

CHAPTER XXIV

THE BHĀGAVATA-PURĀṆA

The Bhāgavata-purāṇa.

THE *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* shares with the *Bhagavad-gītā* a unique position in the devotional literature of India. It cannot however claim the same antiquity: before the tenth century A.D. no references to it have been discovered by the present writer. Even Rāmānuja (born in A.D. 1017) had not mentioned its name or made any quotations from it. But by the time of Madhva the work had become famous: one of the principal works of Madhva (thirteenth century A.D.) is called the *Bhāgavata-tātparya*, in which he deals with the principal ideas of the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*, and lays emphasis on them so far as they support his views. The thoughts of the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* are loftily poetic, but the style is more difficult. The present writer is of opinion that it must have been composed by a Southerner, as it makes references to the Āḷvars, who have probably never been referred to by any writer in Northern or Upper India. The *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*, however, was so much appreciated that immediately commentaries were written upon it. Some of these commentaries are:

Amṛta-raṅginī, *Āmapriyā*, *Kṛṣṇa-padī*, *Caitanya-candrikā*, *Jaya-maṅgalā*, *Tattva-pradīpikā*, *Tātparya-candrikā*, *Tātparya-dīpikā*, *Bhagavallīlā-cintāmaṇi*, *Rasa-mañjarī*, *Sukapakṣīyā Prabodhinī*, a *ṭikā* by Janārdana Bhaṭṭa, a *ṭikā* by Narahari, *Prakāśa* by Śrīnivāsa, *Tattva-dīpikā* by Kalyāṇa Rāya, a *ṭikā* by Kṛṣṇa Bhaṭṭa, a *ṭikā* by Kaura Sādhu, a *ṭikā* by Gopāla Cakravartī, *Anvaya-bodhinī* by Cūdāmaṇi Cakravartī, *Bhāva-prakāśikā* by Narasimhācārya, a *ṭikā* by Yadupati, *Subodhinī* by Vallabhācārya, *Pada-ratnāvalī* by Vijayadhvaja-tīrtha, a *ṭikā* by Viṭṭhala Dīkṣita, *Sārārtha-darśinī* by Viśvanātha Cakravartī, a *ṭikā* by Viṣṇusvāmin, *Bhāgavata-candrikā* by Virarāghava, *Bhāvārtha-dīpikā* by Śivarāma, *Bhāvārtha-dīpikā* by Śrīdhara-svāmī, *Sneha-pūraṇī* by Keśavadāsa, a *ṭikā* by Śrīvāsācārya, a *ṭikā* by Satyābhinava-tīrtha, a *ṭikā* by Sudarśana Sūri, a *ṭikā* by Braja-bhūṣaṇa, *Bhāgavata-purāṇārka-prabhā* by Hari-bhānu, *Bhāgavata-purāṇa-prathama-śloka-ṭikā* by Jayarāma and

Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, *Pañcama-skandha-tīkā* by Vallabhācārya, *Subodhinī* by Bālakṛṣṇa Yati, *Vaiṣṇava-toṣiṇī* by Sanātana Gosvāmī, *Budharañjini* by Vāsudeva, *Nibandha-prakāśa* by Viṭṭhala Dīkṣita, *Anukramaṇikā* by Vallabhācārya, *Ekādaśa-skandha-tātparyā-candrikā* by Brahmānanda, *Anukramaṇikā* by Vopadeva. Many other works also have been written on the diverse subjects of the *Bhāgavata-purāna* and some have also summarized it. Some of these works are by Rāmānanda-tīrtha, Priyādāsa, Viśveśvara, Puruṣottama, Śrīnātha, Vṛndāvana Gosvāmī, Viṣṇu Purī and Sanātana.

Dharma.

The word *dharma*, ordinarily translated as “religion” or “virtue,” is used in very different senses in the different schools and religious traditions of Indian thought. It will be useful to deal with some of the more important of these notions before the reader is introduced to the notion of *dharma* as explained in the *Bhāgavata-purāna*. The *Mīmāṃsā-sūtra* begins with an enquiry regarding the nature of *dharma*, and defines it as that good which is determinable only by the Vedic commands.¹ According to Śabara’s and Kumārila’s interpretation, the good that is called *dharma* means the Vedic sacrifices that lead to good results—the attainment of Heaven and the like. The fact that the Vedic sacrifices may bring about desirable results of various kinds can neither be perceived by the senses nor inferred from other known data: it can be known only from the testimony of the Vedic commands and directions. *Dharma*, therefore, means both the good results attainable by the Vedic sacrifices and the sacrifices themselves, and, as such, it is determinable only by the Vedic injunctions. Desirable results which are attained by rational and prudent actions are not *dharma*: for by definition *dharma* means only those desirable results which are attainable by operations which are performed strictly in accordance with Vedic injunctions. But in the Vedas are described various kinds of sacrifices by the performance of which one may take revenge on his enemies by destroying them or causing grievous injuries of various kinds to them, but action causing injury to any fellow-being is undesirable, and such action cannot be *dharma*.

