

SRIMAD BHAGAVATAM

CHAPTER 12, VOLUME 5

Jada Bharata's further instructions to Mahārāja Rahūgaṇa about the principles of higher knowledge.

PREFACE

King Rahūgaṇa was feeling guilty for having insulted a great personality like Jada Bharata who could not be recognized by the king for his greatness. Jada Bharata had explained to the king, in the last chapter, that a person who had conquered his mind in the real sense is really valorous, and not just a claim of the king about his courage.

This chapter is very profound and great principles are being conveyed by Jada Bharata in reply to the questions put forward by the king. He goes on to say that the material body is only the consequential result of the transformation of the material nature of the earth. The real self cannot be equated with this body. Hence the bodily concept of life leads a person towards involvement of material desires and thus a person gets dragged deeper and deeper into it.

Jada Bharata is quoting his own life as an example for this pitfall as he remembers his previous births. Since the concepts conveyed are very deep it requires not a reading but a study of what Jada Bharata had explained for a proper understanding.

Stanza 1

rahūgaṇa uvāca
namo namaḥ kāraṇa-vigrahāya
svarūpa-tucchīkr̥ta-vigrahāya
namo 'avadhūta dvija-bandhu-liṅga-
nigūḍha-nityānubhavāya tubhyam

(rahūgaṇa uvāca) King Rahūgaṇa said to Jada Bharata:

(kāraṇa-vigrahāya) You are the one who has assumed the body of that very Bhagavan (Ishwara), Who is the only and the entire cause for everything, intending to bless the entire world.

(tubhyam namaḥ) I pay my obeisances to you.

(tubhyam namaḥ) I again pay my obeisances to you, (svarūpa-tucchīkr̥ta-vigrahāya) who, because of the effulgence of the supreme bliss, which is your real form, does not pay any heed even to the slightest thinking about your physical body.

(avadhūta) Hey the great yogi! (tubhyam namaḥ) I again pay my obeisances to you (dvija-bandhu-liṅga-nigūḍha-nityānubhavāya) who is always experiencing the ever permanent bliss which is invisible to others under the veil of your simple look as an ordinary brahmin.

Note : King Rahūgaṇa realized that Jada Bharata was not an ordinary person and he could also understand that he had reached such an exalted position of knowledge. Therefore, the king equates Jada Bharata with none other than that Supreme Brahman.

Stanza 2

*jvarāmayārtasya yathāgadam̐ sat
nidāgha-dagdhasya yathā himāmbhaḥ
kudeha-mānāhi-vidaṣṭa-drṣṭeḥ
brahman vacas te 'mṛtam auśadham̐ me*

*(brahman) Hey the real form of that Supreme Brahman!
(me) For me, (kudeha-mānāhi-vidaṣṭa-drṣṭeḥ) whose vision is
polluted with the poison of the serpent of pride known as my
contemptible material body,
(te vacaḥ) your words of wisdom (auśadham̐ ca) are just like
the medicine (amṛtam) mixed with nectar,
(yathā) which is like (sat agadam̐) a sweet medicine
(jvarāmayārtasya) for a person who is afflicted with fever,
(yathā) or just like (himāmbhaḥ) the cool drink
(nidāgha-dagdhasya) for a thirsty person who is bearing the
intolerable summer heat.*

Note : The king confirms that he had the unnecessary pride about his position as an emperor. He also says that this pride, which is linked to the body alone, is just like the poison of a serpent. This poison can be relieved only by following the advices given to him by Jada Bharata.

