

ing to all the three times (past, present and future) which dawned on Vyāsa by the favour of Nārāyaṇa (*nārāyaṇaprasādena ... traikālikam idaṁ jñānam prādurbhūtam*) 12. 327. 22-23, 97; as *sātvata dharma* 12. 336. 78, (51), or simply as *dharma* 12. 336. 9 ff.

**B.** Description : The *ākhyāna* (or its parts) described as great (*mahat*) 12. 334. 11, very great (*sumahat*) 12. 331. 1; best (*uttama*) 12. 337. 16, unparalleled (*anuttama*) 12. 331. 4; difficult to be understood (*gahana*) 12. 321. 6; pious (*puṇyā*) 12. 335. 6; destroying all sins (*sarvapaṇaśanī*) 12. 331. 8; proceeding directly from the mouth of Nārāyaṇa (*nārāyaṇamukhodbhūta*) 12. 326. 101; originating from the Ṛṣi (Nārāyaṇa) and transmitted by tradition (*ārṣeyam pāramparyāgatam*) 12. 326. 113; related to the origin of Ṛṣi (Vyāsa from Nārāyaṇa) (*ārṣeyā*) 12. 337. 16; of great importance as a prayer to be muttered (*paramam japyam*) 12. 326. 123; based on the Nārāyaṇakathā (*nārāyaṇakathāśraya*) 12. 331. 4; churned out of the Bhārata-ākhyāna of a hundred thousand stanzas (as butter from curds etc.) 12. 331. 2-4; 12. 326. 115; essence of all the hundreds of religious *upākhyānas* heard by Yudhiṣṭhira from Bhīṣma 12. 326. 114.

**C.** Glorification and importance : Contains a *stotra* of Bhagavān (12. 326. 1) who is *viśva, nirguṇa* and *mahātman* 12. 325. 3; constitutes the praise of the high-souled excellent Puruṣa (*mahātmanah puruṣavarasya kīrtanam*) 12. 327. 107; and describes the greatness of the Paramātman (*mahātmyam paramātmanah*) 12. 334. 8; neither a visit to all the *āśramas* nor bathing in all the *tīrthas* yields as much fruit as does the Nārāyaṇakathā 12. 331. 7; it has the purifying effect on listeners

(*pāvitātmādyā samvṛtiḥ śrutvemeṁ āditah kathām* 12. 334. 4; *pāvitāḥ sma tvayā brahman puṇyāṁ kathayatā kathām* 12. 335. 6); it should not be narrated to one who is not devoted to Vāsudeva 12. 326. 113.

**D.** Nature and form : It is a glorification of Nārāyaṇa in different contexts and is in many places in the form of dialogues (1) between Nārāyaṇa and Nārada in the Badaryāśrama 12. 321. 23-43; 12. 331. 20-32; 12. 332. 1-23; 12. 333. 2-25 (11-25 speakers Nara and Nārāyaṇa); at the Śvetadvīpa 12. 326. 10-98; (2) Bhagavān and Arjuna *udhys.* 12. 328-330; (3) Vyāsa and Vaiśampāyana 12. 327. 20-98; 12. 337. 15-57; (4) Bhīṣma and Yudhiṣṭhira 12. 322. 13-52; 12. 323. 1-57; 12. 324. 1-39; 12. 326. 102-120; (5) Vaiśampāyana and Janamejaya 12. 327. 1-19; 99-101; 12. 336-337.

**E.** Etymologies : Arjuna requested Bhagavān to tell him etymologies of his names based on qualities and activities (*niruktaṁ guṇakarmajam* 12. 328. 3, 10; 12. 328. 6-7 (*yāni nāmāni te deva kīrtitāni maharṣi-bhiḥ / ... teṣāṁ niruktaṁ tvaito 'ham srotum icchāmi keśava*); also 12. 328. 1-4; Bhagavān then explained these etymologies to Arjuna 12. 328. 8-51; 12. 330. 1-31.

**F.** Narrations : Various portions of this *ākhyāna* are narrated (1) (*upaniṣadu*) by Nārāyaṇa himself to Nārada 12. 326. 100-101 (*idaṁ mahāpaniṣadam ... pañcarātrānuśabdītam // nārāyaṇamukhodbhūtam*); Nārada narrated it to Brahman 12. 326. 101-102, from whom it passed on successively to the Siddhas, Sūrya, 66000 ṛṣis, gods, *dvija* Asita manes (*puṣṭas*) (including Śaṁtanu); from Śaṁtanu it went to Bhīṣma and then to Yudhiṣṭhira 12. 326. 105-111; (2) (*dharma*) narrated by Nārāyaṇa himself to Nārada