

FIRST FAITH ON THE MEANING AND ROLE OF ŚRADDHĀ IN CAITANYA VAIṢṆAVA THOUGHT

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‘First there is *śraddhā*...’¹ ‘Whatever the nature of your *śraddhā*, your accomplishment will be likewise.’² ‘Man is made of *śraddhā*. Whatever his *śraddhā*, that he is.’³ ‘Worship of me is never in vain, because it yields results in accordance with one’s *śraddhā*.’⁴

These statements, from texts central to Caitanya Vaiṣṇava thought (from Rūpa Gosvāmī’s *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, the *Brahma-saṃhitā*, the *Bhagavad-gītā*, and the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, respectively) illustrate the importance given to *śraddhā*. But what exactly is *śraddhā*?

The word is generally translated into English as ‘faith’, a term with a long heritage in European discourse. James Darmesteter argued over a century ago that the Sanskrit verbal root *śrad-dhā* and its noun *śraddhā* derived from an Indo-European root **krad-dhā* (or **kred-dhē*),⁵ meaning ‘to place (*dhā*) the heart (*krad*)’,⁶ so that the Sanskrit noun *śraddhā* is etymologically related to the Latin *credo* which literally means ‘I give my heart’.⁷ Though this etymology has been contested,⁸ many authors accept it,⁹ for, as Hans-Werbin

¹ *Ādau śraddhā* (*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.4.15).

² *Yādṛṣī yādṛṣī śraddhā siddhir bhavati tādṛṣī* (*Brahma-saṃhitā* 61).

³ *Śraddhāmāyo’yaṃ puruṣo yo yac chradhbah sa eva saḥ* (*Gītā* 17.3).

⁴ *Mamārcanaṃ nārhati gantum anyathā śraddhānurūpaṃ phala-betukatvāt* (*Bhāgavata* 8.17.17).

⁵ The latter is the Proto Indo-European root most commonly given in more recent literature. See, for example, Benveniste (1969), vol. 1, p. 172.

⁶ Darmesteter (1883), pp. 119–122.

⁷ See Benveniste (1969), vol. 1, pp. 171–172 and Walde (1938), vol. 1, pp. 286–287. The *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka* (3.9.21) also links *śraddhā* with the heart, though not etymologically.

⁸ See, for example, Walde (1973), vol. 1, pp. 423–424 and, more importantly, Benveniste (1969), vol. 1, pp. 177–179.

⁹ See, for example, Smith (1998), pp. 61 & 223–225, and Rao (1971), p. 4.

Köhler argues, though *śrat* is never used in Sanskrit literature as meaning ‘heart’, this etymology helps to explain the spectrum of meanings the word *śraddhā* has obtained in various contexts, as we will see below.¹⁰

Though the authors we will study in this essay never attempt to explain the etymology of *śraddhā*, some earlier Sanskrit authors do. In the *Nighaṅṭu* (3.10) and in Yāska’s *Nirukta* (3.13) *śrat* is listed as a synonym for ‘truth’ (*satya*).¹¹ Durga, a commentator on the *Nirukta*, offers an etymology for the word, deriving it from the verbal root *śru*, ‘to hear’: ‘that which becomes worthy of hearing is called *śrat*.’¹² *Śraddhā* would then refer to the placing of truth in something.¹³

The question that then naturally arises is this: where is the heart to be placed or what should it be given to? Or, if we follow the traditional etymology, what should be invested with truth? What is worthy of being heard? In other words, what is the object of *śraddhā*?

In Christianity, the English term faith is understood in two main ways:

Faith, of course, must be understood in a number of ways. It may refer to dogma which is believed (in this sense the expression ‘the faith’ comes to mind) or it may refer to trust in a person, which is essentially relational in character.¹⁴

These two meanings of the term are reflected in the way Christian theologians have understood the New Testament notion of faith (Greek *πίστις*). The Christian Church Fathers and especially the Scholastics, for example, understand faith (Latin *fides*) in the former sense. In the *Summa Theologica* Thomas Aquinas sees faith as an intellectual act of an epistemic nature. He places it somewhere between knowledge (*scientia*), which is self-evidently true and based on perceivable principles (2.2 article 1), and opinion (2.2 art. 2). Its objects are the articles of the Christian doctrine (2.2 art. 6), which are beyond our perception and intellect and thus cannot be verified through knowledge (2.2 art. 4).

The other understanding of faith—relational faith, as trust in a person—is the focus of much of Martin Luther’s teachings. For him, faith (German

¹⁰ Köhler (1973), pp. 1–2.

¹¹ *Ṣaṭ śrat satrā addhā itthā ṛtam iti satyasya* (*Nighaṅṭu* 3.10). Cf. Yāska’s *Nirukta* 9.30.

¹² *Śravaṇārham etad bhavanti śrat* (Durga on *Nirukta* 3.13). Theodor Benfey (1848, p. 185) offers a similar etymology.

¹³ See Durga on *Nirukta* 9.30: *satyam asyāṃ dhiyate iti śraddhā*.

¹⁴ Ferguson & Wright (1988), p. 246.

Glaube) is ‘a living, bold trust in God’s grace, so certain of God’s favor that it would risk death a thousand times trusting in it’.¹⁵ Its object is a person, God, and has a strong emotional character: it is not merely believing that God is true, but rather submitting to that truth and relying upon it.

In this paper I will argue that the Sanskrit word *śraddhā*, as used in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, the *Bhāgavata*, and in the writings of some of the principal Caitanya Vaiṣṇava theologians is—in general—used in neither of these two senses (dogmatic or relational). Rather, the concept of *śraddhā* is *ascetical* in character (from the Greek *ἄσκησις*, ‘practice’): it refers to a mental attitude of the devotee towards a *practice* or a way of acting. Though *śraddhā* has meant various things over the centuries and in different contexts, I argue that in Caitanya Vaiṣṇava thought it generally refers to—as Jan Gonda puts it—‘the performer’s active, positive and affirmative attitude towards religious acts, his belief in the transcendental effects of the ritual performance and the effectiveness of the rites.’¹⁶ Though *śraddhā* often implies an acceptance of certain theological views, it is nevertheless primarily ascetical or ritual in character and more concerned with practice than doctrine. I do not argue that these other two understandings of faith are alien to Hindu thought in general, or Caitanya Vaiṣṇava thought in particular, but merely that they are not denoted by the term *śraddhā*.¹⁷

I will first explore the way *śraddhā* and derivative words¹⁸ are used in the *Bhagavad-gītā* and the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, two foundational texts for Caitanya Vaiṣṇava theologians, and later explore how the term is used in the writings of those theologians, particularly Rūpa Gosvāmī’s *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* and Jīva Gosvāmī’s *Bhāgavata-sandarbhā*s, as well as in commentaries on all these texts—Viśvanātha Cakravartī and Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa on the

¹⁵ *Glaube ist ein lebendige, erwegene Zuversicht auf Gottes Gnade, so gewiss, dass er tausendmal drüber stürbe* (Luther, 1854, p. 125, translation by Smith, 1994).

¹⁶ Gonda (1989), p. 33.

¹⁷ There are indeed parallels between these two concepts of faith and some concepts in Caitanya Vaiṣṇava thought. As others have pointed out, the notion of *bhakti* has elements of a relational faith (see Smith, 1998, 64), and Luther’s understanding of faith also resembles the notion of ‘seeking refuge’ (*śaraṇāgati* or *śaraṇāpatti*) as explained by Caitanya Vaiṣṇava authors (see, for example, *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* 11.673ff and *Bhakti-sandarbhā* 236), and indeed *bhakti* itself (see Hara (1964) and Smith (1998), p. 221). Some of the topics addressed in the discussion of dogmatic faith in the writings of the early Church Fathers also surface in Vedāntic discussions on the authority and validity of verbal, and particularly, scriptural testimony (*pramāṇa*). See, for example, *Tattva-sandarbhā* 9–28.

¹⁸ *Āśraddadhāna*, *āśraddhā*, *śraddadhāna*, *śraddhālu*, etc. For simplicity’s sake, I refer with the word *śraddhā* to these related terms as well, unless I indicate otherwise.

Gītā; Viśvanātha and Jīva Gosvāmī on the *Bhāgavata*; and Jīva, Viśvanātha and Mukundadāsa Gosvāmī on the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*. To help contextualise these authors and their teachings, I have also looked at the commentaries of Śaṅkara and Śrīdhara Svāmī. Having explored the way the term is understood by these authors, I then explore the relation of *śraddhā* to scripture as well as *śraddhā* in relation to trust in a person.

I am hardly the first person to take a closer look at the concept of *śraddhā* in Hindu texts, and with this essay I do not intend to either refute or repeat what these prior studies have affirmed.¹⁹ However, most of these studies are primarily concerned with more ancient texts, such as Vedic and early Buddhist literature, than those explored here. As Hans-Werbin Köhler (1973) has demonstrated in his study on *śraddhā*, the meaning of the term shifts in different contexts, and one of the aims of the present study is to explore the specific meaning and role of *śraddhā* in pre-modern Vaiṣṇava thought, which, as will become clear, is not altogether different from some of its uses in these ancient texts but yet gains a specific significance in the devotional theology of the Caitanya school.²⁰

ŚRADDHĀ IN THE BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ

The concept of *śraddhā* occurs twenty times in the *Bhagavad-gītā*: seventeen times derivatives of the word *śraddhā* are used, while its opposite, *aśraddhā*, is used three times (*aśraddadhāna* in 4.40, 9.3; *aśraddhā* in 17.28). The most frequent use of the word *śraddhā* is in the instrumental (*śraddhayā* ‘with faith’, used seven times: 6.37, 7.21, 7.22, 9.23, 12.2, 17.1, 17.17), while the word *śraddhāvat* (‘possessing faith’) is used four times (3.31, 4.39, 6.47, 18.71). *Śraddadhāna* (‘a person with faith’) occurs only once (12.20), while *aśraddadhāna* (‘a person who lacks faith’) occurs twice (4.40, 9.3).

What does the *Gītā* tell us about *śraddhā*? Twelve of the twenty occurrences—sixty percent—are used in relation to worship (with forms of the verbal roots *bhaj*, *yaj*, *upās*, *ārādh*, and *arc*): the best *yogī* worships Kṛṣṇa ‘possessing faith’ (*śraddhāvān bhajate yo mām*, 6.47), the best devotees attend to him with ‘superior faith’ (*upāsate śraddhayā parayopetās*, 12.2) and those that

¹⁹ For a list of prior studies on the concept, see the bibliography.

²⁰ In this essay, I do not look at all at modern Caitanya Vaiṣṇava usages of the term, which is sometimes rather different from the way the concept is understood in these pre-modern texts. Yoshitsugu Sawai (1992, p. 57) observed a similar shift in the Advaita Smārta tradition of Śṛṅgeri where ‘at present [...] the word *śraddhā* has been gradually generalised to include some motifs of the western concept of faith such as ‘faith in God’.

are devoted to other gods also sacrifice with faith (*yajante śraddhayānvitāḥ*, 9.23), though the faith of devotees of other gods, like any reward that may be obtained through such worship, is actually given by Kṛṣṇa himself (7.21–22). Ritual worship (*yajña*) devoid of faith is said to be tainted by darkness (17.13) and whatever is given or offered, or whatever austerity is performed without faith is naught (*asat*); it yields no results either in this life or the next (17.28). In four verses—twenty percent of the the occurrences—*śraddhā* is linked with other types of religious practices: *yoga* (6.37), *dharma* (9.3),²¹ *tapas* (17.17, 17.28), and charity (17.28). At the very end of the *Gītā*, faith is linked with the religious act of hearing the text itself (18.71).

Only twice the *Gītā* talks about faith in certain teachings (3.31, and slightly more ambiguously in 4.40), and in Kṛṣṇa declares once that faith, devotion, and self-control lead to knowledge (4.39).