¹ *athāto dharma-jijñāsā. Mīmāṃsā-sūtra*, I. I. 1. 1.
codanā-lakṣaṇo’rtho dharmah. Ibid. I. 1. 2.

Dharma in this sense has nothing to do with God, or with ordinary or customary morality, or any kind of mystical or religious fervour as we understand it now. It simply means Vedic rituals and the good results that are supposed to follow from their performances; it has but little religious or moral application; and such a *dharma* can only be known through scriptural injunctions¹. It contains however just a little germ of the idea of non-injury, inasmuch as the performance of rituals for injuring others is not included within its content. *Dharma* also definitely rules out all kinds of emotion, mystic feeling, and exercise of intellect or thought of any description, and merely presupposes a strict loyalty to external scriptural commands; there is not the slightest trace here of any internal spiritual law, or rational will, or loyalty to God's will. The scriptural command however is categorically imperative in some cases, whereas in others it is only conditionally imperative, i.e. conditioned by one's desire for certain good things. Kumārila, in interpreting this idea, says that any substance (*dravya*), action (*kriyā*) or quality (*guṇa*) which may be utilized to produce happiness, by a particular kind of manipulation of them in accordance with Vedic commands, is called *dharma*². Though these substances, qualities etc. may be perceived by the senses yet the fact that their manipulation in a particular ritualistic manner will produce happiness for the per-

¹ *ya eva śreyas-karāḥ, sa eva dharmā-śabdena ucyate; katham avagamyatām; yo hi yāgam anutiṣṭhati, taṁ dhārmika itī samācaksate; yaśca yasya kartā sa tena vyapadiśyate; yathā pāvakaḥ, lāvaka itī. tena yaḥ puruṣaṁ niḥśreyasena saṁyunakti, sa dharmā-śabdena ucyate...ko'rthaḥ—yo niḥśreyasāya jyotiṣṭomādīḥ. ko'narthaḥ—yaḥ pratyavāyāyaḥ. Śābara-bhāṣya on Mīmāṃsā-sūtra, I. 1. 2.*

Prabhākara however gives a different interpretation of this rule, and suggests that it means that every mandate of the Vedas is always binding, and is called *dharma* even when by following it we may be led to actions which are injurious to other people:

tataḥ sarvasya vedārthasya kāryatvam arthatvam ca vidhīyata itī śyenādī-niyogānām api arthatvam syāt.

Śāstra-dīpikā, p. 17, Nirṇaya-sāgara Press, Bombay, 1915.

Kumārila, further interpreting it, says that an action (performed according to the Vedic commands) which produces happiness and does not immediately or remotely produce unhappiness is called *dharma*.

² *phalaṁ tāvad adharmo'sya śyenādeḥ sampradhāryate yadā yeneṣṭa-siddhiḥ syād amuṣṭhānānubandhīm tasya dharmatvam ucyeta tataḥ śyenādī-varjanam yadā tu codanā-gamyāḥ kāryākāryānapekṣayā dharmāḥ prīti-nimittam syāt tadā śyene'pi dharmatā yadā tvapṛīti-hetur yaḥ sāksād vyavahito'pi vā so'dharmaś codanātāḥ syāt tadā śyene'py adharmatā.*

Śloka-vārttika, on sūtra 2, śloka 270-273.

former can be known only by Vedic injunctions; and it is only with regard to this knowledge that the *dharma* is dependent on the Vedas¹. Doing an injury to one's enemy may immediately give one happiness, but by its nature it is bound to produce unhappiness in the future, since it is prohibited by the Vedic injunctions. [But injury to the life of animals in the performance of sacrifices does not produce any sin, and must be regarded as being included within *dharma*.]