Stanza 3

*tasmād bhavantaṁ mama saṁśayārthaṁ
prakṣyāmi paścād adhunā subodham
adhyātma-yoga-grathitaṁ tavoktam
ākhyāhi kautūhala-cetaso me*

*(tasmāt) Therefore, (because I am sure that I am getting the
right kind of medicine from you for my disease),*

*(prakṣyāmi) I shall ask (bhavantaṁ) you (mama saṁśayārthaṁ)
whatever my doubts are concerning this subject matter
(paścāt) later on.*

*(adhunā) However, as of now, (kautūhala-cetasah) I am very
eager in my heart to understand more clearly
(adhyātma-yoga-grathitaṁ) the most difficult subject matter of
self realization (tava) through your (uktam) words of wisdom,
(ākhyāhi) and I request you, therefore, to explain them more
in detail (me) to me (subodham) so that I can understand them
much better.*

Note : The king is expressing his keen interest to know from Jada Bharata the matters relating to self realization and the methods to attain that stage. He tells him that he shall seek clarification about his doubts later on. But, at present he requests Jada Bharata to explain these matters more clearly in such a way that the king can understand them. When the student is more eager to know about the subject matter, the teacher automatically takes great interest and explains in such a manner that the student grasps the subject in a better way. The student and teacher relationship is very important to get a grasp about the subject by the student and the keenness of the teacher to explain the concepts by his coming down to the level of the student. This two way relationship makes the dialogue between them more easier and the subject more interesting.

Stanza 4

*yad āha yogeśvara dr̥śyamānaṁ
kriyā-phalaṁ sad-vyavahāra-mūlam
na hy añjasā tattva-vimarśanāya
bhavān amuṣmin bhramate mano me*

(yogeśvara) Hey the greatest yogi!

This material nature (and the material world), (dr̥śyamānam) which is clearly visible (sad-vyavahāra-mūlam) and hence it is true as well that it is the cause for our transactions with it, (kriyā-phalam) and all the deeds and the consequences of such deeds (the fruitive endeavours),

(na hi) do not have any cognizance at all before us (tattva-vimarśanāya) when we are analysing the matters concerning selfrealization/self enquiry, (añjasā) as a matter of fact.

(bhavān āha) This is the statement you have made a little while ago.

(me manaḥ bhramate) I am little confused in my mind about this statement.

Note : The king is taking the discussion back to stanza 9, chapter 10, where Jada Bharata had used the expression to the king starting with the words “tvayoditam̐ vyaktam avipralabdham̐” - whatever you have stated are absolutely true and certainly not sarcastic. Jada Bharata had said there that he never felt the load of the palanquin on his body while carrying it. He had also said that the physical body has no target location to reach and there was no impact of the load on the body. He had also said that describing the physical body as “fat and stout” etc. have no relevance as those who have attained real knowledge never foist these attributes to the material body.

How come this cannot be taken cognizance of? Both the deeds and its consequences are experienced personally as well as they affect the person. It is here that the king is expressing his doubts.

Through the following six stanzas Jada Bharata is explaining about the bodily concept and its misconceptions. Whatever we transact in this world appear to be real, however they are not really true. To prove this point Jada Bharata is going to the extent of proving

that even the material body, which we call as “I” through this physical body, is not the ultimate truth.

Stanza 5

brāhmaṇa uvāca
ayaṁ jano nāma calan pṛthivyām
yaḥ pāṛthivaḥ pāṛthiva kasya hetoḥ
tasyāpi cāṅghryor adhi gulpha-jaṅghā-
jānūru-madhyora-śirodharāṁsāḥ

(*brāhmaṇa uvāca*) Jada Bharata continues his discourse to the king:

(*pāṛthiva*) Hey king!

(*yaḥ*) This body, which is nothing but the material elements rolled into a lump or a ball, (*pāṛthivaḥ*) which itself is the transformatory consequence (*calan*) of this moving earth, walks around (*pṛthivyām*) on this earth, (*kasya hetoḥ*) for reasons which cannot be guessed.

(*ayaṁ janaḥ*) This so called person is (*saḥ nāma*) just that only.

(*tasya api ca*) Even for that mass of body (which mass represent the body in the form of a human being is as a result of the effect of the transformation of the earth)

(*aṅghryor adhi*) above his feet,

(*gulpha-jaṅghā-jānūru-madhyora-śirodharāṁsāḥ*) there are divisions like ankle, knee, thigh, waist, chest region, neck, shoulder etc.

Note : Through the above and the ensuing five stanzas Jada Bharata puts forward his arguments to prove the point that even though the transactions with this material world appear to be real, they are not to be taken as true in the real sense, because the material body itself which is instrumental for such transactions is not real as one perceives.

