

Notes On The Bhāgavata

By Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

PART I - Introducing The Subject:

The Fruitless Reader & The Shallow Critic

1. We love to read a book which we never read before. We are anxious to gather whatever information is contained in it and with such acquirement our curiosity stops. This mode of study prevails amongst a great number of readers, who are great men in their own estimation as well as in the estimation of those who are of their own stamp. In fact, most readers are mere repositories of facts and statements made by other people. But this is not study. The student is to read the facts with a view to create, and not with the object of fruitless retention.
2. Students like satellites should reflect whatever light they receive from authors and not imprison the facts and thoughts.... Thought is progressive. The author's thought must have progress in the reader in the shape of correction or development. He is the best critic who can show the further development of an old thought; but a mere denouncer is the enemy of progress and consequently of Nature.
3. "Begin anew," says the critic, because the old masonry does not answer at present. Let the old author be buried because his time is gone. These are shallow expressions. Progress is certainly the law of nature and there must be corrections and developments with the progress of time. But progress means going further or rising higher.
4. Now, if we are to follow our foolish critic, we are to go back to our former terminus and make a new race, and when we have run half the race, another critic of his stamp will cry out: "Begin anew because the wrong road has been taken. In this way our stupid critics will never allow us to go over the whole road and see what is in the other terminus. Thus the shallow critic and the fruitless reader are the two great enemies of progress. We must shun them.

The True Critic & The Useful Reader

1. The true critic, on the other hand, advises us to preserve what we have already obtained, and to adjust our race from that point where we have arrived in the heat of our progress. He will never advise us to go back to the point whence we started as he fully knows that in that case there will be a fruitless loss of our valuable time and labor. He will direct the adjustment of the angle of the race at the point where we are.
2. This is also the characteristic of the useful student. He will read an old author and will find out his exact position in the progress of thought. He will never propose to burn the book on the ground that it contains thoughts which are useless. No thought is useless. Thoughts are means by which we attain our objects. The reader who denounces a bad thought does not know that a bad road is even capable of improvement and conversion into a good one.
3. Thoughts will necessarily continue to be an endless series of means and objects in the progress of humanity. The great reformers will always assert that they have come out not to *destroy* the old law, but to *fulfill* it. Valmiki, Vyāsa, Plato, Jesus, Mohamed, Confucius and Caitanya Mahāprabhu assert the fact either expressly or by their conduct.

The *Bhāgavata* Misunderstood:

1. The *Bhāgavata* like all religious works and philosophical performances and writings of great men has suffered from the imprudent conduct of useless readers and stupid critics.... Men of brilliant thoughts have passed by the work in quest of truth and philosophy, but the prejudice which they imbibed from its useless readers and their conduct (i.e., *sahajiyas*), prevented them from making a candid investigation.
2. Truth does not belong exclusively to any individual man or to any nation or particular race. It belongs to God, and man whether in the Poles or on the Equator, has a right to claim it as the property of his Father.]
3. The *Bhāgavata* has suffered alike from shallow critics both Indian and foreign. That book has been accursed and denounced by a great number of our young countrymen who have scarcely read its contents and pondered over the philosophy on which it is founded. It is owing mostly to their imbibing an unfounded prejudice against it when they were in school [under the British]. The *Bhāgavata*, as a matter of course, has been held in derision by those teachers who are generally of an inferior mind and intellect.... Oh! What a trouble to get rid of prejudices gathered in unripe years!
5. As far as we can understand, no enemy of Vaiṣṇavism will find any beauty in the *Bhāgavat*. The true critic is a generous judge, devoid of prejudices and

party-spirit.... The critic, in other words, should be of the same disposition of mind as that of the author whose merits he is required to judge. Thoughts have different ways.... Both the Christian and the Vaiṣṇava [may for instance] utter the same sentiment, but they will never stop fighting with each other [simply] because they have arrived at their common conclusion by different ways of thought.

6. Subjects of philosophy and theology are like the peaks of large towering and inaccessible mountains standing in the midst of our planet inviting attention and investigation. Thinkers and men of deep speculation take their observations through the instruments of reason and consciousness. But they take different points when they carry on their work. These points are positions chalked out by the circumstances of their social and philosophical life, different as they are in different parts of the world.

7. Plato looked at the peak of the spiritual question from the West and Vyāsa made the observation from the East; so Confucius did it from further East, and Schlegel, Spinoza, Kant and Goethe from further West. These observations were made at different times and by different means, but the conclusion is all the same in as much as the object of observation was one and the same. They all hunted after the Great Spirit, the unconditioned Soul of the Universe..., the absolute religion....

8. It requires a candid, generous, pious and holy heart to feel the beauties of their conclusions. Party-spirit, that great enemy of truth, will always baffle the attempt of the inquirer who tries to gather truth from religious works of other nations, and will make him believe that absolute truth is nowhere except in his own religious book.... The critic, therefore, should have a comprehensive, good, generous, candid, impartial and sympathetic soul.

What Is the *Bhāgavat*?:

1. [The traveling companion of a European Gentleman newly arrived in India] will tell him with a serene look, that the *Bhāgavat* is a book which his Oriya bearer daily reads in the evening to a number of hearers. It contains a jargon of unintelligible and savage literature of those men who paint their noses with some sort of earth or sandal, and wear beads all over their bodies in order to procure salvation for themselves.

2. Another of his companions, who has travelled a little in the interior, would immediately contradict him and say that the *Bhāgavat* is a Sanskrit work claimed by a sect of men, the Gosvamis, who give *Mantras*, like the Popes of Italy, to the common people of Bengal, and pardon their sins on payment of gold enough to defray their social expenses.

3. A young Bengali, chained up in English thoughts and ideas, and wholly ignorant of the Pre-Mohammedan history of his own country, will add one more

explanation by saying that the *Bhāgavat* is a book containing an account of the life of Kṛṣṇa, who was an ambitious and immoral man! This is all that he could gather from his grandmother while yet he did not go to school!

4. Thus the great *Bhāgavat* ever remains unknown to the foreigners like the elephant of the six blind who caught hold of the several parts of the body of the beast! But truth is eternal and is never injured but for *a while* by ignorance.

The *Bhāgavat* Explains Itself:

1. It is the fruit of the tree of thought (Vedas) mixed with the nectar of the speech of Śukadeva. It is the temple of spiritual love.... [It is] composed of 18,000 Ślokas. It contains the best part of the *Vedas* and *Vedanta*.

