief from hunger are experienced proportionately to the quantity of food consumed, so too *prema*, direct witnessing of Bhagavān, and detachment manifest in correspondence with the degree of development of *bhajana*.

⁵⁸ *mad-rūpam advayaṁ brahma madhyādyanta-vivarjitam*
sva-prabhaṁ sac-cidānandaṁ bhaktiā jānāti cāvyaṁ

Here the implication is that by means of *bhakti* or *prīti* — whether presently developing or already in a state of completion — there is an expanded direct cognition (*sākṣātkāra*) of Bhagavān's *svarūpa* as nondual, as Brahman, as devoid of beginning, middle, and end, as self-luminous, as eternal, conscious, and blissful, and as imperishable.

who holds another as exceedingly dear], “You are that very person.”⁵⁹ Moreover, worldly dealings are also seen to be focused exclusively on love. All living beings have love alone as their ultimate aim (*tātparya*), because it is evidenced that for the sake of love, one may even sacrifice one’s own life. But being unable to find a suitable object of love, people [continuously] withdraw their love from the objects and people [in which or in whom it was formerly invested]. Consequently, since everyone yearns to find a suitable object of love, it is in Śrī Bhagavān alone that love finds its ultimate completion.

Commentary

In *Bhagavat Sandarbha* (Anucchedas 2-7), it was made clear that Brahman is the unqualified self-disclosure of the complete Absolute, Bhagavān. By the immediate intuition of Brahman, one certainly becomes liberated, but the self-disclosure of the Absolute as devoid of all qualification conceals Its own essential nature (*svarūpa*) and transcendental qualities (*aprākṛta-guṇas*). So, although the Brahman-realized adept is free of all suffering, there is no positive experience of bliss. In the state of unity-consciousness with Brahman, although the *ātmā* remains as a particle of consciousness within the undifferentiated whole that is Brahman, the sense of its distinct identity is lost, like a drop of water mixing with the ocean. In actual fact, the drop is never lost, but it has no sense of itself as an individual unit apart from the ocean.

In the state of Brahman-realization, there is no scope for reciprocation between the *jīva* and Brahman. It was therefore concluded

⁵⁹ The oneness spoken of here between the visible subject (*tvam*, i.e., the *jīva*) and the invisible object (*tat*, i.e., the Para-tattva) is the oneness of love (*prema*). This conclusion is appropriate since absolute ontological oneness (*aikya*) between the *jīva* and the Para-tattva cannot be upheld — the distinction between them being that of the finite and the infinite (*aṇu-vibhu*), the sheltered and its shelter (*āśrita-āśraya*), the regulated and its regulator (*niyāmya-niyāmaka*), as well as potency and its potent source (*śakti-śaktimān*).

in *Bhagavat Sandarbha* (*Anuccheda* 81) that Brahman is an incomplete and hence limited self-disclosure of the Absolute. Here too, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī emphasizes that the immediate intuition (*sākṣātkāra*) of the Para-tattva as transcendently qualified — meaning as Bhagavān — is the *parama-puruṣārtha*.

Having established this *sākṣātkāra* of Bhagavān as the true meaning of liberation (*mokṣa*), Śrī Jīva then takes the discussion to another level, showing that *prīti* (or divine love) is the *parama-puruṣārtha* to the superlative degree, beyond even the *sākṣātkāra* of Bhagavān. This is a crucial point as well as one of the distinctive features of the Gauḍīya School. It is only by *prīti* that Bhagavān reveals Himself. Without *prīti*, no one can know His essential nature (*svarūpa*). Therefore, in *Bhakti Sandarbha* (*Anuccheda* 187), Śrī Jīva goes as far as saying that without *prīti*, even the *sākṣātkāra* of Bhagavān is as good as no *sākṣātkāra* at all.

People like Śiśupāla and Kaṁsa also saw Kṛṣṇa, but they had no *prīti* for Him and so could not understand who or what He is. It is a different matter that because of Kṛṣṇa's supreme majesty, they benefited from contact with Him, but they could not experience the bliss that is intrinsic to the vision of Him. In reality, they did not even see Kṛṣṇa per se. What they saw was only a *māyika* covering of Kṛṣṇa. This was described in *Kṛṣṇa Sandarbha* (*Anuccheda* 106.2). Additionally, the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* makes the following statement about Śiśupāla:

Śiśupāla, having been freed from the defect of envy and other such vices, beheld Bhagavān as the Supreme Brahman, whose form (*svarūpa*) was of imperishable effulgence, shining brilliantly with a garland of rays from the disc He had cast in order to destroy him. (VP 4.15.14)⁶⁰

According to this assertion, the form of Bhagavān that is displayed to the *asuras* is not His true form (*svarūpa*), but a manifestation of *māyā*. If they do actually see the *svarūpa* of Bhagavān, their envy is dispelled.

⁶⁰ *ātma-vināśāya bhagavad-asta-cakrāṁśu-mālojjvalam akṣaya-tejah-svarūpaṁ parama-brahma-bhūtam apagata-dveṣādi-doṣo bhagavantam adrākṣīt.*

It is *prīti* alone that brings an ultimate end to all suffering. If a person is devoid of *prīti*, then even the vision of Bhagavān provides no relief, as evident in the case of Duryodhana. Even after seeing Kṛṣṇa and His Virāṭ form, Duryodhana remained unconvinced about His Godhood. He thought that Kṛṣṇa was just a magician. Seeing Him directly did not bring Duryodhana any bliss. Moreover, he could not understand the truth about Kṛṣṇa and continued to suffer from his envious nature.