On the other hand, there are actions performed with the motive of injuring one's enemies, which are not *commanded* by the Vedas, but the methods of whose performance are *described* in the Vedas only in the case of those who are actuated by such bad motives: these actions alone are called *adharma*. Thus not all injury to life is regarded as sinful, but only such as is prohibited by the Vedas: whereas those injuries that are recommended by the Vedas are not to be regarded as sin (*adharma*) but as virtue (*dharma*). By nature there are certain powers abiding in certain substances, actions or qualities which make them sinful or virtuous, but which are sinful and which can only be known by the dictates of the scriptures². *Dharma* and *adharma* are thus objective characters of things, actions, etc., the nature of which is only revealed by the scriptures. It has already been noted above that Prabhākara gave an entirely different meaning of *dharma*. With him *dharma* means the transcendental product (*apūrva*) of the performance of Vedic rituals which remains in existence long after the action is completed and produces the proper good and bad effects at the proper time³.

The *smṛti* literature is supposed to have the Vedas as its sources, and therefore it is to be regarded as authoritative; even when its contents cannot be traced in the Vedas it is inferred that such Vedic

¹ *dravya-kriyā-guṇādīnāṃ dharmatvaṃ sthāpayiṣyate*
teṣāṃ aindriyakatvē'pi na tādrūpyeṇa dharmatā
sreyah-sādhanatā hy eṣāṃ nityaṃ vedāt pratiyate
tādrūpyeṇa ca dharmatvaṃ tasmān nendriya-gocaraḥ.

Sloka-vārttika, sūtra 2. 13, 14.

² *dharmādharmaṃrthūbhir nityaṃ mrgyau vādhī-ṇṣedhakau*
kvacid asyā ṇṣiddhatvāc chaktiḥ śāstreṇa bodhitā...
vidyamānā hi kathyante śaktayo dravya-karmaṇāṃ
ta eva cedam karmeti śāstram evāmudhāvātā.

Ibid. 249, 251.

³ *na hi jyotiṣtomādi-yāgasyāpi dharmatvam asti, apūrvasya dharmatvā-*
bhyupagamāt. Śāstra-dīpikā, p. 33, Bombay, 1915.

texts must have existed¹. It is only when the *smṛti* is directly contradicted by the Vedas in any particular injunction or statement of fact that the former is to be regarded as invalid. The *smṛti* works are therefore generally regarded as a continuation of the Vedas, though as a matter of fact the *smṛti* works, written at different times at a later age, introduce many new concepts and many new ideals; in some of the *smṛtis*, however, the teachings of the *Purāṇas* and *Smṛtis* are regarded as possessing a lower status than those of the Vedas². On the relation of the *Smṛtis* and the Vedas there are at least two different views. The first view is that, if the *Smṛtis* come into conflict with the Vedas, then the *smṛti* texts should be so interpreted as to agree with the purport of the Vedic texts; and, if that is not possible, then the *smṛti* texts should be regarded as invalid. Others hold that the conflicting *smṛti* text should be regarded as invalid. Mitra Miśra, commenting on the above two views of the Śavara and Bhaṭṭa schools, says that, on the first view, it may be suspected that the author of the conflicting *smṛti* texts is not free from errors, and as such even those non-conflicting *smṛti* texts which cannot be traced in the Vedas may be doubted as erroneous. On the second view, however, *smṛti* is regarded as valid, since no one can guarantee that the non-conflicting texts which are not traceable to the Vedas are really non-existent in the Vedas. Even in the case of irreconcilably conflicting texts, the *smṛti* directions, though in conflict with the Vedic ones, may be regarded as optionally valid³. The Vedic idea of *dharma* excludes from its concept all that can be known to be beneficial, to the performer or to others, through experience or observation; it restricts itself wholly to those ritualistic actions, the good effects of which cannot be known by experience, but can only be known through Vedic commands⁴. Thus the digging of wells, etc., is directly known by experience to be of public good (*paropakārāya*) and therefore is not *dharma*. Thus nothing that is *dṛṣṭārtha*, i.e. no action, the

¹ *virodhe tvanapekṣyaṃ syād asati hyanumānam. Mīmāṃsā-sūtra*, 1. 3. 3.

² *ataḥ sa paramo dharmo yo vedād avagamyate avaraḥ sa tu vijñeyo yaḥ purāṇādiṣu smṛtaḥ tathā ca vaidiko dharmo mukhya utkr̥ṣṭavāt, smārtaḥ anukalpaḥ apakr̥ṣṭavāt. Vyāsa-smṛti* as quoted in *Vīramitrodaya-paribhāṣāprakāśa*, p. 29.

³ See *Vīramitrodaya*, Vol. 1, pp. 28, 29.

