

Summary of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam from the Nārada Purāṇa

Translation by Jan Mareš; from *Śrī Bṛhan-nārādīya Purāṇa, Pūrva-bhāga* (“fore part”), *Bṛhad-upākhyāna* (“the larger episode”), Part 4, Chapter 96.

(1)

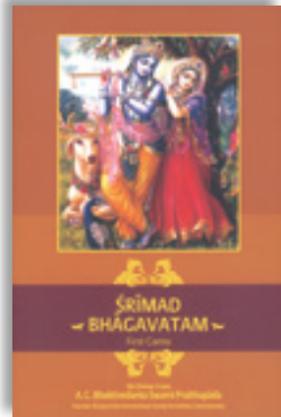
*brahmovāca
marīce śṛṇu vakṣyāmi
vedavyāseṇa yat kṛtam
śrīmad-bhāgavatam nāma
purāṇam brahma-sammitam*

Brahmā said: Listen, O Marīci [a son of Brahmā]. I will tell you about the *Purāṇa* named *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, devoted to the subject of Brahman [with focus on Śrī Kṛṣṇa] and rendered by Vedavyāsa.

(2)

*tad aṣṭādaśa-sāhasraṁ
kīrtitam pāpa-nāśanam
sura-pādapa-rūpo 'yam
skandhair dvādaśabhir yutaḥ*

Its eighteen thousand glorious verses in twelve cantos have the form of a wish-fulfilling tree and destroy sins.



(3)

*bhagavān eva vipreṇdra
viśva-rūpī samīritah
tatra tu prathama-skandhe
sūta rṣiṇām samāgame*

O best of *brāhmaṇas*, in the First Canto, in the meeting of Sūta with the sages, the universal form of Bhagavān is described.

(4)

*vyāsasya caritam puṇyam
pāṇḍavānām tathaiva ca
parīkṣitam upākhyānam
itīdam samudāhṛtam*

The virtuous [i.e., bestowing *puṇya*, or pious merit] stories of Vyāsa, the Pāṇḍavas, and Parīkṣit are narrated there [in the meeting] in detail.

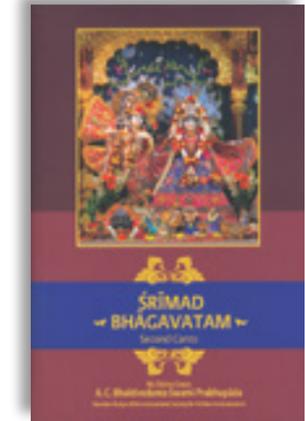
(5)

*parīkṣic-chuka-saṁvāde
sṛṣṭi-dvaya-nirūpaṇam
brahma-nārada-saṁvāde
devatā-caritāmṛtam*

The conversation between Parīkṣit and Śukadeva [in the Second Canto] describes two types of creation, and the conversation between Brahmā and Nārada describes the nectar of the Lord's activities.



Painting by Dīrghā Devī Dāsī



(6)

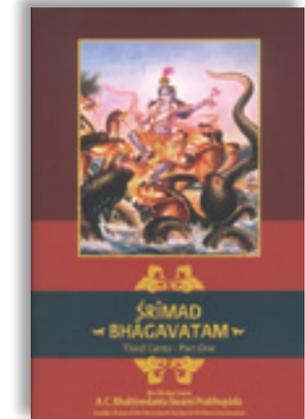
*purāṇa-lakṣaṇam caiva
sṛṣṭi-kāraṇa-saṁbhavaḥ
dvitīyo 'yam samuditaḥ
skandho vyāseṇa dhīmatā*

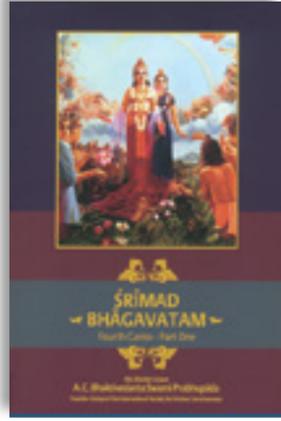
The Second Canto of very intelligent Vyāsa also describes the characteristics of the *Purāṇas* and the process of creation.