On the basis of all this, the conclusion is that *prīti* is the supreme *puruṣārtha* and not the immediate experience of Brahman (*brahma-sākṣātkāra*) or even the vision of Bhagavān (*bhagavat-sākṣātkāra*). Even *mukti* devoid of *prīti* is not the supreme *puruṣārtha*. In the *Bhāgavata*, many other words are used as synonyms for *prīti*, such as *bhakti*, *rati*, *prema*, *bhāva*, and, as we shall see, even *mukti* or *kaivalya*. Since Jīva Gosvāmī first defines *mukti* in terms of *sākṣātkāra* and then demonstrates that *mukti* culminates in *prīti* alone, it naturally follows that the *sākṣātkāra* impelled by *prīti* should involve both greater depth and complexity. This is shown by Śrī Jīva in his description of *prīti*'s six characteristics as follows.

He first states that Bhagavān in His most essential nature is the supreme ground and object (*āspada*) of unconditional love (*nirupādhi-prīti*). Consequently, the *sākṣātkāra* of Bhagavān specifically as the ultimate object of love (*priyatva-dharma*) is supreme above all other types of *sākṣātkāra*. *Prīti* also brings an end to all suffering. Without *prīti*, the *sākṣātkāra* of Bhagavān's *svarūpa* and qualities is impossible. It is *prīti* that enables the *sākṣātkāra* of Bhagavān along with His essential nature. *Prīti* alone discloses His *svarūpa* and divine attributes in direct correspondence with its degree of development. This disclosure manifests to a greater extent to one in whom *prīti* is presently developing or already in the stage of completion. After elaborating these six characteristics of *prīti*, Śrī Jīva provides examples of each of them in sequence beginning with SB 11.20.33.

In this regard, the following doubt may be raised. If *prīti* is the supreme *puruṣārtha*, then why is there no mention of it in the Upaniṣads, the cream of the Vedas? Moreover, why is it that *mukti*

or *mokṣa* is consistently propounded as the supreme *puruṣārtha*? To address this question, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī cites one of the most important statements of the Upaniṣads, one of the four *mahā-vākyas* of the Advaita Vedāntis: “You are That” (*tat tvam asi*).

Although there are many *mahā-vākyas* in the Upaniṣads, Advaitavāda scholars accept only four, one each from the four Vedas, as follows:

1. *Prajñānaṁ brahma*, “Consciousness is Brahman” (Aitareya Upaniṣad 3.1.3, *Ṛg Veda*);
2. *Ahaṁ brahmāsmi*, “I am Brahman” (BAU 1.4.10, *Yajur Veda*);
3. *Tat tvam asi*, “You are That” (CHU 6.8.7, *Sāma Veda*); and
4. *Ayam ātmā brahma*, “This ātmā is Brahman” (*Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* 2, *Atharva Veda*).

Tat tvam asi is a statement made by Āruṇi to his son Śvetaketu while instructing him about the Absolute Reality. The complete statement is as follows: “That which is this subtle essence [known as “being” or “existence” (*sat*)] — this entire [world] has That as its very Self. That is Being. That is the Self. You are That, O Śvetaketu” (CHU 6.8.7).⁶¹ The *jīva* is limited, conditioned, miserable, and ignorant, whereas the Absolute is just the opposite. Hence, they cannot be absolutely one in existential status. Different commentators have tried to resolve this inequality in different ways. In brief, their explanations are as follows:

1. The Advaitavāda view of Śaṅkarācārya holds that there is only one Absolute Reality called Brahman. The *jīva* is nothing but Brahman conditioned or delimited by *māyā*. When this conditioning is removed, the *jīva* again becomes Brahman.
2. The Viśiṣṭa-advaitavāda view of Rāmānujācārya interprets the pronoun *tvam* as referring to the Brahman who is immanent within as the *jīva* and the pronoun *tat* as referring to the Brahman who is the cause of the cosmos. The relation between the *jīva* and Brahman is said to be that of the qualifier (*viśeṣaṇa*) and the qualified Reality (*viśiṣṭa*), or body (*śarīra*) and embodied (*śarīrī*).

⁶¹ *sa ya eṣo’ṇimaitadātmīyam idaṁ sarvaṁ tat satyaṁ sa ātmā tat tvam asi śvetaketo iti.*

3. The Dvaitavāda, or Tattvavāda, view of Madhvācārya explains that the complete sentence *sa ātmā tat tvam asi* should in fact be broken down as *saḥ ātmā atat tvam asi*, meaning “You are that ātmā, you are not Brahman.” Alternatively, they say that *tat tvam asi* is to be understood as *tasya tvam asi*, “You are His,” signifying that the *jīva* is a servant of Viṣṇu.
4. The Śuddha-advaitavāda view of Vallabhācārya explains the statement to mean that there is oneness of essential being, but Brahman is the whole whereas the *jīva* is Its part.
5. The Dvaita-advaitavāda view of Nimbarkācārya explains that the relation between the *jīva* and Brahman is one of simultaneous oneness and difference because the *jīva* is an intrinsic part of Brahman.

All these different views essentially boil down to two primary conceptions. The Advaitavāda followers interpret the statement as establishing the absolute identity of the *jīva* and Brahman. The rest of the commentators deny the idea of absolute oneness, advocating instead various forms of distinction within unity. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī, while accepting the principle of oneness, makes it clear that this is not the oneness of radical nondistinction but that which is rooted in *prīti*. According to him, oneness as a feeling-state (*bhāva*) is possible in *prīti*. A semblance of such oneness can be experienced even by ordinary people who lack devotional education. When two people share an intimate bond of love, they feel a sense of oneness despite being distinct individuals. One can only imagine how close they must feel in true *prīti*. An example of this is found in the following statement made by Śrī Kṛṣṇa:

There is a rumor that I am your lover and you are My beloved. Alas, some gossip that you are My life and I am Yours. O Rādhē, even to say, “You are mine and I am yours” is incorrect. In our conversations, to use the words “I” and “you” is not at all appropriate. (*Alaṅkāra-kaustubha* 5.34)⁶²

⁶² *preyāṁś te'haṁ tvam api ca mama preyaśīti pravādaś
tvam me prāṇā aham api tavāsmīti hanta pralāpaḥ
tvam me te syāṁ aham iti yat tac ca no sādhu rādhē
vyāhāre nau na hi samucito yuṣmad-asmad-prayogaḥ*

Even in worldly dealings, it is seen that when a man and woman are in love, they consider themselves as one entity. This desire for oneness in love is experienced by all beings, including the lower species. For the sake of *prīti*, people can sacrifice everything, including their very lives. If liberation were the highest *puruṣārtha*, no one would be willing to give up their life for the sake of *prīti*.

But the *prīti* found in the material world is temporary, limited, and conditional, and hence does not provide ultimate satisfaction. If it were grounded in truth or authentic being, people would feel completely fulfilled by it because the very nature of *prīti* is bliss. The reason why worldly love is insubstantial is that the *jīva* is atomic in magnitude and has considerably limited happiness in its essential nature. Moreover, in the conditioned state, it identifies with its physical and psychological coverings, which are material. Thus, the so-called *prīti* of worldly experience is actually directed toward the *jīva*'s coverings and not toward the authentic self.

In this condition, one cannot even truly know one's own *svarūpa* or that of another *jīva*. Our innermost desire is for unlimited, unending happiness. This cannot be fulfilled by another *jīva*, since all *jīvas* are limited and conditioned by *avidyā*. Therefore, nobody ever really feels deeply or lastingly satisfied by material *prīti*. In the end, being dissatisfied with one's object of love, one looks for another. This search continues until by good fortune one discovers that only Bhagavān is the true object of *prīti*. It is to expound this *prīti*, unknown to the world, that Śrī Jīva writes *Prīti Sandarbha*.

1.7

Kaivalya in the Form of Prīti Is the Ultimate Goal

तदेवं भगवत्प्रीतेरेव परमपुरुषार्थत्वे समर्थिते साधूक्तम् “अथ प्रीतिसन्दर्भो लेख्यः” इत्यादि । स एष एव परमपुरुषार्थः क्रमरीत्या सर्वोपरि दर्शयितुं सन्दृश्यते । तत्रोक्तलक्षणस्य मुक्तिसामान्यस्य शास्त्रप्रयोजनत्वमाह “सर्ववेदान्त” (भा० १२।१३।१२) इत्यादौ “कैवल्यैकप्रयोजनम्” इति ।

As divine love (*prīti*) for Bhagavān has thus been determined as the supreme goal of human attainment (*parama-puruṣārtha*), it was appropriately stated [at the beginning of this *anuccheda* (1.1)]: “Now the treatise on divine love (*Prīti Sandarbha*) is to be written.” This text is being composed to show in an orderly fashion that the *parama-puruṣārtha* of *prīti* is beyond all other aims of human life. That *mukti* in general as defined above [i.e., as the *sākṣātkāra* of Bhagavān’s *svārūpa*] is the intended goal (*prayojana*) of scripture (*śāstra*) has been stated by Sūta Gosvāmī: “This *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* is the essence of all Vedānta philosophy [...] in which liberation (*kaivalya*) is proclaimed as the one ultimate attainment” (SB 12.13.12).⁶³

केवलः शुद्धः तस्य भावः कैवल्यम् । तदेकमेव प्रयोजनं परमपुरुषार्थत्वेन प्रतिपाद्यं यस्य तदिदं श्रीभागवतमिति पूर्वश्लोकस्थेनान्वयः ।

The word *kevala* means “pure” (*śuddha*), and hence the existential condition (*bhāva*) of being completely pure is *kaivalya*.⁶⁴

⁶³ *sarva-vedānta-sāraṁ yad brahmātmaikatva-lakṣaṇam
vastu advitīyaṁ tan-niṣṭhaṁ kaivalyaika-prayojanam*
Cf. *Tattva Sandarbha*, *Anuccheda* 52.1

The translation of the complete verse is as follows: “This *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* is the essence of all Vedānta philosophy, because its subject (*niṣṭhaṁ*, i.e., *viṣayaṁ*) is the one nondual Absolute (*advitīyaṁ vastu*), characterized by the constitutional oneness [in love] of the *ātmā* with Brahman. In this *Purāṇa*, liberation (*kaivalya*) [in the form of unconditional love for Bhagavān] is proclaimed as the one ultimate attainment (*eka-prayojana*).”

⁶⁴ *Kaivalya* is a general term for liberation, synonymous with *mukti*. Its dictionary definitions are “aloneness, perfect isolation; oneness, and absolute unity.” As a term for liberation, it originates with the Jains and the Yoga tradition (see *Yoga-sūtra* 2.25, 3.50, and 3.55), but it is also favored by the Advaitins. It refers →

Bhāgavata Purāṇa is that book in which this *kaivalya* alone is established as the ultimate attainment (*prayojana*), meaning the *parama-puruṣārtha*. Since the words *śrīmad bhāgavatam* don't actually appear in this verse [SB 12.13.12], they are to be adduced from SB 12.13.9, to which this verse is syntactically connected.