ŚRADDHĀ IN THE BHĀGAVATA

As the *Bhāgavata* is a lengthier text than the *Gītā*, it offers us a better understanding of the way the concept of *śraddhā* is used and understood in Vaiṣṇava texts. The *Bhāgavata* uses the word *śraddhā* and its related expressions 115 times. The word *śraddadbhāna* ('having faith' or 'a person with faith') occurs twenty-one times, while *śraddhālu* ('faithful') occurs thrice. The *Bhāgavata* contains seventeen verbal forms derived from the verbal root *śrad-dhā*, including two past participle (*śraddhita*, 'trusted', 10.69.43, and its opposite, *aśraddhita*, 8.20.14).

Eighty-five of the occurrences of the word *śraddhā* are the instrumental *śraddhayā* ('with faith') and often the word is used and sometimes compounded with one that has an instrumental meaning (*śraddhayā yuktaḥ*, *śraddhayānvitāḥ* and *śraddhānvitāḥ*, *śraddhayopetaḥ*, etc.)—that is just under seventy-four percent. Of the twenty-two occurrences of the word *śraddhā* that are uncompounded or not in the instrumental, over forty percent occur in lists (of more than three) of honourable qualities or practices (such as *titikṣā*, *yama*, *niyama*, *satya*, *dama*, *śama*, *tapas*, *śaucam*, *japa*, etc.).²²

²¹ In his commentary on *Gītā* 9.3, Śaṅkara links this *dharma* with knowledge of the self (*ātma-jñānasya dharmasya*), but all other commentators interpret it as a type of action or practice—as, one could argue, does the *Gītā* itself in the previous verse (*susukhaṃ kartum*, 'it is easily practised').

²² See, for example, *Bhāgavata* 4.21.42, 10.4.41, 11.11.35, 11.11.38, 11.19.13, 11.19.34, and 11.25.2.

Listening

The usage of the concept of *śraddhā* in the *Bhāgavata* resembles that of the *Gītā*. In the vast majority of the occurrences, *śraddhā* is linked with certain practices or methods of worship. The most common of these is the act of listening to narrations of Kṛṣṇa's play: though *śraddhā* is associated with this only once in the *Gītā*, in forty-four passages of the *Bhāgavata* (over a third of the total occurrences) *śraddhā* is mentioned in relation to this.²³

Often the word occurs when a devotee requests another to narrate Kṛṣṇa's play: 'Please continuously describe the praiseworthy [activities] of the Lord to one who is faithful', (*tāni me śraddadhānasya kīrtanyāny anukīrtaya*) Śaunaka asks in 3.25.3, and similarly Vidura asks of Maitreya to tell the acts of Vena to him 'who is faithful and devoted' (*śraddadhānāya bhaktāya*, 3.14.4).

Listening to Kṛṣṇa's play or religious teachings with faith leads to spiritual fulfilment. 'The faithful person who listens to the narrations about me', Kṛṣṇa declares to Uddhava, 'attains undeviating devotion to me, who am eternal' (11.11.23–24). Nārada teaches that the householders who wish to become detached from this world should repeatedly listen 'to the nectar of the narrations about the Lord's descents, with faith and according to the time, surrounded by peaceful persons' (7.14.3–4), whereas Kapila assures his mother that he who hears his teachings on the yoga of devotion even 'once with faith [...] attains my realm' (3.32.43).

At the end of several narrations in the *Bhāgavata* the reader is told that he will receive great rewards if he listens to these stories with faith:²⁴ 'He who is endowed with faith and recites, narrates or hears' the story of Pṛthu's life 'attains the position of Pṛthu' (4.23.31). Similarly, the person who listens to the history of Ajāmila 'endowed with faith, and continually recites it with devotion, [...] though he is inauspicious and mortal, is honoured in Viṣṇu's world' (6.2.47–48). At the end of the *Bhāgavata* we find a similar praise of hearing that text with faith: 'he who hears a verse—even half a verse—with faith purifies his own self' (12.12.59).

²³ See *Bhāgavata* 1.1.17, 1.2.16, 1.5.26, 1.12.3, 1.15.51, 2.1.10, 2.4.3, 2.7.53, 2.8.4, 3.5.13, 3.5.42, 3.8.9, 3.13.3, 3.14.4, 3.25.3, 3.32.43, 4.1.47, 4.12.46, 4.12.50, 4.13.24, 4.23.31, 4.23.35, 4.29.38, 5.26.38, 6.2.47, 6.14.8, 7.14.3, 10.1.12, 10.6.44, 10.33.39, 11.2.7, 11.6.9, 11.11.23, 11.11.34, 11.19.20, 11.20.8, 11.20.9, 11.20.27, 11.20.28, 11.26.29, 11.29.28, 11.29.48, 12.11.28, and 12.12.59.

²⁴ See *Bhāgavata* 1.15.51, 3.32.43, 4.1.47, 4.12.46 & 4.12.50 (Dhruva), 4.23.31 & 4.23.35 (Pṛthu), 10.6.44, 10.33.39 and 12.12.59.

Worship

The next biggest category of occurrences is in relation to worship. Forty-three times *śraddhā* is related to acts of worship or, more broadly speaking, spiritual practice. Thus, the people of the land of Bhārata have ‘faith in the sacrifice’ (*śraddhayā barhiṣi*, 5.19.26), and, having described various ritual offerings, Kṛṣṇa concludes that whatever his devotee offers with faith is very dear to him (11.27.17).

The word is frequently used in connection with the verbal root *yaj*, ‘to worship, to offer’,²⁵ and, particularly in the eleventh book, with the verbal root *arc*, ‘to worship’.²⁶ Often the word is used in relation to the worship of an image in a temple: in the eleventh book, for example, Kṛṣṇa teaches Uddhava to have ‘faith in the establishing of my image’ (*mamārcā-sthāpane śraddhā*, 11.11.38), and the ‘material devotee’ (*bhaktāḥ prākṛtāḥ*) is said to faithfully perform acts of worship to the image, but not to other devotees of Hari (11.2.47).

I have included in this category several instances of other types of religious practices, such as austerity (*tapas*) and meditation: Mucukunda has ‘faith in austerity’ (10.52.3, *tapāḥ-śraddhā-yutaḥ*).²⁷ Kṛṣṇa declares that a mortal who follows the *dharmā* of devotion with faith will conquer his own mortality (11.29.8) and similarly one who praises the acts and births of Viṣṇu will be released from all sin (11.31.27). The Kumāras are praised by Pṛthu to follow their vows with faith (4.22.12), while the Brahmins hired by Aṅga assure him that the offerings for his sacrifice ‘are pure and collected with faith’ (*bavīṃṣy aduṣṭāni śraddhayādītāni*, 4.13.27).

These types of faithful acts are not exclusively performed as worship of God, but also of his great devotees. ‘Worship these *brahma-ṛṣis* with faith in me’ Kṛṣṇa teaches Śrūtadeva (10.86.57), and the faithful and non-envious devotee should attend to the guru until he realises Brahman (11.18.39).

As others have noted before, the concepts of *śraddhā* and *bhakti* are often closely allied in Sanskrit texts.²⁸ The *Bhāgavata* is no exception to this. Of all religious practices, *śraddhā* is particularly often linked with devotion

²⁵ See *Bhāgavata* 3.6.34, 3.32.2, 4.24.62, 5.3.2, 5.4.17, 5.7.5, 5.22.4, 10.84.35, 10.84.37, and 11.27.8.

²⁶ See *Bhāgavata* 8.16.38, 8.17.17, 10.86.57, 11.2.47, 11.11.38, 11.27.33, and 11.27.48.

²⁷ One could read the compound *tapas-śraddhā* as a *dvandva* (‘with faith and austerity’). I follow Śrīdhara’s reading, who explains the compound as *tapasi śraddhā-yutaḥ*.

²⁸ See Hara (1964) and Smith (1998), pp. 238–239. See also *Sāṅḍilya-bhakti-sūtras* 1.2.15–16, which argues that *śraddhā* and *bhakti* are not identical, because the former is general (*sādhāranya*), whereas the latter is not.

(*bhakti*). In twenty-four verses they are mentioned together,²⁹ often both in the instrumental, as in the expression *śraddhayā bhaktyā*, ‘with faith and with devotion’.³⁰

Finally, four times *śraddhā* is used in connection with action (*karma*) in general,³¹ and twice in relation to battle, as when Jarāsandha urges Balarāma to fight ‘if he has faith’ (10.50.18, see also 6.11.5).

Giving and hospitality

In his study on the meaning of *śraddhā* in Vedic and early Buddhist texts, Hans-Werbin Köhler (1973) demonstrates that the idea is closely linked to acts of charity, in particular the sacrificial gift (*dakṣiṇā*) offered to Brahmins at the end of the sacrifice. In oldest Vedic texts the word *śraddhā*, he argues, does not denote a ‘theological creed’ (*theologisches Credo*) but initially rather ‘trust’ in the gods and their might. Later on the meaning of the term is shifted to a trust in the efficacy of the rituals with which these gods are worshipped. This trust, he argues, is expressed through grand ritual performances and particularly through the giving of gifts to Brahmins. The meaning of the term thus gradually shifts from trust to devotedness to what he calls *Spendefreudigkeit*, ‘generosity’.³²

This association of *śraddhā* with giving is already visible in the *Ṛg-veda* (10.151.2), where the goddess Śraddhā is asked to ‘be kind to the giver, be

²⁹ *Bhāgavata* 1.2.12, 1.15.51, 3.5.42, 3.14.4, 3.25.25, 3.32.30, 3.32.41, 4.13.24, 4.23.10, 5.15.12, 5.26.38, 6.2.47, 10.3.37, 10.6.36, 10.33.39, 11.2.47, 11.14.21, 11.18.39, 11.19.13, 11.20.8, 11.26.29, 11.27.8, 11.27.17, 11.29.28. See also 4.12.46, 5.5.10–13, 7.7.30–31, and 11.11.23–24.

³⁰ See *Bhāgavata* 3.5.42, 3.14.4, 3.25.25, 3.32.30, 3.32.41, 4.13.24, 5.15.12, 5.26.38, 6.2.47, 10.3.37, 10.6.36, 11.14.21, 11.18.39, 11.19.13, 11.26.29, 11.27.8, and 11.27.17. It is important to keep in mind that in texts like these *bhakti* is not just a sentiment, but also an action. Thus, texts on *bhakti* will often talk of *doing bhakti* (using the noun *bhakti* with the verbal root *kr* ‘to do, to make’, as in *kurvanty abaitukīm bhaktim*, *Bhāgavata* 1.7.10 or *bhaktim akurvātām*, *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.3.43). In defining the ‘highest *bhakti*’ Rūpa Gosvāmī also stresses by equating it with a type of ‘dedicated service’ or ‘constant practice’ (*anuśilana*, *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.11).

³¹ *Bhāgavata* 3.32.16, 5.26.2–3, 6.1.14, and 11.25.27.

³² Köhler 1973, 64. Köhler (pp. 49–51) also argues quite convincingly that the *śraddhā* offerings to the ancestors are so called based on this last sense of the term *śraddhā* (*Spendefreudigkeit gegenüber Brahmanen*), as the central act in these rituals is a generosity towards the Brahmins—not because the ceremony expresses a belief in the afterlife of the departed, as is commonly considered. See also Jamison (1996, p. 182): ‘The concrete manifestation of *śraddhā* is *giving* in this world, not ‘faith’ in the next, and the giving has just been accomplished by feeding the Brahmins.’

kind to he who wants to give'.³³ In such a context, *āśraddhā*, its opposite, does not mean doubting, lacking in faith, or not trusting, but, as Maurice Bloomfield puts it, just 'stingy'.³⁴

This sense of generosity of the word *śraddhā* is obvious in many Vedic texts and *Dharma-śāstras*. In the *Upaniṣads* too *śraddhā* is often connected with giving. When Śākalya asks Yājñavalkya on what the sacrificial gift (*dakṣiṇā*) is founded, he answers: 'on faith, for a man gives a sacrificial gift only when he has faith. So the sacrificial gift is founded on faith.' And when then asked on what faith is founded, he replies: 'on the heart, for one recognises faith with the heart. So faith is founded on the heart.' (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka* 3.9.21)³⁵ Similarly, in the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (1.11.3) the guru instructs his graduating student he should 'give with faith, and never without faith'. In the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (1.2), Naciketas observes how his father gives unworthy gifts to the Brahmins during his sacrifice. He then became 'possessed by *śraddhā*', and to compensate for his father's lack of generosity, he offers himself to be given in charity.³⁶

Though the word *śraddhā* very often gains this meaning in other texts, it is much much less frequently used in this sense in the *Bhāgavata*. Only ten instances of *śraddhā* are used in connection with giving or charity. Thus, Kṛṣṇa, whose 'self is faithful' (*kṛṣṇena śraddhitātmanā*), offers gifts to Nārada on his visit to Dvārakā (10.69.43); Manu offers his daughter in marriage to Kardama with faith (*śraddhayopabṛtām*, 3.22.11); and the Brahmins at Pṛthu's sacrifice obtained gifts with faith (*śraddhayā labdha-dakṣiṇāḥ*, 4.19.41).

