The discussion of the main topics of the *BG* and the Eleventh *Skandha* of the *SBP* made so far clearly indicate that both the *BG* and the *SBP* deal with them keeping the *Upanishads* in view. However, the *BG* being the earlier text, brings in its discussion some minor concepts, but in the *SBP* we find many more of such concepts either discussed very briefly or mentioned in a passing manner. The reasons behind this are the later date of the *SBP*, the scope of the philosophy being widened by then, as well as the elaborate *Purānic* style of the text. It will be interesting to have a bird's eye-view of these concepts. They are as follows:

1 - The Authority of the *Vedas*

The tradition that the *Vedas* are “revealed” and hence divine (i.e. *apauruṣeya*) is accepted by all the scholars and religious works. However, from time to time, their dogmatic authority have been defied. The *BG* and the *SBP* have to be looked at from this point of view.

The *BG*:

That the *BG* derives inspiration for its views on the authority of the *Vedas* from the *Upanishads* (cf. *plavāḥ hi ete adṛṭḍāḥ yajñarūpāḥ; na asti akṛtam kṛtena*) can never be doubted. It coins the term *puspitā vāni* for the voice of the *Vedas*. It emphatically says that whereas the intelligence of the *karmayogi* is one-pointed and decisive (*vyavasāyātmikā*), that of the follower of the *Vedas* is indecisive, diversified and endless (1). They lack discrimination and one-pointedness which are so essential for achieving the goal of *yoga*. They are full of desires for the worldly objects which keep one engrossed in the Vedic...
practices. Being such, they eloquently extol the practices which are laid down especially for obtaining the sensual worldly pleasures that bind one to the transmigratory cycle (2). This “flowery speech” constituting the three gunas of Prakṛti as their subject (3), destroys the right mental inclination of its follower and consequently, he cannot have the discriminative intelligence or vyavasāyātmikā buddhi even if he strives for samādhi (4). The BG states that to the one who treads the path of yoga, the Vedas serve the purpose of the water of a well during the monsoon when there is water all around due to their empirical nature (5). Therefore, Kṛṣṇa insists that Arjuna should rise beyond the three gunas and be established in the Self (6).

The BG does not doubt the pure nature of those who know the gist of the Vedas and perform yajñas accordingly, but it refuses to accept their aim, viz. heaven, where they enjoy all the celestial pleasures till the fruits of their rituals are exhausted; thereafter, they return to this transmigratory cycle. There is no release for these Karmakāṇḍis (7).

This discussion aims to point at the fact that the BG is merely against the dogmatic, rigid and orthodox views then existing tradition held about the Vedas—in it is not against the gist of the Vedas. This is proved by the fact that while narrating the vibhūtis, Kṛṣṇa says—Vedānāṁ Sāmavedo’smi (8), and Vedaṁ ca sarvaiḥ aham eva vedyaḥ (9). He also asserts that He Himself is the three Vedas (ṛc sāma yajuḥ eva ca) (9-A). Further, the Lord also proclaims that He knows the Vedas (vedavid eva ca aham) and is the “creator” of the Vedānta (vedāntakṛt) (9-B). Moreover, it actually dives into the depth of the innate spirit of the Vedic seers voiced in their hymns, presenting their exalted spiritual ideas in a practical colour. In other words, the rigid orthodoxy representing the Vedas according to the BG, is to be thrown to the rocks, not the vision of the seers.

Therefore, Kṛṣṇa discards the sakāma Karmakāṇḍa and yet picks up the idea of yajña in the germinated form from therein, adding the colour of Karma Yoga
to it. Thus, yajña becomes an activity that goes on simultaneously both at the microcosmic and macrocosmic levels: at the microcosmic plane the individual has to work by giving up the fruits of the actions performed by him, and at the macrocosmic level he has to repay the debt he owes to the society and Nature.

The spirit of “na mama” is to pervade his very being; the act of living thus is called yajñaśīṣṭāśana (10). To prove this point, Kṛṣṇa narrates the myth of the divine origin of yajña and the yajñaacakra (11).

Thus, the BG is a revolutionary book which picks up and amalgamates the best that the Vedic tradition has to offer with its concepts, with due respect to the ancient Vedic seers (12).

The ŚBP: -

The ŚBP accepts the divinity of the Vedas - they are Īśvarātma (13), they are the commandment of the Lord (nigamaḥ Īśvarasya) (14) and the eye of the Lord (Vedah caksuḥ tava Īśvara) (15). The ŚBP says that the Brahman like the spider bringing but the web from its heart through the mouth brings out the Vedas from His heart, out of the subtle nāda, through the mind and from the Īśvarākūṭa (16). These divine Vedas are couched in a wonderful language with several metres like Gāyatrī etc, are infinite and profound and have a vast varied vocabulary (17). As they are divine, God alone knows the real purport of all the Kāṇḍas of the Vedas; moreover, the subject-matter of each Kāṇḍa is God Himself. In brief, the ŚBP says that the function of the Vedas is twofold -

(a) the assertion of the universe as an expression of the Lord’s Māyā, and

(b) the upliftment of the jīva to God by the denial of this manifested world (18).

However, following the footsteps of the BG, the ŚBP also denounces the futility of the Karmakāṇḍa. The Karmakāṇḍa's proposition is that the worlds, Time,
the Vedas and the jīvas are eternal, as well as that the objects of enjoyment are also eternal. The author of the ŚBP logically nullifies this proposition and says that the worldly objects have the quality of duality, and therefore, the wise as well as the ignorant are both happy and unhappy. Consequently, the Karmakāṇḍa can never give pure happiness, freedom from the transmigratory cycle and from the evil tendencies and fruits of one's own actions (19).

Further, the ŚBP reiterates the BG's conviction of the return from the heavenly regions attained by yajña (20). In the typical Puranic style, the author of the ŚBP relates the celestial joys enjoyed by such a person (21). As soon as the effects of his meritorious actions are exhausted, the force of Time (not referred to in the BG) pushes him down to inferior regions (22) -

\[
Tāvat pramodate svarge yāvat puṇyam saṁapyate  \\
Kṣīnapuṇyāh patati arvāk anicchan kālavālaṁ
\]

Moreover, the ŚBP explicitly states that the Karmakāṇḍa is full of sweet promises (phalāsruti) not constituting man's ultimate good (śreyas). It urges a person to initiate efforts towards this, just as children are prompted to take medicines by the promise of sweets (23) -

\[
Phalāsrutih iyam niṇām na śreyah rocanam param  \\
Śreyovivakṣayā proktam yathā bhaiṣajyarocanam
\]

- this is in fact, also a clever defence of the Vedic tradition. Actually, this is the true purport of the Vedas, according to the ŚBP, and is known only to their true knowers. On the other hand, the perverted people (kubuddhayāḥ) take the kusumitā phalāsruti (cf. puspiritā vānī of the BG) only literally (24). These ignorant people are like the men blinded by darkness produced by the mist (niḥāracakṣusāḥ) who do not know God who resides within their very hearts (na te māṁ aṅga jānanti hṛdīstham) (25).

It is interesting to note that while the BG is absolutely revolutionary in its approach, the ŚBP tries to remain within the domain of the orthodox tradition.
as far as possible. Hence, the ŚBP permits the violence of the killing of the animals for the sake of yajña, in conformity with the corresponding Vedic passages (26). As such persons follow the Vedas (puṣpiṇā vānī - (28) they are dominated by the three guṇas of Prakṛti and do not worship the Lord who is beyond the guṇas (29). Therefore, they fail to achieve the goal of human life.

The author of the ŚBP accepts the tradition that the Vedas consist of three sections (tri-kāṇḍā-viṣayāḥ vedāḥ - i.e. karma, upāsanā and jñāna); but he says that their main purport are the Śabda-Brahman and Brahman-Ātman. He further defends the Vedas and their indirect language full of riddles (parokṣavaḍāḥ ṛṣayaḥ) through the mouth of the Lord Himself, “parokṣam mama ca priyam” i.e. “I favour this indirect way of expression” (30).

In the same strain, the Bhāgavatakāra negatively states that the senseless people do not pay heed to the teaching of the Veda (vedopagītam na śṛṇvate abudhāḥ) on the Supreme Lord who is the same as the Self, and interpret the Vedas as a means for the satisfaction of their desires (31). The Vedic injunctions on the worldly subjects are merely permissions (vyavasthitih) given to a person to regulate their desires and live righteously (32). These people, according to the ŚBP, are averse to Vāsudeva (Vāsudeva-parāṁmukhāḥ) and enter the dark regions (33). In fact, the ŚBP upholds the Vedic ritualism and the Vedas in their traditional spirit and also simultaneously applies the BG’s philosophy of niṣkāma karma to it. It asserts that if the Veda-ordained karmas are done (vedoktam eva kurvāṇah) with the spirit of non-attachment (niḥsahgah) and dedication (arpitām īśvare), it leads one to the naiṣkarmya-siddhi (34).

Thus, we see that the Vedas are held by the ŚBP as being totally divine and supreme in their teachings in conformity with it being nigama-kalpa-taroh galitam phalam (35). As a contrast to the BG which curtly curtails the orthodox supremacy by boldly bringing to the surface the gems of the rationalistic and philosophical truths of the Vedas, and thus breaking away from the tradition in this respect, here
we get a very strong impression that the author of the SBP tries to follow the orthodox tradition and synthesize the same with the Bhāgavata Dharma.

FOOT-NOTES

1 BG 2.41.  
2 BG 2.42-43.  
3 BG 2.45.  
4 BG 2.44.  
5 BG 2.46.  
6 BG 2.45.  
7 BG 9.20-21.  
8 BG 10.22.  
9 BG 15.15 c.  
9-A BG 9.17 d.  
10 BG 3.9-16.  
11 BG 3.10-12,14-15.  
12 BG 13.4 ; 15.15.  
13 SBP XI. 3.43.  
14 SBP XI. 20.1.  
15 SBP XI. 20.4.  
17 SBP XI. 31.40.  
18 SBP XI. 21.42-43.  
21 SBP XI. 10.24-25.  
23 SBP XI. 21.23 ; XI 3.44.  
25 SBP XI. 21.28.  
26 SBP XI. 21.29.  
27 SBP XI. 21.30.  
28 SBP XI. 21.34.  
29 SBP XI. 21.32.  
30 SBP XI. 21.35. Also cf. Parokṣapriyā iva hi devāḥ (Ait. Up. 1.3.14.)  
31 SBP XI. 5.10.  
32 SBP XI. 5.11-16.  
33 SBP XI. 5.18(d).  
34 SBP XI. 3.45.  
35 SBP I.
2 - MĀYĀ

Etymology :

The word māyā is etymologically explained as follows -

(1) It is derived from the root mā, meaning “to form”, “to build”, and therefore refers to the capacity to produce forms. Hence, Dr. Radhakrishnan notes that māyā is the creative power by which God fashions or creates the universe. This implies that “the forms, the events and the objects produced by māyā or the form-building power of God, i.e. the māyin, are only illusory” (1).

(2) Roth and Böthlinck derive the word from the root ma- to measure.

(3) Grassmann derives it from man “to think”.

(4) The comparative linguistic study of the western scholars reveals that māyā has parallel words in Greek, Latin, Balto-Slavic group of languages which have similar shades of meanings of imitation, deception, wonderful, sorcery, enchanting, error, and so on. The Avesta also has the word māyā meaning “skilful, clever”. Therefore, the basic meaning of māyā seems to be “to move, to change, to derive” (2).

Origin and development :

(1) RV - The word māyā occurs since the times of the RV. A look at all the references here reveals that the word has more than one connotations :

(a) supernatural power,
(b) cunning,
(c) mysterious will-power.
Sāyaṇa usually explains it as prajñā-mental power, kapāta - cunning, guile, deception. The word occurs more in connection with Indra who is often called māyin (he is said to assume various forms by māyā or mysterious power, e.g. Rūpam rūpam maghavā bobhavātī māyām kṛpavāhī sañvam pari śvām (RV. III. 53.8.). The word at times also occurs in reference with Agni, Mitrāvaruṇa, Maruts, Aśvins, Saraswati and Rbhus.

(2) AV - Here, māyā is related to black magic, and also to the cosmos.

(3) The Upaniṣads - In the Śvet. Up.4.10., māyā for the first time connotes “cosmic illusion” and not merely to an aspect of magic. This illusory nature of māyā is asserted by referring to the reality of the Ātman alone and the falsity of everything else (3).

Māyā in the BG:

The word māyā occurs 5 times in the BG directly, twice under the name of Prakṛti and once as Mahad Brahma. The first ever mention of the word occurs here during the exposition of the Avataravāda. Kṛṣṇa says that though He is unborn (ajaḥ), indestructible (avyayātmā) and the lord of beings (bhūtānām īśavaraḥ), He is born through His own māyā (sambhavāti ātmānātī māyāyā) by controlling this Prakṛti (prakṛtīm svām adhīṣṭhāya) (4). Thus, māyā is God’s power to assume forms He likes and is, therefore, divine.

The other references can be placed in the second category wherein Māyā denotes the force of creation of the empirical world. In fact, Kṛṣṇa says that Prakṛti or Mahad Brahma is the birth-place of all beings, for, in it does the Lord - the father (bijapradaḥ pitaḥ) - lay His seed for creation (Mama yoniḥ mahad brahma ātman garbham dadhāmi ahām) (5). Therefore, the three guṇas form the essence of māyā (guṇamayī nām māyā) (6). Moreover, this māyā which is identical with Prakṛti, forms the Lord’s urging force for creation again and again (7); thus under His supervision (māyā adhyakṣena), Māyā/Prakṛti creates (sūyate) these moveable
and immoveable worlds (8). This \textit{Māyā} forms a kind of veil covering the Lord from the empirical world \textit{(Na aham prakāśāḥ sarvasya yogamāyā- samāvṛtaḥ)} (9); this is the veil of ignorance and the people steeped in it find it difficult to cross it \textit{(mama māyā duratyayā)} (10). Further, at the end of His teachings and advice, the Lord says that \textit{Īśavara} resides in the heart of each being moving it to and fro like puppets, through this \textit{Māyā} \textit{(bhrāmayan sarvabhūtāni yantrārūḍhāni māyayā)} (11).

\textit{Kṛṣṇa} offers the only solution to cross over it - the surest way to free oneself from the clutches of the threefold \textit{Prakṛti} \textit{(māyāṃ etam tarantī te)} - namely, total self-surrender to Him \textit{(mām eva ye prapadyante)} (12).

Thus, \textit{Māyā} in the \textit{BG} implies the following --

(1) It is God's own power;
(2) He incarnates Himself through \textit{Māyā};
(3) It is identical with \textit{Prakṛti} and therefore is threefold;
(4) It is the creative urge of the Lord;
(5) The empirical world owes its existence to \textit{Māyā};
(6) It is, therefore, delusive and binds one to the transmigratory cycle;
(7) Only total surrender to the Lord can help one to overcome \textit{Māyā};
(8) \textit{Prakṛti} and \textit{Mahād Brahma} are synonymous with \textit{Māyā}.
(9) The mention of the tradition of the \textit{Karma Yoga} being destroyed by \textit{Kāla}/Time (12-A), though propounded by the Lord Himself, merely implies that all, even His own-teachings, are subject to the laws of Nature!

\textit{Māyā} in the \textit{ŚBP} :-

The \textit{ŚBP} takes up and retains all the above implications of the word \textit{Māyā} as denoted by the \textit{BG} to expound its doctrine of the \textit{Bhāgavata Dharma}, and adds a few more shades to it in a poetic and elaborate manner.
The ŚBPK accepts that Māyā is the divine power of the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu (parasya Viṣnoh Īśasya and āśvarṣyaṁ māyām) (13); He is, therefore, the Inner Controller of Māyā (māyāyā ātmanā durvibhāvyam) (14). Māyā is constituted of the three guṇas of sattva, rajas and tamas (trivarnā ; triguṇayā; guṇasya māyāmūlātvāt ; idam guṇamayaṁ viddhi trividham māyāyā kṛtam) (15). The ways of the operation of this Māyā are beyond thought and description (16).

Again, like the BG, Māyā represents the urge of creation in the ŚBK; but additionally, it is also responsible for the preservation and dissolution of the cosmos (Eṣā māyā bhagavatāḥ sarga-sthiti-antakāraṇī and Tvam māyāyā.....vyaktam srjasi avasi lumpasi) (17).

The ŚBK further says that when the creative cycle begins, the Sole Reality becomes twofold (dvidhā samabhavat) through Māyā (18). To this idea which is found in the BG, the ŚBK very explicitly adds one more factor - that of Kāla/Time which is found in the BG only twice (at 10.30 b. among the list of the Vibhūtis and at 11.32 ab. where Kālā is the terrifying aspect of the Viśvarūpa of the Lord). Here, in the ŚBK, Kālā is said to agitate the Lord’s threefold Māyā and thereby manifest the category Mahat (19) which is the universe in embryo (20); therefore, Māyā is projected in all the subsequent categories and the universe (21). According to Dr. Siddheshvara Bhattacharya, this “suggests that the creative process presupposes the existence of Time, which cannot, therefore, be considered as a part of the material creation. Time then, is a supra-phenomenal reality” (20-A). Thus, the whole world is under the spell of delusion due to Māyā (22). Therefore, logically the ŚBK holds that both knowledge and ignorance which cause liberation and bondage (vidyāvīdeye...mokṣabandhakā) are created by Māyā since the beginning of the creation (ādye māyāyā me vinirmite) (thus they are the aspects of powers of māyā only) as also all the experiences of duality through the sensual contacts (24). The jīva, consequently, who is really the master of the body, identifies itself with the body, gets attached to it and suffers from the miseries arising thereby (25). The ŚBK compares the experiences of these dualities to be
the projections of $Māyā$ like the illusory mental projections of the $jīva$ in a magic show (26) or in a dream, but not really in respect of the $Ātman$ (27) - this $Ātman$, being the Lord Himself remains unaffected by the $guṇas$ (28).

Realization of this truth, i.e. the Self/$Ātman$ being the witness and the master of all the body-mind experiences and also being beyond the three states of consciousness brought about by $Māyā$ (29) is beautifully and poetically referred to by the $Bhāgavatakāra$ in his characteristic style. He says that this identification of the experiences of the one consciousness/Self is as unstable and unreal as the ring of fire produced by a whirling fire-brand ($Ikṣetavibhramam idam manasaḥ vilāsam dṛṣṭam vināṣṭam atilolam - alātacakram$) (30).

As noted earlier, the dissolution or pralaya of the world also takes place due to $Māyā$. The Lord, in the form of $Kāla$/Time, withdraws this manifested empirical universe into the unmanifested state as the dissolution begins (....$Vyaktam ...... kālah...avyaktāya apakarṣati$) the entire process of the pralaya - from the destruction of the world till its submergence back into $Prakṛti$ - is due to the effect of $Māyā$ (31). In this context, $Kāla$ is considered to be an aspect of God when He assumes the destructive form. The $ŚBP$ looks upon $Kṛṣṇa$ as $Kālarūpa$ for the $Yādavas$ as He considered His own powerful clan as a burden on the earth (31-A).

This apparently paints a dismal picture to us, i.e. our very existence being dependent on the empirical world and therefore on $Māyā$, we cannot possibly escape from its clutches to know our true selves and God; in fact, the $ŚBP$ calls it $dustarā$ - difficult to be crossed, (the $BG$ calling it $durātayā$ at 7.14) (32). In the strain of the $BG$ (15.3 & 7.14) the $ŚBP$ also offers a solution to be released, to overcome $Māyā$, namely, by the sword of self-knowledge ($jñāna-asinā$) (33) which can be had only through the grace of God on His devotee. The $ŚBP$ holds out the promise that the devotee of $Nārāyaṇa$ who knows the $Bhāgavata$ Dharma, goes across the $Māyā$ which is otherwise $dustarā$ or difficult to cross ($nārāyaṇa-parāh māyām-aṇjaḥ tarati dustarāṁ i$) (34).
Further, like the BG, the ŚBP also exhibits the ingrained concept in its philosophy that the Lord assumes avatāra (parasya tanubhrt-jñāna) due to His māyā (māyā-viḍānbanam), just as an actor plays his role on the stage (yatha naṭasya) (35). This cosmic manifestation of the Lord, i.e. the creation of the world, entering into it and sporting therein, and dissolution of it within Himself - yet remaining beyond it simultaneously as the Supreme Principle, is possible through Māyā (36).

The above discussion about the ŚBP's views on Māyā adds the following points to the ones which it has already imbibed in itself from the BG:

(1) It is the divine power through which God creates, maintains and dissolves the world within Himself;

(2) Kāla/Time is beyond Māyā, as it agitates the latter into creativity and vice versa. Dr. Siddheshvara Bhattacharya's observation is noteworthy - “As an expression of Māyā”, Kāla “is a dynamism of God” (37-A) and “as a force driving the cosmic process to materialise into subtle and gross creations it can be described as God’s effort (ceṣṭā)” (37-B). Thus, Kāla has three aspects in the ŚBP -

(a) It is identical with God and
(b) His power on the metaphysical plane and
(c) It is the Time-sequence on the empirical plane (38).

(3) Specific mention of the experience of the miseries of the world due to Māyā (thus, having the negative aspect). Here the illustration of Vasudeva asking God to be born His son and not mokṣa, is noteworthy (39).

(4) As a complementary aspect, release from the same is also due to Māyā (becoming a positive force).
(5) Simultaneous existence of the Lord within the universe and yet being beyond it is possible due to Māyā; and

(6) Lastly, Śaṅkarācārya’s theory of Māyā as adhyāsa is not to be found in the ŚBP.

**FOOT-NOTES**

1 The Bhagavadgīta (Introduction) - by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan
2 Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics.
3 Ibid.
4 BG 4.6.
5 BG 14.3-4.
6 BG 7.14 b.
7 BG 9.8.
8 BG 7.14 ab.
9 BG 7.25.
10 BG 18.61.
11 BG 7.14 cd.
12 BG 18.61.
13 ŠBP XI. 3.1; 17.
14 ŠBP XI. 6.8 a.
15 ŠBP XI. 3.16; 6.8; 11.1; 28.7.
16 ŠBP XI. 24.3.
17 ŠBP XI. 3.16; 6.8.
18 ŠBP XI. 24.3.
19 ŠBP XI. 9.19; 7.47.
20 ŠBP XI. 6.16.
21 ŠBP XI. 3.4.
23 ŠBP XI. 11.3.
24 ŠBP XI. 6.17.
25 ŠBP XI. 2.37; 3.5; 7.16-17; 7.66.26 ŠBP XI. 7.7.
26 ŠBP XI. 11.2.
27 ŠBP XI. 6.17.
28 ŠBP XI. 13.34; 33.
29 ŠBP XI. 13.34; 33.
30 ŠBP XI. 13.34; 33.
31 ŠBP XI. 3.8-17.
31-A ŠBP XI. 1.11,24.
32 ŠBP XI. 3.17.
33 ŠBP XI. 29.39.
34 ŠBP XI. 3.33cd.
35 ŠBP XI. 31.11 ab.
36 ŠBP XI. 31.11 cd.
37-A ŠBP XI. 9.16.
38 The Philosophy of the Srimad Bhagavata - by Dr. Siddheshvara Bhattacharya (Vol.I).
39 ŠBP XI. 2.8.

***
As seen in the chapter on Jñāna Yoga, the ŚBP acknowledges the role of jñāna in gaining the spiritual illumination. Therefore, during its discussion of the subject as one of the three ways to salvation, it briefly refers to the means of attaining jñāna.

Jijnāsa or the desire to gain knowledge is the primary condition for attaining jñāna. Arjuna in the BG has the jijnāsa in the way of knowing the course of his duty or karma, and the result was the Lord’s teaching of Karma Yoga synthesized with jñāna and bhakti. In the ŚBP, Uddhava has the jijnāsa for truth or tattva (1). The Lord also says that one devoted to Him (matparaḥ) should perform karma that is conducive to renunciation (nivṛttam karma seveta), and if he is well set on the jijnāsa or enquiry for knowledge he need not then resort to the Vedic rituals (2).

Further, faith (braddhā), keenness to achieve the goal (tat-paratā) and control over the senses (sānyata-indriyatva) are the other means to attain knowledge and the ultimate peace thereafter (3). The BG also recommends that a jijnāsu must approach the persons who know the truth and gain that knowledge from them, with praṇipāta suggesting humility and modesty, paripraśna implying quest for truth with a total application of mind and intelligence, and sevā indicating love and honour for the preceptor (4).

More significant, however, are the means/methods of achieving this jñāna. The scriptures (Nigamaḥ) and tapas are other means to develop it; but pratyakṣa (experience/direct vision), aitihya (tradition) and anumāna (reasoning) are also the recognized means (5). At one place (6) the Lord advises the aspirant to sharpen his sword of knowledge (jñānasīna) by reasoning or anumāna to cut away the root of doubt and resort to the Lord. (In the BG 15.3, the World-tree is to be cut away by asaṅgaśāstra, but there is no reference to
reasoning). Elsewhere, the ŚBP states that sruti, pratyakṣa (perception), aitihya (tradition), and anumāna (inference) are the four ways of knowing truth (caturṣṭayam pramāṇeṣu) which helps one to renounce the world of multiplicity (7). It is further said that persons capable of knowing truth through investigation (tattva-vicākṣaṇāḥ) use discrimination through pratyakṣa and anumāna (8).

During the detailed explanation of the Jñāna Yoga, the Lord refers to the above 5 means to achieve jñāna. Of these, the study of the nigama and the tapas are well-established. Reasoning or anumāna is employed in reaching the conclusion that it is the Lord or the Supreme which exists unaffected amidst all the transformations of this changing universe, taking the example of the metal, gold, which remains the same as an element in all the modifications it undergoes. The Lord further explains to Uddhava how to use this anumāna or reasoning. He says that this Supreme Truth (satyam) which permeates or illumines the manas during all its three states (i.e. swapna, jñāt and susūpta), and also the three guṇas of Prakṛti that form the basis of these states of mind as well as the universe consisting of karma (cause), kārya (effect) and kartā (agent), continues to exist in the presence or the absence of the universe. Hence, the Lord announces His firm view (iti me maṇiṣā) that He is the only true causal and manifesting substance. In this way, anumāna helps one to derive at attaining jñāna. Elsewhere also (9), the use of anumāna or inference as a means of knowledge is exemplified: Buddhi and other instruments functioning to comprehend the Truth are in themselves lifeless; they appear to be conscious only through consciousness existing behind them which is the Ātman. The Lord supports this by narrating the dialogue between the Avadhūta and the king Yādu. The BG does not refer to this means at all.

As far as the tradition (aitihya) is concerned, it is noted in the earlier chapters of the thesis that the ŚBP always uses the phrase itihāsam purātanam to establish the antiquity of each concept it propagates. The BG (4.1-2), where the Lord establishes the antiquity of the Karma Yoga is the source of inspiration for the author of ŚBP in this respect.
Moreover, the BG uses the word pratyakṣa for Bhakti Yoga, i.e., this yoga can be comprehended through direct vision or experience (pratyakṣa-avagjnam) by oneself (10). Though no reference to such an idea is made in the XI Skandha itself, this is the underlying note in the nature of bhakti preached by the ŚBP (cf. Bhakti Yoga).

The ŚBP upholds in high esteem these means of knowledge even after the attainment of jñāna. Hence, it enjoins the aspirant to understand through pratyakṣa, anumāna, nīgama and one's own realization (ātma-sājivida) that the world which has a beginning and an end is false and knowing thus, he should remain absolutely detached from the world (11).

**FOOT-NOTES**

1. ŚBP XI. 7.13.
2. ŚBP XI. 10.4.
3. BG 4.39.
4. BG 4.34.
6. ŚBP XI. 13.33.
7. ŚBP XI. 19.17.
9. ŚBP XI. 7.23.
10. ŚBP XI. 9.2.
11. ŚBP XI. 28.9.

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**4 - THE CONCEPT OF CATURVYŪHA**

The concept of the Caturvyūha is characteristic to the Bhāgavata cult. It refers to the fourfold transcendental emanations of Viṣṇu. If the term avatāra can be broadly taken to refer to all the divine manifestations or epiphanies of the Lord, then this concept of Vyūha falls within its range, along with other concepts such as Līlāvatāras, Pūrṇavatāras etc. which take place due to cosmic situations. The concept of the Vyūhas, however, differs from these in so far as it is integral aspect of God as Viṣṇu and therefore, is inseparable from Him.
These four Vyūhas of Viṣṇu are:

1. Vāsudeva (i.e., Kṛṣṇa),
2. Saṅkarṣaṇa (i.e., Balarāma),
3. Pradyumna (i.e., son of Kṛṣṇa),
4. Aniruddha (i.e., son of Pradyumna).

These names of the family-group of Kṛṣṇa constituting the Vyūhas have a cosmic and psychological status; for, they are the uninvolved witnesses of the evolutionary categories and states of consciousness. Thus, on the one hand,

1. Vāsudeva relates to the Citta.
2. Saṅkarṣaṇa to the Ahaṅkāra.
3. Pradyumna to the Buddhi.
4. Aniruddha to the Manas.

On the other hand,

1. Vāsudeva refers to the turīya - avasthā or the supra-conscious state of the “empirical ego” or the “transcendental state” (1).
2. Saṅkarṣaṇa refers to the susuptī - avasthā or the deep sleep.
3. Pradyumna refers to the svapna - avasthā or the dream state.
4. Aniruddha refers to the jāgrat - avasthā or the waking state (2).

The ŚBP mentions that the Sāttvatas adore Viṣṇu in these four Vyūhas (3). In the Devastuti to Kṛṣṇa at Dwaraka, the gods mention that the Sāttvatas worship Viṣṇu in one or the other of the four Vyūhas to attain equality with Him in His vibhūtis (yah sāttvataih samavibhūtayaḥ ātmavadbhiḥ vyūhe arcitaḥ) (4). It is interesting to find that while describing the different forms and ways of worship of the Lord in the different yugas, the ŚBP mentions that in the Dwāpara Yuga, He is worshipped as Kṛṣṇa and is praised by the devotees among others—with the epithets Vāsudeva, Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha (all the four in one) (5).
However, despite the reference to the Vyūha doctrine occurring more than once, it “remains peripheral to the theology of the Bhāgavata” (6).

Once in the BG (7), a passing but not an explicit reference is made to this concept of Vyūhas (as the BG belongs to the Bhāgavata cult) as pūrve catvarah. The context is that the seven mahārṣis, the four Vyūhas and the Manus - who have been the origin of the entire living world - have their total inclinations in God as they are born out of His will (madbhavāḥ mānasā jātāḥ) (8). Lokamanya Tilak interprets pūrve catvarah in this light and substantiates his argument with the support from the MBh (9).

**FOOT-NOTES**

1. The Philosophy of the Srimad Bhagavata by Dr. Siddeshvara Bhattacharya.
3. SBP V. 23.1
4. SBP XI. 6.10 cd
5. SBP XI. 5.29.
7. BG 10.6
8. Ibid.

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5 - SATSAṆGA OR HOLY COMPANY

Ideas on the Sat-saṅga or the company of the holy men and its importance do not occur in the BG explicitly. However, we can superimpose the idea of a sādhu/ satpuruṣa/holy man upon the one whom the BG perceives as the ideal man to be followed like the jñānī/the holy brahmin/the royal sage/the karmayogī.
The ŚBP shows its original ideas on this topic. Being the supreme advocate of bhakti, it says that a bhakta can belong to any strata of society and have any calibre; therefore, his psychology has to be moulded and kept dipped in the flow of the nectar of bhakti constantly. This is easily done if the environment of the devotee is made favorable to the point in view; in this respect, sat-saṅga or the holy company plays a very significant role.

Kṛṣṇa asserts that as the satsaṅga erases one's worldly attachments (sarva-saṅga-apahāra), none of the recognized means of diverting the emotion of love from the worldly objects towards the Lord (such as svādhyāya, tapas, tyāga, iṣṭāpūrta etc.) helps the bhakta to bind him to God, to win Him over, as does the satsaṅga (na rodhayati mām yogaḥ... yathā avarūndhe satsaṅgaḥ) (1). People of all the social categories, divine and semi-divine beings, demons, sorcerers, birds, animals, siddhas, - in different ages and having rajas and tāmas qualities predominant in them, have attained God due to satsaṅga only (Satsaṅgena hi daiteyāḥ yātudhānāḥ...... bahavaḥ mat-padam prāptāḥ) (2). Further the Lord emphasizes his point by the illustration of Vṛtrā (Tvāṣṭra), Prahlāda, Vṛṣaparvā, Gajendra, the gopīs, Jáṭāyu, Jámbavān, the yajña-patms etc., who attained God due to satsaṅga (satsaṅgāt mām upāgataḥ), though they had not studied the Vedas, nor had they observed any austerities or disciplines of spiritual nature (3). The supreme illustration is that of the hundreds and thousands of the gopīs who attained Kṛṣṇa - the Parabrahman - by passionately loving Him with kānta-bhāva generated in them due to satsaṅga (4).

The Lord explains how this satsaṅga affects the mind of the devotee. The holy men are looked upon by the ŚBP as the emissaries of God Himself (bhagavataḥ sākṣat pārśadāṁ) (5). Unlike the divine gods who believe in rewarding their devotees in proportion to their offering the holy men are ever compassionate towards the suffering creatures (sādhaṇāḥ dinavatsalāḥ) (6); their minds resting in Viśnu, they always strive for the good of the living beings (bhūtānām...... sukhāya eva hi sādhūnām) (7); and hence, they wander in all the worlds to purify them.
Moreover, the satsanga helps the devotee to cross over Māyā (9).

The author of the ŚBP proves his point by resorting to the negative method too. He says that those who resort to the evil company (a-sat-saṅga) become the slaves of the senses, are filled with desires, greed and sexuality, make sacrifices of animals to ghosts etc. against the Vedic injunctions, and thereby they go to purgatory where they put up with punishments, and attain to the dark tāmas. Thereafter, they are born again and bear the fruits of evil actions they performed due to the evil company (10). Further, the author of the ŚBP looks upon the company of women and anything related to them also as evil, as it agitates the minds of even the men of discrimination (viduṣām ca api avidrabdhāḥ sadvargah kimu mādṛśāṁ) (11).

Thus, the ŚBP has clear and positive ideas on having the company of holy men to develop and increase bhakti for God.

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**FOOT-NOTES**

1. ŚBP XI. 12.1-2.9.  
2. ŚBP XI. 12.3-5.  
3. ŚBP XI. 12.5-7.  
5. ŚBP XI. 2.28 ab.  
6. ŚBP XI. 2.6 d.  
7. ŚBP XI. 2.5.  
8. ŚBP XI. 2.28 d.  
9. ŚBP XI. 3.23.  
10. ŚBP XI. 10.27-29.  
11. ŚBP XI. 26.22-24; 7.32-74; 8.84; 13-14 etc.
The general meanings of the words varṇa and āśrama are the “caste” and the “period of life”.

The word varṇa denoting “colour” was probably used to distinguish the Aryans from the non-Aryans. However, it was restricted more or less to the Aryan fold, and referred to the chief function or occupation performed by a person and hence, it appears to be functional. The first traces of this concept can be found in the RV. X.90.12 wherein the origin of this arrangement is bestowed divinity by saying that the brahmin originated from the face of the Virāț Puruṣa, the kṣatriya from his arms, the vaiśya from his thighs, and the śūdra from his feet. This origin of the classes related to the functional purposes, and probably was indicative of the obligation of each individual towards the society.

This idea has been picked up by the BG, but it is very striking that it makes a passing reference to it as: (Caturvarṇyam mayā sṛṣṭam guṇa-karma-vibhāgaśah | Tusya kariṭāram api mām viddhi akariṭāram avyayam |) (1). The author of the BG is not much concerned about these distinctions and divisions of the classes of the society from the philosophical point of view. However, the purpose in bringing in this subject is merely -

(1) to assert the flexibility of this functional division on the basis of the work one performs as a means of livelihood on the basis of the predominant guṇa (sattva, rajas or tamas) in his nature (guṇa-karma-vibhāgaśah), and not on the basis of one’s birth. Therefore, sāma, dama, tapas, etc. naturally belong to a brahmin in whom the predominant guṇa is that of sattva (2). (2) Further, as this division has the guṇas as its basis, it is believed to be divine in origin, i.e., it is created by God. Hence, the performance of one’s actions becomes obligatory in the form of svadharma, and if done detachedly, it relieves one of the bondage of karma (3); in fact, the BG’s advice is that man should worship (abhyarcya) God by dedicating to Him all his actions (svakarmanā) (4).
The word āśrama is derived from the root śram meaning “to exert oneself”. Thus, it refers to the place where austerities are performed as also the action of performing austerities. The latter meaning appears to be more applicable in the present context, i.e., the ancient Indian way of life. That it is never to be found in the RV at all is a striking point in the origin and development of this concept.

The earlier Upaniṣads like the Čāṇ. Up. (8.15), Bh. Up. (6.2.1.) etc. do refer to the stages of life of a student as brahmaṇarīna, grāhastra and the vānaprastha in various ways. The Śvet. Up. (6.21) and the Kaivalya Up. (24) use the word atyāśramin to mean “exalted above the (three) āśramas” for those who knew the Ātman; this word probably implied the sānyāsin of the later age. However, a clear-cut division of the same probably did not emerge till the Smṛti and the Dharma-Sūtra periods.

Gradually, the division of the life of an Arya into these 4 stages, each of 25 years came to be established. The MBh XII. 243-246 and the Manu-Smṛti II-VI clearly refer to this Āśrama-vyavasthā. However, although the BG is a part of the MBh, there is no direct reference to this vyavasthā, except during Arjuna’s viśāda and decision to prefer the life of begging for alms, instead of performing his duty as a kṣatrya to indulge in the warfare against adharma! (5). That the word sānyāsin refers not to the 4th stage of life in the BG, but to the one who has renounced the attachment for the fruit of the actions, is a noteworthy point here (6).

The SBP has references to the varṇa and the āśrama vyavasthā. The sage Camasa (7), in his sermon to the king Nimi refers to the worldly-minded people. Here, the author of the SBP strictly adheres to the tradition of the divine origin of the varṇa vyavasthā as given in the Puruṣa-sūkta and simultaneously assigns the
divinity to the āśrama vyavasthā. Further, he follows and expands the BG’s principle of the guṇas of Prakṛti as the basis of both the systems; thus, from the Supreme Person’s arms, thighs and feet originated alongwith the four āśramas (āśramaiḥ saha -- but there is no explicit statement of the exact part of the body form where a particular āśrama originated), the four varṇas of brahmins etc. on the basis of the guṇas (catvāraḥ jajñire varṇāḥ guṇāḥ viprādayāḥ prthak).

The ŚBP utilizes this concept for the justification of its central doctrine of bhakti just as the BG does for the Karma Yoga. The ŚBP says that those among these varṇas who do not adore God (na bhajanti) and despise Him (avajānanti), fall down from the high place of evolution they have attained (sthānāt bhraṣṭāḥ patanti adhaḥ). The ŚBP considers the cases of the women, the śūdras etc. who are not given any facilities to hear the Hari-kathā as well as Acyuta-kīrtana, deserve to be sympathised (anukampyāḥ) and uplifted by the royal sages like Nimi (bhavādṛśām). Here we find that whereas in the BG the Lord Himself has bestowed right to these classes of people to salvation, the ŚBP assigns this duty to the king (7). Another difference we find between the two texts is that while the vaiśyas are placed alongwith the pāpayonayah, women and the śūdras for this right in the BG (8), in the ŚBP they are given the status beside the vipras and the rājanyas so that all these three varṇas rightfully by birth and education (śrautena janmana) are qualified to adore the feet of Hari (Hareḥ prapṭāḥ pada-antikam). Those who despise and do not adore the Lord are called pseudo-scholars (pandita-māninaḥ) and hypocrites (dāmbhikāḥ) by the ŚBP.

To assert bhakti and the Bhāgavata Dharma as one’s svadharma, the ŚBP reiterates at length this subject in the form of Uddhava’s request to the Lord to repeat the exposition once again - i.e. the exposition which He had made in ancient times (abhihitam purvam) (9) -- thus bestowing divinity once again on both the systems. Granting Uddhava’s request, Kṛśna explains this Dharma acknowledging...
that the discussion is beneficial to the followers of the Varṇa-āśrama-dharmas (10). Again, elsewhere, it is called the Sanātana Dharma (11).

The ŚBP accepts the origin of the varṇas as given in the Puruṣa-sūkta (RV.X.90.12) and additionally - gives the origin of the āśramas thus: from the hips of the Lord sprang the grhasthāśrama, from the chest originated the vānaprasthāśrama, and from the head of the Lord originated the śānyāsāśrama (12). It is further said that those who were born of the higher regions of the body of the Lord, were endowed with nobler nature and those who originated from the lower parts were of lower nature (13); hence, for eg. śama, dama etc. qualities belong to a brahmin and so on as stated by the BG also (14). However, the author of the ŚBP exhibits his original and flexible thinking inspite of the acceptance of this vyavasthā in stating that whatever be the varṇa of a person, ahiṃsā, satyam, asteyam, akāma-akrodha-alobhata, and bhūta-priya-hita-ihā -- are the qualities that form dharma common to all the varṇas (dharmaḥ ayam sārva-varnikah) (15). In this context comes a reference to antevasāyin - probably implying people not belonging to the varṇāśrama discipline and hence not Hindu, whose characteristics according to the Bhāgavitakāra are aśauca, anṛta etc. (16).

The ŚBP also refers to the fact that in the Kṛta Yuga, Haṁsa was the only varṇa, as the people then were self-fulfilled, and perfect (kṛta-kṛtyāḥ) as well as sinless (mukta-kīṁsīrḥ) (17). In the Tretāyuga emerged the Vedas, the Yajña and the Virāṭ Puruṣa. Then came into existence the whole, complex structure of varṇāśrama discipline, (as probably the three guṇas prevailed over men) (18).

The ŚBP, however, considers the fact that this discipline need not be rigid:

(1) A dvija is one who has undergone all the 16 saṁskāras (19).

(2) In normal times, a person from the lower order should not take up the work of the higher order except for a kṣatriya; but in the times of difficulties anybody can follow any means of livelihood (20). In fact, one may even follow falsehood - but never the canine means (21).
It appears from the above discussion that the *varṇa* system referred to in these scriptures must have been different from what we call the caste system in the modern times, as it was based on the *guṇas* of a person, and not on the birth.

Hereafter, the ŠBP deals at length with the duties of a person in *Brahmacārī-avasthā* (22), the *Grhaṭa-srama* (23) and means of attaining *mokṣa* therein (24), the *Vanaprastha-srama* (25) and the *sannyāsin’s* way of life as well as the evils of premature *sannyāsa* (26).

The author of the ŠBP gives in brief the reason for upholding and following this *varṇāsrama dharma* (27). Although each *āśrama* constitutes particular virtues (for e.g. *sama*, *ahīṃśa* etc. are the virtues of a *brahma-cārin*), they may be practiced by one not belonging to that *āśrama* (e.g. even a *grhaṭa* can practice the virtues of *tapas*, universal affection etc.). Moreover, *bhakti* for the Lord is the common virtue of all the *varṇas* and *āśramas* (28). In other words, performance of *svadharma*, i.e. according to one’s own *varṇa* and *āśrama* in dedication to God, becomes an instrument to attain liberation (\(\text{Varṇāsramavatām dharmah eşaḥ} / \text{ācāralakṣaṇāḥ} / \text{Sah eva mad-bhaktiyutaḥ niḥśreyaskaraḥ paraḥ} 11\)) (29).

This proves that like the BG, the ŠBP is also flexible in its outlook at the social and structural aspects of human life.

The above discussion on the *varṇa* and *āśrama dharma* can be summed up thus: “The *dharmas*... are meant for the development of the human personality so that one may not only be a useful member of the society but also grow to the full stature of humanity. The assignment of the four castes to form part of the Cosmic Man symoblizes that caste-duties are aimed at the formation of the ideal man” (30).
FOOT-NOTES

1 BG 4.13; 18.41. 
2 BG 18.42-44. 
3 BG 18.47. 
4 BG 18.46. 
5 BG 2.5 b. 
6 BG 5.3; 6.14; 18.2. 
7 SBP XI. 5.2. 
8 SBP XIX. 6. 
9 SBP XI. 17.1-2. 
10 SBP XI. 17.9. 
11 SBP XI. 11.2, 5, 7. 
12 SBP XI. 17.13-14. 
13 SBP XI. 17.15. 
14 SBP XI. 17.16-19. 
15 SBP XI. 17.21. 
16 SBP XI. 17.20. 
17 SBP XI. 17.10-11. 
19 SBP VII. 11.13. 
20 SBP VII. 11.17. 
21 SBP VII. 11.18. Also - SBP XI. 17.47-49. 
22 SBP XI. 17.22-36. 
23 SBP XI. 17.37-46. 
24 SBP XI. 17.50-58. 
25 SBP XI. 18.1-11. 
26 SBP XI. 18.12-37; XI. 18.38-41. 
28 SBP XI. 18.42-43. 
29 SBP XI. 18.47. 
30 The Philosophy of the Srimad Bhagavata by Dr. Siddheshvara Bhattacharya.

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7 - NECESSITY OF THE GURU

The tradition of gaining knowledge - practical and spiritual - by sitting at the feet of the guru or the preceptor in his āśrama, was a well-established tradition since the Vedic times. The Maṇḍūka- sūktā (RV. VIII. 103) and the Taitt. Up. (1.11.1-4) are the glaring illustrations of this. The BG, though revolutionary and yet synthesizing in nature, follows this guru-śiṣya paramparā of the Vedic
times. In fact, the entire teaching of the BG is initiated by the Lord only after Arjuna - full of moha and kārpaṇya, and therefore unable to make the right choice of his course of action - surrenders at His feet as a sīṣya requesting the Lord to show him the correct guidance as the preceptor (sīṣyāḥ te aham śādhi mām ivām prapannam) does Kṛṣṇa, with an affectionate smile (prahasan iva) on His lips, begin His “Song” (1). In the Upaniṣadic tradition, the BG emphasizes that jñāna can be gained from those who have the true knowledge of things (tattvadarśināh jñānīnāh) through three conditions:

1. Praṇipāta - salutation, implying humility of the disciple and respect as well as trust in the guru/preceptor.
2. Pariprasna - inquiry, indicating the ever-seeking, alert and receptive mind of the disciple.
3. Sevā - service, suggesting the disciple’s perseverance, modesty and love for the guru/preceptor.

These conditions being fulfilled, the guru willingly parts with his knowledge to the disciple (2). In the context of the BG, we find that Arjuna possesses all these qualities and hence is worthy to receive the Brahma-Vidyā from the Lord - the Supreme Guru; who else could be a better friend, philosopher, and preceptor other than the Lord Himself? Hence, again, in the ancient Vedic tradition, the BG is termed as the Upaniṣad (cf. the colophon - Iti Śrīmad Bhagavadagītāśu Upaniṣatsu) - that which is learnt by sitting near the preceptor (upa+ni+sad). Further, the BG follows the same outlook of:

1. providing full liberty to the disciple to take his own decision about his course of action after a proper consideration (vimṛṣya etat aśeṣaṇa yathā icchasi tathā kuru) (3), and
2. confirming the proper comprehension of the imparted knowledge by asking questions about it to the disciple (4).

Thus, we find that the BG fully understands and yet suggests the necessity of the guru in spiritual life by briefly and at times indirectly referring to it.
other hand, the ŚBP, in its Purānic style, elaborates it, glorifies it and treats it from more than one viewpoint.

The very last message of Kṛṣṇa to Uddhava has its roots in the jñāṇāsā and praśna of Uddhava -- the sevaka/dāsa of the Lord (5). The ŚBP, in the manner of the BG, advises that one who is inquisitive to know the Bhāgavata Dharma for his own upliftment (jñāṇasūtṛ) should take resort to the guru (gurum prapadyeta). Here, whereas the BG merely refers to the qualities of the guru as being a jñānī and a tattvadarśin, the ŚBP provides more qualifications that a spiritual guru should possess. Such a guru, according to the ŚBP, must be of the excellent type (uttamam), tranquil (sāntam), expert in the scriptures (sadbde pare ca niṣṇātām) and who himself is tranquil due to the attainment of the Brahman (Brahmaṇi upśama-āśrayam) (i.e. one who is self-realized himself) (6). The disciple must look upon him as devatāmā (7) or ātma-daivata (8) i.e. the deity himself - indicating that the disciple must have intense love, regard, humility and faith in his preceptor.

This qualification and efficacy of the self-realization of the guru is corroborated by the Haṁsāvatāra of the Lord; it also is indicative of the absolute worthiness of the śiṣya. In this incident, Sanaka and others, the mānasa-puras of Brahmā himself, were the śiṣyas inquisitive of knowing the subtlest aspects of the highest strata of Yoga. As Brahmā being engaged in the creative activities was unable to satisfy the query of his sons, he called upon Viṣṇu - the Supreme Lord to perform the role of the guru. Viṣṇu instructed Sanaka and others about the Yoga in the form of the Swan/Haṁsa (10). As the swan symbolizes the quality of proper discrimination (cf. Śrīdhara’s comment in the Avataravāda), the incarnation too is suggestive of the need of the guru being self-realised and hence having an absolute sense of discrimination.

The ŚBP (11) lays down that the seeker of knowledge who serves such a guru, must have several virtues not referred to in the BG from this particular point of view. They are - humility, lack of quarrelsomeness, dexterity, lack of
attachments, having cordial feelings towards all, poise, keenness in his quest for Truth, freedom from jealousy, control in speech, awareness of the futility of the worldly relations and the immortality of the Self which is the only Truth.

The entire process which takes place from the moment of the surrender of such a disciple at the feet of the worthy guru, is aptly described by the ŚBप in poetic words: The guru is the lower fire-stick (acāryaḥ araniḥ ādyah), the disciple is the upper one (antevāṣi-uttara-araniḥ), the churning-stick placed in between them to produce fire is the instruction (tat-sandhānam pravacanam) — and the fire thus produced on churning is the blissful effulgence of knowledge arising from this instruction (vidyāsandhiḥ sukhavāhah) (12). The pure fire of spiritual enlightenment thus imparted to the jīṣya wipes away the bondages caused by the guṇas of Prakṛti (Vaiśāradī sattvisuddhah - buddih dhunoti māyām guṇa- samprasūṭām) and the guṇas themselves (guṇaḥ ca), just as the fire subsides after consuming the fuel (13).

A significant and an extremely novel regarding the necessity of not having one but several gurus is elaborately illustrated by the ŚBप through the story of the Avadhūta Dattatreya (14). The Avadhūta tells Yadu that he attained the status of the supreme ascetic or Paramahāṁsa by looking upon several objects and persons as gurus and learning many lessons from them (15). He justified this exceptional act of his (i.e., having 24 gurus) by stating that the subject of the supreme spiritual enlightenment and the Brahma being extremely profound as also its presentation being made variously by the seers, a single guru might prove inefficient to firmly and fully impart it (Na hi ekasmat guroḥ jñānam sushīram syāt supuṣkalam | Brahma - etad - acvātiyam vai gīyate bahudarśibhiḥ iḥ) (16). Hence, various aspects of the spiritual knowledge can be instructed by different gurus.

Here, we find that the ŚBप is catholic in as much as it accepts and presents an absolute novel idea not found in the Upaniṣads and the BG; in fact, the
logicality and the soundness of the above argument of the Avadhūta is highly impressive.

In this way, the ŚBP has picked up the idea of the necessity of having the guru for spiritual development from the Gītā wherein it is found in a subtle form and has elaborated it considerably.

**FOOT-NOTES**

1 BG 2.7-10. 2 BG 4.3-4.
3 BG 18.63 cd. 4 BG 18.72.
5 ŚBP XI. 7.3. 6 ŚBP XI. 3.21-22.
7 ŚBP XI. 2.37. 8 ŚBP XI. 3.22.
9 ŚBP XI. 10.5. 10 ŚBP XI. 9.16-21.
15 ŚBP XI. 7.32. 16 ŚBP XI. 9.31.

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8 - MUKTI

The word mukti and its other popular synonym mokṣa denote "salvation, liberation, release" from the bondage of any kind. The suffix kti is added to the root muc to form the word mukti in feminine gender. Amara gives the words kaivalya, nirvāṇa, śreyati nihśreyas and amṛta as the synonyms of mukti (1). We also come across other words having the same connotation: tāraṇa, uddhāra, trāṇa/paritrāṇa and raksā. The roots of these words are also used to denote the same shades of meaning as implied by the words themselves.
Mukti or mokṣa forms one of the four puruṣārthas or goals of human life according to the Indian tradition (namely - dharma, artha, kāma and mokṣa); rather, it is considered as the ultimate goal of human life, as it implies the realization of one's own identity with the Ultimate Reality. Further, it is the goal to be attained by the human being only because it is dear to the Lord (2) as being at the culmination of creation (3).

As the ancient Indian seers were very well aware of this status of man and his gift of intelligence, Hinduism has been a salvational religion, and the quest for mukti has reached the most deep and intense fervor found in the world religions since the dawn of the civilization.

Right since the beginning of this speculation till its culmination, mukti/mokṣa has always been viewed from two angles:

(1) negative - i.e., liberation from sin and evil, actions and their bonds, and from death and rebirth - in other words, release from the experiences of the empirical existence; and
(2) positive - i.e., as the final liberation or the attainment of the perfection, the highest goal, supreme peace, immortality or the supreme abode of God.

According to the BG, mukti can be attained through the Karma Yoga, Dhyāna Yoga and the Jñāna Yoga (3-A) by dedicating one's actions to God and performing them with the spirit of detachment. The words used to denote the state of liberation in the BG are brāhmi sthitāḥ (4), brahma-nirvāpa (5), nirvāṇaparamām śāntim (6), paramām gatīm (7), naiṣkarmya-siddhīm (8), etc. This state, the Lord says, abides in Him (matsaṣṭhām śāntim) (9), or when one attains Him (madbhāvam yāti) (10), or when one shall come to Him (māṁ eva eṣyasi) (11). As this state of liberation is the attainment of Brahman - (brahma sampadyate tadā), it implies that the Ātman becomes identical (eka) with Brahman (12). Moreover, though the later kinds of mukti do not find much scope in the BG, the concept almost always is
suggestive of the identity or *advaita* between the *Ātman* and the *Brahman/God*. This corresponds to the thought wherein the individual soul merges into the Ultimate Principle, after which there is no return (*anāvṛtti* or *punarjanma na vidyate*) (13).

The *BG* refers to this state in the *Vaisnava* terminology as *mama dhāma* or *mama pada*. In the thought that followed the *BG*, *Kṛṣṇa’s/Viṣṇu’s* abode is conceived as *Vaikunṭha*; however, in the *BG* we do not find a reference to this term at all. It *does*, in a passing way, refer to the *parama dhāma* as that which is not illuminated by the Sun, nor by the Moon nor by Fire, and on reaching which there is no return (14). This once again suggests that this *dhāma* labode is not a place - but the transcendental state of perfect identity with *Kṛṣṇa*.

The author of the *ŚBP*, like the *BG*, states the ways of attaining *mukti*-with a change: *Jñāna Yoga, Karma Yoga*, and *Bhakti Yoga* instead of *Dhyāna Yoga* in the *BG* (15).

The *ŚBP* follows the twofold concept of *mukti* - the purpose being to emphasize the practice of the *Bhagavata Dharma*. From the negative point of view, this doctrine helps its follower to release from the bondage of *māyā* and thus from the miseries of the empirical existence (16). In fact, the Lord bestows His very Self on the follower of this doctrine (17), thus uplifting him. One who wants to overcome these miseries is called *atitinṛṣuh* by the *ŚBP* (17-A). This concept is extended to such an extent that *Vasudeva* repents for having worshipped the Lord for getting an issue and not for liberation (implying probably that even the vision of God for such a desire is binding) (18). Positively speaking, *mukti* denotes final liberation, attainment of the Lord identification with Him. This state constitutes Supreme Peace or *parām śāntim* (19), on attaining which there is no superior gain to be had (*na ataḥ paramah labhah*) and transmigratory cycle vanishes (*naśyati saṁsṛtiḥ*) (20); it is the *paramā gatiḥ* (21), wherein one becomes one with the *Bṛahman* (*brahmabhūyāya kalpate*) (22). It is also called *matsthāna* - the state of
God, क्षेमा - Beatitude and is identical with paramam brahma (23). Such a person is called mumuksu by the SBP (23-A).

In this context are noteworthy the definitions of the terms mukti and bandhana:-

(a) Bandhah indriyaviksepaḥ i.e. bondage is the state in which the senses are outgoing, and

(b) Mokṣah esām ca sanyamaḥ i.e. their control is mokṣa (24).

This implies that mukti is within one’s own control. According to the SBP, the worship of the lotus-feet of the Lord bestows mokṣa easily (25).

In the SBP, we get many words and phrases denoting mukti/mokṣa (26), such as -- śreyā (27), niḥśreyasa (28), nirvāna (29), kaivalya (30), saṅsiddhi (31), param naiśkarmya (32), śreṣṭham padam (33), bhaktiyogam (labhate) (34), and brahmabhūyaya (kalpate) (35).

The SBP refers to the abode of Viṣṇu/Kṛṣṇa in general terms like matsthāna, svakam dhāma (36) and specifically it uses the term Vaikuṇṭha as Viṣṇu’s own and highest abode (paramam svadhāma (37). The term Vaikuṇṭha is once used as epithet of Viṣṇu also (38). Both these usages of the word Vaikuṇṭha are not to be found in the BG.

Another novel aspect of mukti - not to be found in the BG, and therefore a contribution of the SBP, is that of the 5 kinds of mukti (due to its doctrine requiring the belief in the saguna ṭīvra) (39). They are -

(1) Śālokya - abiding with Kṛṣṇa in His region.
(2) Sārsti - equality with Viṣṇu in glory (It seems that the BG (14.2) refers to this when it says - mama sādharmyam āgataḥ).
(3) Sāmipyā - being near Him.
(4) *Sarupya* - similarity with Him in form.

(5) *Ekatva* (or *sanyāja* or *sāmya*) being one with Him or merging into or uniting with Him. In this form of *mukti*, the individuality of the devotee is totally lost.

The *ŚBP* here glorifies the devotee who does not opt for either of these 5 types of *mukti* though offered to him; he only prefers service to the Lord instead.

Other two types of *mukti* are also referred to in the *ŚBP* (40) -

(6) *Sadyomukti* - the attainment of liberation at the moment of death (41).

(7) *Kramamukti* - the gradual attainment of salvation (42).

Noel Sheth, S.J., adds the following types of *mukti* to the above ones. They are:

(8) In the form of the service to the Lord (43).

(9) In the form of wealth, strength, good fortune, intelligence and skill (44).

(10) *Jīvana-mukti* - salvation while still living (45).

(11) Temporary visions of truth but cannot be called *mukti* in the literal sense of the term.

(12) *Mukti* delayed by *Kṛṣṇa* when Vasudeva asked for Him as his son and not liberation (46).

(13) *Mukti* through fear or *bhaya* as by *Śālva* (47).

(14) Through *dveṣa* or *vaira* as by *Jarāsandha* and *Śiśupāla* (48).

The last two varieties of *mukti* signify that the type of the emotion towards the Lord is subsidiary to the concentration of the mind and being on Him which actually elevates an individual to the highest level; they are, in other words, the negative way to cultivate an ardent devotion for the Supreme (49). In this way, the *ŚBP* lays open wider (than does the *BG*) the doors of *mukti* to each being with every possible emotion.
FOOT-NOTES

1. Amarakośa 1.5.6.
2. ŚBP XI. 7.22.
3. ŚBP XI. 9.28.
3-A. ŚBP XI. 13.25.
4. BG 2.72.
5. BG 2.72; 5.25.
6. BG 6.15.
7. BG 8.13.
8. BG 18.49.
9. BG 6.15.
10. BG 8.5.
11. BG 8.7.
13. BG 5.17; 8.16.
14. BG 15.6.
15. ŚBP XI. 20.6.
16. ŚBP XI. 2.9; 3.1-33 etc.
17-ŚBP XI. 13.17.
18. ŚBP XI. 2.8.
19. ŚBP XI. 2.43; 5.37.
20. ŚBP XI. 5.37.
21. ŚBP XI. 5.44.
22. ŚBP XI. 5.52.
23. ŚBP XI. 20.37.
24. ŚBP XI. 18.22 cd.
25. ŚBP XI. 2.8; 5.41.
26. ŚBP XI. 7.74; 11.1-3.
27. ŚBP XI. 7.20; 20.31.
28. ŚBP XI. 7.14; 18.47.
29. ŚBP XI. 9.12; 14.46.
30. ŚBP XI. 5.16.
31. ŚBP XI. 19.6.
32. ŚBP XI. 3.41,46.
33. ŚBP XI. 19.3.
34. ŚBP XI. 27.53.
35. ŚBP XI. 5.52.
36. ŚBP XI. 13.42; 31.6.
37. ŚBP XI. 6.27.
38. ŚBP XI. 2.29.
40. ŚBP XI. 2.32.
42. ŚBP XI. 18.9; Also cf. BG. 8.24-25.
43. ŚBP III. 29.13 cd.
44. ŚBP X. 41.42 cd.
45. ŚBP XI. 11.6-14; 25.36; 26.2; X. 81.30; 82.48; 86.38.
46. ŚBP XI. 2.9.
47. ŚBP XI. 15.15.
48. ŚBP XI. 5.48.
49. The Divinity of Krishna by Noel Sheth, S.J.

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Divine grace is a concept characteristic to the Bhakti-marga or the path of devotion. The term for it is prasāda/anugraha derived from pra+sad, meaning “to be favourable, gracious”, and therefore, secondarily means “peace of knowledge” (1). (Anugraha has a similar connotation).

The Vedic seer desparately seeks the favor and grace of the gods (cf. Bhakti Yoga) through hymns and sacrifices, but the concept of love and its corresponding concept of grace or prasāda of the gods appears only in the Upanishadic texts (2).

The BG picks up this idea of prasāda/anugraha/grace and puts it in the context of the saguna Isvara named here as Kṛṣṇa; for, like bhakti, grace also involves a mutual relationship between God and the bhakta upon whom God bestows His grace. The BG says that He showers His grace upon the jñāni bhakta who loves Him with absolute dedication and intense love; He also helps him to cross His māyā (3). In fact, His attitude towards all beings is equanimous; but love wins Him over and in return the Lord is especially gracious to such a devotee, and also bestows Buddhi Yoga upon him (4). This is the Lord’s promise to Arjuna as he is His friend and disciple (5). The Lord also takes care of the worldly dealings and livelihood of such a devotee as they dedicated his entire being to Him (Tēṣāṁ nityābhiyuktānāṁ yogakṣemaṁ vahāmi aham) (6). Further, the Lord immediately (na ciraḥ) extends His redeeming hand (teśāṁ aham samuddharta) to deliver his devout bhakta from he “ocean of the death-bound existence” (mṛtyu-saṁśāra - saṁgarat) and all obstacles (7), and attains the eternal and transcendental bode through His grace (mat prasūdāt) (8). Kṛṣṇa’s final advice to Arjuna is to surrender his total being solely to God, and He, in turn, will not only ensure the gain of immortality, but also salvation from all sins (aham tvāṁ sarvapāpebhyah mokṣayisyāmi). Kṛṣṇa then lovingly consoles him, saying, “Mā śucāḥ - Do not lament!” (9). The end of the BG picturises Arjuna wielding his Gāndīva, with his faint-heartedness vanished due to the grace of his steadfast (acyuta) friend who is God incarnate (10).
Another point is noteworthy here - Divine Grace is showered not only by God, but also by the holy men who themselves are the ardent devotees of God, thus, forming an instrument in elevating the spirituality of an individual. Sajijaya, in this sense, acknowledges his great fortune in directly seeing and hearing the "Divine Song" from the Lord to Arjuna through the grace of Vyāsa (11).

The ŚBP, being the exponent of the Bhakti Yoga, includes the concept of Divine Grace in its doctrine and bestows a great significance to it. It has imbibed the basic ideas from the BG into its doctrine, namely, God's grace is instrumental in spiritual enlightenment of an individual as well as carrying out his day-to-day needs. The ŚBP adds depth to it in the following ways:

1. God, out of compassion (anukampā) for His dāsa, bestows jñāna upon him (12);
2. Love and adoration for God awakens due to:
   a) good fortune (yadrcchā) (13), and
   b) as a result of some past good actions (kena api karmanā) (14).

Thus, Divine Grace becomes "the primary means to devotion" (15), and vairāgya towards the worldly life. Nārada, therefore, in his Bhakti-Sūtras, refers to this thus: Mukhyastu mahatākṛtyaiva bhagavatākṛpeläsādvā (16).

FOOT-NOTES

1 Love of God according to Śaiva Siddhānta - A Study in the Mysticism and Theology of Śaivism - by Dr. Mariasusai Dhavamony.
2 Kathopaniṣad 2.20 ; Śvet.Up. 3.20.
3 BG 7.17,14 ; 8.14 ; 12.20. 4 BG 9.29 ; 10.10.
5 BG 8.7. 6 BG 9.22.
7 BG 12.6-7 ; 18.58. 8 BG 18.56.
9 BG 18.62,66. 10 BG 18.73.
11 BG 18.75. 12 ŚBP XI. 29.38.
13 ŚBP XI. 20.8,11. 14 ŚBP XI. 8.37.
15 The Philosophy of the Srimad Bhagavata by Dr. Siddeshvara Bhattacharya.
16 Nārada-Bhakti-Sūtras. 38.

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The spirit of asceticism (saññyäsa) and renunciation (vairägya) has been fundamental to Hinduism and the Indian tradition since ancient times. The philosophical speculations of the Vedic seers reflect their quest for truth, which gradually developed in realizing this goal by renouncing the worldly life and searching the inner self in the forest. This culminated into the Jhāna-mārga and saññyäsa of the late Vedic age. Thus, saññyäsa came to mean dispassion for the world and longing for God, which in turn, required both inner and outer renunciation of worldly attachments; leading life thus, one attains mukti - the ultimate goal of human life.

The BG - with its need to cater to the background of its exposition - opened the doors of mukti to the entire society, particularly to the householders of all strata, by shifting the emphasis of the bāhya saññyäsa or the outer renunciation onto the antra-saññyäsa or the inner renunciation i.e. by giving up attachment, desire from the actions performed by a person (1). It defines saññyäsa: Sarva-karma-phala-tyāgam prāhuḥ tyāgam vicaksanah, i.e. the wise people call giving up of the desire from all the actions as tyāga or saññyäsa (2). It further highlights that the path of the so-called saññyäsa to be extremely difficult (3). On the other hand, the BG considers an equanimous person (referred as the sthitaprajña, the trigunālīta, the bhakta, the karmayogī) to be a nitya-saññyāsī (4).

Although the signs of such a person as referred to by the BG, correspond more or less to the Bhāgavatottama (cf. SBP XI. 2.45-55), which again are similar to those of the antra-saññyäsa of the Paramahamsa, there is absolutely no mention or indication to this type of a saññyāsī in the BG.

The Paramahamsopanisād - one of the minor Upaniṣads, gives the characteristics of the Paramahamsa - the highest order of the saññyāsin through the dialogue between Brahmā and Nārada (5). They are:
This is the path of Yoga which is extremely difficult to be followed, and hence, even a single exponent of the same is difficult to be found.

The mind of the Paramahaṁsa always abides in the Brahman, and the Brahman too “abides” in him.

He has renounced all his worldly attachments and activities, except for a kaupīna, danda and bare minimum clothes etc. for his maintenance.

His aims are: (a) the good of the people, (b) and above it is the achievement and constant experience of the identity with the Brahman.

He regards his own body as a corpse, as he has thoroughly destroyed the body-idea.

The awareness of the advaita forms his sandhyā ceremony and his possessions.

Being above all desires, he always remains steeped in this highest condition. All his outgoing tendencies subside.

He has no home, does not bother about clothes, wealth or any worldly object.

The ŚBP, in contrast to the BG, being the Pāramaḥamsī Saṁhitā, refers to and illustrates the incidents of the Paramahaṁsas like the Avadhūta Dattātreya more than once (cf. The Sermon of the Avadhūta). The ŚBP describes the Avadhūta in the following words -

Amitatejasah i.e. of blazing spiritual power (7).

Kaṁcit carantam i.e. wandering everywhere and vicārāmi mahīṁ etāṁ referring to his roaming all over the earth (8).
Akutobhayam i.e. being fearless (9).

Kavim referring to the signs of spiritual enlightenment (10).

Vidvān and yet carati bālavat, i.e. though wise, he roams about like a child (11).

Na kartā na ṭhase kiṅcit jaḍa-unmatta-piśacavat suggesting that the Avadhūta did not do anything, nor desired for anything; and he wandered somewhat like a senseless man or one inebriated or one possessed (12).

Na tapyase kāma-lōbha-dāvagninā and muktaḥ gaṅgā-āmbhāṣṭhaḥ iva dvīpah i.e. he is not burnt by the sexual craving and greed and thus is free like an elephant who has plunged into the waters of the Ganga (13).

Kevalātman i.e. he is solitary (14).

He lived on the mādhukari vṛtti, i.e. collecting small quantities of food from house to house - enough for the sustenance of the body (15).

He also resorted to the ajagari vṛtti. i.e. eating food that comes by chance irrespective of its quantity, taste, and thus lying quiet and inactive, yet alert (16).

Elsewhere also (17), the ŚBP describes the Paramahāṁsa’s way of life as one who is firmly established in jñāna and vairāgya or who has abandoned desire for mukti to attain bhakti, who has given up the external signs of his āśrama and moves about not adhering to any prescribed injunctions. Though wise, the Paramahāṁsa may sport like a child (budhah bālavat kṛṣṇet); though intelligent (kuśalaḥ) he may behave like a dull-witted person (jaḍavat); speak like an intoxicated person (unmattavat vādet), and though established in the Truth propounded by the Vedas (naigamah) he may wonder aimlessly like cattle (gocaryām caret).

This is the Paramahāṁsa’s way of life. Just as the swan has the quality of separating milk from water, the highest kind of the saṃyāsin is called Paramahāṁsa, as he can well distinguish between the ways and the goals of the world and jñāna, and then resorts to the latter (idam antaram jñātvā saḥ paramah āṁśah) (18). Śrīdhara notes - Yathā haṁsaḥ nīram kṣīram ca prthakkartum śaktāṁ evam aham
gunāscetaśceti dyotayitum hamsarūpeṇa gato'smīti (19). It must be noted that
the fourth stage of life i.e. saññyāsa, is considered as the vibhūti among the
dharmas (dharmāṇāmasmi saññyāsaḥ) (20).

This is in conformity with the ŚBP which is the Pāramahāṁśi Sāṁhitā,
advocating vairāgya also as a means to commune with God. However, this
outlook has a different colour in the BG as noted earlier due to its aim being
to urge Arjuna to engage himself in his duty.

FOOT-NOTES

1 BG 5.2-3; 6.2.
3 BG 5.6. ab.
5 Paramahāṁsopaniṣad 1-4.
7 ŚBP XI. 7.24 d.
9 ŚBP XI. 7.25 b.
11 ŚBP XI. 7.26 d.
13 ŚBP XI. 7.29.
15 ŚBP XI. 8.9.
17 ŚBP XI. 18.28-29.
19 Śrīdhara on the ŚBP XI. 13.19.
2 BG 18.2 cd.
4 BG 5.3.
6 Yati - pañcakam 16, 2 b, 5 c, 1 c.
8 ŚBP XI. 7.25 b; XI. 9.30 c.
10 ŚBP XI. 7.25 c.
12 ŚBP XI. 7.28 cd.
14 ŚBP XI. 7.30 d.
16 ŚBP XI. 8.2-4.
18 Paramahāṁsopaniṣad. 3.
20 ŚBP XI. 16.26 a.

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Sraddhā or faith is an important stepping-stone on the path of bhakti. It fundamentally refers to the emotional aspect of the human being which involves the right mental attitude to direct him towards the right goal.

The BG frequently uses the word śraddhā and also deals with its various kinds. It says that śraddhā is threefold on the basis of the three guṇas of Prakṛti as follows -

1. Sattvikī śraddhā - is the faith with which one worships the gods.
2. Rājasī śraddhā - is the faith with which one appeases the yaksas and rākṣasas, while with
3. Tamāsī śraddhā, a person tries to please the ghostly beings (1).

Correspondingly, one performs sattvika tapas without a desire for the fruits of his actions, and the other two varieties of austerities are devoid of pure śraddhā (2). Similar are their yajñas (3) and dāna (4). Further, a person worshipping different deities and attaining their corresponding fruits are also recognized by the BG (5). The BG firmly holds that of persons devoid of śraddhā (termed as aśraddhānaḥ) surely perish as they have doubt in everything (sāsrayātmā vinaśyati) (6); they do not attain God and return to the transmigratory cycle (nivartante mṛtyusaṁsāravartmani) (7).

The Lord proclaims that śraddhā or faith in God, alongwith concentration and dedication for Him is an essential quality of bhaktas - in fact, such bhaktas are held in the highest esteem by the Lord Himself (śraddhāyā parayā upetiḥ te me yuktatamāḥ maikāḥ) (8). They, with controlled senses, obtain knowledge about the Lord (śraddhāvān labhate jñānam) (9). Krṣna says that such bhaktas, having śraddhā in Him, are extremely dear to Him (śraddadhānāḥ matparāmāḥ bhaktāḥ te aśīva me priyāḥ) (10).
Another requirement for sraddhā is the absence of jealousy (anasūyā), which enables one to be free from the bondages to actions (11). In fact, the BG holds out the promise to one, endowed with sraddhā, that even if he has not attained perfection of Yogā at the time of death, he continues his efforts for achieving perfection in His successive births (12).

This concept of sraddhā as given in the BG is not only accepted by the SBP, but is further elevated by it. The author of the SBP states this through the sermon of the sage Kapila while elucidating the generation and growth of bhakti to his mother Devahūti. In the intimate company of the holy men, there are chantings of the accounts of the glorious deeds of the Lord, which form a veritable draught of ambrosia to their ears and hearts. By drinking this ambrosia one can soon develop, one after the other, faith (sraddhā), delight/attachment for God (rati) and loving devotion (bhakti) (Tat joṣāṇāṁ āśu apavarga-vartmani sraddhā ratiḥ bhaktiḥ anukramisyati) (13). Thus, sraddhā - faith with the right mental approach - is the first stage of the development of bhakti. In other words, it is “a state of mind in which the spiritual value is accepted as more fundamental than any other, and man shows readiness to sacrifice and strive for it. The very important part which the holy company (sādhu-saṅga) plays in generating faith is stressed all through the Text” (14). The Bhāgavata Dharma is prescribed for such men of faith.

Like the BG, the SBP also considers sraddhā (among others) as based on the three guṇas of Prakṛti (15). In fact, it considers sraddhā once as a sāttvika guṇa (15-A). Therefore, sraddhā is three fold --
(a) Sāttvika - is ādhyātmikā, i.e. the faith in spiritual life.
(b) Rājasī - is karma-sraddhā, i.e. faith in action.
(c) Tāmasī - is adharme yā sraddhā, i.e. faith in evil and unrighteous.

Here, the SBP goes one step further by saying that faith in the service of the Lord is beyond the guṇas (mat-sevāyām tu nirguṇā) (16). Once, the SBP considers sraddhā as a part of the 12 yamas and niyamas (17).
Further, one who is keen to attain the Lord by following the Bhāgavata Dharma is required by the ŚBP to have faith in the scriptures related to the Bhagavān (18). However, śraddhā/faith only in the image-worship of the Lord and not in His devotees is looked upon by the ŚBP itself as of the lowest category (19).

Towards the end of His sermon in the Eleventh Skandha, the Lord holds out His promise that whosoever shall observe with śraddhā the Dharma propounded by Him, shall overcome the invincible death (yāṁ śraddhayā ācaraṁ martyah mṛtyum jayati durjayam) (20), and will be free from the bondage of karma (karmabhiḥ na saḥ badhyate) (21). One who does not have such a faith is called dāmbhikāḥ - hypocrite as he has no real faith (22). This Dharma is not meant for a hypocrite (dāmbhikāḥ), an atheist (nāstikāḥ), a crafty person (sāṭhāḥ), one who does not like to hear it (aṣuṭrāṣuḥ) or to one who lacks devotion (abhaktāḥ). Lastly, the Lord proclaims that He is attainable only through unswerving faith and devotion (bhaktyā aham ekaya grahyāḥ śraddhayā) (23).

Thus, in both the BG and the ŚBP, śraddhā forms the first step towards the realization of God.

**FOOT-NOTES**

1 | BG 17.2.4.       | 2 | BG 17.17-19.       
3 | BG 17.11-13.     | 4 | BG 17.20-22.       
5 | BG 7.21-22.      | 6 | BG 4.40.           
7 | BG 9.3.          | 8 | BG 12.2. Also cf. BG 6.47. 
12 - MORALITY : PĀPA VS. PŪNYA

The most comprehansive term for morality in our tradition is dharma which includes various aspects of human life; however, here it is restricted only to righteousness and unrighteousness, i.e. pāpa and punya.

The teachings of the BG originate due to the concept of sin or pāpa. The viśāda springing from the sight of the relatives devastates Arjuna to whom the idea of killing them is a great sin (mahat pāpam) (1). But the question which Kṛṣṇa poses is: is the descision of Arjuna of not fighting - punya or a right action? In other words, klaibya or “faint-heartedness” of Arjuna is sin from Kṛṣṇa's point of view (2). Arjuna cannot straightaway answer it, and surrenders himself at the feet of the Lord to show him the right course of action. The BG itself therefore, is the Karma-Yoga-Śāstra. However, an eternal question remains to be answered, namely, why does a person perform unrighteous actions against his wishes at times - as if he is forced to act so (3)? Kṛṣṇa holds two qualities of man behind this, viz. desire (kāma) and anger (krodha) arising out of the quality of rajas (4). Anger arises out of the unfulfilled kāma/desire, and hence, the real enemy (vairiṇām) which is insatiable (mahāśānaḥ) and unrighteous (mahāpāpām) is kāma. It overpowers a person’s sense-organs, mind and intelligence and causes infatuation, steeping one in ignorance (5). Therefore, it is pāpmāḥ and has to be annihilated (6). Besides kāma/desire, krodha/anger and lobha/greed are called the three gates to the
destruction of the Ātman (7); one who has, therefore, given up kāma, can cultivate the highest order of morality. The vyavasāyātmikā buddhi developed by adhering to the yoga helps one to achieve this (8).

The ŚBP too being a spiritual text, aims at elevating an individual to the level where he merges into Kṛṣṇa. However, in its Purānic style, it deals with the aspect of morality separately. It defines "good as - adherence to actions that come within one's sphere of competency (svē svē adhikāre ya niṣṭhā saḥ guṇāḥ parikṛitiṇah), while the opposite of the same is "evil" (Here, one is reminded of svadharma and paradharmā of the BG) (9). The ŚBP acknowledges and accepts its indebtedness to the Smṛīs for the rules of moral conduct though it separates them under different categories (10). Of these, some rules are meant to help a person in his spiritual progress (dharmārtham) (11). The ŚBP at this stage, indulges in the discussion of purity and impurity at the external level, but it also points out that one has to rise beyond this physical aspect of dharma and become free by renunciation. (Yataḥ yataḥ nivarteta vimucyeta tataḥ tataḥ | Eṣaḥ dharmāḥ nṛṇāṁ kṣemaḥ soka-moha-bhayāpahāḥ) (12).

Following the BG (2.62-63), the ŚBP describes and denounces the sense-attachments that originate kāma and the subsequent vices leading to his total destruction; it compares such a person to a tree which is merely alive (vrksajīvikayā jīvan) and to the bellows that just breathe (bhastra iva yaḥ śvasan) - not knowing his own Self (na āimāṇam veda), thus falling back from his goal (sva-artha-vibhṛṣaḥ) (13). Therefore, winning over one's senses and desire, one must adhere to the Lord's paths (matpathāḥ) of the nature of Bhakti, Jñāna and Kriyā to avoid the trasmigratory cycle (14).

To put it briefly in the words of the BG, God is neutral towards the fate of a person: this implies that pāpa and punya are the consequences one's own doing (15).

Thus, pāpa and punya in both the texts are treated from the higher spiritual values, and not the outlook we are conversant with in the modern context. Hence, the feeling of repentance is not known to them.
FOOT-NOTES

1 BG 1.45.  2 BG 2.2-3.
3 BG 3.36.  4 BG 3.37.
5 BG 3.40-41.  6 BG 3.41,43.
7 BG 16.21.  8 BG 2.41 a.
9 ŚBP XI. 21.2. 10 ŚBP XI. 21.4.
11 Ibid. 12 ŚBP XI. 21.18.
15 BG 5.14-16.

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13 - CHANGEFUL CONDITIONS OF THE ĀTMAN

The Lord, in the BG, states that those who take refuge in Him (māṃ āśṛtya) and strive for release from old age and death (jarāmarāṇa - mokṣāya yatanti), know Brahman, the entire Adhyātma, Karma, Adhibhūta, Adhidaiva as well as Adhiyajña (5). These people know Him even at the time of death (1). As the question of Arjuna follow requesting the Lord to explain these terms, we get aphoristic explanations of the same (these terms are not mentioned again in the BG). Thus :-

(1) Brahman is the highest indestructible Principle (aksaram paramam) (2).
(2) Adhyātma is the essential nature (svabhāvaḥ) i.e. the Lord of the body, i.e. the Ātman residing in the body (3). Śaṅkarācārya in his bhāṣya on this verse, comments: Saḥ eva ātmānam deham adhikṛtya bhoktṛtvāna vartamānāḥ adhyātma śabdāna ucyate! (3).
(3) Karma is the creative force that brings beings into existence (bhūta - bhāva - udbhavakaraḥ) (4).
(4) **Adhibhūta** or the basis of all the created things is the mutable nature (kṣaro bhāvah) (5).

(5) **Adhidaiva** i.e. the basis of the divine elements is the Cosmic Spirit or Purusa (6).

(6) **Adhiyajña** is the Lord Himself who is the basis of all sacrifices in the body (aham eva atra dehe) (7).

Thus, these terms cover the Supreme Being, the process of the existence of the empirical world, constituting the changing conditions of the Ātman in relation to these.

The ŚBP too refers to this only once in the Skandha XI (8), using only three of them - (1) Adhyātma, (2) Adhidaiva, and (3) Adhibhūta (at XI. 28.7. they are suggested). The Bhāgavata-kāra speculates that the Lord's guṇamayaṁ māyā generates differences in the objects of the world and the way they are apprehended. These changeful conditions of effects (vaikārikaḥ) are threefold - i.e. Adhyātma, Adhidaiva and Adhibhūta. These are illustrated thus -

The sense-organ eye is Adhyātma, the forms and colours visible to it are the Adhibhūta, and the aspect of the Sun as the deity which governs the vision of the eye and yet shines independently in the sky is the Adhidaiva. Thus, the organ, object and the deity are simultaneously together and separate. The same is the case with all the senses. In all these cases, the Ātman is the Being in whose presence alone can these functions of the senses be effective, and yet it is above them.

Elsewhere, in the ŚBP (9) it is stated that the person who is Ādhyātmika, Ādhidāivika and Ādhibhautika, is the same; God/Ātman is the witness to this empirical world, and therefore, it is the Truth and the Support (āśrayah) of all this. Hence, these forms are possessed by the Ātman only during the creation, due to Māyā, and not in reality.

Thus, we find that both the BG and ŚBP consider these concepts as related to the Ātman to be very minor, because they do not belong to It in actuality.
FOOT-NOTES

1 BG 7.29-30. 2 BG 8.3 a.
3 BG 8.3 b. 4 BG 8.3 cd.
5 BG 8.34 a. 6 BG 8.34 b.
7 BG 8.4 cd. 8 ŠBP XI. 30-31.
9 ŠBP II. 10.8-9.

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14 - GUNAS OF PRAKR̥TI

The nature of Prakṛti being three fold viz., sāttvika, rājasika and tāmasika, is the unquestionably accepted hypothesis found in the BG (1) as well as the ŠBP (cf. Māyā in this chapter). The world created out of Prakṛti consists of these three gunas.

The knowledge of these gunas is considered by the Lord as liberating (2), for, they bind the indestructible Ātman to the body (3). The BG plunges into the description of these gunas -

(1) Sattva - is pure, causes illumination and health, and binds one to happiness and knowledge (4). It prevails by overpowering rajas and tamas (5). Hence the entire being of a person being illumined by knowledge indicates the dominance of sattva (6). On death, such a person attains the pure worlds of those who know the Highest Being (not the parama pada) (7).

(2) Rajas - is of the nature of passion (rāgātmakam), arising from desire (troṣṇā) and attachment (saṅga); hence, it binds the Ātman to the bondage of action (8). This mode arises by overpowering the sattva and tamas (9). Greed, activity, undertaking
of actions, restlessness and desire arise due to the dominance of rajas (10). On death, a person having rajas as the predominant quality is born among those attached to action (11).

(3) Tamas - is of the nature of ignorance and delusion, binding one by the qualities of negligence, indolence and sleep (12). It overpowers the modes of sattva and rajas (13). When tamas is dominant in a person, the qualities of non-illumination, inactivity, negligence and delusion arise (14). On death, a tāmasika person is reborn in the worlds of similar people (15).

However, the ideal man of the BG is beyond these guṇas (as they are all binding). When he sees that the world is the play of guṇas (guṇāḥ guṇeṣu vartante) (16) and knows that which is beyond them, merges into Brahman or Amṛta (17). He is called guṇāṉīta by the BG.

The SBP too, in the same strain, discusses the characteristics of guṇas (18). To each, however, it adds a long list of qualities in conformity with its elaborate Purānic style. Therefore, the following additions are significant -

- A firm pursuit of dharma, artha and kāma leading to earnestness, attachment and wealth is the result of the combination of the guṇas (guṇānāṁ sannikarṣaḥ) (19).
- Adherence to dharma by a householder (20).
- Adherence to svadharma and devotion to the Lord detachedly are of sattvika nature (21). Desire - oriented behaviour of this type is rājasīka (22) and tāmasīka if directed for the evil of others (23).
- Dominance of sattva marks the increase in the introspective strength represented by the deities (of the senses); the Asuras representing the activity dominate on the ascent of rajas, and on that of tamas, the delusive strength of the rākṣasas prevail (24).
- The jagṛt-avasthā is due to the quality of sattva, the svapna - avasthā is due to rajas, the suṣupta - avasthā is due to tamas, while in the turiya - avasthā, the Ātman transcends all the three guṇas (turiyam triṣu santatam) (25).
The sattvika way of life leads to heaven, the tamasika leads to the lowest worlds and the rajasika to the worlds in between i.e. such a person attains human form (26).

Food, śraddhā, dwellings, and all the other elements connected with man are also threefold as characterized by these three guṇas.

Liberation from these guṇas can be had only through service and surrender to the Lord (27).

It must be noted here that whereas the BG refers to the effects of the guṇas elaborately as they form the basis of all the aspects (good or evil) of human life (such as dāna, tapa, dhṛti etc.) (28), the ŠBP does not do so. Here, it appears that the BG is more vivid and thorough in its delineation of these fundamentals of life in this topic than the ŠBP.

FOOT-NOTES

1 BG 14.5. 2 BG 14.2.
3 BG 14.5 cd. 4 BG 14.6 ; 14.17 a.
5 BG 14.10 ab. 6 BG 14.11.
9 BG 14.10 c. 10 BG 14.12.
19 ŠBP XI. 25.7. 20 ŠBP XI. 25.8.
21 ŠBP XI. 25.10. 22 ŠBP XI. 25.11 ab.
23 ŠBP XI. 25.11 cd. 24 ŠBP XI. 25.19.
25 ŠBP XI. 25.20. 26 ŠBP XI. 25.21-22.
27 ŠBP XI. 25.27 d, 29 d, 33,35. 28 BG 18.7-39.
The vision of the Cosmic Form of the Lord is the culmination of the Bhakti Yoga of the BG (11.15-45). It is the divine form of the saguṇa Brahman (aisvaram rūpam) (1) manifesting “the true meaning of the cosmic process and destiny” (Kāla) (2), which is possible to be perceived known and entered into by the grace of Kṛṣṇa. Arjuna, by the grace of Kṛṣṇa, has a fleeting vision of this form, but the BG’s aim is to make him live by it, by transmuting his nature into the divinity. Hence the BG does not end here - it continues its quest for reality in the successive chapters.

In the Skandha XI of the SBP, however, we do not come across this Cosmic Form of Viṣṇu; here is given only the description of the Caturbhuja form of Viṣṇu to be meditated upon by the devotee (4).

FOOT-NOTES

1 BG 11.3.
2 Commentary on the 11.5. in The Bhagavatagītā by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan.
3 BG 11.54. 4 SBP XI. 14.36-42.

16 - CONCEPT OF THE WORLDS

The existence of worlds other than the earth is an accepted and a well-established belief of the Indians since the Rg Vedic times. The gods were divided into three groups on the basis of their places of habitat: (1) terrestrial, (2) of the intermediate region and (3) celestial. Another world also existed for the dead ancestors, namely, (4) the abode of Yama.
Gradually evolved the idea of the existence of more worlds (14 in the Puranic age). The BG makes a passing reference to the lokas/worlds, but it is not informative about them as its purpose is to emphasize the fulfilment of the purpose of human life of achieving moksha by performing svadharma. In this context, Krsna informs Arjuna that if one goes to either of the worlds till the Brahmaloka, he has to return to this world, i.e., he has to take rebirth (abrahamabhuvanat lokah punaravartinaḥ); but on attaining God, there is no rebirth (Mām upetya tu Kaunteya punarjanma na vidyate) (1). Moreover, the BG asserts that the holy (pūtapāpāḥ) karmakāṅḍins who desire for the heaven by worshipping the Lord also have to return to the earth (martyalokam viśānti) on the exhaustion of the merits (ksine punye) they had gathered thereby (2). The attainment of the gods by worshipping them, reaching the ancestors by their worship and the ghosts by appeasing them is also recognised by the BG (3). The mention of the sukla and kṛṣṇa gatis also point to the concept of the existence of more than one world found in the BG (4). Further, the Lord proclaims that although He has no action to perform nor anything to be gained in all the three worlds (trisu lokasu), yet He is engaged in activity to avoid their annihilation (utsīdeyuh ime lokāḥ) (5). Thus, it is clear that the concept of the existence of more than three worlds was well-established by the time of the BG.

However, unlike the BG, the SBP refers to all the lokas. As a Mahāpurāṇa, the topics of Creation and Dissolution fall under its realm of discussion; this subject is treated briefly even in the Skandha XI once (6).

In the process of evolution, the Sūrātmā arose out of the three guṇas of Prakṛti, from it came the Mahat, then the Ahāṅkāra, the Tanmātras, then the Indriyas and their presiding deities, and then the Manas. All these combined into the Cosmic Shell (anda) in which the Supreme Lord manifested Himself as Nārāyaṇa when it was floating in the Cosmic Waters. Out of His navel came the World-lotus (visvākhyam padmam) within which arose the self-born Brahmā (7). Endowed with rajas, by the Lord’s grace (madanugrahat) as well as through austerity, Brahmā created the threefold universe with their presiding deities (8).
(1) Bhūrloka -- i.e. the earth for the mortals,
(2) Bhuvarloka -- i.e. the atmosphere for the spirits,
(3) Svarloka -- i.e. heaven as the abode of the gods.
(4) Brahmā also created worlds superior to these three (tritayāt param) for the Siddhas (9).
(5) For the Asuras, Nāgas and other beings, he created worlds at the levels inferior from the earth (10).

Here, the SBP mentions that the earlier three worlds are obtained as the fruits of actions based on the three guṇas (11).
(6) Maharloka.
(7) Tapoloka.
(8) Satyaloka.

These are the higher and purer worlds, attained by one through yoga, tapas and sannyāsa (12).

(9) Madgati/Vaikunthal merging into God is possible through bhakti alone (13).

All the beings who have attained the worlds other than the last loka, are bound by their actions and being controlled by Kāla, they submerge and re-emerge in this threefold flow of the guṇas (14).

Elsewhere in the SBP (15), the sāttvika persons are said to attain Satyaloka or Brahma-loka through the gate of the Sun (Sūryadvaraṇa) ; at the end of the creative cycle they, alongwith Brahmā, merge into the Supreme Principle. The different nether worlds are also described at length (16). The 14 worlds are also referred to in the SBP (17). Of these, the 7 worlds - Atala, Vitala, Sutala, Tālātala, Mahātala, Rasātala and Pātāla form the lower parts of the body of the Cosmic Form of the Lord, and the Bhūrloka, Bhuvarloka, Svarloka, Maharloka, Janalo, Tapoloka, and Satyaloka form the upper parts of His body. However, the attainment of liberation being the chief aim of the SBP, especially in the Skandha XI, only casual reference to the above loka is found here in order to highlight that mokṣa can be achieved only through bhakti.
FOOT-NOTES

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17 - KŚETRA-KŚETRAJÑA

The terms kṣetra and kṣetrajña are peculiar to the Sāṁkhya philosophy as depicted in the BG (13). Though the ŠBP contains the methodical description of this system of thought mentioned all over the expanse of its text, this terminology never occurs.

(Detailed discussion of the topic - cf. Sāṁkhya Yoga).

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18 - CREATION AND DISSOLUTION

Sarga, Visarga and Saṁsthā are three of the twelve subjects to be dealt by a Mahāpurāṇa. Therefore, they are elaborately and frequently related by the ŠBP, not only in the XI Skandha (1), but in the other Skandhas as well (2) (cf. Sāṁkhya Yoga).
However, in the *BG* the discussion of these topics is very brief and concise, forming merely a point to be comprehended as a part of *jñāna*/*knowledge*. Therefore, most of the details dealt with by the *ŚBP* are not taken into consideration by the *BG*. The author of the *BG* refers only the following points:

1. The empirical world and the Consciousness are the *aparā* and *para prakṛtis* which combine to give rise to the living beings (3).
2. The Lord is the origin (*prabhavaḥ*) and destroyer (*pralayaḥ*) of this whole world (4).
3. As He is the Eternal Seed of all the beings (5), nothing exists apart from Him (6).
4. Creation takes place when the day of *Brahmā* dawns, and the world is dissolved at the beginning of the night of *Brahmā* (7).
5. God is the cause of the creation, preservation and dissolution of the cosmos (8).

Again, the purpose behind this discussion being brief in *BG* is to urge *Arjuna* into the performance of his own duty with the full knowledge about God and the world; whereas the aim of the *ŚBP* is the renunciation of the world. Therefore the discussion is reiterated to highlight the falsity of the *sāṁsāra*.

**FOOT-NOTES**

1. *ŚBP* XI. 24; Also XI. 3.8-16.
2. *ŚBP* II. 5; II. 6; III. 5-12; III. 26; XII. 4.
3. *BG* 7.4,5,6 ab.
4. *BG* 7.6 cd.
5. *BG* 7.10 ab.

***
Dr. Siddheshvara Bhattacharya (1) explains ās the traditional sacrifices as enjoined by the Vedas, and pūrtas as the extra-traditional social services. (see "Authority of the Vedas" for īṣṭa). The latter concept forms a part of the Kriyā Yoga in the SBP whereby through socio-religious activities is given the "redirection of all senses to knowledge" (2), i.e., for the sublimation of the self-centred motives for the society at large as also for the elevation of one's own Self.

This concept occurs in the BG, under the terms - yajña and lokasaṅgraha (cf. Kārma Yoga). The BG firmly believes in the Upanishadic ideal of the dual purpose of the human life - for niḥśreyas (spiritual elevation at the microcosmic level) and abhyudaya (social upliftment and the fulfilment of the social obligations at the macrocosmic level).

Thus, īṣṭāpūrtas form the basis as well as the aim of human life in both the scriptures.

FOOT-NOTES

1 The Philosophy of the Śrimad Bhāgavata by Dr. Siddheshvara Bhattacharya.
2 Ibid.
The other concepts which are just passingly referred to by both the *BG* and the *SBP* respectively are as follows:

20. **Attitude of the *jñānī* towards the *ajñānī*:**

*BG*:

A *jñānī* should not create a difference, i.e., doubt in the mind of the *ajñānī* instead, he should coaxingly make the latter do his actions equanimously (cf. 3.26 and 29).

*SBP*:

21. **Yusa and Kalpa:**

*BG*:

These words are merely mentioned to show that even this so-called immeasurable expanse of Time has an end (cf. 8.17; 9.7).

*SBP*:

22. **Aumkāra:**

*BG*:

-> It is a *vibhūti* of the Lord i.e. He is *Aumkāra* in the speech (10.25 b).

-> As it is the symbol of *Brahman*, one who gives up his body while muttering it, attains the highest beatitude (8.13).

-> Again, being the symbol of *Brahman*, it is always pronounced before performing *yajña*, *dāna* and *tapa* as enjoined in the scriptures (17.23-24).

*SBP*:
23. Vairagya

BG: -

-> The fickle mind can be controlled only through abhyasa and vairagya ie. by constant practice of controlling it and with non-attachment (6.35).

ŚBP: -

-> It is also called virakti. Non-attachment towards the world is the other facet of devotion for the Lord, and both bhakti and virakti can be simultaneously experienced.

-> Mind should be controlled by abhyasa and vairagya (XI. 9.11).

-> Knowledge is supported by vairagya (XI.19.8).

24. Śabda-brahma:--

BG: -

ŚBP: -

(cf. Nāda-brahma under Jhāna Yoga).

25. Yamas and Niyamas

BG: -

The qualities mentioned in the ŚBP are not given here under this heading, but are referred to as being sattvika or daivi prakṛti and as a part of jñāna (10.4-5; 13.8-12; 16.1-3).

ŚBP: -

Ahimsā, satya, asteya, asaṅga, hṛi, asaṅcaya, āstikya, brahmacarya, mauna, sthairya, kṣamā, abhaya, śauca, japa, tapa, homa, śraddhā, añīthya, bhagavadarcana, īrthājana, parārthā(jhā), tusji und ācāryasevana- are the internal and external disciplines for yamas and niyamas.

Thus, all the above minor concepts show that as both the BG and the ŚBP are the spiritual texts that have guided millions of men in elevating their spiritual lives, they deal with these topics as an intrinsic part of their teachings.

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