दोषमूलं हि जीवस्य परमतत्त्वज्ञानाभाव एवेत्युक्तम् “भयं द्वितीयाभिनिवेशतः स्यात्” (भा० ११।२।३७) इत्यादौ “ईशादपेतस्य” इत्यादिभिः । अतस्तज्ज्ञानमेव शुद्धत्वमिति कैवल्यशब्दस्यात्र पूर्ववत् तदनुभव एव तात्पर्यम् ।

The root defect of the living being (*jīva*) is nothing other than the absence of awareness of the Absolute Reality. This was stated in SB 11.2.37, with the words: “Fear arises from absorption in duality [...] which is rooted in the perpetual diverting of regard away from Bhagavān.”⁶⁵ Therefore, only immediate awareness (*jñāna*) of the Absolute is the state of complete purity (*śuddhatvam*), and thus, as elaborated above, the sole import of the word *kaivalya* that is applicable here is direct experience (*anubhava*) of the Absolute.

अथवा कैवल्यशब्देन परमस्य स्वभाव एवोच्यते । यथा स्कान्दे—

Alternatively, the word *kaivalya* can mean “the intrinsic nature

to the state of the individual self when freed from all material conditioning and situated in perfect isolation in its own essential nature (*svarūpa-pratiṣṭhā*, *Yoga-sūtra* 4.34). The word *kaivalya* appears 25 times in *Śrīmad Bhāgavata*, where it has been appropriated to mean liberation in a general sense and more specifically as *prīti*, as demonstrated by Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī. In his *Krama-sandarbha* commentary to SB 12.13.12, he says: “The word *kevala* means ‘pure’ (*śuddha*), referring specifically to the devotee who has cast aside all hypocrisy (*kaitava*), because it is stated in the second verse of the *Bhāgavata* that the supreme *dharma* propounded therein, which is free of all hypocrisy (*kaitava*), is that of those devotees who are firmly established in authentic being (*satām*). The existential state (*bhāva*) of such a pure devotee (*kevala*) is thus known as *kaivalya*, meaning *bhakti* utterly bereft of the desire for liberation.”

See also the explanation of SB 2.3.12 given below in *Anuccheda* 16.

⁶⁵ *bhayaṁ dvitīyābhīniveśataḥ syād īśād apetasya viparyayo'smṛtiḥ tan-māyayāto budha ābhajet taṁ bhaktyaikayeśaṁ guru-devatātmā*
The full verse has been quoted and commented on in *Tattva Sandarbha* (*Anuccheda* 32), *Paramātmā Sandarbha* (*Anuccheda* 47), and *Bhakti Sandarbha* (*Anuccheda* 1).

or essential being (*svabhāva*) of the Absolute (*parama*),” as stated in *Skanda Purāṇa*:

ब्रह्मेशानादिभिर्देवैर्यत् प्राप्तुं नैव शक्यते ।
स यत् स्वभावं कैवल्यं स भवान् केवलो हरे ॥ ११ ॥ इति ।

O Bhagavān Hari, He whom the *devas* like Brahmā and Śiva are unable to attain and whose essential being (*svabhāva*) is *kaivalya*, is none other than You, the utterly unique (*kevala*). (*Skanda Purāṇa*)⁶⁶

क्वचित् स्वार्थिकतद्वितान्तेन कैवल्यशब्देनापि परम उच्यते । यथा श्रीदत्तात्रेयशिक्षायाम्
(भा० ११।१।१८) —

Sometimes the Absolute (*parama*) is referred to directly by the word *kaivalya*, which is formed by applying the *svārthika-taddhita* affix (on the word *kevala*) [whereby the derivative meaning is identical to the word on which it is applied], as stated in the teachings of Śrī Dattātreya:

परावराणां परम आस्ते कैवल्यसञ्ज्ञितः ।
केवलानुभवानन्दसन्दोहो निरुपाधिकः ॥ १२ ॥ इति ।

The Primeval Puruṣa,⁶⁷ who is the supreme refuge and object of attainment (*parama*)⁶⁸ for both greater and lesser beings (*parā-varāṇām*),⁶⁹ who is the totality of pure (*kevala*)⁷⁰ consciousness (*anubhava*) and bliss (*ānanda*), who is devoid of all limiting adjuncts (*nirupādhika*), and who is thus designated as

⁶⁶ *brahmeśānādibhir devair yat prāptuṃ naiva śakyate
sa yat svabhāvaṃ kaivalyaṃ sa bhavān kevalo hare*

⁶⁷ The words *ādi-puruṣaḥ* are drawn from the previous verse, to which this verse is syntactically connected.

⁶⁸ Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī glosses the word *parama* as *āśraya*, “the supreme refuge,” Śrīdhara Svāmī glosses it as *prāpya*, “the supreme object of attainment,” and Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī takes it to mean *ārādhyā*, “the supreme worshipful object.”

⁶⁹ Śrī Jīva interprets the compound *parāvarāṇām*, lit., “of greater (*para*) and lesser beings (*avara*),” as referring to Bhagavān’s own integrated portions (*svīyāṃśa*) and His differentiated portions (*vibhinnāṃśa*); Śrīdhara Svāmī takes it to mean the *devas* headed by Brahmā and other liberated *jīvas*; and Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī interprets it as referring to the liberated *jīvas* and the bound *jīvas*.

⁷⁰ Śrī Jīva glosses the word *kevala* (qualifying the words *anubhava* and *ānanda*) as “pure” (*śuddha*), meaning “intrinsic to His essential being” (*svarūpa-bhūta*).

kaivalya, alone exists [during the period of cosmic dissolution].
(SB 11.9.18)⁷¹

तथाप्युभयथैव तदनुभव एव तात्पर्यम् । तत्स्वभावं वा । तमेवानुभावयितुमिदं शास्त्रं
प्रवृत्तमित्यर्थः ॥ श्रीसूतः ॥

Yet in both applications of the word *kaivalya* [used either to signify the state of complete purity (*śuddhatvam*) or as a designation of the Absolute], its import is either the immediate experience of Him (*tad-anubhava*) or His essential nature (*svabhāva*), and it is only to facilitate the direct realization of Him that this book [*Śrīmad Bhāgavata*] has been propounded.

Commentary

In this first *anuccheda* of *Prīti Sandarbha*, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī has established *prīti* as the supreme *puruṣārtha*. Traditionally, only four *puruṣārthas* are spoken of in India, namely, *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma*, and *mokṣa* or *mukti*. To propose *prīti* as the fifth *puruṣārtha* is the unique contribution of Jīva Gosvāmī.⁷² This is the justification for writing *Prīti Sandarbha*. He furthermore makes the claim that this *prīti* is the sole purpose of *Śrīmad Bhāgavata*, *kaivalyaika-prayojanam*.

In Advaita Vedānta, the word *kaivalya* is commonly used to mean *mukti* or the attainment of Brahman. The word *kevala* means “only” or “alone,” thus *kaivalya* can be understood in the sense of “aloneness,” which in that doctrine entails freedom from all duality and the immediate intuition of absolute identity with Brahman. This meaning, however, contravenes the very spirit of *Śrīmad Bhāgavata*, which propounds *bhakti* as the supreme goal, as was shown in *Bhakti Sandarbha*.

⁷¹ *parāvarāṇām parama āste kaivalya-sañjñītaḥ
kevalānubhavānanda-sandoho nirupādhiḥ*

⁷² Śrī Vallabhācārya, who was Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s contemporary, mentions *bhakti* as the fifth *puruṣārtha* while commenting on *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* but does not elaborate on the idea (*athavā bhaktiḥ pañcamah puruṣārthaḥ catvāras tair anubhūtāḥ*, Subodhinī on SB 1.15.46).

For this reason, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī makes evident the appropriate interpretation of the word *kaivalya* as *prīti*. He says that *kevala* means “pure,” so *kaivalya* (an abstract noun derived from the word *kevala*) thus means “the existential state of being completely pure.” This can refer only to the direct experience (*anubhava*) of Bhagavān because it alone dispels the root cause of all impurity, which is the beginningless prior absence of awareness of Him. The purpose of all rules and regulations laid down in scriptures is to remember Bhagavān always and to never forget Him even for a moment.⁷³ Consequently, *bhakti* or *prīti* is the ultimate purpose of all scriptures.

Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī cites two verses, one from *Skanda Purāṇa* and the other from *Śrīmad Bhāgavata*, to demonstrate two additional meanings of the word *kaivalya*. According to the first verse, *kaivalya* means “the intrinsic nature or essential being (*svabhāva*) of the Absolute (*parama*), who is *kevala*, or ‘utterly unique.’” There is no one equal or superior to the Absolute, and thus Bhagavān is appropriately called “Kevala.” The word *kaivalya* is derived from the word *kevala* by applying the *taddhita* affix *ṣyañ* in the sense of “nature” or “essence.” From this analysis, the word *kaivalya* refers to the Absolute’s essential nature of being entirely unique. Here also, the word *kaivalya* can mean *prīti*, because *prīti* especially epitomizes the uniqueness of Bhagavān. He is the ultimate source and object of *prīti*, as previously explained in *Bhakti Sandarbha* (*Anuccheda* 325).

The verse from *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* (11.9.18) cited at the end of this *anuccheda* illustrates a further application of the word *kaivalya*. The *taddhita* affix *ṣyañ* can optionally be applied on *kevala* without changing its sense (*svārthika*). In that case, *kaivalya* is identical in meaning to *kevala*. This usage is seen in the *Bhāgavata* verse just referred to in which Bhagavān is directly designated (*sañjñīta*) as *kaivalya*. In this sense, *kaivalya* stands for Bhagavān, who is *prīti* personified, as attested to in *Śrīmad Bhāgavata*:

Bhagavān, who is the very embodiment of divine love (*svayaṁ prītiḥ*) [i.e., who is the very form of *prīti* by His essential nature

⁷³ *smartavyaḥ satataṁ viṣṇur vismartavyo na jātucit
sarve vidhi-niṣedhāḥ syur etayor eva kiṅkarāḥ*

PP 6.71.100

(*svabhāvataḥ prīti-rūpa eva*)]⁷⁴ became visibly pleased (*prītim agāt*) in the sacrifice of King Gaya. (SB 5.15.13)⁷⁵

Having established *prīti* as the supreme *puruṣārtha*, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī takes up the analysis of various types of *mukti* beginning from *Anuccheda* 2 up to *Anuccheda* 16. He does so because *mukti* is popularly considered as the ultimate *puruṣārtha*. Śrī Jīva will demonstrate, however, that the highest peak of *mukti* is found only in *prīti*.



⁷⁴ This is Śrī Śukadeva's gloss on the words *svayaṁ prītiḥ*, referring to Bhagavān.

⁷⁵ *prīyeta sadyaḥ sa ha viśva-jīvaḥ prītaḥ svayaṁ prītim agād gayasya*

Anuccheda 2

Mukti As Svarūpa-sākṣātkāra Is the Parama-puruṣārtha

२ । तथा चान्यत्र (भा० ६।१६।६३) —

AND THE SAME matter [that *mukti* in the form of *svarūpa-sākṣātkāra* is propounded as the *parama-puruṣārtha* of *śāstra*] is seen elsewhere, as in Śrī Saṅkarṣaṇa's statement to Citraketu:

एतावानेव मनुजैर्योगनैपुण्यबुद्धिभिः ।
स्वार्थः सर्वात्मना ज्ञेयो यत् परात्मैकदर्शनम् ॥ १३ ॥

The immediate cognition (*darśana*) of the self's oneness with the Absolute — this alone is to be understood as the authentic self's ultimate object of attainment (*sva-artha*), accessible through investment of the totality of the self by human beings whose intellective faculty is refined to the highest level of skill by means of *yoga*. (SB 6.16.63)¹

