

REFERENCES

- [1] It is a custom among Sanskrit writers to start their works auspiciously by invoking, saluting, or praying to their Chosen Deities, for the unhindered completion of their compositions. Pursuant to this tradition, Śankarācārya quotes a verse from a Smṛti. Thereby he indirectly admits that Smṛtis like the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, *Bhagavadgītā*, etc. as well as Histories like the *Mahābhārata* are valid sources of spiritual knowledge.—Tr.

The name Nārāyana is derived by the combination of two words, *nāra* and *ayana*, of which the former means those that are associated with *nara* and the latter means their goal. *Nara* refers to all the bodies, both moving and non-moving, and *nāra* stands for the individual Ātman(s), the reflections of the supreme Consciousness which remain in association with those bodies. Being the substratum of Ātman(s), their Ordainer and Inner Controller, the supreme Being or supreme Consciousness is called Nārāyana. From the phenomenal point of view, the supreme Being (Brahman) is called Bhagavān, who is associated with Māyā and possessed of omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience.

The Unmanifest stands for Māyā, which is referred to in the *Gītā* as *aksara*, the immutable (15.16; Mu. 2.1.2). So, by saying, 'Nārāyana is higher than the Unmanifest', the text means that Nārāyana is none other than the transcendental Brahman.

The *Egg* refers to the principle of Hiranyagarbha, whose body is constituted by the five elements (namely earth, water, fire, air, and space, in their subtlest forms) that emerge from the Unmanifest.

'All these worlds,' and, so on refer to the body of Virāṭ, which is made up of the five elements in their gross, compounded forms.