He goes on to say that the material body (on which we foist our perception as “I”) itself has come about because of the transformations of the earth (the material elements). Why this body is moving around on this earth is beyond anyone’s logic. It is this body, which we call person (the one who has taken birth) which carries the load etc. There are very many other material elements like the stone etc., which do not move, are all dumb. The body is also just like that only. When we keep the hard stone like materials over those dumb materials, or if we kick or break those materials, they do not feel sadness or tiredness. In the same manner, the body which is dumb do not feel tired. Above its feet there are sub divisions like ankle, thigh, waist, chest region, neck, shoulder etc. All these subdivisions are just like the dumb materials. For some unknown reasons, because of the divine order, this body moves around, and nothing more than that. This is the only difference between the body and other dumb materials.

Since the body has only this much difference from the dumb materials, it is illogical to say that the body feels tired by carrying load.

Stanza 6

*aṁse ’dhi dārvī śibikā ca yasyāṁ
sauvīra-rājety apadeśa āste
yasmin bhavān rūḍha-nijābhimāno
rājāsmi sindhuṣy iti durmadāndhaḥ*

(śibikā ca) Even this palanquin (aṁse) which is placed on the shoulder (adhi dārvī) is made by the log of wood (a dumb material), (yasyāṁ) and upon that palanquin (āste) is seated

(sauṁvīra-rājah itī) the one who is being known as the King of Sauṁvīra (Rahūgaṇa), (apadeśaḥ) who can also be considered as the mass of earth. (yasmin) Upon this mass of earth, (bhavān) you are, (rūḁha-nijābhīmānaḥ) with your deep rooted pride and ego (itī) feel that (rājā asmi) “I am the emperor (sindhuṣu) of these places known as the kingdoms of Sindhu”, (durmadāndhaḥ) and thus gets blinded by your false perception.

Note : The shoulder is one of the transformatory material natures of the earth. Upon this transformed material, rests what is known as the palanquin made of wood which again is the transformed materials of the earth. Upon the palanquin sits the king, whose body is again the result of the transformatory materials of the earth, considering himself to be very great ruler with all his pride. Jada Bharata is making these statements to provoke the king to search analytically about what is the ultimate truth.

Stanza 7

*śocyān imāṁs tvam adhikaṣṭa-dīnān
viṣṭyā nigrhṇan niranugraho 'si
janasya goptāsmi vikatthamāno
na śobhase vṛddha-sabhāsu dhrṣṭaḥ*

(tvam) You are (na śobhase) not shining bright (vṛddha-sabhāsu) among the category of great personalities (vikatthamānaḥ) because you are praising all by yourself (dhrṣṭaḥ) with false prestige (asmi) that you are (goptā) the protector (janasya) of the people, (niranugraha asi) and in fact you are very merciless

(nigrhṇan) due to the fact that you have enlisted people by using force (viṣṭyā) for working for you without wages (imān) and such people (who are your palanquin bearers) (śocyān)

whose condition is pitiable (*adhikaṣṭa-dīnān*) are already facing difficulties in their lives.

Note : Jada Bharata tells the king that his action of enlisting people by force for his personal comfort and that too without giving them wages, let alone showing any compassion or mercy upon them, the king, because of his false prestige that he occupies the position of the king, makes him unfit to be called a ruler. He cannot be called the protector of the people as he was doing by his own actions the opposite of their protection. He has no right to give trouble to his own people and make them slaves. This disqualifies him to be categorized in the group of great personalities, though the king claims to be one such.

Stanza 8

*yadā kṣitāv eva carācarasya
vidāma niṣṭhām prabhavaṁ ca nityam
tan nāmato 'nyad vyavahāra-mūlaṁ
nirūpyatām sat-kriyānumeyam*

(*nityam*) As per the regulative principles of nature (*yadā*) when (*vidāma*) we have always seen (*carācarasya*) that all the moving and non moving material bodies (*prabhavaṁ*) generate from

(*niṣṭhām ca*) and degenerate (*kṣitau eva*) within this earth itself, (*tadā*) then what remains (*vyavahāra-mūlaṁ*) as a matter of transactional details (in between the birth of such material bodies and their dissolution into the earth) (*anyat*) is nothing

(*tan nāmataḥ*) other than their names (which names are again given to them by us) (*nirūpyatām*) and it is better to think and come to conclusion (*ānumeyam*) whether there is any thing out of such materials which remain factual (*sat-kriyā*) either in meaning or in deed.