टीका च — “न चातः परः पुरुषार्थोऽस्तीत्याह ‘एतावान्’ इति । योगे नैपुण्यं यस्याः सा बुद्धिर्येषां परस्यात्मनो ब्रह्मणो जीवतत्त्वस्य तस्यैकं केवलमैक्येन दर्शनमिति यदेतावानेव” इत्येषा ।

Śrīdhara Svāmī comments: “Śrī Saṅkarṣaṇa speaks this verse with the intent to point out that there is no object of human attainment (*puruṣārtha*) beyond what is stated here. He says,

¹ *etāvān eva manuṣṣair yoga-naipuṇya-buddhibhiḥ
svārthaḥ sarvātmanā jñeyo yat parātmaika-darśanam*

‘This alone (*etāvān eva*) is [the *sva-artha*, i.e., *parama-puruṣārtha*], which involves the immediate cognition (*darśanam*) of the oneness (*ekam*) of the self (*ātmanah*) and the Absolute (*parasya*).’”

परमात्मनः केवलस्य दर्शनमिति वा ॥ श्रीसङ्कर्षणश्चित्रकेतुम् ॥

Alternatively, [if *parātmā* is taken as a single word and not as a combination of *para* + *ātmā*], what would then be pointed out [as the *parama-puruṣārtha*] is the immediate cognition (*darśanam*) of the Immanent Self (*Paramātmā*), who is one alone (*ekam*), or in other words, “utterly unique” (*kevala*).

Commentary

IT IS INTERESTING to note that Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī chose this particular verse to support his conclusion about *prīti*, as it seems instead to support the Advaitavāda view of oneness. He could have chosen some other verse that advocates *bhakti* explicitly, such as SB 2.1.5. But he specifically chose this verse and even cited Śrīdhara Svāmī’s comment wherein the Advaitavāda view is clearly expressed. His intent in doing so is to show that verses such as this, which seem to lean toward Advaitavāda, are in reality speaking about *prīti*. This verse is offered in support of the Upaniṣadic statement *tat tvam asi*, cited toward the end of the previous *anuccheda*, which was interpreted as signifying the oneness of love between the *jīva* and Bhagavān. Thus, a sincere student of the *Bhāgavata* should have no misgivings about such statements.

If we follow Śrī Jīva’s train of thought through the previous *anuccheda*, we notice that he first equates *mukti* with *svārūpa-vyavasthiti*, or establishment in one’s essential being. He then clarifies that the true meaning of such establishment entails *svārūpa-sākṣātkāra*, or immediate intuition of the *svārūpa* of Bhagavān and of one’s own authentic self. Then by showing that this *sākṣātkāra* is possible only by *prīti*, he concludes that the true import of *mukti* is in *prīti* alone. Thus, verses such as this, which advocate *mukti*, or

sva-rūpa-sākṣātkāra, as the *parama-puruṣārtha*, indirectly establish *prīti* itself as the ultimate aim. This is the rationale employed by Śrī Jīva.

One has to take the meaning of a verse in its context and not examine it independently. Just prior to this verse, Śrī Saṅkarṣaṇa emphasized the fact that the person who has become established in knowledge and immediate realization of the truth through proper application of discernment should then become a devotee of Bhagavān. If one examines the present verse (SB 6.16.63) in light of the previous statement, it would be impossible to interpret it to mean radical nondistinction between the self and the Absolute. We cite here the previous verse in full:

By the power of one's discernment, one should become free from the thirst for sense objects that are either directly experienced or heard about. Then, being fully satisfied by knowledge and realization, a person should become My devotee. (SB 6.16.62)²

The oneness (*ekam*) mentioned in SB 6.16.63 is out of *prīti*, as explained in the previous *anuccheda*. This indeed is the authentic self's ultimate object of attainment (*sva-arthaḥ*), accessible through investment of the totality of the self (*sarvātmanā*, i.e., *sarva-prayatna-sādhyaḥ*)³ by human beings whose intellective faculty is refined to the highest levels of skill by means of *yoga* (*yogena naipunyam yasyāḥ sā buddhiḥ yeṣām*).⁴ The words *etāvān eva*, "this alone," are used to express a conclusion. This particular phraseology is one of the characteristics of *Śrīmad Bhāgavata*. There are more than half a dozen verses that begin with this phrase. Most of them speak about *bhakti*.



² *dr̥ṣṭa-śrūtābhir mātṛābhir nirmuktaḥ svena tejasā
jñāna-vijñāna-santṛpto mad-bhaktaḥ puruṣo bhavet*

This was the principal verse of *Bhakti Sandarbha*, *Anuccheda* 230.

³ Śrī Gaṅgā Sahāya

⁴ Śrī Gaṅgā Sahāya

Immediate and Gradual Liberation

3.1

Utkrāntā-mukti

३ । सैषा हि मुक्तिरुत्क्रान्तदशायां द्विधा भवति — सद्य एव च क्रमरीत्या च । तत्र पूर्वा द्वि-
तीये “स्थिरं सुखं चासनम्” (भा० २।२।१५) इत्यादिप्रकरणान्ते “विसृजेत् परं गतः” (भा०
२।२।२१) इत्यत्र ।

IN THE POSTHUMOUS condition following death (*utkrānta-daśā*), the above-mentioned liberation (*mukti*) has two varieties — immediate (*sadya*) and gradual (*krama*). Among them, the first is described in the Second Canto of the *Bhāgavata*, beginning with SB 2.2.15 and ending with SB 2.2.21. We cite here the opening and closing verses from the series:

O King, when the ascetic (*yati*) intends to leave this world, he should not be concerned about an auspicious time or place for doing so. Being seated in a stable and comfortable posture and having regulated his vital air, he should withdraw his life force through the mind. (SB 2.2.15)¹