2. The *Bhāgavata* is pre-eminently "the Book" in India. Once enter into it, and you are transplanted, as it were, into the spiritual world where gross matter has no existence. The true follower of the *Bhāgavat* is a spiritual man who has already cut his temporary connection with phenomenal nature, and has made himself the inhabitant of that region where God eternally exists and loves. This mighty work is founded upon inspiration and its superstructure is upon reflection. To the common reader it has no charms and is full of difficulty. We are, therefore, obliged to study it deeply through the assistance of such great commentators as Śrīdhara Svāmī and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His contemporary followers.

3. Now Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the great preacher of Nadia, who has been Deified by His talented followers, tells us that the *Bhāgavat* is founded upon the four verses which Vyāsa received from Nārada, the most learned of the created beings. He tells us further that Brahmā pierced through the whole universe of matter for years and years in quest of the final cause of the world, but when he failed to find it abroad, he looked into the construction of his own spiritual nature, and there he heard the Universal Spirit speaking unto him:

4. "...I was in the beginning before all spiritual and temporal things were created, and after they have been created I am in them all in the shape of their existence and truthfulness, and when they will be all gone I shall remain full as I was and as I am. Whatever appears to be true without being a real fact itself, and whatever is not perceived though it is true in itself are subjects of my illusory energy of creation, such as light and darkness in the material world."

5. [Like Brahmā, Vyāsa also] fell back into his own self and searched his own spiritual nature and then it was that the above truth was communicated to him for his own good and the good of the world. The sage immediately perceived that his former works required supercession in as much as they did not contain the whole truth and nothing but the truth. In his new idea he obtained the development of his former idea of religion. He commenced the *Bhāgavat* in pursuance of this change.

Sambandha, Abhidheya, Prayojana:

1. The whole of this incomparable work teaches us, according to our Great Caitanya, the three great truths which compose the absolute religion of man. Our Nadia preacher calls them *Sambandha*, *Abhidheya* and *Prayojana*, i.e., the relation between the creator and the created, the duty of man to God, and the prospects of humanity.
2. In these three words is summed up the whole ocean of human knowledge as far as it has been explored up to this era of human progress. These are the cardinal points of religion and the whole *Bhāgavat* is, as we are taught by Śrī Caitanya, an explanation, both by precepts and examples, of these three great points.

Sambandha -

1. [Throughout] the *Bhāgavat* teaches us that there is only one God without a second, Who is full in Himself and is and will remain the same. Time and space, which prescribe conditions to created objects are much below His supreme spiritual nature, which is unconditioned and absolute....
2. Māyā intervenes between us and God as long as we are not spiritual, and when we are able to break off her bonds, we, even in this mortal frame, learn to commune in our spiritual nature with the unconditioned and absolute. No, Māyā does not mean a false thing only, but it means concealment of eternal truth as well.
3. The creation is not Māyā itself but is subject to that principle.... The true idealist must be a dualist also. He must believe all that he perceives as nature created by God full of spiritual essence and relations, but he must not believe that the outward appearance is the truth. The *Bhāgavat* teaches that all that we healthily perceive is true, but its material appearance is transient and illusory....
4. Nature is eternally spiritual but the intervention of Māyā makes her gross and material. Man, in his progress, attempts to shake off this gross idea, childish and foolish in its nature, and by subduing the intervening principle of Māyā, lives in continual union with God in his spiritual nature.... The *Bhāgavat* teaches us this relation between man and God.... This is called *Sambandha-jñāna* of the *Bhāgavat*, or in other words, the knowledge of the relations between the conditioned and the Absolute.

Abhidheya -

1. ...[T]he second great principle inculcated by the *Bhāgavat* [is] the principle of duty. Man must spiritually worship his God. There are three ways in which the Creator is worshiped by the created... according to the constitution of their mind: [As *brahman*, *paramātmā*, and *bhagavān*.].

2. Those who worship God as infinitely great in the principle of admiration call Him by the name of *Brahman*. This mode is called *jñāna* or knowledge. Those who worship God as the Universal Soul in the principle of spiritual union with him give Him the name of *Paramātmā*. This is *yoga*. And those who worship God as all in all with all their heart, body and strength style Him as *Bhagavān*. This last principle is *bhakti*. The book that prescribes the relation and worship of *Bhagavān*, procures for itself the name *Bhāgavat* and the worshiper is also called by the same name.

3. The superiority of the *Bhāgavat* consists in the uniting of all sorts of theistic worship into one excellent principle in human nature, which passes by the name of *Bhakti*. This word has no equivalent in the English language. Piety, devotion, resignation and spiritual love unalloyed with any sort of petition except in the way of repentance, compose the highest principle of *Bhakti*. The *Bhāgavat* tells us to worship God in that great and invaluable principle, which is infinitely superior to human knowledge and the principle of *yoga*.

4. ...[T]he principle of *Bhakti* passes [through] five distinct stages in the course of its development into its highest and purest form. Then again when it reaches the last form, it is susceptible of further progress from the stage of *prema* (love) to that of *Mahābhāva* which is in fact a complete transition into the spiritual universe where God alone is the bride-groom of our soul. The voluminous *Bhāgavat* is nothing more than a full illustration of this principle of continual development and progress of the soul from gross matter to the All-Perfect Universal Spirit who is distinguished as personal, eternal, absolutely free, all powerful and all intelligent.

(Matter As a Dictionary of Spirit):

5. [In the *Bhāgavat*] comparisons have been made with the material world, which cannot help but convince the ignorant and the impractical. Material examples are absolutely necessary for the explanation of spiritual ideas. The *Bhāgavat* believes that the spirit of nature is the truth in nature and is the only practical part of it.

6. The phenomenal appearance of nature is truly theoretical, although it has had the greatest claim upon our belief from the days of infancy. The outward appearance of nature is nothing more than a sure index of its spiritual face. Comparisons are therefore necessary. Nature, as it is before our eyes, must explain

the spirit, or else the truth will ever remain concealed, and man will never rise from his boyhood though his whiskers and beard grow white as the snows of the Himalayas.

7. The whole intellectual and moral philosophy is explained by matter itself... All spiritual ideas are... pictures from the material world, because matter is a dictionary of spirit, and material pictures are but the shadows of the spiritual affairs which our material eye carries back to our spiritual perception.

8. God in His infinite goodness and kindness has established this unfailing connection between the truth and the shadow in order to impress upon us the eternal truth which he has reserved for us. The clock explains the time, the alphabet points to the gathered store of knowledge, the beautiful song of a harmonium gives the idea of eternal harmony in the spirit world, today and tomorrow and the day after tomorrow, [and thus] thrust[s] into us the ungrasped idea of eternity. ...[S]imilarly, material pictures impress upon our spiritual nature the truly spiritual idea of religion.