(7)

*caritam vidurasyātha
maitreyeṇāsya saṁgamaḥ
sṛṣṭi-prakaraṇam paścād
brahmaṇaḥ paramātmanaḥ*

[The Third Canto tells of] the meeting between Vidura and Maitreya. It has a section on creation and ends with descriptions of Brahman and Paramātmā.



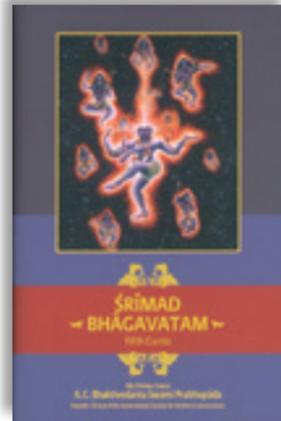


(8–9)

*kāpilam sām̐khyam apy atra
tṛtīyo 'yam udāhṛtaḥ
satyās caritam ādau tu
dhruvasya caritam tataḥ*

*pṛthoḥ puṇya-samākhyānaṁ
tataḥ prācīnabarhiṣam
ity eṣa turyo gadito
visarge skandha uttamaḥ*

The Third Canto also describes the [original] Sāṅkhya of Kapila. Beginning with the story of Sañī and the virtuous story of Dhruva, the supreme Fourth Canto narrates the virtuous stories of Pṛthu and Prācīnabarhiṣat, and of the *visarga* [the secondary creation, by Brahmā and others].



(10)

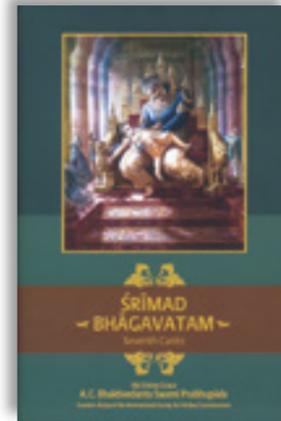
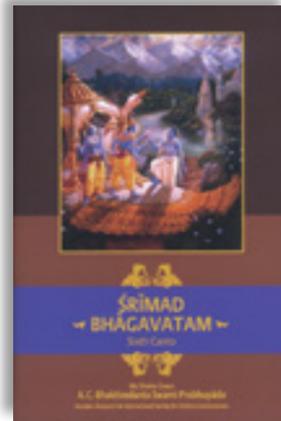
*priyavratasya caritam
tad vaṁśyānām ca puṇya-dam
brahmāṇḍāntargatānām ca
lokānām varṇanam tataḥ*

[The Fifth Canto narrates] the virtuous story of Priyavrata and his dynasty, as well as the description of the universe with its *lokas* [worlds].

(11–12)
*naraka-sthitir ityeṣa
samsthāne pañcamo mataḥ
ajāmilasya caritaṁ
dakṣa-sṛṣṭi-nirūpaṇam*

*vṛtrākhyānaṁ tataḥ paścān
marutām janma puṇyadam
ṣaṣṭho 'yam uditāḥ skandho
vyāseṇa pari-poṣaṇe*

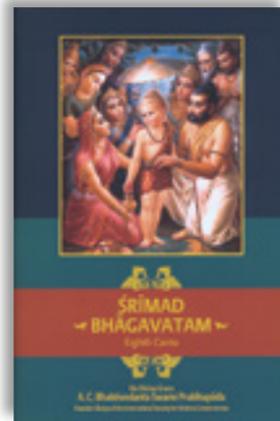
The Fifth Canto also describes the stay in hell. The story of Ajāmila, the progeny of Dakṣa, the story of Vṛtra, and, at its end, the virtuous birth of the Maruts are spoken about by Vyāsa in the Sixth Canto, which concerns the Lord's comprehensive mercy.