Sealing the seven gateways of the life force (*prāṇa*) [the two ears, two eyes, two nostrils, and the mouth], the ascetic should lead the *prāṇa* from the root of the palate [i.e., the top of the *viśuddha-cakra*] to the third-eye center [*ājñā-cakra*] between the two eye-brows. If he is free from all desire [for visiting higher worlds], he should fix his attention there for a half a *muhūrta* [about 24 minutes]. Then, being firmly established in Parabrahman

¹ *sthiraṁ sukhaṁ cāsanam āsthito yatir yadā jihāsūṣaṁ imam aṅga lokam
kāle ca deśe ca mano na sajjayet prāṇān niyacchen manasā jītāsuḥ*

and endowed with the eye of wisdom, he should lead the *prāṇa* to the Brahman-aperture [*brahma-randhra*] at the crown of the head [*sahasrāra-cakra*], pierce the opening, and relinquish the body and senses. (SB 2.2.21)²

उत्तरा च तदनन्तरम् “यदि प्रयास्यन् नृप पारमेष्ठ्यम्” (भा० २।२।२२) इत्यादौ “तेनात्म-
नात्मानमुपैति शान्तम्” (भा० २।२।३१) इत्यत्र ।

The second variety [i.e., gradual liberation (*krama-mukti*)] is described thereafter from SB 2.2.22 to 2.2.31. The opening and closing verses are as follows:

O King, if the ascetic wishes to visit the abode of Brahman or the sporting grounds of the perfected celestial beings, or to attain the eight metanormal powers and liberty to wander any realm of the universe constituted of the *guṇas*, he should depart [from the body] accompanied by the mind and senses. (SB 2.2.22)³

Finally, upon the dissolution of his subtle *upādhis*, and by way of the pure self, he attains the Supreme Self, the very embodiment of immutable peace and bliss, and he himself thus becomes blissful. Dear Parikṣit, one who attains the abode of Bhagavān never returns to conditional existence. (SB 2.2.31)⁴

Commentary

AFTER ESTABLISHING that *prīti* is the supreme object of human attainment (*parama-puruṣārtha*) and that it naturally bestows immediate cognition (*sākṣātkāra*) of the Absolute, which is synonymous with *mukti*, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī now describes two categories of *mukti* occurring after death. In *Anuccheda* 1.5, it was said that liberation can occur even while living in the present body. This is called *jīvan-mukti*. The state of *mukti* attained after giving up the body

² *tasmād bhruvor antaram unnayeta niruddha-saptāyatano'napekṣaḥ
sthितvā muhūrtārdham akuṇṭha-dṛṣṭir nirbhīdya mūrdhan viśrjet param gataḥ*

³ *yadi prayāsyān nṛpa pārameṣṭhyam vaihāyasānām uta yad vihāram
aṣṭādhipatyam guṇa-sannivāye sahaiva gacchen manasendriyaiś ca*

⁴ *tenātmanātmānam upaiti śāntam ānandam ānandamayo'vasāne
etām gatiṁ bhāgavatīm gato yaḥ sa vai punar neha viśajjate'ṅga*

is called *utkrāntā-mukti*, or posthumous liberation. One can reach this state either immediately (*sadya*) after giving up the body or by a gradual process (*krama-rītyā*) after experiencing various higher dimensions of existence in the universe as well as in its constituent coverings. The first of these is called *sadyo-mukti*, and the second, *krama-mukti*.

Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī provides examples of these two types of *utkrāntā-mukti* from the second chapter of the Second Canto. This description explains how a *yogī* regulates his vital force (*prāṇa*) through focused intent and meditative absorption. Drawing on such resources, he gradually raises his *prāṇa* from the lowest *cakra*, called *mūlādhāra*, up to the highest *cakra*, called *sahasrāra*. He then relinquishes the body, mind, and senses and passes beyond the material universe. In accordance with his spiritual view and practice, he will enter either into Brahman or Vaikuṇṭha. This is called *sadyo-mukti*.

If, however, the *yogī* desires to experience the various spheres within the universe, he gives up only the physical body but carries with him the subtle body consisting of the mind and senses. He can then visit any region at will and experience the unique varieties of material pleasure available there. The universe is covered by the non-composite mega elements (*tattvas*) of earth, water, fire, air, space, the collective “I-principle” (*ahaṅkāra*), and cosmic intellect (*maḥat*). The *yogī* crosses all these coverings while experiencing the pleasure innate to each of them. Then, becoming free of *prakṛti* and its numerous evolutes, he attains *mukti*.

3.2

Jīvan-mukti

जीवदशायामपि सा तु तद्विशेषेष्वग्रतो दर्शनीया । तत्र ब्रह्मसाक्षात्कारलक्षणां जीवन्मुक्तिमाह (भा० १।३।३३) —

In the living condition as well (*jīvad-daśā*), the specialized forms of *mukti* that can be attained will be shown hereafter. In this matter, *jīvan-mukti* characterized as the immediate intuition of Brahman (*brahma-sākṣātkāra*) is described by Śrī Sūta as follows:

यत्रेमे सदसद्रूपे प्रतिषिद्धे स्वसंविदा ।
अविद्ययात्मनि कृते इति तद् ब्रह्मदर्शनम् ॥ १४ ॥

That [vision] (*tat*) is the immediate intuition of Brahman (*brahma-darśana*) in which (*yatra*) these two gross (*sat*) and subtle forms (*asat*), which have been superimposed on the *ātmā* out of ignorance, are negated through authentic awareness of the self's essential nature. (SB 1.3.33)⁵