9. It is on these reasonable grounds that Vyāsa adopted the mode of explaining our spiritual worship with some sorts of material phenomena, which correspond with the spiritual truth.

10. In the *Bhāgavat* we have been advised first of all, to convert ourselves into most grateful servants of God as regards our relation to our fellow brethren. Our nature has been described as bearing three different phases: goodness, passion and ignorance. Goodness is that property in our nature which is purely good as far as it can be pure in our present state. Passion is neither good nor bad. Ignorance is evil. ...[I]t is our object to train up [our] affections and tendencies to the standard of Goodness....

11. ...[W]e are [then] to look to all living beings in the same light in which we look to ourselves, i.e., we must convert our selfishness into all *possible disinterested* activity towards all around us. Love, charity, good deeds and devotion to God will be our only aim. We then become the servants of God by obeying His high and holy wishes. Here we begin to be *Bhaktas*.... All this is covered by the term *Abhidheya*, the second cardinal point in the supreme religion.

Prayojana -

1. What is the object of our spiritual development, our prayer, our devotion and our union with God? The *Bhāgavat* tells us that the object is not enjoyment or sorrow, but continual progress in spiritual holiness and harmony.

2. In the common-place books of the Hindu religion... we have descriptions of a local heaven and a local hell; the Heaven as beautiful as anything on earth and the Hell a ghastly as any picture of evil. Besides this Heaven we have many more places where good souls are sent up in the way of promotion! There are 84

divisions of the Hell itself, some more dreadful than the one Milton has described in his "Paradise Lost."

(Controversial Passages Concerning Descriptions of Hell, etc.):

3. These are certainly poetical and were originally *created by the rulers of the country* in order to check evil deed of the ignorant people, who are not able to understand the conclusions of philosophy. The religion of the *Bhāgavat* is free from such a poetry. Indeed, in some of the chapters we meet with descriptions of these hells and heavens, and accounts of curious tales, but we have been warned somewhere in the book not to accept them as real facts, but as inventions to overawe the wicked and to improve the simple and the ignorant.

4. The *Bhāgavat* certainly tells us of a state of reward and punishment in the future according to deeds [performed] in our present situation. All poetic inventions, besides this spiritual fact, have been described as statements borrowed from other works in the way of preservation of old traditions in the book which superseded them and put an end to the necessity of their storage.

5. If the whole stock of Hindu Theological works which preceded the *Bhāgavat* were burnt like the Alexandrian Library and the sacred *Bhāgavat* [alone was] preserved as it is, not a part of the philosophy of the Hindus, except that of the atheistic sects, would be lost. The *Bhāgavat* therefore may be styled both as a religious work and [as] a compendium of all Hindu history and philosophy.

6. The *Bhāgavat* does not allow its followers to ask anything from God except eternal love towards Him. The kingdom of the world, the beauties of the local Heavens, and the sovereignty over the material world are never the subjects of Vaiṣṇava prayer.

7. The Vaiṣṇava meekly and humbly says, "Father, Master, God, Friend and Husband of my soul! Hallowed by thy name! I do not approach You for anything which You have already given me. I have sinned against You and I now repent and solicit Your pardon. Let thy holiness touch my soul and make me free from grossness. Let my spirit be devoted meekly to Your Holy service in absolute love towards Thee."

8. "I have called You my God, and let my soul be wrapped up in admiration at Your greatness! I have addressed You as my Master and let my soul be strongly devoted to Your service. I have called You my Friend, and let my soul be in reverential love towards You and not in dread or fear! I have called you my Husband and let my spiritual nature be in eternal union with You, forever loving and never dreading, or feeling disgust. Father, let me have strength enough to go up to You as the consort of my soul, so that we may be one in eternal love! Peace to the world."

9. [The Vaiṣṇava] does not expect to be the king of a certain part of the

universe after his death, nor does he dread a local fiery and turbulent hell.... [Nor is] his idea of salvation [the] total annihilation of personal existence.... The Vaiṣṇava is the meekest of all creatures, devoid of all ambition. He wants to serve God spiritually after death, as he has served Him both in spirit and matter while here. His constitution is [spiritual] and his highest object of life is divine and holy love.

10. The *Bhāgavat*... affirms that the Vaiṣṇava soul when freed from gross matter will distinctly exist not in time and space but spiritually in the eternal kingdom of God where love is life, and hope and charity and continual ecstasy without change are its various manifestations.

11. [In considering the essence of God], two great errors stare before us and frighten us back to ignorance and its satisfaction. One of them is the idea that God is above all attributes both material and spiritual and is consequently above all conception. This is a noble idea but useless. If God is above conception and without any sympathy with the world, how [explain] this creation, this universe composed of properties, the distinctions and phases of existence, the differences of value, etc.

12. The other error is that God is all attribute, i.e., intelligence, truth, goodness and power. This is also a ludicrous idea. Scattered properties can never constitute a Being. It is more impossible in the case of [opposing] principles such as Justice and Mercy and Fulness and Creative Power.

13. The truth, as stated in the *Bhāgavat*, is that properties, though many [may be] beligerent, are united in a Spiritual Being where they have full sympathy and harmony. Certainly this is beyond our comprehension. It is so owing to our nature being finite and God being infinite.... This is a glimpse of truth and we must regard it as Truth itself. Often, says Emmerson, a glimpse of truth is better than an arranged system and he is *right*.

14. The *Bhāgavat* has, therefore, a personal, all-intelligent, active, absolutely free, holy, good, all-powerful, omnipresent, just and merciful and supremely Spiritual Deity without a second--creating [and] preserving all that is in the Universe. The highest object of the Vaiṣṇava is to serve that Infinite Being for *ever spiritually* in the activity of *Absolute Love*.

Criticisms of the Shallow Critic Regarding the Deity:

1. The shallow critic summarily rejects [Vyāsa] as a man-worshiper. He would go so far as to scandalize him as a teacher of material love and lust and the injurious principles of exclusive asceticism.

2. [Such a] shallow critics mind will undoubtedly be changed if he but reflects upon one great point, i.e., how is it possible that a spiritualist of the School of

Vyāsa, teaching the best principles of Theism [throughout] the *Bhāgavata*, and making the four texts quoted in the beginning the foundation of his mighty work, could have forced upon the belief of men [the notion] that the sensual connection between a man with certain females is the highest object of worship?

3. This is impossible dear critic! Vyāsa could *not* have taught the common Vairāgi to set up a place of worship with a number of females! Vyāsa, who could teach us repeatedly in the whole of *Bhāgavata* that sensual pleasures are momentary like the pleasures of rubbing the itching hand, and that man's highest duty is to have spiritual love with God, could never have prescribed the worship of sensual pleasures. His descriptions are spiritual and you must not connect matter with [them].