⁴ *tathā pratyupasthita-niyamānām ācārāṇāṃ dṛṣṭārthatvād eva prāmāṇyam... prapās tadāgāmi ca paropakārāya na dharmāya ity evā'vagamyate. Śabara-bhāṣya on Mīmāṃsā-sūtra*, 1. 3. 2.

beneficial effects of which may be known through experience, can be called *dharma*. The *Āṅgīrah smṛti* echoes this idea when it says that, excepting efforts for attaining self-knowledge, whatever one does out of his own personal desire or wish is like child's play and unnecessary¹.

Many of the important *Smṛtis* however seem to extend the limits of the concept of *dharma* much further than the pure Vedic commands. As Manu's work is based entirely on the purport of the Vedas, he is regarded as the greatest of all *smṛti* writers; whatever *smṛti* is in conflict with Manu's writings is invalid². Manu defines *dharma* as that which is always followed by the learned who are devoid of attachment and antipathy, and that to which the heart assents³. In another place Manu says that *dharma* is of four kinds; the observance of the Vedic injunctions, of the injunctions of *smṛti*, the following of the customary practices of good people, and the performance of such actions as may produce mental satisfaction (*ātmanas tuṣṭiḥ*) to the performer⁴. But the commentators are very unwilling to admit any such extension of the content and meaning of *dharma*. Thus Medhātithi (9th century), one of the oldest commentators, remarks that *dharma* as following the Vedic injunctions is beginningless; only the Vedic scholars can be said to know *dharma*, and it is impossible that there should be other sources from which the nature of *dharma* could be known. Other customs and habits and disciplines of life which pass as religious practices are introduced by ignorant persons of bad character (*mūrkha-duḥśīla-puruṣa-pravartitāḥ*); they remain in fashion for a time and then die out. Such religious practices are often adopted out of greed (*lobhān mantra-tantrādiṣu pravartate*)⁵. The wise and the good are

¹ *svābhīprāya-kṛtaṃ karma yatkiñcij jñāna-varjitaṃ
 kṛdā-karṁeva bālānāṃ tat-sarvaṃ niṣ-prayojanam.*
Viramitrodaya-paribhāṣāprakāśa, p. 11.

² *vedārthopani-bandhṛtvāt prādhānyam hi manoḥ smṛtam
 manvartha-vi-paritā tu yā smṛtiḥ sā na praśaṣyate.*
 Bṛhaspati quoted in *Viramitrodaya*, *ibid.* p. 27.

³ *vidvadbhīḥ sevitaḥ sadbhīr nityam adveṣa-rāgibhīḥ
 hṛdayenābhyanujñāto yo dharmas taṃ nibodhata.*
Manu-saṃhitā, II. 1.

⁴ *vedo'khilo dharmā-mūlaṃ smṛti-śīle ca tadvidāṃ
 ācāraś caiva sādḥūnām ātmanas tuṣṭir eva ca.* *Ibid.* II. 6.

⁵ Medhātithi says that such practices as those of besmearing the body with ashes, carrying human skulls, going about naked or wearing yellow robes, are adopted by worthless people as a means of living. *Ibid.* II. 1.

only those who know the injunctions of the Vedas, who carry them into practice out of reverence for the law, and who are not led astray into following non-Vedic practices out of greed or antipathy to others. And, though a man might be tempted in his mind to perform many actions for his sense-gratification, real contentment of the heart can come only through the performance of Vedic deeds¹. Consistently with his own mode of interpretation Medhātithi discards not only the Buddhists and the Jains as being outside the true Vedic *dharma*, but also the followers of Pañcarātra (i.e. the Bhāgavatas) and the Pāsupatas as well, who believed in the authority of the authors of these systems and in the greatness of particular gods of their own choice. He held that their teachings are directly contrary to the mandates of the Vedas: and as an illustration he points out that the Bhāgavatas considered all kinds of injury to living beings to be sinful, which directly contradicts the Vedic injunction to sacrifice animals at particular sacrifices. Injury to living beings is not in itself sinful: only such injury is sinful as is prohibited by the Vedic injunctions. So the customs and practices of all systems of religion which are not based on the teachings of the Vedas are to be discarded as not conforming to *dharma*. In interpreting the phrase *smṛti-śīle ca tad-vidām*, Medhātithi says that the word *śīla* (which is ordinarily translated as “character”) is to be taken here to mean that concentration which enables the mind to remember the right purports of the Vedic injunctions². By customary duties (*ācāra*) Medhātithi means only such duties as are currently practised by those who strictly follow the Vedic duties, but regarding which no Vedic or *smṛti* texts are available. He supposes that minor auspices and other rituals which are ordinarily