यत्र यस्मिन् दर्शने स्थूलसूक्ष्मरूपे शरीरे स्वसंविदा जीवात्मनः स्वरूपज्ञानेन प्रतिषिद्धे भवतः । केन प्रकारेण ? वस्तुत आत्मनि तेन स्त एव किन्त्वविद्ययैवात्मनि कृते अध्यस्ते इति एतत्प्रकारेणेत्यर्थः ।

The pronoun *yatra*, “in which,” refers to that vision (*darśana*) wherein (*yasmin*) the gross (*sat*, i.e., *sthūla*) and subtle (*asat*, i.e., *sūkṣma*) bodies are negated (*pratiṣiddhe*) by authentic self-awareness (*sva-saṁvidā*), meaning by realization of the essential nature (*svarūpa-jñāna*) of the individual self (the *jīvātmā*). By what manner [of self-awareness]? It is by the recognition that in reality, these two forms do not exist in the self but have been superimposed on the self (*ātmani kṛte*, i.e., *adhyaste*) through ignorance alone.

तद् ब्रह्मदर्शनमिति यत्तदोरन्वयः । ब्रह्मणो दर्शनं साक्षात्कारः ।

⁵ *yatrema sad-asad-rūpe pratiṣiddhe sva-saṁvidā*
avidyayātmani kṛte iti tad brahma-darśanam

That [vision] (*tat*) is the immediate intuition of Brahman (*brahma-darśanam*) [in which (*yatra*) these two bodies are negated by self-awareness]. This is how the correlative pronouns *tat* (“that”) and *yatra* (“in which”) are syntactically connected. The vision of Brahman (*brahma-darśanam*) means the immediate intuition of the Absolute (*brahma-sākṣātkāra*).

यत्र स्वसंविदेत्युक्त्या जीवस्वरूपज्ञानमपि तदाश्रयमेव भवतीति । तथा केवलस्वसंविदा ते निषिद्धे न भवत इति च ज्ञापितम् ।

By placing the instrumental case compound *sva-saṁvidā* (“through authentic self-awareness”) in the subordinate clause, it is made evident that the awareness of the *jīva*’s essential nature (*svarūpa-jñāna*) is subordinate to and dependent on the realization of Brahman and that the subtle and gross bodies do not become negated by self-awareness alone.

ततश्च जीवत एवाविद्याकल्पितमायाकार्यसम्बन्धमिथ्यात्वज्ञापकजीवस्वरूपसाक्षात्कारेण तादात्म्यापन्नब्रह्मसाक्षात्कारी जीवन्मुक्तिविशेष इत्यर्थः ॥ श्रीसूतः ॥

From this analysis, the verse’s import is that the *sākṣātkāra* of Brahman, attained by conscious identity with that Reality (*tādātmya*) and occurring in the living condition itself is one specific type of *jīvan-mukti*. This *sākṣātkāra* of Brahman is accompanied by the *sākṣātkāra* of the *jīva*’s *svarūpa*, which discloses the illusory nature of the relation with *māyā*’s effects, a relation conceived out of ignorance.

Commentary

As explained earlier (in *Anuccheda* 1.5), *mukti* is of two types — namely, the *sākṣātkāra* of Brahman and that of Bhagavān. The first of these is described by Sūta Gosvāmī in the principal verse of this *anuccheda* (SB 1.3.33).

In the conditioned state, the self is delimited by subtle and gross coverings, the mind and body. Although the self is absolutely distinct from these two, it becomes identified with them through the

influence of *māyā*. This is called bondage and is caused by beginningless *avidyā*. When a practitioner is graced with the immediate cognition of Brahman, this vision is accompanied by immediate awareness of the self's essential nature as distinct from the two coverings.

This awareness of the self is referred to in the verse as *sva-saṁvid*, and it is included within the vision of Brahman (*brahma-darśanam*). This is the significance of the locative pronoun *yatra*, “in which,” meaning “in which vision of Brahman” (*yasmin brahma-darśane*), implying that the recognition of the falsity of the identification with the gross and subtle bodies is dependent on and implicit within the realization of Brahman.

In the process of attaining liberation in Brahman, the practitioner becomes consciously identified with Brahman. Mere knowledge of the self will not free one from the two coverings because the self is atomic in magnitude and does not have the power to free itself of *māyā* by its own effort alone. Thus, mere realization of one's infinitesimal spiritual identity apart from *māyā* does not result in *mukti*. Kṛṣṇa asserts in the *Gītā* (7.14) that only by taking shelter of Him can one attain freedom from His *māyā*. Only when the intrinsic potency of Bhagavān is transmitted into a *jīva* can he be released from bondage.

In contrast to *brahma-sākṣātkāra*, the immediate perception of Bhagavān (*bhagavat-sākṣātkāra*) discloses both the oneness and distinction that holds between Bhagavān and the liberated self. In this state of recognition, the relation between the *jīva* and Bhagavān as part and whole, or as lover and beloved, remains intact. When, however, awareness of the self is perceived as indistinct from that of Brahman, it is called *brahma-sākṣātkāra*. There is no possibility of any relation in this state.

This intuition of nondistinction is called *tādātmya* and is not the same as *aikya* or *aikātmya*, which entails absolute ontological oneness. Such radical oneness can never be the case between beings of two different existential grades — the part and the whole, the infinitesimal *jīva* and the infinite Brahman. In *aikātmya*, there is no separate ontological existence, but in *tādātmya*, there is only

the absence of awareness of the distinction that nevertheless exists between two related substantives. An iron rod placed in fire takes on the properties of fire due to proximity, but it does not actually become fire. It attains *tādātmya* with the fire but not *aikātmya*. This is the difference between the two forms of identity-consciousness. The Brahmvādīs in fact mistake this *tādātmya* for *aikātmya*, or ontological oneness.