(13)

*prahlāda-caritaṁ puṇyam
varṇāśrama-nirūpaṇam
saptamo gadito vatsa
vāsanā-karma-kīrtane*

The virtuous story of Prahlāda and a description of *varṇāśrama* based on material desires are narrated in the Seventh Canto, O dear child, which concerns the description of materially motivated activities.



(14)

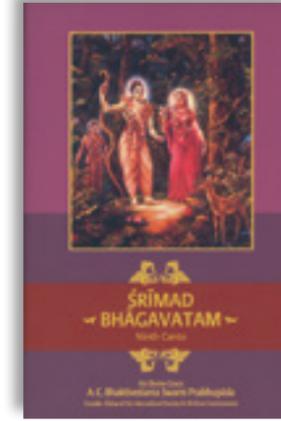
*gajendra-mokṣaṇākhyānaṁ
manvantara-nirūpaṇe
samudra-mathanam caiva
bali-vaibhava-bandhanam*

[The Eighth Canto] describes Gajendra's liberation, the *manvantaras* [periods ruled by the Manus], the churning of the ocean, and the bondage of the opulent Bali.

(15)

*matsyāvatāra-caritam
aṣṭamo 'yam prakīrtitaḥ
sūrya-vaṁśa-samākhyānaṁ
soma-vaṁśa-nirūpaṇam*

The Eighth Canto provides the story of Matsya as well as the story of the Sūrya-vaṁśa [the dynasty of the sun-god] and gives the description of the Soma-vaṁśa [the dynasty of the moon-god].



(16–17)

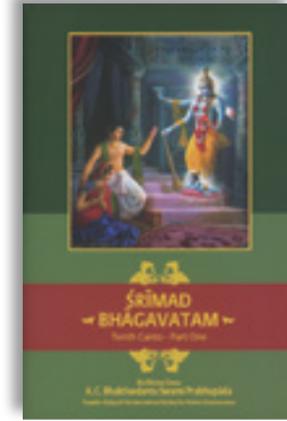
*vaṁśyānucarite prokto
navamo 'yam mahāmate
kṛṣṇasya bāla-caritaṁ
kaumāraṁ ca vraja-sthitiḥ*

*kaiśoraṁ mathurā-sthānaṁ
yauvanaṁ dvārakā-sthitiḥ
bhū-bhāra-haraṇam cātra
nirodhe daśamaḥ smṛtaḥ*

The Ninth Canto, concerning a description of dynasties, speaks of various *vaṁśas* and their characteristics, O great sage. The story of Kṛṣṇa's childhood, His life in Vraja as a young boy, His life in Mathurā as an older boy, His life in Dvārakā in His youth, and His removal of the earth's burden are remembered in the Tenth Canto in regard to the topic of annihilation.

(18–21)

*nāradena tu samvādo
vasudevasya kīrtitaḥ*



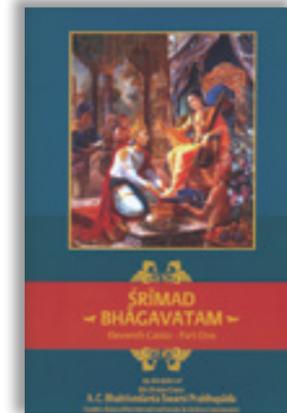
*yadoś ca dattātreyaṇa
śrī-kṛṣṇoddhavasya ca*

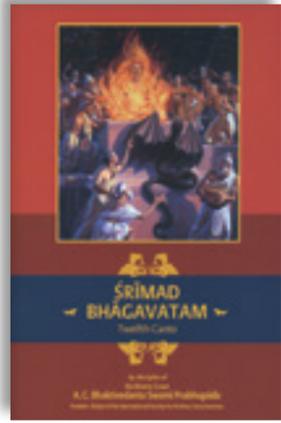
*yādavānām mithontas ca
muktāv ekādaśaḥ smṛtaḥ
bhaviṣya-kali-nirddeśo
mokṣo rājñah parikṣitaḥ*

*veda-sākhā-praṇayanam
mārkaṇḍeya-tapaḥ kriyā
saurī vibhūtir uditā
sātvaṭī ca tataḥ param*

*purāṇa-samkhyā-kathanam
āśraye dvādaśo hy ayam
ity evaṁ kathitaṁ vatsa
śrīmad bhāgavataṁ tava*

The talks between Nārada and Vasudeva, between Yadu and Dattātreya [as an *avadhūta brāhmaṇa*], and between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Uddhava, as well as the mutual end and liberation of the Yadus, are remembered in the Eleventh Canto. The future of Kali-yuga, the liberation of King Parikṣit, the expansion of Vedic branches, the austerities of Mārkaṇḍeya, and the transcendent supreme glory of Lord Kṛṣṇa are described along with the enumeration of the *Purāṇas* in the Twelfth Canto. Thus I have narrated to you, O dear child, the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, which concerns the ultimate shelter.





(22)

vaktuḥ śrotuś copadeṣṭur
anumoditur eva ca
sāhāya-kartur gaditam
bhakti-bhukti-vimukti-dam

One who speaks, hears, teaches, appreciates, and follows this summary narration will get devotion to the Lord, enjoyment in this world, and liberation.

(23–24)

prauṣṭhapadyām pūrṇimāyām
hema-simha-samanvitam

deyam bhāgavatāyedaṁ
dvijāya prīti-pūrvakam

sampūjya vastra hemādyair
bhagavad bhaktim icchatā
yo 'py anukramaṇīm etām
śrāvayec chṛṇuyāt tathā
sa purāṇa śravaṇa jam
prāpnoti phalam uttamam

If on the full-moon day of the month of Bhādra one places *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* on a golden throne, gives it as a gift to a *brāhmaṇa* with loving affection, worships him, and offers him clothes, gold, and other gifts, one will get the desired devotion to the Lord. Even by reciting or listening to this enumeration, one will achieve the supreme fruit of listening to that *Purāṇa*.

iti śrī bṛhan nārādīya purāṇe pūrva bhāge bṛhad
upākhyāne caturtha pāde
śrīmad bhāgavatānukramaṇī nirūpaṇam nāma
ṣaṇṇavatitamo 'dhyāyaḥ

This is *Śrī Bṛhan-nārādīya Purāṇa*, *Pūrva-bhāga*, *Bṛhad-upākhyāna*, fourth part, named “The Description of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*,” chapter 96. 🌐

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DO WE HAVE FREE WILL?

(continued from page 19)

the person who does not even know about the punishment? All people follow their sinful desires, even though those desires cause destruction of the very goals they pursue – *artha*, *dharma*, *kāma*, and *mokṣa*. For a person devoid of association of saintly persons, even if he has knowledge of scripture, what can punishment accomplish? He will not be able to destroy the strong influence of those bad desires.

The next verse is an injunction:

indriyasyendriyasyārthe
rāga-dveṣau vyavasthitau
tayor na vaśam āgacchet
tau hy asya paripanthinau

“Attachment and repulsion are firmly fixed in each of the sense objects. Therefore one should not come under control of attachment and repulsion.

They are the two obstacles.” Bala-deva Vidyābhūṣaṇa comments:

If the actions of men were under the control of their sinful natures, then the positive and negative injunctions of scripture would be useless. . . . The scriptures, which direct one to associate with the saintly persons, will turn one away from, and make one detest, what is forbidden, even though it is pleasurable to the mind, by making one understand the undesirable consequences of the forbidden act. And they will also make one have attraction for and engage in acts prescribed by scripture by making one understand their favorable results, even though these may be unpleasant for the mind. Thus the positive and negative injunctions of scripture are not useless.