4. Yes [dear critic], you nobly point to the immoral deeds of the common Vyrāgis, who call themselves the followers of the *Bhāgavata* and the great Caitanya. You nobly tell us that Vyāsa, unless purely explained, may lead thousands of men into great trouble in time to come. But dear critic! Study the history of ages and countries! Where have you found the philosopher and the reformer fully understood by the people?

5. Whether you give the Absolute Religion in figures, or simple expressions, or teach it by means of books or oral speeches, the ignorant and the thoughtless must degrade it.... "Truth is good," is an elemental truth which is easily grasped by the common people. But if you tell a common patient that God is infinitely intelligent and powerful in His spiritual nature, he will conceive a different idea from what you entertain of the expression. All higher truths, though intuitive, require previous education in the simpler ones....

PART II - The Teaching of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*:

The Great Divisions: Relationship, Function & Fruit:

1. The teaching of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* falls into three distinct parts according as it treats of: 1) *Sambandha* or Relationship; 2) *Abhidheya* or the Function or Activity that pertains to the Relationship; and, 3) *Prayojana* or the Object or Fruit of such Activity.

2. [In the compilation of *Vedānta-sūtra*], the aphorisms of the Upaniṣads, which contain the highest teaching of the Vedic literature, are presented in the form of a systematic body of knowledge under the headings of *Sambandha*, *Abhidheya* and *Prayojana*. In his *Ṣat-sandarbhā*, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī has applied the same method of treatment to the contents of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, which is admitted to be the only authentic *bhāṣya* or exposition of the *Vedānta-sūtra*.

3. The first of the "Six Sandarbhas," the *Tattva-sandarbha*, applies itself to the elucidation of the epistemology of transcendental knowledge.... It has made possible the comparative study of religion on the only admissible and scientific basis.

Transcendental Epistemology - A Summary of the *Tattva-sandarbha*:

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His Three Principle Energies -

1. Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Ultimate Reality, is One without a second. [He] is distinct from His energy.... Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the predominating Absolute. His energy is the predominated Absolute in the three positions of *antaranga* [internal], *tatastha* [marginal], and *bahiranga* [external] respectively.
2. *Antaranga* is that which pertains to the proper Entity of the Absolute Person.... The literal meaning of the word is "that which belongs to the inner body." And the word *śākti* is rendered as "power."
3. *Tatastha* means literally, "that which is on the border-line as between land and water." This intermediate power does not belong to any definable region of the Person of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. It manifests itself on the border-line between the inner and the outer body of the Absolute.
4. The power that manifests itself on the outer body is *bahiranga-śākti*. As there is no [difference] between the Body and the Entity of the Absolute Person, the distinctions as between the inner, outer and marginal positions of His Body are in terms of the realization of the individual soul.
5. Although Śrī Kṛṣṇa is One without a second, He has His own multiple Forms corresponding to the degree and variety of His subjective manifestations. The subjective entity of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is not liable to any transformation. His different forms are, therefore, aspects of the One Form manifesting Themselves to the different aptitudes of His servitors.
6. But the power of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is transformable by the will of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. These transformations of power in the cases of the internal and marginal energies are eternal processes. In the case of the external energy the transformations of power are temporary manifestations.
7. The phenomenal world is the product of the external power of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The Absolute Realm is the transformation of the inner power. Individual souls are the transformations of the marginal power. [These *jīvas*] are the eternal infinitesimal emanations of the marginal power, capable of subserviency to the inner power, but also susceptible to dissociation from the workings of the inner

power.

Methods of Approaching the Absolute -

8. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is *advaya-jñāna*, or absolute knowledge. Absolute knowledge cannot be challenged. He can only be approached by the method of complete self-surrender, by the reciprocal, otherwise ineligible, cognition of individual souls.
9. Transcendental epistemology is differentiated from empiric epistemology with respect to relationship (*sambandha*), function (*abhidheya*), and object (*prayojana*), for the reason that it refers to entities that are located beyond the [limited] range of the assertive cognitive endeavor normally practiced by the deluded people of this world for their temporary purposes.
10. By the peculiarities of their infinitesimality, essentially spiritual nature, and marginal position, all individual souls have the constitutional option of choice between complete subservience and active or passive hostility to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. These opposed aptitudes lead them to the adoption of correspondingly different methods for the realization of the respective ends.

The Methods of Active & Passive Hostility:

1. Those methods that are adopted for the practice of active hostility to the Absolute are termed *pratyakṣa* (direct individual sense perception) and *parokṣa* (associated collective sense perception by many persons past and present)....
2. The *aparokṣa* method (the method of cessation from individual and collective sense perception) leads to the position of neutrality.
3. The *pratyakṣa* and *parokṣa* methods are diametrically opposed to the methods approved by the *Bhāgavata* for the search of the Truth.
4. The *aparokṣa* method also tends to an unwholesome and negative result if it seeks to stand on the mere rejection of the *pratyakṣa* and *parokṣa* methods without trying to progress towards the positive transcendence. Such inactive policy would indeed be tantamount to the practice of passive hostility to the Absolute and as such is even more condemnable than open hostility.
5. No method can be recognized as suitable for the quest of the Truth that is actuated more or less by the purpose of opposing the Absolute Supremacy of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. In other words, individual souls cannot realize the subjective nature of the Absolute except by the exercise of their fullest subservience to Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His inner power [internal energy].
6. The failure of the individual souls to find the Truth is brought about by

their own innate perversity. They possess perfect freedom of choice as between complete subservience to Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the practice of active or passive hostility to Him. There is no other alternative open to them. If they chose to refuse to serve they have to practice hostility or indifference towards the Absolute.

7. The perverse individual soul is not obstructed in the active exercise of his freedom of choice. He is enabled to exercise the functions of hostility and indifference within consistent deterring limits, by the wonderful contrivance of the deluding power of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

8. The continued deliberate exercise of such hostility and indifference towards the Absolute by the perverse individual soul results necessarily in the suicidal abdication of all activities by the deliberate offender.

The Methods of Active & Passive Subservience:

1. The methods that are adopted for practicing active and complete subservience to the Absolute are termed respectively as *adhokṣaja* (the external or reverential method of serving the Transcendental Object of worship) and *aprakṛta* (the internal or confidential method of service of the Absolute).

2. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* inculcates and divulges the search of the Absolute by the *adhokṣaja* and *aprakṛta* methods. It condemns the *pratyakṣa* and *parokṣa* methods, but recognizes the proper use of the *aparokṣa* method [styled as passive subservience].

