

ŚRĪMAD BHĀGAVATAM

Second Canto-Part One



His Divine Grace
A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda
Founder-Acārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

ŚRĪMAD BHĀGAVATAM

Second Canto

“The Cosmic Manifestation”

(Part One—Chapters 1–6)

*With the Original Sanskrit Text,
Its Roman Transliteration, Synonyms,
Translation and Elaborate Purports*

by

His Divine Grace
A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness



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Preface

We must know the present need of human society. And what is that need? Human society is no longer bounded by geographical limits to particular countries or communities. Human society is broader than in the Middle Ages, and the world tendency is toward one state or one human society. The ideals of spiritual communism, according to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, are based more or less on the oneness of the entire human society, nay, of the entire energy of living beings. The need is felt by great thinkers to make this a successful ideology. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* will fill this need in human society. It begins, therefore, with the aphorism of Vedānta philosophy *janmādy asya yataḥ* to establish the ideal of a common cause.

Human society, at the present moment, is not in the darkness of oblivion. It has made rapid progress in the field of material comforts, education and economic development throughout the entire world. But there is a pinprick somewhere in the social body at large, and therefore there are large-scale quarrels, even over less important issues. There is need of a clue as to how humanity can become one in peace, friendship and prosperity with a common cause. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* will fill this need, for it is a cultural presentation for the respiritualization of the entire human society.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam should be introduced also in the schools and colleges, for it is recommended by the great student-devotee Prahlāda Mahārāja in order to change the demoniac face of society.

*kaumāra ācaret prājño
dharmān bhāgavatān iha
durlabhaṁ mānuṣaṁ janma
tad apy adhruvam arthadam
(Bhāg. 7.6.1)*

Disparity in human society is due to lack of principles in a godless civilization. There is God, or the Almighty One, from whom everything emanates, by whom everything is maintained and in whom everything

is merged to rest. Material science has tried to find the ultimate source of creation very insufficiently, but it is a fact that there is one ultimate source of everything that be. This ultimate source is explained rationally and authoritatively in the beautiful *Bhāgavatam*, or *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the transcendental science not only for knowing the ultimate source of everything but also for knowing our relation with Him and our duty toward perfection of the human society on the basis of this perfect knowledge. It is powerful reading matter in the Sanskrit language, and it is now rendered into English elaborately so that simply by a careful reading one will know God perfectly well, so much so that the reader will be sufficiently educated to defend himself from the onslaught of atheists. Over and above this, the reader will be able to convert others to accepting God as a concrete principle.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam begins with the definition of the ultimate source. It is a bona fide commentary on the *Vedānta-sūtra* by the same author, Śrīla Vyāsadeva, and gradually it develops into nine cantos up to the highest state of God realization. The only qualification one needs to study this great book of transcendental knowledge is to proceed step by step cautiously and not jump forward haphazardly like with an ordinary book. It should be gone through chapter by chapter, one after another. The reading matter is so arranged with its original Sanskrit text, its English transliteration, synonyms, translation and purports so that one is sure to become a God-realized soul at the end of finishing the first nine cantos.

The Tenth Canto is distinct from the first nine cantos because it deals directly with the transcendental activities of the Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa. One will be unable to capture the effects of the Tenth Canto without going through the first nine cantos. The book is complete in twelve cantos, each independent, but it is good for all to read them in small installments one after another.

I must admit my frailties in presenting *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, but still I am hopeful of its good reception by the thinkers and leaders of society on the strength of the following statement of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.5.11):

*tad-vāg-visargo janatāgha-viplavo
yasmin prati-ślokaṁ abaddhavyaty api*

*nāmāṇy anantasya yaśo 'ñkitāni yac
chṛṇvanti gāyanti gṛṇanti sādhaveḥ*

“On the other hand, that literature which is full with descriptions of the transcendental glories of the name, fame, form and pastimes of the unlimited Supreme Lord is a transcendental creation meant to bring about a revolution in the impious life of a misdirected civilization. Such transcendental literatures, even though irregularly composed, are heard, sung and accepted by purified men who are thoroughly honest.”

