



तव कथामृतं तप्तजीवनम्
tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanam

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THE BHAGAVATAM PREDATES VOPADEV

His Divine Grace A. C.

Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Some Māyāvādī scholars argue that Śrīmad Bhāgavatam was not compiled by Sri Vyasadev. And some of them suggest that this book is a modern creation written by someone named Vopadev. In order to refute such meaningless arguments, Sri Sridhar Svami points out that there is reference to the Bhāgavatam in many of the oldest Purāṇas. This first śloka of the Bhāgavatam begins with the Gāyatrī mantra. There is reference to this in the Matsya Purāṇa, which is the oldest Purāṇa. In that Purāṇa it is said about the Bhāgavatam that in it there are many narrations of spiritual instructions, that it begins with the Gāyatrī mantra, and that it contains the history of Vritrasura. Anyone who makes a gift of this great work on a full moon day attains to the highest perfection of life by returning to Godhead. There is reference to the Bhāgavatam in other Purāṇas also, where it is clearly stated that this work was finished in twelve cantos, which include eighteen thousand ślokas. In the Padma Purāṇa also there is reference to the Bhāgavatam in a conversation between Gautam and Maharaja Ambarish. The king was advised therein to read regularly Śrīmad Bhāgavatam if he desired liberation from material bondage. Under the circumstances, there is no doubt about the authority

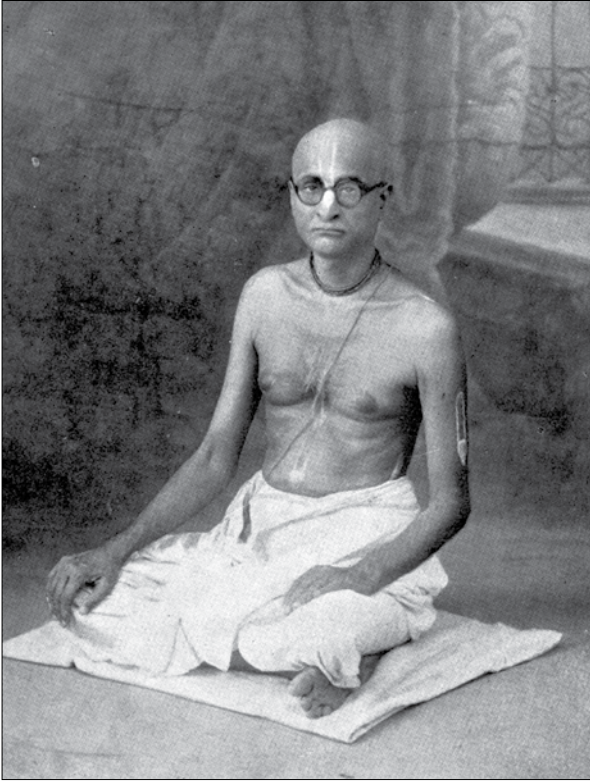


His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

of the Bhāgavatam. Within the past five hundred years, many erudite scholars and ācāryas like Jiva Goswami, Sanatan Goswami, Viswanath Chakravarti, Vallabhacharya, and many other distinguished scholars even after the time of Lord Chaitanya made elaborate commentaries on the Bhāgavatam. And the serious student would do well to attempt to go through them to better relish the transcendental messages. ❧

— Purport to Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 1.1.1



“NO INTEREST”

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada

Question: Why are we not inclined toward the Lord’s service?

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Prabhupada: We have no inclination toward God and no inclination to remedy that situation. Therefore we need an expert doctor. Our inclination toward the Lord will arise if we associate with devotees. Just as a veterinary surgeon tactfully places medicine in an animal’s mouth, similarly the spiritual master and the devotees, who are just like expert doctors, bestow mercy on us. Despite our reluctance they forcibly pour the mellows of devotional service into our mouths. ❧

— From *Amṛta Vani*, collected teachings of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur. chapter 51. Compiled in Bengali by Sri Bhakti Bhagavat Mayukha Maharaja. Adapted and translated into English by Bhumipati Das and Isvara Das. Touchstone Media. Mumbai. 2004.

NOT BY VOPADEV

**From Srila Baladev Vidyabhushan’s
Siddhānta-darpaṇa 6.3
with commentary by Sri Nanda Mishra**

*vopadeva-kṛtatve ’tra vopadeva-purābhavaiḥ
katham ṭikāḥ kṛtāḥ saṁsyur hanumac-citsukhādibhiḥ*

How is it possible that Sri Vopadev wrote the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* when it is well known that personalities

like Sri Hanumat, Sri Chitsukha, etc., who lived before him, have commented on it?

Commentary: *vopadeva-kṛtatvaṁ sarvathā nāstīty āha—vopadeveti. yady etad bhāgavatam vopadevena vyaracīty ucyate, tarhi tasmāt pūrvaṁ jātair hanumad-ādibhis tasmin kṛtāḥ ṭikāḥ kathā sambhaveyuh? hanumān śrī-rāma-pārśadaś citsukhaś cācāryaḥ śrīmad-bhāgavatam vyācakyau. śrī-madhva-muniḥ sva-bhāṣye tad-vākyāny udājahāra. sa eva śrī-bhāgavata-tātparyam ca kṛtavān. tātparyasyāpi prabodhini ṭikāsti. śrīmad-bhāgavata-mātra-varṇite mṛd-bhakṣaṇa-vastra-haraṇe śrī-govindāṣṭake varṇayan śaṅkarācāryō ’pi tad vyākhyātavān eva. śrī-madhva-śaṅkarau hi sama-kāla-prasiddhau. śaṅkarācārya-samayād uttare vatsara-śata-dvaye vyatīte vopadevo ’bhūd iti śrī-rāmāśramādibhir likhitam. yadaite hanumad-ādayas tasya vyākhyānādi cakrus tadā vopadevasya janmāpi nābhūd iti tasya tat-karṭṛtvaṁ kathayan bhrānta-dhīr eva*

This verse mentions how it is entirely impossible that Sri Vopadev wrote the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*.