Stephanie Jamison argues that the term *śraddhā* also refers to 'nonritual hospitality' in *Dharma-śāstras* and some Vedic texts, where the idea 'expresses the trust or agreement between strangers in a hospitality relation'.³⁷ This sense, she argues, is related to the ritual sense of giving. 'On the one hand, śrauta [i.e. Vedic] ritual is the ultimate hospitality ceremony, offered to the gods; on the other, every guest can be a god in disguise, at least in theory.'³⁸

In only a few cases does the *Bhāgavata* use the word *śraddhā* in this sense of hospitality: when Arjuna visits his home, Balarāma gives him food that is

³³ See also Pendse (1977), pp. 23–36.

³⁴ Bloomfield (1896), p. 412.

³⁵ Translation by Patrick Olivelle.

³⁶ For more on this expression, see Hara (1975).

³⁷ Jamison (1996), p. 178.

³⁸ Jamison (1996), p. 184.

‘offered with *śraddhā*’ (10.86.5 and 10.38.39) and Rantideva is said to receive his guests with *śraddhā* (*śraddhayānviṭaḥ*, 9.21.6). Similarly, when Kṛṣṇa is said to address the visiting sage Nārada ‘with pleasing sentences’ before he ‘satisfies the sage with faith’ (10.70.34), it is easy to take this too as a display of hospitality.³⁹

Teachings and knowledge

In nine cases, *śraddhā* is related to verbal instructions, scripture or knowledge received through instructions. Thus the devotee should have ‘faith in the *Bhāgavata* scripture, [yet] not condemn other texts’ (*śraddhām bhāgavate śāstre’nindām anyatra cāpi hi*, 11.3.26). Rahūgaṇa is said to have had ‘complete faith in the inquiry of the truth’ (*tattva-jijñāsāyām samyak-śraddhayā*, 5.10.15), and Nārada is taught to reflect with faith on the teachings on the self he has received (10.87.44), for, as stated earlier, one who meditates with faith on sacred knowledge attains peace (10.87.3).⁴⁰ Thrice the word is used in relation to the following of orders, as when the wives of Kāliya ask Kṛṣṇa for directions what to do, which they claim they will follow faithfully.⁴¹

Verbal forms

The verbal forms of the root *śrad-dhā* are consistently used in a very different sense, however. There are eighteen verbal forms used in the entire *Bhāgavata*,⁴² some of which are used in a non-religious context, and contrary to the uses of the *śraddhā* and related nouns which we have just explored, it is sometimes used in a relational sense, to express a faith or trust in a particular person.⁴³

³⁹ See also *Bhāgavata* 11.19.34 (*śraddhātīhyam*).

⁴⁰ See also *Bhāgavata* 4.9.38, 6.16.64.

⁴¹ *Bhāgavata* 10.16.53.

⁴² *Śraddadhyāt* (3.6.35, 11.28.43), *śraddadbita* (3.13.43), *śraddadbitsva* (3.33.11, 4.29.65), *śraddadbate* (4.6.44, 6.18.21), *śraddadbe* (4.9.37, 10.89.39), *śraddadbyur* (6.7.14), *śraddadbitre* (10.7.10), *śraddadbiyeta* (10.65.12), *śraddadbita* (10.69.43), *śraddadbmah* (10.70.46), *śraddadbitmabi* (10.88.32), *śraddadbur* (10.89.14), *śraddadbmabe* (10.89.31), and *śraddadbiti* (11.8.40).

⁴³ There are also a few instances where the verbal forms express a sense of ‘desire’ or ‘longing’, as in *Bhāgavata* 3.13.43 (*śraddadbita*, which Śrīdhara glosses as *spr̥hayet*) and 3.6.45 (*śraddadbyād*, which he glosses as *ic̣cheta*). Commenting on *Bhāgavata* 8.17.18, Śrīdhara also gives a similar sense to the noun *śraddhā*: *śraddhānuruṣaṃ ic̣chānūsāreṇa*. This usage of the verb can be traced back to Vedic texts, where, as Köhler (1973, pp. 4–6) has demonstrated, the noun is often used in the sense of ‘desire’. Sāyana, the Vedic commentator, also interprets the notion of *śraddhā* in some contexts in this way. See his commentary on *Ṛg-veda* 1.103.3, where he glosses *śraddadhānaḥ* as *adārātīśayena kāmayaṃānaḥ*; on *Ṛg-veda* 10.151.1, where

This sense of the root *śrad-dhā* goes back to the *Ṛg-veda* where the verb is primarily used to express a ‘faith’ or ‘trust’ in the prowess of the gods, particularly that of Indra.⁴⁴ Thus in *Ṛg-veda* 2.12.5 we are urged to place our trust in Indra,⁴⁵ and *Ṛg-veda* 1.103.5, after describing Indra’s great exploits, exclaims: ‘behold his great wealth, have faith in Indra’s might.’⁴⁶ Similarly, *Ṛg-veda* 1.102.2 declares that ‘the seven rivers bear his fame; heaven, earth and sky display his form; the sun and moon run each their course, so that we, Indra, may see and trust (*śraddbe*).’⁴⁷

In the *Ṛg-veda* the noun *śraddhā* is often used in a similar sense as the verbal forms.⁴⁸ But the noun quickly loses this relational sense and already in the *Brāhmaṇas* is used in its ascetical sense as faith or conviction in rituals (and ritual giving).⁴⁹ The verbal root *śrad-dhā*, however, retains this relational sense much longer, as Köhler remarks.⁵⁰

This relational sense of the verbal root survives in the *Bhāgavata*, where verbal forms of the root *śrad-dhā* are occasionally directed at a person. Thus a grief stricken Brahmin laments that he placed his trust (*śraddadhe*) in Kṛṣṇa, who was unable to save his sons from death (10.89.39), while the sages who heard of Bhṛgu’s encounter with the Lord trust in Viṣṇu whom they now

he interprets *śraddhā* as *puruṣa-gato bhilāṣa-viśeṣaḥ*; and on *Atharva-veda* 11.10.22, where he glosses *śraddhā* as *abhilāṣa-rābityam*.

⁴⁴ Some scholars have interpreted the verbal root *śrad-dhā* as ‘believe’ (see Köhler, 1973, pp. 7–9 & pp. 13–15). Bloomfield (1896, p. 411), for example, understands *śraddhā* generally in its ritual sense, but argues that before it ‘is pointed towards ‘works’, it primarily meant ‘religious faith’. He refers to *Atharva-veda* (11.2.28) where Bhaga is asked to be kind to ‘he who believes the gods exist’ (*yaḥ śraddadbāti santi devā iti*, Bloomfield’s translation). As many of the other occurrences on the root in Vedic texts clearly express a ‘trust’ in the gods rather than a ‘belief’ (see Köhler, 1973, pp. 12–22), I think it is unlikely that the root here obtains such a different sense. I follow Sāyana’s reading of the passage, who writes in his commentary on this verse that ‘the meaning is that the orthodox person has faith (*śraddadbāti*), that is, respects or trusts, that the gods, the guardians like Indra, exist’ (*ya āstikyāḥ puruṣo devā indrādāyo rakṣakāḥ santīti śraddadbāti ādriyate viśvasitīty arthab*).

⁴⁵ *Śrad asmai dhatta* (*Ṛg-veda* 2.12.5).

⁴⁶ *Tadasyedam paśyatā bhūri puṣṭam śrad indrasya dhattana vīryāya* (*Ṛg-veda* 1.103.5).

⁴⁷ *Aya śravo nadyaḥ sapta bibhrati dyāvākṣāmā pṛthivī darśatam vapuḥ, asme sūryācandra-masābbhicaḥ śraddbe kam indra carato vitarturam* (*Ṛg-veda* 1.102.2).

⁴⁸ See, for example, *Ṛg-veda* 7.32.14 and 1.108.6. The ritual sense of the noun is, however, clearly used in the hymn to Śraddhā (*Ṛg-veda* 10.151).

⁴⁹ See K.L. Seshagiri Rao’s extensive comments on the notion of *śraddhā* in the *Śatapatha-brāhmaṇa*: Rao (1971), pp. 10–47.

⁵⁰ See Köhler (1973), pp. 12–22 & 64.

consider to be the greatest (10.89.14).⁵¹

Most commonly, however, the object of the verb is impersonal, generally directed to a message or spoken words. Thus the people of Gokula did not believe (*śraddadhire*, 10.7.10) the children's description of Kṛṣṇa's acts. Nārada tells the king Prācīnabarhi to 'accept as true' (*śraddhatsva*) his teachings on the body and mind,⁵² as does Kapila to his mother.⁵³ Similarly, when told that his son had returned, Uttānapāda did not believe the message to be true (*na śraddadbe*, 4.9.37).⁵⁴

Only in two instances is a verbal form used in relation to a practice, in a sense similar to that of the noun. The eleventh book, for example, states that a devotee should not have faith (*śraddadhyāt*) in yoga,⁵⁵ and the strict Brahmins are said to place their faith (*śraddadbate*) in the sacrifices taught by Dakṣa.⁵⁶

THE MEANING OF ŚRADDHĀ

Though we can come to some understanding of the meaning of *śraddhā* in the *Bhāgavad-gītā* and the *Bhāgavata* by examining the way the term is used in these texts, neither of these texts ever do define *śraddhā*. I now turn to some prominent commentators on these texts as well as other works central to Caitanya Vaiṣṇava theology to come to a fuller understanding of the term in that tradition.

In both the *Gītā* and the *Bhāgavata* *śraddhā* was most commonly mentioned alongside a particular practice, generally with *śraddhā* in the instrumental: these activities—sacrifice, hearing of Kṛṣṇa, praising Kṛṣṇa, etc.—were, or should be performed with *śraddhā*. In a few places the *Bhāgavata* indicates that *śraddhā*'s object is the practice itself—Kṛṣṇa teaches Uddhava, for example, that one should perform Vedic ritual actions (*karma*) until 'faith

⁵¹ *Tan niśamyātha munayo [...] bhūyāmsaṃ śraddadbur viṣṇum (Bhāgavata 10.89.14)*. See also *Bhāgavata 10.89.31, 11.8.40*.

⁵² *Bhāgavata 4.29.65*. Śrīdhara glosses *śraddhatsva* as *niścayena manyasva* 'consider with certainty'.

⁵³ *Śraddhatsvaitan mataṃ mahyaṃ juṣṭaṃ yad brahma-vādibhiḥ yena mām abbayaṃ yāyā mṛtyum ṛcchanty atad-vidaḥ (Bhāgavata 3.33.11)*.

⁵⁴ See also *Bhāgavata 10.65.11–12, 6.7.14, 10.70.46, and 10.88.32*.

⁵⁵ *Yogaṃ niṣevato nityaṃ kāyaś cet kalpatām iyāt tac cbraddadhyān na matimān yogam utsrjya mat-paraḥ (Bhāgavata 11.28.43)*.

⁵⁶ [...] *yān brāhmaṇāḥ śraddadbate dhr̥ta-vratāḥ (Bhāgavata 4.6.44)*.

in the hearing of my narrations, and so on' awakens⁵⁷—but more often the text does not specify its object. What, then, is the object of that *śraddhā*? Is it Kṛṣṇa, to whom these actions are directed, the practices themselves, or the theological dogmas underlying the practice?

If we look at the writings of various theologians it is clear that the primary object of *śraddhā* is the religious practice itself. Rūpa Gosvāmī teaches that the devotee should have 'faith and especially affection in attending the feet of the sacred image'.⁵⁸ In the *Bhakti-sandarbha*, Jīva Gosvāmī talks of 'a mode of the mind characterised by *śraddhā* in the hearing of narrations about the Lord, and so on'⁵⁹. Mukundadāsa Gosvāmī states that a fortunate person develops faith 'in *bhakti* to Śrī Kṛṣṇa' or 'in attending Śrī Kṛṣṇa'.⁶⁰ Commenting on the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*'s (2.4) statement that *śraddhā* constitutes the head of the 'self consisting of perception' (*vijñāna-maya*), Śaṅkara similarly states that *śraddhā* here is 'in relation to the things that have to be done'. 'Since that *śraddhā* precedes everything that has to be done,' he continues, 'it is the head, in the sense that it is like the head.'⁶¹

But what type of mental attitude is *śraddhā*? The *Amara-koṣa*, the classical Sanskrit thesaurus, groups *śraddhā* with other emotions such as intention, affirmation, conviction, and longing.⁶² A few times Śrīdhara and Jīva gloss the term as 'respect' (*ādara*) for a practice: *śraddhā* is thus, for example, 'respect for hearing'⁶³ or 'respect for dharma',⁶⁴ and commenting on the *Chāndogya*, Śaṅkara explains it as 'respect towards what one will meditate on'.⁶⁵ Jīva Gosvāmī writes that such respect 'primarily drives away an offence,

⁵⁷ *Tāvat karmāṇi kurvīta na nirvidyeta yāvatā mat-kathā-śravaṇādau vā śraddhā yāvan na jāyate* (*Bhāgavata* 11.20.9). See also *Bhāgavata* 11.20.27–28, 11.2.27.

⁵⁸ *Śraddhā viśeṣataḥ prītiḥ śrī-mūrter aṅghri-sevane* (*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.90).

⁵⁹ *Śrī-bhagavataḥ kathā-śravaṇādau śraddhā-lakṣaṇā dhī-vṛttir* (*Bhakti-sandarbha* 62). See also Viśvanātha's comments on *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.15: [...] *bhakti-yoge kathā-śraddhānur evādbhikārī darśitaḥ*.

⁶⁰ *Śrī-kṛṣṇasya bhaktau śraddhā* (Mukundadāsa on *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.4.15–16); *śrī-kṛṣṇasya sevane bhaktau jāta-śraddhas* (on *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.14). See also his comments on *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.18.

⁶¹ [...] *kartavyeṣv artheṣu pūrvam śraddhotpadyate. Sā sarva-kartavyānām prāthamyāc chira iva śraḥ* (Śaṅkara on *Taittirīya* 2.4).

⁶² *Samdhā pratijñā maryādā śraddhā sampratrayaḥ sprhā* (*Amara-koṣa* 2539).

⁶³ *Śraddhā śravaṇādarah* (Śrīdhara on *Bhāgavata* 11.19.20); *śraddhāyā śravaṇādareṇa* (*Krama-sandarbha* on 3.5.41).

⁶⁴ *Śraddhā dharmādarah* (Śrīdhara on *Bhāgavata* 11.19.34). See also his comment on *Bhāgavata* 7.1.34: *śraddhāyā nādarāṇīya...*

⁶⁵ *Mantavya-viśaye ādarah* [...] *śraddhā* (Śaṅkara on *Chāndogya* 7.19.1). A similar sense can be deduced from a popular verse (sometimes attributed to the *Skanda Purāṇa*) in praise

characterised by disrespect, that impedes the growth of the unique fruit that is the satisfaction of the Lord'.⁶⁶ Elsewhere, Śaṅkara calls it 'a tranquillity of mind, which precedes all human pursuits (*puruṣārtha*) and is the means to attaining them.'⁶⁷

More common, however, is the notion that *śraddhā* is the firm conviction that a particular practice leads to perfection and is thus the proper thing to do. Śrīdhara explains a faithful person (*śraddhālūḥ*) as one who has 'the firm conviction that by *bhakti* alone all will be accomplished',⁶⁸ while Viśvanātha describes him as 'placing his trust only in the narrations of Hari, considering it to be the highest human aim'.⁶⁹ Jīva Gosvāmī similarly describes such a person as having 'a firm conviction in his mind'.⁷⁰ The often cited definition of *śraddhā* offered in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* shares this understanding: 'the word *śraddhā* denotes the firm conviction that if one performs devotion to Kṛṣṇa all actions are accomplished.'⁷¹ Jīva Gosvāmī,

of Kṛṣṇa's name which is said to deliver him who sings it even once, whether with *śraddhā* or with disrespect: *sakṛd api pariḡitaṃ śraddhayaḥ helayā vā bbr̥gu-vara nara-mātram tārayet kṛṣṇa-nāma* (quoted in *Padyāvalī* 26, *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* 11.451, *Bhakti-sandarbhā* 171, Viśvanātha on *Bhāgavata* 1.1.2, *Krama-sandarbhā* on 8.3.8, etc.).

Sāyana, the Vedic commentator, also sometimes glosses *śraddhā* or its verbal forms (generally used relationally in the *R̥g-veda*) as 'respect' (*ādara*) or 'great respect' (*ādarātīśaya*). See his commentary on *R̥g-veda* 1.108.6, 1.103.3 and 8.1.31.

⁶⁶ *Sa [=ādaraḥ] tu bhāgavat-toṣa-lakṣaṇa-ḥbala-viśeṣasyotpattāv anādara-lakṣaṇa-tad-vigbhātakāparādbasya nirasana-paraḥ* (*Bhakti-sandarbhā* 172).

⁶⁷ *Śraddhā yat-pūrvakaḥ sarva-puruṣārtha-sādhana-prayogaḥ citta-prasādaḥ* [...] (Śaṅkara on *Muṇḍaka* 2.1.7). See also Durgācārya on *Nirukta* 9.30: *dharmārtha-kāma-mokṣeṣu aviḥparyayeṇaivam etad iti yā buddhir utpadyate tad adhivedatā bhāvākhyā śraddhety ucyate*.

In *Gītā* 6.37, Arjuna asks about the *yogī* who is 'not ascetic' (*ayatiḥ*) and 'whose mind strays from yoga' (*yogāc calita-mānasah*) but is nevertheless 'endowed with faith' (*śraddhāyopetaḥ*). According to Śrīdhara that the *yogī* has faith indicates that he started the practice of yoga properly, wholeheartedly, with faith in that practice, not that he practised deceitfully, 'misleading the people' as Viśvanātha adds. *Pratbamaṇi śraddhāyopeta eva yoge pravṛttaḥ, na tu mithyācāratayā* (Śrīdhara on *Gītā* 6.37). *Na tu loka-vañakatvena mithyācāraḥ* (Viśvanātha on *Gītā* 6.37).

⁶⁸ *Śraddhālur bhaktyaiva sarvam bhaviṣyatīti dṛḍha-niścaya* (Śrīdhara on *Bhāgavata* 11.20.28).

⁶⁹ [...] *śraddadhbānasya hari-kathāyām eva parama-puruṣārtha-buddhyā viśvasataḥ śuddha-bhaktasyety arthaḥ* (Viśvanātha on *Bhāgavata* 3.5.13). See also his comments on *Bhāgavata* 3.5.14 and *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.186.

⁷⁰ *Tathāpi śraddhāvān manasi dṛḍha-niścaya evety arthaḥ* (Jīva on *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.18).

⁷¹ *Śraddhā-śabde viśvāsa kabe sudṛḍha niścaya kṛṣṇe bhakti kaile sarva-karma kṛta haya* (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta* 2.22.62).

using *śraddhā* in this sense, illustrates ‘faith in worship’ (*bbajana-śraddhā*) with two verses from the *Bhāgavata* (4.21.31–32):

The delight of those scorched in this world of rebirth in serving his [Kṛṣṇa’s] feet, increasing day by day, at once cleanses the dirt of their minds gathered over countless lives, like the river flowing from his toes [i.e, the Ganges]. The dirt of his mind completely shaken off, mighty with detachment and special knowledge, a man who has again made his abode at the Lord’s feet, does not attain the stream of this world, full of afflictions.⁷²

As mentioned earlier, Kṛṣṇa states in the *Gītā* (17.28) that any sacrifice, act of charity, or austerity performed without faith does not yield results either in this world or in the next.⁷³ Viśvanātha often returns to this point to discuss the attitude a devotee should have towards Vedic rituals and *varṇāśrama* duties. Thus, he argues, Rūpa Gosvāmī states that *bhakti* should not be obstructed by *karma* and *jñāna* rather than that it should be devoid of these, because an open-minded devotee can perform ritual acts such as the *śrāddha* offerings to his ancestors provided he has no faith in the act, but does so merely for the benefit of society (*loka-saṅgraha*). If, however, a devotee performs such ritual acts with faith and in accordance with scriptural injunctions, fearing he would otherwise incur sin, or even if he has faith in these actions, thinking they will lead to *bhakti*, his devotion becomes obstructed by such ritual actions.⁷⁴ Such a devotee has no faith in devotion, Jīva argues; only when his faith in these other paths ceases can he take up the activities of devotion.⁷⁵

That *śraddhā* does not refer to a dogmatic faith is also important to consider when discussing the opposite of faith. The opposite of *śraddhā* is

⁷² Cited in *Bhakti-sandarbhā* 205.

⁷³ This idea has some grounding in Vedic thought: an *āśis* (a particular type of mantra) uttered by one without *śraddhā* yields no results. See Gonda (1989), pp. 32–33.

⁷⁴ *Tena loka-saṅgrahārtham aśraddhayāpi pitrādi-śrāddhaṃ kurvatām mahānubhāvānām śuddha-bhaktau nāvyāptiḥ* (Viśvanātha on *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.11). *Bhagavad-gītā* 3.20 also advocates performing some acts merely for the betterment—or, as Viśvanātha states in his commentary, for the education—of those who are not ready to pursue something higher. See also Viśvanātha on *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.22, 1.2.247 and *Bhāgavata* 4.22.50, 5.7.6.

⁷⁵ See Jīva’s comments on *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.65: *karma-jñānādbikāriṇo tu tādrśa-śraddhā-rabitaḥ saṅgādi-vaśāt tādrśa-śuddha-bhaktau pravṛttayoḥ api anādara-doṣeṇa jhaṭīti asiddheḥ doṣa-prāya eveti jñeyam*. See also Jīva on *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.69.

not doubt or disbelief, as one might suspect if its primary object were doctrine, but rather just the lack of *śraddhā* or *āsraddhā*. In the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (1.5.3) this is demonstrated clearly: in discussing the realm and functions of the mind, the Upaniṣad lists both faith and lack of faith, and distinguishes that from doubt and decision.⁷⁶ Śaṅkara's gloss on these terms again underlines the ascetic character of *śraddhā*: 'faith', he writes, 'is the orthodox mentality towards ritual actions and their unseen results, as well as in the gods', whereas 'lack of faith is the conception that is the opposite to that'.⁷⁷ These are different from decision and doubt, which convey a strong epistemological notion: decision is that which allows us to determine the nature of an object before us—like whether it is blue or white—and doubt is the inability to do so and thus 'the cognition of uncertainty'.⁷⁸

Similarly, in chapter four of the *Bhagavad-gītā* (4.40) Kṛṣṇa describes those unfit for the knowledge he has just discussed: they are ignorant, without faith and full of doubts ('their mind is doubt').⁷⁹ The commentators point out that faith and doubt are not opposite here, or that lack of faith is the same as being doubtful. Śaṅkara describes the first as not having faith in the words of the guru and sacred texts, and the second as 'having a mind full of doubts'. Viśvanātha defines the faithless as those who, 'though they have knowledge of the scriptures, having seen the mutually contradictory positions of various debaters, do not trust' while those that doubt 'have faith, but their minds are full of doubt'.⁸⁰ The *Bhagavad-gītā* also illustrates this in chapter three: those who act on Kṛṣṇa's teachings with faith (3.31) are contrasted not with persons who doubt Kṛṣṇa's teachings, but merely those who do not follow his instructions (3.32).