Note : No one says that the parts of the body over his ankles, thighs etc. till the head, are in any way a burden/load on him. Thus, Jada Bharata justifies his statement that in the same manner, the load sitting over the shoulder in the form of the palanquin and the king, which are the resultant transformations of this earth, cannot be considered as a load.

Anything and everything which appear on this earth are all as a result of the transformational consequences of the nature. What remains after the disappearance of such materials within this earth is only their names and nothing more than that. There cannot be any other material out of them which can be considered as permanent or any deed which such materials can do independently.

When we set aside these different names and shapes attributed to these materials, there remains nothing which can be considered as true in the sense of the worldly terms. And, therefore, there is no one who is there as a load taker or anyone thereof who is grieved as a consequence of such carrying of the load.

Now Jada Bharata takes the arguments still further. Is the earth itself permanent and true? These are explained below.

Stanza 9

*evaṁ niruktaṁ kṣiti-śabda-vṛttam
asan nidhānāt paramāṇavo ye
avidyayā manasā kalpitās te
yeṣāṁ samūhena kṛto viśeṣaḥ*

(*kṣiti-śabda-vṛttam*) The material which we know as the earth through the word meaning of “kṣiti” or earth, (*asan nidhānāt*) gets dissolved into atomic particles which are not permanent.

(evaṁ) Because of this factor, (niruktaṁ) the earth itself can be interpreted as an illusion.

(ye paramāṇavaḥ) As far as the atomic particles are concerned, (te) they are all (kalpitāḥ) the result of (manasā) the imagination of the mind (avidyayā) because of our ignorance.

(viśeṣaḥ) The gigantic form of this earth (kṛtaḥ) is also classified (yeṣāṁ samūhena) as part and parcel of these atomic particles, and hence not permanent and true.

Note : Just as the material bodies, which are nothing but the consequential result of the transformation of the earth, are not permanent in nature, the earth is also not permanent, and therefore, not true in the real sense. (What remains permanent is only considered as the truth).

The earth gets dissolved into the atomic particles. Are these atomic particles true? Though these atomic particles are responsible for the transformations in the forms and shapes in the earth and the earth itself, these group of atomic particles are all illusory because of our mind seeing them to be true.

Because of this logic, any and all transformations of the earth are the effect of the perception of the mind alone and that is why they are called illusory.

In view of the above, even the atomic particles are not permanent as they are only responsible for the transformations taking place in the earth (and matters within this earth). These transformations happen in Nature (Prakṛti) and without this Nature (Prakṛti) there is no independent place for the atomic particles.

Stanza 10

evaṁ kṛśaṁ sthūlam aṅur bṛhad yad

*asac ca saj jīvam ajīvam anyat
dravya-svabhāvāśaya-kāla-karma-
nāmnājayāvehi kṛtaṁ dvitīyam*

*(evaṁ) In this manner, this world (even universe) (dvitīyam)
seen as a separate entity as distinct from oneself,
which appears (kṛśaṁ) as short, (sthūlam) long, (aṇuḥ)
small (br̥hat) and big, (sat) and has in it the cause (asat) and
effect factors, (jīvam) with life (ajīvam ca) and without life (
anyat yat) and such other factors,
(dravya-svabhāvāśaya-kāla-karma-nāmnā) is known with different
names like materials, characteristics, disposition of mind,
time factor, place for activities etc., etc.*

*(avehi) Therefore, you must understand (ājayā kṛtaṁ) that all
these are the consequential effect of the material nature
(Prakṛti) or the perception of the mind because of its
ignorance about these principles or what is known as the
Maya Shakti (the powers of the Supreme Almighty or the
Ultimate Truth) which is beyond the perception of the mind.*

Note : Whatever we see in this world are all the consequential
effect of the material nature (Prakṛti). The duality of perception
is because of the mind. The nature (Prakṛti) which generates so
many things before our eyes should not be misunderstood as the
reality.