¹ In interpreting the meaning of the word *hṛdaya* (heart) in the phrase *hṛdayena abhyanuññāta* Medhātithi says that the word *hṛdaya* may mean “mind” (*manas, antar-hṛdaya-varttāni buddhyādi-tattvāni*); on this supposition he would hold that contentment of mind could only come through following the Vedic courses of duties. But, dissatisfied apparently with this meaning, he thinks that *hṛdaya* might also mean the memorized content of the Vedas (*hṛdayam vedah, sa hy adhito bhāvanā-rūpeṇa hṛdaya-sthito hṛdayam*). This seems to mean that a Vedic scholar is instinctively, as it were, led to actions which are virtuous, because in choosing his course of conduct he is unconsciously guided by his Vedic studies. A man may be prompted to action by his own inclination, by the example of great men, or by the commands of the Vedas; but in whichever way he may be so prompted, if his actions are to conform to *dharma*, they must ultimately conform to Vedic courses of duties.

² *samādhiḥ śīlam ucyate...yac cetaso'nya-viśaya-vyākṣepa-parihāreṇa śāstrārtha-nirūpaṇa-pravaṇatā tac chīlam ucyate.* Medhātithi's commentary, II. 6.

performed by the people of the Vedic circle have also ultimately originated from the Vedic injunctions. Similarly it is only the feeling of self-contentment of those persons who are habituated to work in accordance with the Vedas that can be regarded as indicating the path of *dharma*. It simply means that the instinctive inclination of the true adherents of the Vedas may be relied on as indicating that those actions to which their minds are inclined must be consistent with the Vedic injunctions, and must therefore conform to *dharma*. Other commentators however take a more liberal view of the meaning of the words *śīla*, *ātmanas tuṣṭi* and *hṛdayeṇa abhyanuṣṭāta*. Thus Govindarāja explains the last phrase as meaning “absence of doubt” (*antaḥ-karaṇa-cikitsā-śūnya*), and Nārāyaṇa goes so far as to say that, unless the heart approves of the action, it cannot be right: Rāmānanda says that, when there is any doubt regarding two conflicting texts, one should act in a way that satisfies his own mind. The word *śīla* has been interpreted as “character” (*vr̥tta* or *caritra*) by Rāmānanda in his *Manvarthacāndrikā* and as dissociation of attachment and antipathy by Govindarāja: Kullūka takes it according to Hārīta’s definition of *śīla* as involving the qualities of non-injury to others, absence of jealousy, mildness, friendliness, gratefulness, mercy, peace, etc. Self-satisfaction can in practice discern the nature of *dharma*, but only when there are no specified texts to determine it. Thus, though the other later commentators are slightly more liberal than Medhātithi, they all seem to interpret the slight concession that Manu had seemed to make to right character and self-contentment or conscience as constituent elements of *dharma*, more or less on Medhātithi’s line, as meaning nothing more than loyalty to scriptural injunctions.

It has been pointed out that Medhātithi definitely ruled out the Pañcarātra and the Pāsupata systems as heretical and therefore invalid for inculcating the nature of *dharma*. But in later times these too came to be regarded as Vedic schools and therefore their instructions also were regarded as so authoritative that they could not be challenged on rational grounds¹.

¹ Thus *Yogi-yājñavalkya* says: *Sāṃkhyaṃ yogaḥ pañca-rātraṃ vedāḥ pāsupataṃ tathā ati-pramāṇānyetāni hetubhir na virodhayet*, quoted in *Vīramitrodaya*, p. 20, but not found in the printed text, Bombay. This *Yogi-yājñavalkya* is a work on *yoga* and the other a work on *smṛti*, and it is the former text