The Ascending and Descending Processes:

1. The *pratyakṣa*, *parokṣa* and the [improper] passive *aparokṣa* methods are collectively called the *aroha* or ascending process. The proper *aparokṣa*, *adhokṣaja* and *aprakṛti* methods constitute the *avaroha* or descending process.

2. By adoption of the ascending process the perverse individual soul strives to realize his suicidal end by the positive and negative perverse manipulation of mundane experience gained through direct and indirect sense perception.

3. By the descending process the soul is enabled to strive for the realization of the unalloyed service of the Absolute by the honest exercise of his unreserved receptive aptitude to the Initiative of the Absolute when He is pleased to come down to the plane of his tiny perverse cognition.

The Fruits or Objectives of the Different Methods:

1. The fruits that are realizable by the different methods of endeavor correspond to the particular method that is followed.
2. The *pratyakṣa* and *parokṣa* methods aim at *dharma* (virtue), *artha* (utility) and *kama* (sensuous gratification).
3. The wrong *aparokṣa* method aims at pseudo-*mokṣa* (annihilation).
4. The right *aparokṣa* method aims at positive transcendence.
5. The *adhokṣaja* method aims at *bhakti* or reverential transcendental service of the Absolute.
6. The *aprakṛti* method has in view the realization of *prema* or Divine Love.

The Dawning of Pure Theism As Opposed to Hostility:

1. Pure Theism begins with the first appearance of the positive desire for the service of the Absolute, who is located beyond the range of our sensuous activity. It involves the clear perception of the fact that all empiric activity is the deliberate practice of perverse hostility against the Absolute supremacy of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.
2. The word *adhokṣaja* which is applied in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to the Object of worship refers to the fact that Śrī Kṛṣṇa has reserved the right of not being exposed to human senses.
3. The theistic methods alone thus apply to the proper Entity of the Absolute. Those who are in rebellion against the supremacy of Śrī Kṛṣṇa by the adoption of sensuous activity are prevented from all access to His presence by the operation of [the Lord's] deluding power [external energy].
4. The individual soul is always susceptible to being thus deluded by *māyā*, the limiting or measuring potency. The conditions for the practice of sensuous activities in this realm of finite existence are provided by *Māyā* for the correction of the suicidal perversity of the rebellious souls.
5. It is in this manner that a person who is averse to the service of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is made to proceed along the tracks of *karma* and *jñāna* by the ascending process, [so that he will gain] the bitter experience of the practice of perverse hostility to Śrī Kṛṣṇa and [to] his own self.
6. This world is inhabited by persons who are deliberately addicted to this

suicidal course. They are unconditionally committed to the ascending process for sojourning in this realm of nescience. The method is further characterized by the hypocritical assumption of the validity of experience derived through the senses for providing progressive guidance in the quest [for] a state of perfect felicity.

7. The method of quest in which the Truth Himself takes the Initiative is termed the *avaroha* or descending process. The individual soul can have no access to the Absolute by reason of his infinitesimality, dissociable marginal position, and his own nature as an emanation of power. He can, however, have a view of the Truth if the Absolute is pleased to manifest His descent to the plane of his tiny cognition.

8. Real theism cannot begin till the individual soul is enabled by the descent of the Absolute to have the opportunity for His service. The Absolute manifests His descent in the Form of the Name or the Transcendental Divine Sound on the lips of His pure devotees.

9. *Dikṣa*, or the communication of the knowledge of the Transcendental in the Form of the Sound to the submissive receptive cognition of the individual soul by authorized agents of the Absolute, is the Vedic mode of initiation into Transcendental Knowledge.

10. The Name is the Object of worship of all pure souls. The transcendental service of the Name, or *bhakti*, is the proper function of all souls and the only mode of quest of the Truth. The pursuit of this right method of quest leads to a growing perfection of *bhakti* and progressive realization of the subjective nature of the Object of worship.

Brahman, Paramātmā & Bhagavān:

1. The Ultimate Reality is termed... as *brahman*, *paramātmā* and *bhagavān*. The Brahman conception stresses the necessity of excluding the deluded, concrete, limited experience of the followers of apparent truth. The conception of Paramātmā seeks to establish a tangible connection between this temporal world and the Ultimate Reality. Both of these conceptions present not only an imperfect, but also a grossly misleading view of the Absolute.

2. The conception of Bhagavān as Transcendental Personality who is approachable by *śuddha-bhakti* or unalloyed devotion of the soul, corresponds to the complete realization of the Absolute which necessarily also accommodates and supplements the rival concepts of Brahman and Paramātmā.

3. The Brahman conception is misunderstood by exclusive monists (*kevalādvaita* of the Śāṅkara school) who quite disingenuously assume that the conception denied the Transcendental Personality and Figure of the Absolute.

4. The root of the error lies in the fear of the impersonalists that if concreteness in the Absolute is admitted, such an admission would lead to the

importation of the undesirable features of apparent truth (experienced by the methods of sensuous perception) into the transcendental conception of the Absolute Reality favored by the scriptures.

5. The method of *śuddha-bhakti*, while recognizing fully the necessity of admitting the Transcendental Nature of the Ultimate Reality, does not deny the immanent transcendental connection of the Absolute with manifest mundane existence (which idea is found in the Yogi's conception of Paramātmā, but in a wrong and offensive formulation).

6. The conception of Bhagavān, realized by the process of *śuddha-bhakti*, harmonizes these respective requirements as secondary features of the Proper Transcendental Personality of the Absolute. The *adhokṣaja* and *aprakṛta* methods of quest, alone tend to such realization.

Sambandha, Abhidheya, and Prayojana Defined In Terms of the *Bhāgavata*:

1. *Sambandha*, or relationship, implies a numerical reference. The Ultimate Reality is One without a second, though the aspects of the Absolute may prove different in different eyes. The unity of the Ultimate Reality carries a similarity to the integer of mathematical conception, denoting Himself as the Object of worship (Śrī Kṛṣṇa), and connoting His *śaktī* in her three aspects and her transformations and products.

2. Under "relationship," therefore, come all those parts of the teaching of the *Bhāgavata* that reveal the knowledge of the subjective nature of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the subjective nature of His *śaktī*, or power, in all her three aspects, and the subjective nature of the activities of the different aspects of power.

3. Under *abhidheya*, or function, are included all those parts of the teaching of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* which reveal the nature of transcendental worship and, negatively, of the activity of aversion to Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

4. Under *prayojana*, or fruit, are included those portions of the teaching of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that deal with *prema*, or spiritual love and, negatively, with *dharma* (virtue), *artha* (material utility), *kāma* (lust), and *mokṣa* (merging in the Absolute).