⁷⁶ *Kāmaḥ saṃkalpo cicikītsā śraddhāśraddhā dḥṭir adḥṭir hrīr dhīr bhīr ity etat sarva mana eva* (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka* 1.5.3).

⁷⁷ *Śraddhā adṛṣṭārtheṣu karmasv āstikya-buddhir devatādiṣu ca; āsraddhā tad-viparītā buddhiḥ* (Śaṅkara on *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka* 1.5.3).

⁷⁸ *Samkalpaḥ pratyupasthita-viśaya-vikalpanaṃ śukla-nīlādi-bhedena. Vicikītsā saṃśaya-jñānam* (Śaṅkara on *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka* 1.5.3).

⁷⁹ *Ajñāś cāśraddadhānāś ca saṃśayātmā vinaśyati* (*Gītā* 4.40).

⁸⁰ *Āsraddadhānaḥ śāstra-jñānavattve'pi nānāvādināṃ paraṣpara-vipratipattim dṛṣṭvā na kvāpi viśvastaḥ, śraddhāvattve'pi saṃśayātmā* (Viśvanātha on *Gītā* 4.40). Baladeva's comments are almost identical. See also *Bhakti-sandarbha* 155.

ŚRADDHĀ AND SCRIPTURE

Most commonly the commentators link this understanding of *śraddhā* with ‘orthodoxy’ (*āstikya*) and often gloss the word *śraddhā* as *āstikya-buddhi*⁸¹—an ‘orthodox understanding’, or, as Paul Hacker puts it, an ‘affirmative attitude towards a tradition’ (*bejahende Haltung gegenüber einem Überlieferung-complex*).⁸² Śrīdhara, for example, states that the faithless persons Kṛṣṇa discusses in *Gītā* 9.3 ‘do not accept orthodoxy’.⁸³

The notion of *āstikya* goes back to the old distinction made in South Asian religions between *āstika* and *nāstika* schools of thought, the former affirming the validity of something (the term being derived from *asti*, meaning ‘it is’), whereas the latter denies its validity (*nāsti* meaning ‘it is not’). What is denied or affirmed, is, however, disputed and also shifts over time. According to the *Vācaspatyam* Sanskrit dictionary, the word *āstika* refers to someone who thinks there is an afterlife (*para-loka*).⁸⁴ In his Sanskrit-English dictionary Monier Monier-Williams translates *āstika* as ‘one who believes in the existence (of God, of another world, &c.)’, and offers ‘belief in God, piety, faithfulness’ as the primary meaning of *āstikya*, while a *nāstika* is according to him ‘an atheist or unbeliever’. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan and Charles Moore (1973, 350), on the other hand, claim the basis of the distinction is the acceptance or rejection of the Veda: ‘The systems of thought which admit the validity of the Vedas are called *āstika*, and those which repudiate it *nāstika*.’ This last goes back to Manu’s *Dharma-sāstra* (2.10–11) which states that the Veda and *Dharma-sāstra* ‘should never be called into question in any matter, for it is from them that the Law (*dharmā*) has shined forth. If a twice born disparages these two by relying on the science of logic, he ought to be ostracised by good people as an infidel (*nāstika*) and a denigrator of the Veda.’⁸⁵

⁸¹ See Śrīdhara on *Gītā* 9.3, 17.1 and *Bhāgavata* 1.16.29; Viśvanātha on *Gītā* 4.39, 9.3, 16.23, 18.42; Śaṅkara on *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka* 1.5.3, 3.9.21, *Chāndogya* 7.19.1, *Muṇḍaka* 2.1.7, and *Gītā* 6.37, 9.23, 17.1, 17.17, 18.42.

⁸² Hacker (1954), p. 362.

⁸³ *Āsraddadbhānā āstikyenāsvikurvantaḥ* (Śrīdhara on *Gītā* 9.3). In his commentary on the first book of the *Bhāgavata*, Śrīdhara even glosses *āstikya* as *śraddhā*: *āstikyaṃ śraddhā* (Śrīdhara on *Bhāgavata* 1.16.29). Viśvanātha offers the same gloss.

⁸⁴ *Asti para-loka iti matir yasya tḥak* (Tarkavācaspati (1970), p. 892).

⁸⁵ *Te sarvārtheṣv amūnāṃṣye tābhyāṃ dharmo hi nirbabbau. Yo ’vamanyate te tūbhe betu-sāstrāśrayād dvijaḥ, sa sādhubhir bahiṣ-kāryo nāstiko veda-nindakāḥ* (*Mānava-dharmaśāstra* 2.10–11, translation by Patrick Olivelle). In his commentary on this verse, Medhātithi

If we take a closer look at the use of these two categories—*āstika* and *nāstika*—it becomes clear that the Veda (and by extension the texts that support or at least do not deny its teachings) is seen as the basis of this distinction not in and of themselves, but because it is the foundation of Vedic ritualism, or as Manu emphasises in the above passage, because ‘it is from them that *dharmā* has shined forth’. It is this ritual connection that becomes of central importance for the commentators and many Mīmāṃsā theologians, who defend Vedic ritualism against Buddhists and Jains who reject these rituals as immoral because of their sometimes violent character. Manu’s ‘denigrator of the Veda’ is thus, as Andrew Nicholson points out, ‘not someone who says that the Veda is untrue, but someone who says that the Veda is immoral’.⁸⁶ In other words, because the *nāstikas* reject the rituals which they perceive to be immoral, they also reject the Veda, which is immoral for teaching them.

This rejection of ritual is also one of the most common characteristic of *nāstikas* given in the *Mahābhārata*. As Gregory Bailey demonstrates, the characteristics the *Mahābhārata* most commonly associates with the *nāstikas* are that they reject the Veda, that they do not perform rituals and that they are ignorant about *dharmā* and thus do not live in accordance with it.⁸⁷

It is in this ritual context that we have to see the claim that an acceptance or rejection of an after life or other world (*para-loka*) forms the basis of the *āstika/nāstika* division. As Medhātithi, a commentator on Manu, writes ‘a *nāstika* is one who says, ‘there is no other world; there is no [purpose in] gift-giving; there is no [purpose in] sacrificing.’⁸⁸ All three are linked: the *nāstikas* do not perform sacrifices, nor do they give sacrificial gifts, because they do not believe that these can lead to heaven.

Andrew Nicholson notes that this view of the *āstika/nāstika* distinction is strongly tied to the Mīmāṃsā view of scripture. As he explains,

in the worldview of the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā school, a ‘reviler of the Vedas’ is simply a synonym for a ritual skeptic, someone who refuses to perform rituals or acknowledge their efficacy. According to the Mīmāṃsakas, we do not listen to the Vedas for information about the world; rather, the essence of the Vedas

clarifies that ‘the science of logic’ here refers to ‘the *nāstika* science of logic of the Buddhists, Cārvākas, and others, which repeatedly state that the Veda leads to *adharma*’.

⁸⁶ Nicholson (2010), p. 168.

⁸⁷ Bailey (2013), pp. 299–304.

⁸⁸ Medhātithi on *Manu* 8.309, quoted in Nicholson (2010), p. 168.

is injunction (*vidhi*). Of course, some passages in the Veda appear to impart factual information about the world, for instance, statements such as ‘Vāyu is the swiftest deity.’ In fact, the sole function of these ‘statements of praise’ (*arthavāda*) is to encourage ritual action, not to impart knowledge about time-bound states of affairs in the world. The Vedas cannot do this because they are eternal. Since the Vedas would already have had to exist before any particular state of affairs came to pass, it is a logical impossibility that they should give information about any event in time. Instead, the only function of the Vedas is to prescribe action. A ‘reviler of the Veda’, then, can only mean someone who refuses to do the things that the Veda prescribes.⁸⁹

However, Nicholson argues, Vedānta has a very different view of the Veda—it teaches not rituals and *dharmā*, but rather knowledge of Brahman—and as this school gained in prominence, he continues, over time the meaning of *nāstika* and *āstika* shifted from being based on orthopraxy to being about orthodoxy.⁹⁰

The way the (Vedāntic) commentators I examine here understand the term *āstikya*, however, does not quite support such a claim, and as we will see below, Caitanya Vaiṣṇavas do not quite argue that scripture merely teaches knowledge. Viśvanātha defines *āstikya*, ‘orthodoxy’, as ‘a firm trust in scripture’⁹¹ and Baladeva similarly explains it as ‘an acceptance of the meaning derived from scripture as truth’ but elaborates that scripture teaches that ‘Hari, who is to be known by all Vedas, who is the sole cause of everything, who is worshipped by acts he himself enjoins and pleased by single-minded devotion, offers everything [to his devotees] including himself.’⁹²

Often when *śraddhā* is defined as such, it is explicitly linked with rituals or devotional practices, rather than beliefs, and this, as I will argue later, reflects their views of scripture. Thus, Viśvanātha describes the faithless (*aśraddadhānāḥ*) of *Gītā* 9.3 as those ‘who do not choose orthodoxy (*āstikya*), considering the excellence of *bhakti* expounded in the statements of scripture

⁸⁹ Nicholson (2010), pp. 170–171.

⁹⁰ Nicholson (2010), p. 171.

⁹¹ *Āstikyaṃ śāstrārthe dṛḍha-viśvāsaḥ* (Viśvanātha on *Gītā* 18.42).

⁹² *Āstikyaṃ sarvaveda-vedyo harir nikhilaiika-karaṇaṃ sva-vibitaiḥ karmabbir āradhitaḥ kevalayā bhaktiyā ca santoṣitaḥ sva-paryantaṃ sarvam arpayatīti śāstrādhigate’rthe satyatva-viniścayaḥ* (Baladeva on *Gītā* 18.42).

to be merely praise (*stuti*) and explanation (*arthavāda*).⁹³ In other words, those without *śraddhā*, are those that do not perform devotional acts, praised in the preceding verse, because they do not trust the praise given to these acts by scripture.

Śaṅkara, whose view of scripture differs from the Vaiṣṇava theologians we will discuss here, nevertheless also associates this ‘orthodox understanding’ with religious practice. He defines *śraddhā* as ‘an orthodox understanding in regards to ritual actions (*karma*), whose object is unseen, as well as towards the gods, and so on’. *Āśraddhā*, he continues, ‘is the understanding that is opposite to this’.⁹⁴ Elsewhere he links it with a peace of mind that precedes every action, respect towards the object of one’s meditation, and with *bhakti*.⁹⁵

Though the word *śraddhā* is only occasionally used in both the *Gītā* and the *Bhāgavata* in relation to scripture or teachings, the commentators regularly see scripture or teachings as the object of *śraddhā*. Just as Medhātithi’s and the Mīmāṃsaka’s understanding of *āstika* is grounded in ritual, but also defined by an acceptance of the Veda as the foundation of ritual practice, so too is *śraddhā* as ‘orthodox understanding’ often linked with scripture or oral teachings received from one’s preceptor. Thus Śrīdhara elaborates that the faithful person (*śraddhāvān*) of *Gītā* 4.39 is ‘one who has an orthodox understanding in regards to the meaning taught by the preceptor’⁹⁶ and while commenting on the *Gītā*’s teachings on yoga, Viśvanātha explains *śraddhā* as ‘the orthodox understanding in regards to the scriptures of yoga’.⁹⁷

But the association of *śraddhā* and scripture is made even when *śraddhā* is not explicitly seen in relation to *āstikya*. Commenting on *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* 2.4, for example, Jīva Gosvāmī glosses *śraddhā* as ‘true apprehension of the meaning of the scriptures on the Self’,⁹⁸ and commenting on the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.2.19) he explains *śraddhā* as ‘trust in the meaning

⁹³ *Āśraddadhānāḥ, śāstra-vākyaiḥ pratipāditam bhakteḥ sarvotkarṣaṃ stuty-arthavādam eva manyamānā āstikyaena na svīkurvanti* (Viśvanātha on *Gītā* 9.3); see also Śrīdhara’s comments on the same verse, on which Viśvanātha here elaborates.