If the *jīva* had no capacity to understand the consequences of harmful and beneficial actions, and to direct its intelligence accordingly, there

would be no need for the knowledge of the *Gītā* and the *Bhāgavatam*. Thus, the *jīva* has the capacity to choose (inside-out), but it is limited by the information it receives (outside-in) to make that choice. When it receives the knowledge of *bhakti* it is presented, then the *jīva* learns about its identity as separate from the mind, intelligence, and body. It now has the option to choose between material activities and *bhakti*'s activities. The *jīva* of course does not become free from the body, but the mind, intelligence, and body now become vehicles in the *jīva*'s acquiescing to *bhakti*'s instructions. Now begins the struggle. The *jīva* has to make a daily choice to either serve Kṛṣṇa – i.e., to perform *bhakti* – or to serve Kṛṣṇa's material energy, *māyā*.

By steadily progressing on this path, the *jīva* becomes transcendental to the *guṇas* – that is, free from the agitation caused by the material body, mind, and intelligence. Then the

jīva is free from outside-in control; this is called the stage of liberation. In this stage the *jīva* is completely indifferent to (i.e., not controlled by) material happiness, distress, criticism, praise, friend, foe, activity, confusion, and illumination.

The easiest way to become free from the tyranny of the body that suppresses the *jīva*'s capacity for inside-out control is to perform *bhakti*, as Kṛṣṇa explains in the *Gītā* (14.26):

mām ca yo 'vyabhicāreṇa
bhakti-yogena sevate
sa guṇān samatītyaitān
brahma-bhūyāya kalpate

“One who engages in full devotional service, unflinching in all circumstances, at once transcends the modes of material nature and thus comes to the level of Brahman.” Performing *bhakti* not only frees one from the control of the *guṇas* but also makes one a surrendered associate of Kṛṣṇa. In this state the devotee is now controlled by *prema*, or love for Kṛṣṇa. The devotee still has the capacity to choose, but the choices available in the spiritual world are in the context of how to make Kṛṣṇa happy. Thus the *jīva* is dependent in its capacity to choose, whether in the material world or the spiritual world. In fact, in all of existence the only independent person with complete free will to do as He likes is Kṛṣṇa Himself. 🌐

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- (2) Ibid.
- (3) Hinsin, K. (2010), “A scientific model for free will is impossible.” *Proc Natl Acad Sci USA* 107:E149.
- (4) de Duve, C. (1995), *Vital Dust* (Basic Books, New York).
- (5) Cashmore, A. R. (2010), “Reply to Hinsin: Free will, vitalism, and distinguishing cause from effect.” *Proc Natl Acad Sci USA* 2010 107 (38) E150.

CALENDAR

This calendar is calculated for Mayapur, West Bengal, India. The dates, derived from a lunar calendar, may vary by one day for other locations. For the exact dates for your area, go to www.vaisnavacalendar.com.

Because the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement comes in disciplic line from Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the calendar includes not only dates relevant to all followers of the Vedic tradition but also dates relating to Lord Caitanya's associates and prominent spiritual masters in His disciplic succession.

Month of Keśava

(November 5 – December 3)

NOVEMBER

14 – Utpannā Ekādaśī

Fasting from grains and beans.

30 – Mokṣadā Ekādaśī

Fasting from grains and beans. The anniversary of the day on which Lord Kṛṣṇa spoke the *Bhagavad-gītā*.

Month of Nārāyaṇa

(December 4 – January 2)

DECEMBER

7 – Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, the spiritual master of Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

13 – **Saphalā Ekādaśī**
Fasting from grains and beans.

19 – Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Locana Dāsa Ṭhākura, a great devotee of Kṛṣṇa known for his Bengali devotional songs.

21 – Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, one of the Six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana.

29 – **Putradā Ekādaśī**
Fasting from grains and beans.



Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta
Sarasvatī Ṭhākura

- (6) Dawkins, R. (2006), *The God Delusion* (Bantam Press, London).
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- (8) Bear, Adam and Bloom, Paul

(2016), “A simple task uncovers a postdictive illusion of choice.” *Psychological Science*, 27(6).

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