Oṃ tat sat

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami

Introduction

“This *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* is as brilliant as the sun, and it has arisen just after the departure of Lord Kṛṣṇa to His own abode, accompanied by religion, knowledge, etc. Persons who have lost their vision due to the dense darkness of ignorance in the age of Kali shall get light from this *Purāṇa*.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.3.43)

The timeless wisdom of India is expressed in the *Vedas*, ancient Sanskrit texts that touch upon all fields of human knowledge. Originally preserved through oral tradition, the *Vedas* were first put into writing five thousand years ago by Śrīla Vyāsadeva, the “literary incarnation of God.” After compiling the *Vedas*, Vyāsadeva set forth their essence in the aphorisms known as *Vedānta-sūtras*. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is Vyāsadeva’s commentary on his own *Vedānta-sūtras*. It was written in the maturity of his spiritual life under the direction of Nārada Muni, his spiritual master. Referred to as “the ripened fruit of the tree of Vedic literature,” *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the most complete and authoritative exposition of Vedic knowledge.

After compiling the *Bhāgavatam*, Vyāsa impressed the synopsis of it upon his son, the sage Śukadeva Gosvāmī. Śukadeva Gosvāmī subsequently recited the entire *Bhāgavatam* to Mahārāja Parikṣit in an assembly of learned saints on the bank of the Ganges at Hastināpura (now Delhi). Mahārāja Parikṣit was the emperor of the world and was a great *rājaṛṣi* (saintly king). Having received a warning that he would die within a week, he renounced his entire kingdom and retired to the bank of the Ganges to fast until death and receive spiritual enlightenment. The *Bhāgavatam* begins with Emperor Parikṣit’s sober inquiry to Śukadeva Gosvāmī: “You are the spiritual master of great saints and devotees. I am therefore begging you to show the way of perfection for all persons, and especially for one who is about to die. Please let me know what a man should hear, chant, remember and worship, and also what he should not do. Please explain all this to me.”

Śukadeva Gosvāmī’s answer to this question, and numerous other questions posed by Mahārāja Parikṣit, concerning everything from the nature of the self to the origin of the universe, held the assembled sages

in rapt attention continuously for the seven days leading to the King's death. The sage Sūta Gosvāmī, who was present on the bank of the Ganges when Śukadeva Gosvāmī first recited *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, later repeated the *Bhāgavatam* before a gathering of sages in the forest of Naimiṣāraṇya. Those sages, concerned about the spiritual welfare of the people in general, had gathered to perform a long, continuous chain of sacrifices to counteract the degrading influence of the incipient age of Kali. In response to the sages' request that he speak the essence of Vedic wisdom, Sūta Gosvāmī repeated from memory the entire eighteen thousand verses of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, as spoken by Śukadeva Gosvāmī to Mahārāja Parīkṣit.

The reader of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* hears Sūta Gosvāmī relate the questions of Mahārāja Parīkṣit and the answers of Śukadeva Gosvāmī. Also, Sūta Gosvāmī sometimes responds directly to questions put by Śaunaka Ṛṣi, the spokesman for the sages gathered at Naimiṣāraṇya. One therefore simultaneously hears two dialogues: one between Mahārāja Parīkṣit and Śukadeva Gosvāmī on the bank of the Ganges, and another at Naimiṣāraṇya between Sūta Gosvāmī and the sages at Naimiṣāraṇya Forest, headed by Śaunaka Ṛṣi. Furthermore, while instructing King Parīkṣit, Śukadeva Gosvāmī often relates historical episodes and gives accounts of lengthy philosophical discussions between such great souls as the saint Maitreya and his disciple Vidura. With this understanding of the history of the *Bhāgavatam*, the reader will easily be able to follow its intermingling of dialogues and events from various sources. Since philosophical wisdom, not chronological order, is most important in the text, one need only be attentive to the subject matter of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to appreciate fully its profound message.

The translator of this edition compares the *Bhāgavatam* to sugar candy—wherever you taste it, you will find it equally sweet and relishable. Therefore, to taste the sweetness of the *Bhāgavatam*, one may begin by reading any of its volumes. After such an introductory taste, however, the serious reader is best advised to go back to Volume One of the First Canto and then proceed through the *Bhāgavatam*, volume after volume, in its natural order.

This edition of the *Bhāgavatam* is the first complete English translation of this important text with an elaborate commentary, and it is the first widely available to the English-speaking public. It is the product of

the scholarly and devotional effort of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the world's most distinguished teacher of Indian religious and philosophical thought. His consummate Sanskrit scholarship and intimate familiarity with Vedic culture and thought as well as the modern way of life combine to reveal to the West a magnificent exposition of this important classic.

Readers will find this work of value for many reasons. For those interested in the classical roots of Indian civilization, it serves as a vast reservoir of detailed information on virtually every one of its aspects. For students of comparative philosophy and religion, the *Bhāgavatam* offers a penetrating view into the meaning of India's profound spiritual heritage. To sociologists and anthropologists, the *Bhāgavatam* reveals the practical workings of a peaceful and scientifically organized Vedic culture, whose institutions were integrated on the basis of a highly developed spiritual world-view. Students of literature will discover the *Bhāgavatam* to be a masterpiece of majestic poetry. For students of psychology, the text provides important perspectives on the nature of consciousness, human behavior and the philosophical study of identity. Finally, to those seeking spiritual insight, the *Bhāgavatam* offers simple and practical guidance for attainment of the highest self-knowledge and realization of the Absolute Truth. The entire multivolume text, presented by the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, promises to occupy a significant place in the intellectual, cultural and spiritual life of modern man for a long time to come.

—The Publishers

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CHAPTER ONE

The First Step in God Realization

INVOCATION

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥

om namo bhagavate vāsudevāya

om—O my Lord; *namaḥ*—my respectful obeisances unto You; *bhagavate*—unto the Personality of Godhead; *vāsudevāya*—unto Lord Kṛṣṇa, the son of Vasudeva.

TRANSLATION

O my Lord, the all-pervading Personality of Godhead, I offer my respectful obeisances unto You.

PURPORT

Vāsudevāya means “to Kṛṣṇa, the son of Vasudeva.” Since by chanting the name of Kṛṣṇa, Vāsudeva, one can achieve all the good results of charity, austerity and penances, it is to be understood that by the chanting of this *mantra*, *om namo bhagavate vāsudevāya*, the author or the speaker or any one of the readers of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is offering respectful obeisances unto the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa, the reservoir of all pleasure. In the First Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the principles of creation are described, and thus the First Canto may be called “Creation.”

Similarly, in the Second Canto, the postcreation cosmic manifestation is described. The different planetary systems are described in the Second Canto as different parts of the universal body of the Lord. For this reason, the Second Canto may be called “The Cosmic Manifestation.” There are ten chapters in the Second Canto, and in these ten chapters the

purpose of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and the different symptoms of this purpose are narrated. The first chapter describes the glories of chanting, and it hints at the process by which the neophyte devotees may perform meditation on the universal form of the Lord. In the first verse, Śukadeva Gosvāmī replies to the questions of Mahārāja Parīkṣit, who asked him about one's duties at the point of death. Mahārāja Parīkṣit was glad to receive Śukadeva Gosvāmī, and he was proud of being a descendant of Arjuna, the intimate friend of Kṛṣṇa. Personally, he was very humble and meek, but he expressed his gladness that Lord Kṛṣṇa was very kind to his grandfathers, the sons of Pāṇḍu, especially his own grandfather, Arjuna. And because Lord Kṛṣṇa was always pleased with Mahārāja Parīkṣit's family, at the verge of Mahārāja Parīkṣit's death Śukadeva Gosvāmī was sent to help him in the process of self-realization. Mahārāja Parīkṣit was a devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa from his childhood, so he had natural affection for Kṛṣṇa. Śukadeva Gosvāmī could understand his devotion. Therefore, he welcomed the questions about the King's duty. Because the King hinted that worship of Lord Kṛṣṇa is the ultimate function of every living entity, Śukadeva Gosvāmī welcomed the suggestion and said, "Because you have raised questions about Kṛṣṇa, your question is most glorious." The translation of the first verse is as follows.

TEXT 1

श्रीशुक उवाच

वरीयानेष ते प्रश्नः कृतो लोकहितं नृप ।
आत्मवित्सम्मतः पुंसां श्रोतव्यादिषु यः परः॥ १ ॥

śrī-śuka uvāca

variyān eṣa te praśnaḥ

kṛto loka-hitam nṛpa

ātmavit-sammataḥ puṁsāṁ

śrotavyādiṣu yaḥ paraḥ

śrī-śukaḥ uvāca—Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī said; *variyān*—glorious; *eṣaḥ*—this; *te*—your; *praśnaḥ*—question; *kṛtaḥ*—made by you; *loka-hitam*—beneficial for all men; *nṛpa*—O King; *ātmavit*—transcen-