If it is assumed that Sri Vopadev wrote the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* then how is it possible that personalities predating him such as Sri Hanumat wrote commentaries on it? The commentator Hanumat refers to Hanuman, who is none other than the associate of Lord Rama, and Chitsukha is another commentator on the *Bhāgavatam*. Words from his commentary have been mentioned by the revered Sri Madhvacharya in his own commentary. It is Madhvacharya who also wrote the *Bhāgavata-tātparya*. The *prabodhini* is a sub-commentary on the *Bhāgavata-tātparya* of Madhvacharya. Topics from the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, like Krishna’s eating of dirt and his stealing of the *gopīs* clothes, have been narrated in Shankaracharya’s *Govindāṣṭakam*. In this way it is understood that even Shankaracharya knew and wrote about Krishna’s pastimes given in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. It is well known that Sri Madhvacharya and Sri Adi Shankara were almost contemporaries. It has been written clearly by Sri Ramashram Swami and others that Sri Vopadev appeared at least two hundred years after Sri Shankaracharya.

When commentators such as Hanumat and Chitsukha wrote their commentaries, Sri Vopadev was not even born! Thus, those who say that Vopadev was the composer are certainly misled. ❧

— Translated by Hari Parshad Das from the Sanskrit available at Gaudiya Grantha Mandira (<http://www.granthamandira.com>)

Unknown artist. Gita Press, circa 1960



DEFINITIONS OF BHAKTI

Various Authors

1) Sri Vyasadeva

pūjādiṣv anurāga iti pārāśaryaḥ

Srila Vyasadeva, the son of Parashar Muni, says that 'bhakti' means 'fond attachment for worshiping the Lord in various ways'. (*Nārada-bhakti-sūtra* 16)

2) Sri Garga Muni

kathādiṣv iti gargaḥ

Garga Muni says that 'bhakti' means 'fondness for narrations about the Lord, by the Lord, etc.' (*Nārada-bhakti-sūtra*, 17)

3) Sri Shandilya Muni

ātma-raty-avirodheneti śāṇḍilyaḥ

Shandilya Muni says that 'bhakti' means 'taking unobstructed pleasure in the self'. (*Nārada-bhakti-sūtra*, 18)

4) Sri Narada Muni

nāradas tu tad-arpitākhlilācārātā tad-vismaraṇe parama-vyākulateti

Narada, however, says that 'bhakti' means 'offering one's every act to the Supreme Lord and feeling extreme distress in forgetting him'. (*Nārada-bhakti-sūtra*, 19)

sā tv asmin parama-prema-rūpā amṛta-svarūpā ca

Devotional service manifests as the most elevated, pure love for God. This pure love for God is eternal. (*Nārada-bhakti-sūtra*, 2-3)

5) Srila Rupa Goswami

*sarvopādhi-vinirmuktān tat-paratvena nirmalam
hṛṣikeṇa hṛṣikeśa-sevanān bhaktir ucyate*

The act of engaging the senses that are freed from all designations and purified by unflinching dedication in the service of Lord Hrishikesh, the master of the senses, is known as 'bhakti'. (*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.12)

6) Sri Madhusudana Saraswati

*drutasya bhagavad-dharmād dhārāvāhikatām gatā
sarveśe manaso vṛttir bhaktir ity abhidhīyate*

When, by executing the activities of *bhāgavata-dharma*, the melted tendencies of the mind flow in streams towards the Supreme Lord, then such tendencies are to be known as 'bhakti'. (*Bhagavad-bhakti-rasāyana*, 3)

— *Nārada-bhakti-sūtra*. Translation and Commentary by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada and disciples.

— *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* and *Bhagavad-bhakti-rasāyanam*. Sanskrit text available at Gaudiya Grantha Mandira (www.granthamandira.com)



Unknown artist



SHYAM HAS COME TO NADIA Sri Harivallabha Das

śyāmera tanu ava gaura-varaṇa
gokula choḍi ava nadīyā ā-ola
vaṁśī choḍi kīratana

(Refrain) He whose body was dark now has a fair

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complexion. Leaving Gokul he came to Nadia. Putting down his flute he sings the holy names.

kāliṅdī-taṭa choḍi sura-sarita-taṭe
avahum karata vilāsa
aruṇa-varaṇa ḍora-kaupīna ava
choḍi pīta-dhaḍā bāsa

Leaving the Yamuna he enjoys pastimes on the Ganga's banks. Putting down his yellow garments he wears the saffron cloth of a sannyaśī.

vāme nahata ava rā-i sudhā-mukhī
vraja-vadhū nahata niyaḍe
gadādhara paṇḍita phirata vāme ava
sadā sa-e bhakata vihare

Sweet-faced Radha is no longer at his left. The vraja-gopīs are no longer around him. Now Gadadhar Pandita is at his left as he enjoys pastimes with his devotees.

choḍi mohana cūḍā śire śikhā rākhala
mukhe kahata rārā rārā
kahe hari-vallabha teracha cāhani choḍi
du-nayane galata dhārā

He abandoned his glorious hair and wears a śikhā. With his mouth he now loudly calls the holy names. Hari-vallabha Das says that the Lord has turned away from crooked, playful glances and makes a flooding river of tears flow from his eyes. ❀

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