Sambandha or Relationship:

1. The worship of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the only full-fledged, unadulterated function of all souls--the only complete theistic worship. All other forms of worship represent the infinity of gradations of approach towards this complete [form of] worship.

2. Pure theism, involving the active reciprocal relationship of the soul with the Divinity, does not begin until there is actual realization of the Transcendental Personality of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The degree of this realization corresponds to that of the loving aptitude of His worshiper.

(Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead):

3. The Proper Figure of Śrī Kṛṣṇa (Svayam-rūpa) is identical with the Entity of Kṛṣṇa, and is One without a second. There is an infinity of Aspects of the Divine Figure that emanate from the Figure-in-Himself (Svayam-rūpa). These plural aspects of the Divine Figure are of the nature of Identities, Manifestations, Expansions, Plenary Parts, Plenary Parts of Parts, Descending Divinities (*avatāras*), etc. These Divine Aspects, Who are part and parcel of the Divinity in His fulness, are worshiped by the corresponding aptitudes of love of Their respective worshipers.

4. [Just as a] relationship of service subsists between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His power (*śaktī*) in all her aspects and transformations, [similarly] [t]he infinite Aspects of the Divine Personality Himself, emanating from the Figure-in-Himself (Svayam-rūpa), are related to Śrī Kṛṣṇa as Servitor-Divinities Who are possessors of power.

5. These Divine Persons show an order of classification into the categories of *Svayam-prakāṣa* (Manifestation-in-Himself), *Tadekātma-rūpa* (Essentially Identical Figure), and *Aveṣa-rūpa* (The Figure of Divine Super-imposition). Of these, *Svayam-prakāṣa* is, as it were, the other self of *Svayam-rūpa*, and is also One without a second. *Tadekātma-rūpa* and *Aveṣa-rūpa* are multifarious.

6. Each of these Divine Persons possesses His own absolute realm (Vaikuṅṭha) where He is served by the infinity of His servitors. These Vaikuṅṭhas transcend the countless worlds of finite existence constituting the realm of the deluding power.

7. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is possessed of 64 Divine Excellences. Śrī Nārāyaṇa, the Supreme Object of reverential worship, possesses 60 of the full perfections of Divine Excellence. Brahmā and Rudra, who wield the delegated powers of mundane creation and destruction, possess 55 Excellences, but not in their full divine measure. Individual souls (*jīvas*) possess 50 of the Excellences of Kṛṣṇa in an infinitesimal measure.

8. The clue to the Supreme Excellence of the Personality of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is supplied by the principle of *Rasa* which is defined by Śrī Rūpa as "that ecstatic principle of concentrated deliciousness that is tasted by Śrī Kṛṣṇa and in sequel reciprocated by the serving individual soul on the plane that transcends mundane thought." Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Figure-in-Himself of the whole compass of the nectarine principle of *Rasa*. The Figure of Kṛṣṇa excels all His other Aspects of His Divine Personality by being the Supreme Repository of all the *Rasas*.

(The Principle of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa):

9. The Supreme Possessor of power, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is inseparably coupled with His *antaranga-śaktī*, or power inhering in His Own proper Figure. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* refers to the service of one particular *gopī* (lit., one who is fully eligible for the service of Śrī Kṛṣṇa) being preferred by Śrī Kṛṣṇa above all the other *gopīs*.

10. In other words, *antaranga-śaktī* is one and all-perfect. She is the "predominated Absolute." She has her own specific figure, viz., that of Śrī Rādhikā. The two aspects of the *antarangā-* or *svarupa-śaktī*, namely, *tataṣṭhā-śaktī* and *māyā-* or *bahirangā-śaktī*, reveal themselves in the intermediate and outer regions of the Divine Figure.

(The Individual *Jīva* Soul):

11. *Jīvas* or individual souls are detachable, infinitesimal emanations of the *tataṣṭhā-śaktī*, sharing the essence of the plenary spiritual power. [They] appear on the border-line between the inner and outer zones of divine power. They have no *locus standi* in their nascent or *tataṣṭhā* state. They are eternally exposed to the opposite attractions of *svarupa-śaktī* and *māyā-śaktī* at the two poles.

12. Their proper affinity is with *svarupa-śaktī*, but they are susceptible to be overpowered by *māyā-śaktī*, at their option. If they choose to be the subservients of *māyā-śaktī*, they are subjected to ignorance of their proper nature which results in confirmed aversion to the service of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. In this manner is brought about the deluded condition of individual souls who sojourn in the realm of *māyā*.

13. The constitutions of individual souls in their nascent state, and the realm of *māyā* are comparable to the outer penumbral and the shadowy zones respectively of the sun, while the position of *antarangā-śaktī* is like the inner ball of light which is the proper abode of the Sun-god, who corresponds to Śrī Kṛṣṇa [in this analogy].

14. Individual souls are detachable, infinitesimal emanations of the marginal power located on the border-line and exposed to the opposite pulls of the internal and external energies. They are distinct from the plenary emanations, manifestations and multiples of the internal energy on the one hand, and from the products of the external energy on the other.

15. The individual soul, in his nascent marginal position, is confronted with the alternative of choice between subservience to the plenary power on the one hand and apparent domination over the deluding power on the other. When he chooses the latter alternative, he forgets his relationship of subservience to the inner power and his subservience to Śrī Kṛṣṇa through such subservience.

16. It is never possible for the conditioned soul to understand the nature of the service of Śrī Kṛṣṇa that is rendered by His inner power. There is, therefore, a categorical distinction between the function of individual souls and that of the inner power, even on the plane of service.

17. In the works of the followers of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu who propounded the school of *acintya-bhedābheda-tattva* (simultaneous oneness and difference) the subject of the working of the inner power and individual souls has been treated in all its details. The clue to the comparative study of the working of power on the transcendental plane is supplied by the account of the *rāsa* dance in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

18. When the individual soul chooses unreserved subservience to the inner power, he has access to the service of the untampered Personality of the Absolute. The *kaivalya* state, mentioned in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, is the state of unalloyed devotion to the untampered Personality of the Absolute.

(How the Monists Misunderstand Kṛṣṇa-līlā):

19. Exclusive monists imagine that the figure of the object of worship exists only in the mundane world and that in the final position there is also no activity of worship. In other words, they deny the possibility of the *līlā*, or the eternal transcendental activities of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

20. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* flatly denies this groundless contention in the most explicit terms. There is total absence of all mundane reference in the transcendental activity of *śuddha-bhakti*.

21. The word activity is not expressive of *līlā*. It corresponds to *kriyā* or mundane activity. Transcendental activity has neither beginning or end. There is, of course, relativity in *līlā*, but it is not the unwholesome relativity of mundane activity or *kriyā*. The notion that *līlā* can have an end or termination is due to ignorant confusion between the conceptions of *līlā* and *kriyā*.