This being so, then what is ever permanent or true in the real
sense? These are explained below.

Stanza 11

*jñānaṁ viśuddhaṁ paramārtham ekam
anantaraṁ tv abahir brahma satyam
pratyak praśāntaṁ bhagavac-chabda-saṁjñāṁ
yad vāsudevaṁ kavayo vadanti*

**(jñānam) That ever permanent knowledge (the Supreme Consciousness/the Brahman) alone,
(viśuddham) which is very pure,
(ekam) which is single without any other,
(anantaram tu abahiḥ) which has nothing as inside or outside,
(brahma) which is spread out incessantly everywhere,
(pratyak) which is intrinsic,
(praśāntam) which is not subject to any transformation or change at any time,
(satyam) remains for ever (paramārtham) as the only and ever permanent Truth.**

(bhagavac-chabda-saṁjñam) This Truth is also known as the “Bhagavan” because of the overwhelming characteristic of all the six qualities which are applicable only to Bhagavan namely "fortunate, blessed" and hence "illustrious, divine, venerable, holy", etc. (yat) and this Supreme Consciousness/the Ultimate Reality (vadanti) is also being called (kavayaḥ) by the intelligent persons (vāsudevam) as Vasudeva.

Note : The intelligent persons (the saint and sages), who have realized the absolute knowledge properly, describe that Ultimate Truth as Vasudeva because it is that Ultimate Truth which is the source for and of everything and as Bhagavan because it is all powerful and responsible for controlling everything.

As far the knowledge about the Supreme Reality/Supreme Consciousness is concerned, it is not possible to acquire it through the sense organs or by performing deeds. This is not a work knowledge. To emphasize this point the very stanza starts with the word “jñānam viśuddham” meaning that this knowledge is pure. Thereafter six specific specialities are also added (as detailed in the above stanza).

When we want to acquire knowledge through deeds and actions, because such deeds arise from the point of ignorance, it is not pure. It is manifold. It has what is called inside and outside concepts. It is divisible, has various aspects, and subject to changes.

This knowledge about that Supreme Reality/Ultimate Truth is not transacted as a bargain or give and take method.

In order to emphasize the point that the Truth “satyam” is not a subject to be treated as a transactional matter (as we carry out all other deeds and actions), the word “the only and ever permanent Truth” “paramārtham” has been added to the word Truth “satyam”.

This knowledge about the Ultimate Truth cannot be reached by any person if he does not serve the great personalities. Though other deeds might help purifying one’s heart, it is only the service to the great personalities and because of their blessings alone one can acquire this knowledge about the Ultimate Truth. This is what is being said by Jada Bharata through the following stanza.

Stanza 12

*rahūgaṇaitat tapasā na yāti
na cejyayā nirvapaṇād grhād vā
na cchandasā naiva jalāgni-sūryair
vinā mahat-pāda-rajo-’bhiṣekam*

*(rahūgaṇa) Hey Rahūgaṇa! (mahat-pāda-rajo-’bhiṣekam vinā)
Without one getting oneself smeared with the dust particles
coming from the feet of the great personalities (without doing
service to them and worshipping them)
(etat) this knowledge about the Ultimate Reality/Ultimate
Truth cannot be achieved,*

*(na yāti) not even (tapasā) by doing penances,
(na) not (iyyayā ca) by pursuing the deeds as prescribed by
the Vedas,*

*(na) not (nirvapaṇāt) by giving charity and free food,
(na) not (gṛhāt) by performing prescribed duties as a
householder,*

*(na) and not (chandasā vā) even by learning the Vedic
chants.*

*(na eva) It is also not possible to acquire this knowledge
(jalāgni-sūryaiḥ) by worshipping water, fire, sun and such
other deities.*

Note : Now, Jada Bharata is explaining as to how one can acquire this knowledge through the service and worship of the feet of the great knowledgeable personalities.

Stanza 13

*yatrottamaśloka-guṇānuvādaḥ
prastūyate grāmya-kathā-vighātaḥ
niṣevyamāṇo 'nudinam̐ mumukṣor
matim̐ satim̐ yacchati vāsudeve*

*(yatra) It is only in the presence of such exalted personalities,
(ottamaśloka-guṇānuvādaḥ) where there are discourses about the
glories of the Bhagavan (prastūyate) taking place (anudinam̐)
on day to day basis,*

*(grāmya-kathā-vighātaḥ) upon listening to which it is possible to
stop one's indulgence in the stories about the worldly
matters,*

*(niṣevyamāṇaḥ) and when the person does service to such
personalities with care and attention,*

*(mumukṣoḥ) to such a person who is seeking liberation,
(yacchati) this situation facilitates (satim̐) cleansing of heart
(matim̐) and deep devotion (vāsudeva) towards Sri Vasudeva.*

Note : In order to emphasize the point that the involvement in the worldly matters can bring about hurdles in the realization about the Ultimate Truth, now Jada Bharata is explaining through the following stanzas about his previous history as a real example. This is also, in a way, in reply to the question the king had asked him like “Who are you?” etc.

Stanza 14

*ahaṁ purā bharato nāma rājā
vimukta-dr̥ṣṭa-śruta-saṅga-bandhaḥ
ārādhanam bhagavata īhamāno
mṛgo 'bhavam mṛga-saṅgād dhatārthaḥ*

(ahaṁ purā) I was once (rājā) a king (bharataḥ nāmaḥ) named Bharata. (īhamānaḥ) I was doing (ārādhanam) worship of (bhagavataḥ) Bhagavan (vimukta-dr̥ṣṭa-śruta-saṅga-bandhaḥ) after I discarded all the material desires not only in this world but of also other worlds, (mṛga-saṅgāt) and because of my desire to get endearingly attached with a baby deer, (hatārthaḥ) I lost whatever was the purpose of my life, (mṛgaḥ abhavam) and was reborn as a deer.

Note : Jada Bharata is saying through the following stanza that even for a person whose purpose of life has been defeated, the continued worship of Bhagavan shall definitely uplift towards higher levels. He quotes his own life experience and example.

Stanza 15

*sā mām smṛtir mṛga-dehe 'pi vīra
kṛṣṇārcana-prabhavā no jahāti
atho ahaṁ jana-saṅgād asaṅgo
viśaṅkamāno 'vivṛtaś carāmi*

(vīra) Hey the great personality! (mṛga-dehe api) Even when I was reborn with the body of a deer, (kṛṣṇārcana-prabhavā) I continued to worship the Bhagavan, and as a result of such worship (mām no jahāti) I did not forget (sū smṛtiḥ) the memory about my past lives. (atho) Therefore, (ahaṁ) I am (viśaṅkamānaḥ) really afraid of (jana-saṅgāt) getting myself associated with people (carāmi) and thus going around (avivṛtaḥ) incognito (asaṅgaḥ) without having any desire in anything.

Stanza 16

*tasmān naro 'saṅga-susaṅga-jāta-
jñānāsinehaiva vivṛkṣa-mohaḥ
hariṁ tad-īhā-kathana-śrutābhyām
labdha-smṛtir yāty atipāram adhvanah*

(tasmāt) Therefore, (naraḥ) a person, (asaṅga-susaṅga-jāta-jñānāsina) because of his acquiring the sword of knowledge due to his association with the exalted personalities, who are not at all involved in the worldly matters, (vivṛkṣa-mohaḥ) is able to cut all his worldly desires (iha eva) right in this world itself.

(yāti) Through this he is able to reach (hariṁ) Sri Hari, (atipāram) Who is the other shore (adhvanah) of the great ocean of this worldly life, (tad-īhā-kathana-śrutābhyām) by listening to the pastimes of Sri Hari and by constant remembrance about His glories, (labdha-smṛtiḥ) retaining for ever the position of remaining in his own true form.

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***This concludes the twelfth chapter of the fifth volume of
Srimad Bhagavatam.***

Hari Om