⁹⁴ *Śraddhā adṛṣṭārtheṣu karmasv āstikya-buddhir devatādiṣu ca; āśraddhā tad-viparītā buddhiḥ* (Śaṅkara on *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka* 1.5.3).

⁹⁵ See Śaṅkara on *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka* 3.9.21, *Chāndogya* 7.19.1, *Muṇḍaka* 2.1.7.

⁹⁶ *Śraddhāvān gurūpadiṣṭe arthe āstikya-buddhimān* (Śrīdhara on *Gītā* 4.39).

⁹⁷ [...] *śraddhayopetaḥ yoga-śāstrāstikyaena* [...] (Viśvanātha on *Gītā* 6.37).

⁹⁸ *Śraddhā adhyātma-śāstre yātbārthya-pratītiḥ* (*Sarva-saṃvādinī* p. 90).

of scripture'.⁹⁹ Commenting on a verse from the *Bhāgavata*, he defines a faithful person as 'one who trusts the scriptures taught by me [Kapila], the guru and my devotee',¹⁰⁰ while in the *Krama-sandarbhā* he glosses *śraddhā* as 'trust in scripture'.¹⁰¹ Viśvanātha echoes this in his commentary on the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*,¹⁰² and in the *Mādhurya-kādambinī* he similarly defines *śraddhā* as 'consisting of a firm conviction in the meaning of various scriptures'.¹⁰³

How scripture and faith relate to each other several commentators directly address in their discussions on *Gītā* 17.1. Having heard from Kṛṣṇa that 'those who abandon the injunctions of scripture and act impelled by desire do not attain success, nor happiness, nor the highest goal' (16.23), Arjuna wonders about the condition of those who abandon the injunctions of scripture, but act with faith (17.1). Viśvanātha clarifies Arjuna's question as follows: 'those who give up the injunctions of the scriptures act guided by their desires. However, those endowed with faith, fully free from desire and enjoyment, sacrifice, that is, they perform the sacrifice of austerity, the sacrifice of knowledge and the sacrifice of chanting, and so on. What is their condition or position, what is their support?'¹⁰⁴

Śrīdhara emphasises that Arjuna does not ask about those that violate the injunctions of scripture, but those who have never made an effort to study scripture because they consider it troublesome or because they are lazy.¹⁰⁵ Their faith, Śāṅkara explains, arises not from a knowledge of scripture, as they are unaware of the teachings of both *śruti* or *smṛti*, but 'merely

⁹⁹ *Yo bhaved ity atrāpi śāstrādiṣv anipuṇa ity anuvariantīyaṃ śraddhā-mātrasya śāstrārtha-viśvāsa-rūpatvāt* (Jīva on *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.19).

¹⁰⁰ *Śraddadhāno mad-bhakta-guru-mad-upadiṣṭa-śāstrayor viśvāsavān* (*Krama-sandarbhā* on *Bhāgavata* 3.32.41–42).

¹⁰¹ *Śraddhā hi śāstra-viśvāsaḥ* (*Krama-sandarbhā* on *Bhāgavata* 11.20.9).

¹⁰² *Śāstrārtha-viśvāsa eva śraddhā* (Viśvanātha on *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.17).

¹⁰³ *Sā [=śraddhā] ca tat-tac-chāstrārthe dṛḍha-pratyaya-mayī* (*Mādhurya-kādambinī* 2.5).

¹⁰⁴ *Ye śāstra-viddbim utsṛjya kāma-cārato vartante; kiṃtu kāma-bhoga-rabitā eva śrad-dhayānvitāḥ santo yajante tapo-yajña-jñāna-yajña-jaṇa-yajñādikāṃ kurvanti, teṣāṃkā niṣṭhā stbītiḥ kiṃ ālambanam ity arthaḥ* (Viśvanātha on *Gītā* 17.1). Baladeva echoes this in his comments on this verse.

¹⁰⁵ *Ato nātra śāstrollāṅghino grhyante, api tu kleśa-buddhyā vā ālasyād vā śāstrārtha-jñāne prayatnam akṛtvā [...]* (Śrīdhara on 17.1). He repeats the same idea in the next sentence. See also Baladeva on 17.1: *ye janāḥ pāṭhato'rthataś ca durgamaṃ vedam viditvālyasādinā tad-vidbim utsṛjya...*

from witnessing the conduct of elders'.¹⁰⁶ That such persons do not know scripture is of crucial importance for the commentators, for if they had knowledge of the injunctions of scripture but chose to ignore them they would not have faith, as Śrīdhara explains: 'faith is an orthodox understanding and for those who have knowledge of scripture it does not arise in regards to what is inconsistent with scripture.'¹⁰⁷ 'It is not possible to imagine', Śaṅkara writes, 'that those endowed with faith that are aware of some scripture which primarily teach injunctions regarding the worship of the gods, and so on, would abandon scripture because they have no faith [in them], and engage in the worship of the gods, and so on, which is enjoined by that [i.e. scripture]'.¹⁰⁸

Baladeva argues similarly and makes a distinction between 'scriptural faith' (*śāstrīya-śraddhā*) and the 'natural faith' (*svabhāvajā śraddhā*) Kṛṣṇa discusses in this chapter. Those who have the latter do not have 'the discriminatory knowledge born from good teachings and scripture which is capable of altering one's own nature (*svabhāva*)', whereas those who possess faith born from scripture 'carry out the meaning of scripture by the injunctions it teaches'.¹⁰⁹

The same idea is found earlier in the *Gītā*, when Kṛṣṇa discusses those who faithfully worship other gods. The *Gītā* again stresses that those who worship other gods may have faith, but their faith is not scripturally grounded, for their worship is 'not preceded by injunctions' (*avidhi-pūrvakam*, *Gītā* 9.23), and Śaṅkara clarifies that those who worship other gods do so impelled by their own nature (*svabhāva*).¹¹⁰

In the *Bhakti-sandarbhā*, Jīva Gosvāmī too makes a distinction between scriptural faith and faith not grounded in scripture (though, unlike this

¹⁰⁶ *Śruti-lakṣaṇaṃ smṛti-lakṣaṇaṃ vā kaṃcit śāstra-viddhiṃ apaśyantaḥ vṛdda-vyavahāra-darśanād eva śraddadhānatayā ye devādīn pūjayanti* (Śaṅkara on *Gītā* 17.1).

¹⁰⁷ *Āstikya-buddhir hi śraddhā, na cāsau śāstra-viruddhe arthe śāstra-jñānavatām sambhavati* (Śrīdhara on *Gītā* 17.1).

¹⁰⁸ *Devādi-pūjā-vidhi-param kiṃcit śāstraṃ paśyanta eva tat utsrjyāśraddadhānatayā tad-vibitāyāṃ devādi-pūjāyāṃ śraddhayaṃ anvitāḥ pravartante iti na śakyam kalpayitum* (Śaṅkara on *Gītā* 17.1).

¹⁰⁹ *Svabhāvam anyathayitum samarthā khalu sad-upadiṣṭa-śāstra-janyā viveka-samvit sātēṣāṃ nāsty ataḥ svabhāvajā śraddhā trividhā bhavati. Tādṛk-śāstra-janyā śraddhā tv anyaiiva yathā tad-ukti-vidhinaiva tad-arthānuṣṭhānam* (Baladeva on *Gītā* 17.2). Baladeva uses the term *śāstrīya-śraddhā* in his introductory comments to *Gītā* 17.1: *vedam adbhīya tad-vidhinā tad-arthānutiṣṭhantaḥ śāstrīya-śraddhā-yuktā devāḥ*.

¹¹⁰ *Yayaiva pūrvam pravṛttaḥ svabhāvato yo yāṃ devatā-tanuṃ śraddhāyārcitum icchati* (Śaṅkara on *Gītā* 7.22).

chapter of the *Gītā*, he considers both in relation to devotion to Kṛṣṇa): ‘if he, though having faith, remains repeatedly sensually engaged by the power of his current (*prārabdha*) karma, his devotion—the essence of which is humility—may nevertheless intensify when he wards that off, even at the time of such sensual engagement.’¹¹¹ Jīva specifies that this type of faith is the faith discussed in chapter seventeen of the *Gītā*, and ‘is obtained through popular traditions, not born from a deep study of scripture’.¹¹² Scriptural faith, he argues, is of a different nature. When it arises one cannot behave badly: scripture itself condemns such bad activities, and rejecting scriptural teachings would be displeasing to Viṣṇu. Transgressing scriptural injunctions would thus conflict with being a devotee, and would prove the devotee has no faith in the greatness of devotion to Kṛṣṇa.¹¹³ Jīva’s point is thus similar to Śāṅkara’s: to have faith in rituals and knowingly ignore scriptural injunctions regarding those ritual acts does not make sense, as those acts are taught in those texts, and therefore to reject one is to reject the other.

In several other places, Jīva Gosvāmī considers this non-scriptural faith to be the faith of the *Bhāgavata*’s ‘materialistic devotee’. Asked by king Nimi to describe the devotees of the Lord in greater detail, the sage Havir categorises them into three groups: the highest devotees (*bhāgavatottama*), who sees God in everything and everything in God; the ‘middle’ devotees (*madhyama*), who relate to God with love (*prema*), to his devotees with friendship, to the ignorant with compassion, and to the malicious with indifference; and, finally, the materialistic devotee (*bhaktah prakṛtaḥ*), who worships Kṛṣṇa’s image (*arcā*) with faith, but does not behave like this towards his devotees and other people (*Bhāgavata* 11.2.44–47). The faith of this last type of devotee is not scriptural faith, according to Jīva, but rather some faith that ‘arises merely from popular tradition’.¹¹⁴ Because this devotee is

¹¹¹ *Yadi vā śraddhāvato’pi prārabdhādi-vaśena viṣaya-sambandhābhyāso bhavati, tathāpi tad-bādhayā viṣaya-sambandha-samaye’pi dainyātmikā bhaktir evocchalitā syāt* (*Bhakti-sandarbha* 173).

¹¹² [...] ‘*ye śāstra-vidhim utsrjya yajante śraddhayānvitāḥ*’ (*Gītā* 17.1) *itival loka-paramparā-prāptā, na tu śāstrādvadhāraṇa-jātā* (*Bhakti-sandarbha* 173).

¹¹³ *Śāstrīya-śraddhāyām tu jātāyām sudurācāratvāyogaḥ syāt, ‘para-patnī-para-dravya’ (Viṣṇu Purāṇa 3.8.14) ity-ādi-viṣṇu-toṣaṇa-śāstra-virodhāt. Maryādām kṛtām tena ity ādinā tad-bhaktatva-virodhāc ca. Na tu sā durācāratā tad-bhakti-mahima-śraddhākṛtaiva* (*Bhakti-sandarbha* 173).