22. *Śuddha-bhakti* belongs to the category of *līlā*. In Vṛndāvana the *gopīs* serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa by unconventional amorous love. The super-excellence of this service cannot be admitted if the absolutely wholesome nature of all unalloyed activity on the plane of Vraja is disbelieved, on principle, by one's ignorant perverse judgement.

(The Transcendental Purpose of Varnāśrama):

23. The function of conditioned souls is of two kinds. The function that is provided by the *varnāśrama* system for conditioned souls is not opposed to *śuddha-bhakti*. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* has treated the *varnāśrama* system from the

point of view of unalloyed devotion. Thereby it has provided an intelligent way of viewing the situation of conditioned souls during their sojourn to the mundane world.

24. The spiritual value of the *varṇāśrama* system is due to the fact that it admits the possibility of the activity of conditioned souls being endowed with reflected spiritual quality by being directed towards the unalloyed service of the Absolute on the transcendental plane.

25. It is the purpose of the *varṇāśrama* regulation to impart this direction to the activity of the conditioned souls. The crucial nature of this theistic purpose of the *varṇāśrama* arrangement is fully treated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. It is not explicitly treated in any other *śāstric* work.

Abhidheya or Function:

(Unalloyed, Varṇāśrama and Ignorant Functions of the Soul):

1. *Śuddha-bhakti* is the only proper function of all unalloyed individual souls and is located on the plane of transcendence. But all animate life forms are potentially eligible for the transcendental service of the Absolute.
2. *Varṇāśrama* life is not the unalloyed spiritual life that is led by fully liberated souls. It is the stage preparatory to such life. Neither is it on a par with the life of unmixed sensuousness that is led by people outside the *varṇāśrama* society.
3. Every form of activity of conditioned souls outside the *varṇāśrama* system is inspired by meaningless malicious hostility to the Absolute. All such activity is necessarily atheistical. This mundane world is the congenial sphere for the practice of the deluded dominating activity that is coveted by conditioned souls for practicing active aversion towards the Absolute. The conditions for such activity are supplied by the deluding power. They constitute the realm of nescience, spiritual ignorance or *acit*.
4. But as soon as the activity of *cit*, or uneclipsed cognition is aroused in the spiritual essence of the misguided soul, it dissipates by its appearance such wrong addiction to the ignorant activities of this world and also the susceptibility of being tempted by the deluding power.
5. There is no common ground between the unalloyed spiritual function and the activity of conditioned souls in the grip of nescience. The one does not dovetail into the other. It is for this reason that the unalloyed spiritual function can never be understood by the resources of the archaeologists, historians, allegorists, philosophers, etc., of this world.

6. Such empiric speculations tamper with the transcendental Personality of the Absolute. They belong to the realm of nescience and constitute the active denial of the Entity of the Absolute. By indulging in such speculations our spiritual nature is deprived of its proper function.
7. Conduct enjoined by the *varṇāśrama* system is calculated to counteract the inherent atheistical trend of all worldly activities which are unavoidable in the conditioned state.
8. Activities that are prompted by the urge for sensuous enjoyment create the discordant diversity of this world. One who is addicted to worldly enjoyment has a deluded way of looking at everything. When such a person is established in the proper activity of his unalloyed spiritual nature towards his Transcendental Master, the only Recipient of all willing service in the eternal world, the true view of everything is revealed to his serving vision. There can be no ignorance and misery if the world is viewed aright.
9. The urge for sensuous enjoyment expresses itself in the institutions of family and society of worldly-minded persons. They are traps of the deluding energy. But these very traps are used as instruments of service to the ABSolute by the awakened soul.
10. The hymns of the *Bhāgavata* always reveal the eternal service of the Absolute on the highest plane, identical with the Personality of Śrī Gaurasundara, to the enlightened soul.... The language of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* reveals its true meaning only to the enlightened soul. That meaning is very different from what even the most renowned linguists may suppose it to be in their blind empiric vanity.

(The Nature of Transcendental Vraja-līlā):

11. The *Bhāgavata* gives the highest position to the service of Śrī Kṛṣṇa by the *gopīs* of Vṛndāvana. In its account of the *rāsa* dance, it gives the clue to the distinctive nature of the services of Śrī Rādhikā and the other milkmaids.
12. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is served by Śrī Rādhikā by herself and simultaneously by her multiple bodily forms in the shapes of the residents of Vraja. The services of the other milkmaids, of Nanda and Yaśodā, of Śrīdama and Sudama, and of all the associates and servitors of Kṛṣṇa in Vraja, are part and parcel of the service of Śrī Rādhikā.
13. Śrī Gurudeva belongs to this inner group of servitors. He is the divine manifested entity for disclosing the forms and activities of all eternal servitors of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The function of Śrī Gurudeva is a fundamental fact in the *līlā* of Vraja where Śrī Kṛṣṇa is served as the emporium of all the *rāsas*. The servitors of Vraja minister to the gratification of the senses of Kṛṣṇa in every way. Śrī Gurudeva is

the divine exciting agent of the serving activity of Vraja.

14. [The nature of Transcendental Vraja Līlā is liable to be misunderstood by the empiric study of the *Bhāgavata*. The limit of empiric inference is reached by the speculations of the *parokṣa* method. By the abandonment of empiricism, represented by the *aparokṣa* method, the Brahman and Paramātmā conceptions are realized. But these also are not objects of worship.]

15. [We have already seen that the activity of service is possible only on the plane of *adhokṣaja*, which yields the realization of the Majestic Personality of the Absolute as Śrī Nārāyaṇa. *Aprakṛta-vraja-līlā*, the central topic of the *Bhāgavata* is the highest form of *adhokṣaja* realization.]

(Transcendental and Mundane Sexuality):

16. The dalliances of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in Vraja have a close resemblance to unconventional mundane amour. Sexuality, in all its forms, is an essentially repulsive affair on the mundane plane. It is, therefore, impossible to understand how the corresponding transcendental activity can be the most exquisitely wholesome service of the Absolute.

17. It is, however, possible to be reconciled, to some extent, to the truth of the narrative of the *Bhāgavata* if we are prepared to admit the reasonableness of the doctrine that the mundane world is the unwholesome reflection of the realm of the Absolute, and that this world appears in a scale of values that is the reverse of that which obtains in the reality of which it happens to be the shadow.

18. In the form of the narrative of the *Bhāgavata*, the Transcendental Vraja-līlā manifests its descent to the plane of our mundane vision in symbolic shapes resembling those of the corresponding mundane events.

19. If we are disposed, for any reason, to underestimate the transcendental symbolism of the narrative of the *Bhāgavata*, we are unable to avoid unfavorable and hasty conclusions regarding the nature of the highest, the most perfect and the most charming form of the loving service of the Divinity to which all other forms of His service are as the avenues of approach.

20. Sexuality symbolizes the highest attraction and the acme of deliciousness in transcendental service. In the amorous performances of Vraja, the secrets of the eternal life are exhibited in their uncovered perfection in the activity of the love of unalloyed souls.

21. We may notice, in passing, certain significant differences between Śrī Kṛṣṇa's amorous dalliances and mundane sex activity which should prevent any hasty conclusions: 1) In Vraja-līlā, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is under the age of eleven years; and, 2) The spiritual milkmaids never conceive and bear children to Śrī Kṛṣṇa (the children born of Śrī Kṛṣṇa belong to the less perfect *līlā* of Dvaraka).

22. To suppose the Divine *līlā* to be a product of anthropomorphic speculation is the greatest offense. The *Bhāgavta* declares that the realization of the true nature of the Vraja-*līlā*, in pursuance of the *śrauta* method, is the only remedy for all conditioned souls afflicted with the disease of mundane sexuality.

23. The conventions of civilized society for the regulation of sexual relationships attain their ethical perfection in the *varṇāśrama* arrangement. Thus a person belonging to the *varṇāśrama* society can readily appreciate the transparent moral purity of life on the plane of Vaikuṅṭha and Ayodhya, although he cannot understand their esoteric nature. In those realms, the Godhead poses as the ideal monogamous husband.

24. The ethical restrictions of sex relationships that are imposed at Ayodhya by the form of the monogamous marriage are relaxed at Dvaraka where the ABSolute manifests His fuller Personality and appears in the guise of the polygamous husband.

25. The conventions of marriage are abrogated altogether in Vṛndāvana where the sanctity of wedlock becomes secondary and a foil to the amorous exploits of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in His fullest manifestation.

26. The spiritual function in its unalloyed form has a real correspondence to mundane activity, with the distinction that its objective, mode of activity and instrumental are unalloyed spirit. This makes the inconceivable difference between the spiritual function and mundane activity. It also supplies a kind of explanation for the fact that those activities in Vraja which correspond to the most wholesome performances on the mundane plane, are comparatively speaking the least pleasing in the sight of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

(The Plane of Mundane Enjoyment and the Plane of Spiritual Service):

27. The sole object of all spiritual activity is gratification of the senses of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. When Śrī Kṛṣṇa is pleased, His servitors experience unmixed joy. This is the reverse of what happens in this world. Activity that yields enjoyment to the person indulging in the same alone possesses attraction on the mundane plane. But such selfish pleasure is never coveted on the plane of spiritual service.

28. The plane of mundane sensuous enjoyment is thereby sharply differentiated from that of spiritual service with respect to the quality and orientation of their respective activities. Desire for mundane enjoyment is potentially, but uncongenially, inherent in the soul. And it can be cultivated at his option. The practice of it, however, leads to the abeyance of his truly natural serving function.

29. Modern civilization does not suspect its own degradation in seeking exclusively for mundane enjoyment. The mind and body of man have a natural

aptitude for sensuous gratification, and all his ordinary mundane activities are practiced for its realization. [Thus] few... can grasp [the fact that] the unalloyed essence of the soul has a natural aptitude for the exclusive service of the Absolute which is utterly incompatible with mundane sensuous living.

30. In the transcendental service of the Absolute the aptitude, form, as well as ingredients are uncovered absolutely wholesome living reality. In this complete uncovering of the proper nature of a person by the perfection of his serving function, he is enabled to realize fully the abiding interests of his real entity [or self]. Such unconditional submissive activity towards the Absolute is also necessarily identical with the realization of the perfect freedom of the soul, which expresses itself in the highest forms of his serving activity.

Prayojana or Fruit:

1. In the position of complete realization of the activity of the uncovered soul a person becomes eligible for participation in the Transcendental pastimes or *līlā* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.... The realization of this all-absorbing love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the FRUIT or *prayojana* of the eternal spiritual activities of all pure souls.
2. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is directly served by His plenary inner power as His only consort. The residents of Vraja, the plane of this inner service, are extensions of the figure of the plenary Divine power. They are the divine participants in the divine pastimes, as all those entities display the nature of the full servitorship of the Divinity.
3. Not so the souls of men, all of whom are susceptible to the temptations offered by the deluding face of the plenary power for preventing the access of the non-residents of Vraja to the arena of the Divine pastimes. We, the sojourners of this mundane plane, have been thus kept out of the plane of Vraja by the deluding face of the Divine Power.
4. Individual souls who are not part and parcel of the inner plenary power have no automatic access to the plane of Vraja. They are also lacking in spontaneous love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa. It is possible for them to attain to the love of Śrī Kṛṣṇa only as accepted subservients of the inhabitants of Vraja.
5. The first appearance of the spontaneous loving aptitude for Śrī Kṛṣṇa in an individual soul elevates him to the condition of the *madhyam-bhagavata* as distinct from the condition of the *mahā-bhagavata* who possesses love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the plenary measure which makes him eligible for participating as a subservient of the servitors of Vraja, in the loving activities of the highest sphere of service.
6. In proportion as the hesitant, reverential serving disposition of the *madhyam-bhagavata* is gradually developed, by the practice of pure service, into

one of subserviency to the inhabitants of Vraja in their unconventional performances of the highest loving services of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, such hesitation and distance are superseded by growing confidence and proximity to the Object of one's highest love. Thereby the spiritual vision is perfected, in conformity with the natural capacity of an individual, and he is enabled to realize the full function of his specific spiritual self.

7. Goloka-Vṛndāvana is realizable in the symbolic Vṛndāvana that is open to our view in this world by all persons whose love has been perfected by the mercy of the inhabitants of Transcendental Vraja, and not otherwise.

8. The grossest misunderstanding of the subject of the Vraja-līlā of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is inevitable if these considerations are not kept in view. All persons under the sinister influence of the deluding power of Nescience are subject to such misunderstanding in one form or another. They are fated to see nothing but a mundane tract of country in the terrestrial (*Bhauma*) Vṛndāvana, and the practice of the grossest forms of debauchery in the Vraja pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

9. But the true esoteric vision of the *mahā-bhagavata* is very different from the realization of deluded humanity. It is described in Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā, 17-55:

"When Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya catches sight of a wood, it appears to Him in the likeness of Vṛndāvana; and when He looks at a hill, He mistakes it for Govardhana."

THE END.