

The Srimad Bhagavatam – Different from the Bhagavad-gita



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The Srimad Bhagavatam is generally mistaken to be the same as the Bhagavad-gita. The Bhagavad gita , which was spoken by Lord Krishna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra, is the most famous book in the entire universe because it is spoken by God Himself. One may go to any part of the world and one will find that everywhere the glories of the book are sung. Any serious seeker of the Absolute Truth will not be unaware of the exalted nature of the divine book.

Since the Bhagavad gita was spoken on the battlefield to induce Arjuna to fight, it is concise in nature and many higher transcendental exchanges of love are not discussed. These topics are discussed in detail in the Srimad Bhagavatam, which is considered the graduate study of the Bhagavad-gita. The Srimad Bhagavatam is one of the eighteen *puranas*, and is therefore, also known as the Bhagavata Purana. It is considered to be the essence of all the Vedas. The Vedas are compared to a desire tree because all kinds of knowledge that one may desire, are available in them. But Srimad Bhagavatam is the ripened fruit of that desire tree because it is giving the highest knowledge of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the reciprocation of loving exchanges between Him and His devotees.

It was spoken by Sukadeva Goswami, the son of Vyasadeva – the compiler of all the Vedic literature, to King Parikshit on the banks of the Ganges, when the latter was cursed to die after seven days. It is composed of eighteen thousand verses divided into 12 cantos. The Bhagavad gita, which consists of 700 verses, is considered the essence of all the Upanishads. These two books, namely the Bhagavad gita and the Bhagavatam are enough to gain a complete insight of the Supreme Absolute Truth.

Just as the Ganga is considered the best among the rivers, Krishna – the most exalted among all deities and Lord Shiva as the best among the devotees of Krishna, similarly the Bhagavatam is considered the best among all the Puranas. It is the natural commentary of the Vedanta Sutra since it is written by the author, Vyasadeva himself.

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, the founder acharya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, has done a great service by making the great epic available in the English language. The English translation with roman transliteration, word-to-word meanings and commentary is available in eighteen volumes at all the Hare Krishna Centers around the globe.

The Bhagavatam starts with a prayer to Lord Krishna, the son of Vasudeva because it is conclusively proved in it that Krishna is the original Personality of Godhead (*krshnas to bhagavan svayam*). The mayavadis are very afraid of the great epic because they cannot twist and interpret it to prove that God is impersonal. It is clearly stated at every step of the Bhagavatam that God has a Personality and Krishna is that attractive Personality of Godhead, who is original source of everything in the entire creation.

It concludes by proclaiming that the highest form of religion in the present age of Kali is to chant the holy name of Krishna, because by doing so, one gets liberation from the miseries of the material world, namely birth, old age, disease and death. One can attain the highest benefit of love of Godhead by chanting the holy name Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare/ Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare.