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# Bhagavatha Vahini



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# Forward

This edition of the *Bhagavatha Vahini* improves on the previous edition in several ways. Some grammatical errors and typos have been corrected, and many sentences have been rewritten to smooth and clarify the presentation —of course, without disturbing the original meaning. Some long paragraphs have been split in two where it made sense and provided easier reading.

We have inserted subtitles in appropriate places in order to make the contents of this book more accessible to the reader. The subtitles appear in the table of contents.

Sanskrit words have been replaced by their English equivalents, to make the *Bhagavatha Vahini* more accessible to readers who do not know Sanskrit. However, most of the Sanskrit words have been retained (in parentheses, following their English replacements). Many Sanskrit words have no exact English equivalent, and retaining the Sanskrit keeps the edition accurate.

Several Sanskrit words have made their way into the English language and can be found in most dictionaries —e.g. *dharma*, *guru*, *yoga*, and *moksha*. These words have generally been used without translation, although their meanings appear in the glossary at the end of the book.

Besides definitions of Sanskrit words used in the *Bhagavatha Vahini*, the Glossary contains descriptions of the people and places mentioned.

This edition of *Bhagavatha Vahini* is done in .epub and .mobi formats so that it can be read easily on tablets such as the ipad, kindle, and nook. In these ebook versions, you generally get to choose the font and font size that best suit you.

Clicking on most names of people and places and Sanskrit words will take you to the glossary for a definition or explanation. Your reader should then have a back button to take you back to where you were reading.

With these changes, we hope that the revised *Bhagavatha Vahini* will be of great benefit to earnest seekers in the spiritual realm.

Convener

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## Dear Reader

This *Bhagavatha* is a dialogue between a person under the sentence of death and a great saint, who prepared him to meet it. We're all under a sentence of death; our hearts, like muffled drums, are beating funeral marches to the grave. Some reach it late, some soon. We require the counsel of a great saint to prepare us, too, for meeting Death and witness the horizon beyond.

The *Bhagavatha* is a Ganga, emerging from the Lord and merging in Him after a long journey through geographic descriptions, historic annals, philosophic disquisitions, hagiological narratives, epistemological enquiries, and after fertilising the vast valleys of human minds with the pure pellucid waters of Krishna episodes.

Bhagavan has come again as Sathya Sai for the revival of *dharma* among men. One important aspect of that revival is the reestablishment of reverence for the ancient spiritual texts, like the *Bible*, the *Koran*, the *Zend Avesta*, the *Tripitaka*, the *Vedas*, and the *Bhagavatha*. Reverence can spring at the present time only when the inner meanings of the statements and stories are explained in clear, simple, charming style, by the very Person who inspired the original scripture.

Here, in this book, we have His version of that voluminous textbook of devotion (*bhakti*) that Vyasa composed at the suggestion of the sage Narada, so that he could win peace and equanimity.

This is not just a book, dear reader. It is a balm, a key, a mantra —to soften, solve, and save, to loosen the bonds, to liberate from grief and pain, thirst, and tutelage.

Open it with humility, read it with diligence, revere it with devotion, observe its lessons with steadfastness, and reach the Goal that Vyasa reached and Narada attained, that Suka taught and Parikshith learned. What greater recompense can man hope for?

—N. Kasturi

Prasanthi Nilayam

Guru Pournami

18 July 1970