¹¹⁴ ‘*Ye śāstra-vidhim utsrjya yajante śraddhayānvitāḥ*’ (*Gītā* 17.1) *ity-ādy-ukta-rītyā loka-paramparā-mātra-jāte yat-kiñcic-cbraddhā-sad-bhāve tu kaniṣṭha-bhāgavatatvam eva* (*Bhakti-sandarbha* 106).

described as ‘materialistic’, which means he has only just begun to practice devotion, ‘his faith is not born from deep study of the meaning of scripture’ because his materialistic vision, by which he identifies with the body, is proof that he has no knowledge of scripture. ‘And hence’, Jīva concludes, ‘it should be understood that for the first, or youngest (*kaniṣṭha*), practitioner scriptural faith in love (*prema*) has not yet arisen’.¹¹⁵

This discussion clearly shows that *śraddhā* in itself is not a doctrinal faith: though none of the commentators make this explicit, we can assume that those whose faith is not grounded in scripture probably do not have much theological knowledge, as they are unaware of the sources of that theology.¹¹⁶ Yet they still have faith. In other words, faith is not dependent on knowledge of scripture—and hence is not a faith *in* scriptural teachings. Jīva Gosvāmī’s sharp distinction between faith obtained from popular traditions and scriptural faith does indicate that faith should ideally be informed by scripture: knowledge of scriptural teachings will make one’s faith so strong that there is no chance of doing anything contrary to the injunctions of scripture. One’s conviction to perform acts of devotion is fully grounded in these scriptural injunctions, which have been, as it were, fully internalised.

That *śraddhā* is not a doctrinal faith becomes even clearer in the remainder of this chapter of the *Gītā*, which simultaneously underlines its relation to religious practice. Kṛṣṇa declares that the faith of all men corresponds to their mind or state of being (*sattva*). ‘A person consists of faith; whatever he has faith in, that he is.’¹¹⁷ The nature of a man’s faith corresponds to the nature of his mind—if, for example, passion predominates in his mind, his faith will be passionate—yet the relationship is not one-sided, for a man also is what his faith is. Kṛṣṇa then describes these three types of faith: ‘Persons who are pure (*sāttvika*) worship the gods, while those who are passionate (*rājasa*) worship *yakṣas* and *rākṣasas*. Others, who are ignorant (*tāmasa*), wor-

¹¹⁵ *Sa prakṛtaḥ—prakṛti-prārambho’dbunaiva prāraddha-bhaktir ity arthaḥ. Iyaṃ ca śraddhā na śāstrārthāvadbhāraṇa-jātā,—‘yasyātma-buddhiḥ kuṇape tribhūtuke’ (Bhāgavata 10.84.13) ityādi-śāstrājñānāt, tasmāl loka-paramparā-prāptaiyeti pūrvavat. Atāś cājāta-premā-śāstrīya-śraddhā-yuktaḥ sādhabas tu mukhyaḥ kaniṣṭho jñeyasḥ. (Krama-sandarbhā on 11.2.47)* See also *Bhakti-sandarbhā* 190, where Jīva Gosvāmī repeats these comments with some minor elaborations.

¹¹⁶ In the Hindu context, and particularly in Mīmāṃsā and Vedānta, theology is derived from scripture, and independent reasoning is frowned upon. See Jīva’s commentary on *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.17.

¹¹⁷ *Sattvānurūpā sarvasya śraddhā bhavati bhārata; śraddhā-mayo ‘yaṃ puruṣo yo yac-chraddhaḥ sa eva saḥ (Gītā 17.3).*

ship the spirits of the dead and groups of ghosts.’¹¹⁸ Two observations can be made here. Firstly, the person who has a pure faith does not disbelieve in the existence of the *yakṣas* or the spirits of the dead—the object of worship of those who have the other two kinds of faith—nor does he disbelieve in the efficacy of the practice of worshipping these beings.¹¹⁹ But he does not value such worship, or—keeping the etymology of *śraddhā* in mind—does not ‘place his heart’ in the act of worshipping these beings, though he has Gonda’s ‘active, positive and affirmative attitude’ towards the act of worshipping the gods.

Secondly, it is remarkable that while describing these three types of faith, Kṛṣṇa does not use the word for the concept he is explaining, as he does for all the other things he analyses according to the three modes of nature in the rest of the chapter (food, sacrifice, charity, etc.). The word *śraddhā* or any of its derivatives is not used in this verse, but rather Kṛṣṇa talks of persons worshipping or offering (the verbal form *yajante*, used twice in this verse), thus emphasising the ascetical nature of faith—the differences in faith are manifested not in a difference of ideas, but rather in a difference of practice.

But what then of faith in scriptures or oral teachings received from one’s guru? How should we understand this? The context in which the above *Gītā* passages occur clarify this. The faith in scripture is not so much a faith in

¹¹⁸ *Yajante sāttvikā devān yakṣa-rakṣāṃsi rājasāḥ; pretān bhūta-gaṇāṃś cānye yajante tāmasā janāḥ* (*Gītā* 17.4). Some commentators take the *sāttvika śraddhā* to be the real *śraddhā*, and the other two its transformations. For example, when Kṛṣṇa declares faith to be of three kinds, Śrīdhara voices a possible objection: ‘faith is only *sāttvika*, because it is a product of *sattva*. [...] Therefore, how can you say faith is threefold?’ Śrīdhara does not refute this idea, but answers the objector’s question: ‘This is true,’ he writes. ‘Nevertheless, because it inheres in a person associated with passion or ignorance, goodness becomes threefold by being mixed with passion and ignorance.’ (*Nanu śraddhā sāttvikī eva sattva-kāryatvena [...] ataḥ katham tasyās traividhyaṃ ucyate? Satyaṃ, tathāpi rajas-tamo-yukta-puruṣāśrayatvena rajas-tamo-miśritatvena sattyasya traividhyaṃ ghaṭate*, Śrīdhara on 17.3).

The *Bhāgavata* (11.25.27) offers an other analysis of faith according to the *guṇas*: *sāttvika śraddhā* is spiritual (*adhyātmikī*), *rājasā* is faith in ritual action (*karma*), while faith in *adharma* is *tāmasā*. To this it adds a fourth: faith in the worship of Kṛṣṇa, which is beyond the *guṇas* (*nirguṇa*). Some commentators interpret the few occurrences of the words *parā śraddhā* (‘higher faith’, *Gītā* 12.2 & 17.17, *Bhāgavata* 5.24.19) as referring to this fourth type of faith: see, for example, Viśvanātha on *Gītā* 12.2. For yet another *guṇa*-classification of *śraddhā* see also Śrīdhara on *Bhāgavata* 5.26.2.

¹¹⁹ The *Gītā* itself states several times that worship of different beings leads to different results, thus emphasising that such types of worship is efficacious, but also indicating that such worship is not good. See, for example, *Gītā* 7.23, 9.25.

the doctrine these may texts proclaim, but rather in their ritual injunctions. It is the injunctions of scripture (*śāstra-vidhi*) that are of central concern here. As we saw earlier, Śrīdhara and Śaṅkara emphasise that the persons discussed in *Gītā* 17.1 cannot know scripture, for they could not have faith—the orthodox mentality (*āstikya-buddhi*)—and at the same time act contrary to scriptural injunctions. Just as for the Mīmāṃsakas, in this context the text and the practice cannot be separated. As the commentators' comments indicate, to denigrate one is to denigrate the other.

When scripture or oral instruction is the object of *śraddhā* in the *Gītā*, it is also clear that it relates to an instruction to perform a certain act. Thus, Śrīdhara clarifies that 'the faithful' mentioned in *Gītā* 3.31 have faith in Kṛṣṇa's words, and he elaborates in his commentary on the next verse that Kṛṣṇa's teaching here is 'the injunction that actions should be performed for the sake of the Lord'.¹²⁰

The importance of injunctions in scripture is again highlighted in Rūpa and Jīva Gosvāmī's use of the four prerequisites or preliminary discussions (*anubandhas*) used in Sanskrit philosophical texts: the eligibility for the study of the topics discussed in the text (*adbikāri*), the subject matter of the text (*viṣaya* or *abhidheya*), the aim or purpose of the text (*prayojana* or *phala*) and the relation or connection between the object of knowledge and that which reveals it (*sambandha*), that is, how the text teaches its subject matter.¹²¹

Sadānanda, a popular Advaita author of the fifteenth century, explains these four as follows: the person eligible for Vedānta has to have studied and understood the Veda and its ancillary texts, be freed from illicit acts and actions motivated by desire, while performing the obligatory Vedic rites, austerity and acts of worship; he has to be pure in mind, be able to discriminate between the temporal and eternal, be renounced, control his senses and mind, be patient and tolerant, have faith in the teachings of his guru, and

¹²⁰ *Mad-vākye śraddhāvantaḥ* (Śrīdhara on *Gītā* 3.31); *iśvarārthaṃ karma kartavyam ity anuśāsanam* (Śrīdhara on *Gītā* 3.32). Śrīdhara refers here to Kṛṣṇa's teachings in *Gītā* 3.9, where he states actions should be performed for the sake of *yajña*, which, based on the Vedic phrase *yajño vai viṣṇuḥ* ('Viṣṇu indeed is *yajña*'), Śrīdhara glosses as Viṣṇu.

¹²¹ See Sadānanda's *Vedānta-sāra* (1.3): *tatra anubandho nāma adbikāri-viṣaya-sambandha-prayojanāni*. In the introduction to his commentary on both the *Īśā Upaniṣad* and the *Gītā*, Śaṅkara calls *viṣaya*, the second of the *anubandhas*, *abhidheya*: *evam uktādbikāry-abhidheya-sambandha-prayojanān mantrān saṃkṣepato vyākhyāsyāmaḥ* (Introduction to *Īśā*); *paramārtha-tattvaṃ ca vāsudevākhyam para-brahmābhidheya-bhūtaṃ viśeṣataḥ abhivyañjayad viśiṣṭa-prayojana-sambandhābhidheyaḥ gītā-śāstram* (Introduction to *Gītā*).

desire liberation.¹²² The subject matter (*viśaya*) of Vedānta is the oneness of the living being (*jīva*) with Brahman, which is pure consciousness. ‘This is to be established’, Sadānanda writes, ‘because this is the purport of the Upaniṣads’.¹²³ The connection (*sambandha*) is the relation between that oneness that is to be established (*prameya*) and the means of establishing it (*pramāṇa*)—the Upaniṣads which teach this.¹²⁴ And, finally, the aim (*prayojana*) is removal of ignorance regarding one’s identity and the attainment of bliss of one’s inherent nature.¹²⁵

In the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.2.16–19) Rūpa names faith as one of three items that make one eligible for a devotional practice that follows scriptural injunctions (*vidhī bhakti*): ‘he who by some great fortune develops faith in service, and is neither too attached nor too renounced, is eligible for this.’¹²⁶ He divides those eligible into three classes, based on the strength of their faith and their knowledge of scripture. The best are those ‘who are well versed in scripture and logic [or scriptural reasoning and interpretation, as Jīva Gosvāmī clarifies in his commentary], who have an absolutely firm conviction, and whose faith is mature’.¹²⁷ Next are those ‘who are not well versed in scripture and so on, [but] have faith’, whereas the third have only ‘pliable faith’.¹²⁸ Knowledge of scripture is important, and distinguishes the best and medium devotee from the lowest, as they are engaged in the devotional practice that follows scriptural injunctions (*vidhī bhakti*). A knowledge of and trust in the injunctions (*vidhī*) of the scriptures is therefore important, as it makes their faith mature. As Jīva explains, the third devotee’s faith is easily shattered by hearing other statements from scripture or conflicting logic, but the confidence of the other two types of devotees is firm by their reflections on truth (*tattva*), religious practice (*sādhana*) and the human aims

¹²² *Vedānta-sāra* 1.4.

¹²³ *Viśayaḥ jīva-brahmaikyam śuddha-caitanyaṁ prameyaṁ tatra eva vedāntānām tātparyāt* (*Vedānta-sāra* 1.4).

¹²⁴ *Sambandhas tu tad-aikya-prameyasya tat-pratipādakopaniṣat-pramaṇasya ca bodhya-bodbaka-bhāvaḥ* (*Vedānta-sāra* 1.4).

¹²⁵ *Prayojanam tu tad-aikya-prameya-gatājñāna-nivṛttiḥ sva-svarūpānandāptiś ca* (*Vedānta-sāra* 1.4).

¹²⁶ *Yaḥ kenāpy atibhāgyena jāta-śraddho’sya sevane nātisakto na vairāgya-bhāg asyām abbikāry asau* (*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.14).