It is however a relief to find that in some of the later *Smṛtis* the notion of *dharma* was extended to morality in general and to some of the cardinal virtues. Thus Bṛhaspati counts kindness (*dayā*, meaning a feeling of duty to save a friend or foe from troubles), patience (*kṣamā*, meaning fortitude in all kinds of difficulty), the qualities of appreciating others' virtues and absence of elation at others' faults (*anasūyā*), purity (*śauca*, meaning avoidance of vices, association with the good and strict adherence to one's caste duties), avoidance of vigorous asceticism (*sannyāsa*), performance of approved actions and avoidance of disapproved ones (*maṅgala*), regular charity even from small resources (*akārpaṇya*), contentment with what little one may have and want of jealousy at others' prosperity (*aspyhā*), as constituting the universal *dharma* for all¹. Viṣṇu counts patience (*kṣamā*), truthfulness for the good of all beings (*satya*), mind-control (*dama*), purity (*śauca* as defined above), making of gifts (*dāna*), sense-control (*indriya-samyama*), non-injury (*ahiṃsā*), proper attendance to teachers (*guru-śuśrūṣā*), pilgrimage, kindness (*dayā*), straightforwardness (*ārjava*), want of covetousness, adoration of gods and Brahmins, as constituting universal *dharma*. Devala considers purity (*śauca*), gifts (*dāna*), asceticism of the body (*tapas*), faith (*śraddhā*), attendance to teachers (*guru-sevā*), patience (*kṣamā*), mercifulness in the sense of pity for others' sufferings, showing friendliness as if these were one's own (*dayā*), acquirement of knowledge, Vedic or non-Vedic (*vijñāna*), mind-control and body-control (*vinaya*), truthfulness (*satya*), as constituting the totality of all *dharma*s (*dharma-samuccaya*). Yājñavalkya speaks of *ahiṃsā*, *satya*, *asteya* (avoidance of stealing), *śauca*, *indriya-nigraha* (sense-control), *dāna*, *dama*, *dayā*, and *kṣānti* as constituting universal *dharma* for all. The *Mahābhārata* counts truthfulness (*satya*), steadiness in one's caste duties (*tapas* as *sva-dharma-varitva*), purity (*śauca*), con-

that has been printed. The present writer has no knowledge whether the latter text has been published anywhere.

Viṣṇudharmottara also speaks of Pañcarātra and Pāsupata as means of enquiry into Brahman:

sāṃkhyam yogaḥ pañcarātram vedāḥ pāsupatam

tathā kṛtānta-pañcakam viddhi brahmaṇaḥ parimārgaṇe. Ibid. p. 22.

But Mitra Miśra on the same page distinguishes between Pāsupata as a Vedic *āgama* and as a non-Vedic *āgama*. Similarly there was a Vedic and non-Vedic Pañcarātra too. *Ibid. p. 23.*

¹ *Ibid. pp. 32-4.*

tentment, meaning sex-restriction to one's own wife and also cessation from sense-attractions (*viśaya-tyāga*), shame at the commission of evil deeds (*hrī*), patience as capacity in bearing hardships (*kṣamā*), evenness of mind (*ārjava*), philosophic knowledge of reality (*jñāna*), peace of mind (*śama* as *citta-praśāntatā*), desire to do good to others (*dayā*), meditation, meaning withdrawal of the mind from all sense objects (*dhyāna* as *nirviśaya*), as universal *dharmas*. Yājñavalkya says that the highest of all *dharmas* is self-knowledge through *yoga*.

These universal *dharmas* are to be distinguished from the special *dharmas* of the different castes, of the different stages of life (*āśrama*), or under different conditions. We have thus three stages in the development of the concept of *dharma*, i.e. *dharma* as the duty of following the Vedic injunctions, *dharma* as moral virtues of non-injury, truthfulness, self-control etc., *dharma* as self-knowledge through *yoga*.

But the *Bhāgavata* presents a new aspect of the notion of *dharma*. *Dharma* according to the *Bhāgavata* consists in the worship of God without any ulterior motive—a worship performed with a perfect sincerity of heart by men who are kindly disposed towards all, and who have freed themselves from all feelings of jealousy. This worship involves the knowledge of the absolute, as a natural consequence of the realization of the worshipfulness of the spirit, and naturally leads to supreme bliss¹. The passage under discussion does not directly refer to the worship of God as a characteristic of the definition of *dharma* as interpreted by Śrīdhara². The *dharma* consists of absolute sincerity—absolute cessation of the spirit from all motives, pretensions and extraneous associations of every description: and it is assumed that, when the spirit is freed from all such extraneous impurities, the natural condition of the spirit is its natural *dharma*. This *dharma* is therefore not a thing that is to be attained or achieved as an external acquirement, but it is man's own nature, which manifests itself as soon as the impurities are removed. The fundamental condition of *dharma* is not therefore something positive but negative, consisting of the dissociation (*projjhita*) of extraneous elements (*kitava*). For, as soon as the extraneous elements are wiped out, the spirit shows itself in its own

¹ *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*, I. 1. 2, interpreted according to Śrīdhara's exposition.

² *komalam īśvarārādhanā-lakṣaṇo dharmo nirūpyate*. Śrīdhara's comment on the above passage.