¹²⁷ *Śāstre yuktau ca nipuṇaḥ sarvathā dṛḍha-niścayaḥ prauḍha-śraddho’dhikāri yaḥ sa bhaktāu uttamo mataḥ* (*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.17).

¹²⁸ *Yaḥ śāstrādiṣu anipuṇaḥ śraddhvān sa tu madhyamaḥ [...] yo bhavet komala-śraddhaḥ sa kaṣiṭho nigadyate* (*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.18–19).

(*puruṣārtha*) as taught by their guru.¹²⁹ Nevertheless, though knowledge of scripture is important, faith is the only characteristic all three devotees have in common, and Rūpa Gosvāmī later states (and both Viśvanātha and Jīva also repeatedly stress) that such faith in devotion to Kṛṣṇa alone makes one eligible for it.¹³⁰

The other three items—scripture’s connection, subject matter, and aim (generally in that order)—Jīva discusses in the beginning of the *Tattva-sandarbhā*. Jīva explains the first of these along Sadānanda’s lines: it is the relation between the subject of scripture—Śrī Kṛṣṇa, ‘the signified (*vācya*)’—and its means—‘the signifier (*vācaka*)’.¹³¹ Jīva analyses this first briefly in the *Tattva-sandarbhā* (50–63), and much more elaborately in the following three treatises (the *Bhāgavat-*, *Paramātmā-*, and *Kṛṣṇa-sandarbhās*).¹³² Using a range of hermeneutical tools, including the six Mīmāṃsā criteria for determining the content of a text (*ṣaḍ-liṅga*), Jīva attempts to demonstrate how the *Bhāgavata* teaches nothing but knowledge of a personal God (*bhagavān*).¹³³

The most remarkable difference, though, lies in the second element: scripture’s meaning (*abhidheya*, ‘that which is to be denoted’). Though traditionally this element is necessarily related to that of scripture’s connection (*sambandha*)—the latter merely establishes *how* the text under discussion establishes the former—Jīva departs here from that. According to him, the

¹²⁹ *Tataś cātrānīpuṇa iti yat kiñcin nīpuṇa ity arthaḥ. Komala-śraddhaḥ śāstra-yukty-antareṇa bhettum śakyaḥ* (Jīva on *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.19). The middle devotee is not so easily shaken: *Tattva-vicāreṇa sābhāna-vicāreṇa puruṣārtha-vicāreṇa ca dṛḍha-niścaya ity arthaḥ* (Jīva on *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.17). Viśvanātha repeats this comment and clarifies in his comment on the next verse the focus of such deliberation: *śraddhāvān gurūpadiṣṭa-bhāgavat-tattvādau manasi dṛḍha-niścaya evety arthaḥ* (Viśvanātha on *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.18).

¹³⁰ *Śraddhā-mātrasya tad-bhaktāv adbhikāritva-betutā* (*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.191). See also Jīva and Viśvanātha on *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.60, Jīva on *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.65, Viśvanātha on *Bhāgavata* 11.20.8, and Jīva’s *Bhakti-sandarbhā* 172.

¹³¹ *Atthāivam sūcitānām śrī-kṛṣṇa-tad-vācya-vācakatā-lakṣaṇa-sambandha [...]* (*Tattva-sandarbhā* 9). See also *Tattva-sandarbhā* 50.

¹³² See *Kṛṣṇa-sandarbhā* 189 and *Bhakti-sandarbhā* 1.

¹³³ See *Paramātmā-sandarbhā* 105. The six criteria (*ṣaḍ-liṅga*) are six hermeneutical tools used in Mīmāṃsā and Vedānta to determine the subject matter of a text. They are what is mentioned in the opening and concluding statements (*upakramopasaṃbhāra*), what is repeated (*abhyāsa*), what is novel (*apūrva*), what is the result of its teachings (*phala*), what is explained (*arthavāda*), and established through reasoning (*upapatti*). For more on these, see Rambachan (1992), pp. 40–42. For more on Jīva’s use of these to determine how the *Bhāgavata* teaches its theology, see Gupta (2007), pp. 93–105.

subject (*abhidheya*) of the *Bhāgavata* is not Brahman, as Sadānanda argues, nor even Kṛṣṇa, as he demonstrated in his discussion of the connection (*sambandha*), but rather ‘that which is to be enjoined (*vidheya*), namely the worship of him [Kṛṣṇa]’.¹³⁴ Devotion is the only purport of the entire *Bhāgavata*, Jīva argues and at length attempts to demonstrate in the *Bhakti-sandarbha*, using once more the above mentioned six Mīmāṃsā criteria (*śad-liṅga*).¹³⁵ Thus, since devotion is the subject matter of the *Bhāgavata*, and not theology in its narrowest sense, its aim (*prayojana*) is not the removal of ignorance and the attainment of bliss as with Sadānanda, but rather love (*prema*) for Kṛṣṇa.¹³⁶

How do these two views relate to each other? How do injunctions as the subject of scripture relate to the theology scripture teaches? Jīva states that knowledge of Absolute Truth (*para-tattva*)—which falls in his views under connection (*sambandha*)—is the primary purport of scripture,¹³⁷ but argues that it establishes both ‘that which scripture denotes’ (*abhidheya*), namely *bhakti*, and its goal (*prayojana*).¹³⁸ This is true on two levels: what scripture teaches us about God’s nature and our relation to him forms the foundation for the devotional practices it enjoins, but also, if a person obtains knowledge of God from scripture, he will also worship God with the injunctions of scripture. In the *Bhakti-sandarbha*, Jīva explains this with an analogy:

It is just as a poor person, having heard that there is a treasure in his house, strives for it and [thus] obtains it. Nevertheless, [though injunctions to worship Kṛṣṇa are thus implied in statements about his nature,] it is still instructed to remove laxness.¹³⁹

¹³⁴ [...] *tad-bhajana-lakṣaṇa-vidheya-saparyāyābhidheya* [...] (*Tattva-sandarbha* 9).

¹³⁵ See *Bhakti-sandarbha* 114.

¹³⁶ [...] *tat-prema-lakṣaṇa-prayojana* [...] (*Tattva-sandarbha* 9).

Because of Jīva’s unusual use of these terms, they are often used in later writings as a shorthand for the theology proper (*sambandha*), the practice of devotion (*abhidheya*), and love for Kṛṣṇa (*prayojana*). See, for example, Kṛṣṇadāsa’s *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* 2.6.178: *bhagavān—‘sambandha’, bhakti—‘abhidheya’ haya premā—‘prayojana’, vede tina-vastu kaya*. ‘Bhagavān is the connection (*sambandha*), devotion the subject (*abhidheya*), love the goal (*prayojana*). The Vedas state these three things.’ See also *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* 2.20.124–125, 2.20.143, and 2.25.102–104.

¹³⁷ *Tato mukhyena tātparyeṇa para-tattve paryavasite’pi teṣaṃ para-tattvādy-upadeśasya* [...] (*Bhakti-sandarbha* 1).

¹³⁸ See *Tattva-sandarbha* 32.

¹³⁹ *Yathā tava grhe nidhir asti iti śrutvā kaścid daridras tad-arthaṃ prayatate labhate ca tam iti, tadvat tathāpi tac-chaitbhilya-nirāsāya punas tad-upadeśaḥ* (*Bhakti-sandarbha* 1).

Thus even when scripture teaches about God, it teaches us to turn to him and engage in acts of devotion to come to a deeper knowledge and experience of him. Jīva demonstrates this in the *Bhakti-sandarbha*, where he defines the subject (*abhidheya*) and aim (*prayojana*) in slightly more Vedāntic terms: *abhidheya* means ‘turning one’s face to him, from its opposite of having one’s face averted from him’. This turning to Kṛṣṇa is ‘characterised by worship of him’, and from this worship ‘knowledge of him arises’. The aim is then the experience of him, namely an internal and external realization (*sākṣāt-kāra*) that dispels all sorrow.¹⁴⁰

ŚRADDHĀ AND TRUST

In a few places, *śraddhā* is equated with ‘trust’ (*viśvāsa*, from the verbal root *vi-śvas*, ‘to breath freely, to be free from fear, to trust’).¹⁴¹ Though *viśvāsa* is at times used in a relational sense,¹⁴² the object of that trust is often a practice or teaching.¹⁴³ Sometimes, however, that distinction is not so clear cut. Thus Jīva Gosvāmī states that *śraddhā* is ‘trust (*viśvāsa*) in the meaning of scripture’, which ‘teaches that those who do not seek refuge in Kṛṣṇa are

¹⁴⁰ *Tatrābhidheyaṃ tad-vaikumhya-virodhitvāt tat-sāmmukhyam eva; tac ca tad-upāsana-lakṣaṇaṃ, yata eva taj-jñānam āvirbhavati. Prayojanaṃ ca tad-anubhavaḥ. Sa cāntar-bahiḥ-sākṣātkāra-lakṣaṇaḥ, yata eva svayaṃ kṛtsna-dubkha-nivṛttir bhavati (Bhakti-sandarbha 1).*

¹⁴¹ See, for example, Jīva’s *Krama-sandarbha* on *Bhāgavata* 3.25.25, and his *Bṛhad-vaishṇava-toṣaṇī* on 10.6.36; Baladeva on *Gītā* 2.6, 4.39, 6.37, 8.3, and 9.23.

¹⁴² The word *viśvāsa* occurs only once in the *Bhāgavata* (and not at all in the *Gītā*). In the eighth book (8.9.9), after the churning of the ocean of milk, Mohinī tempts the demons, and when they seem to trust her, she expresses her surprise that they want to go along with this because she has not proven to be worthy. She calls herself a *puṃścalī*, a courtesan—someone who runs after men—and says *viśvāsaṃ paṇḍīto jātu kāmīṃṣu na yāti hi*, ‘A learned person never puts his trust in women.’

In the (Bengali) *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* of Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja the word *viśvāsa* is very frequently used, and generally in a relational sense. Kavirāja Gosvāmī laments, for example, that his brother had a firm trust or faith (*sudṛḍha viśvāsa*) in Caitanya, but only the semblance of faith (*viśvāsa-ābhāsa*) in Nityānanda (1.5.173). Śrī Caitanya also states that he had had such firm *viśvāsa*—trust or faith—in the words of his guru: *ei tānra vākye āmi dṛḍha viśvāsa dbari* (1.7.95).

¹⁴³ See also for, example, the following verse from the *Bhāgavata*: ‘Trusting, they worship your feet, who, here on earth [lead to] freedom from this world.’ (*bhavata upāsate ’nighrim abhavam bhūvi viśvasitāḥ*, 10.87.20) The trust is here directed to a practice, namely the worship of Kṛṣṇa’s feet. In his commentary on this verse, Viśvanātha connects this with a trust in the word of the Lord, who in the *Gītā* (7.14) assures his devotees that those who worship him quickly cross over his *māyā*, which is otherwise difficult to cross (*mām eva ye prapadyante māyām etāṃ taranti te*).

fearful but those who seek refuge in him are fearless. Therefore when faith awakens, it is a sign of seeking refuge (*śaraṇāpatti*).¹⁴⁴ Though Jīva does not define *śraddhā* here in relational terms, there is a strong relational element to it. Having a firm trust in the statements of scripture that the act of seeking refuge leads to freedom from suffering and rebirth, is for Jīva a sign of trust in Kṛṣṇa, who promises in scripture he will guard his surrendered devotees from sin.¹⁴⁵

Rūpa Gosvāmī writes in the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* that *śraddhā* is the only cause of eligibility for *bhakti*, but adds that this is merely an aspect of a special trust (*viśvāsa*) in Keśava.¹⁴⁶ Jīva comments that though the two words (*śraddhā* and *viśvāsa*) are generally synonymous, they refer to two distinct stages.¹⁴⁷ The ‘special trust’ Rūpa mentions is, according to Mukundadāsa Gosvāmī ‘trust, accompanied by experience (*anubhava*), in Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is to be obtained through devotion’.¹⁴⁸ This special trust is a form of friendship (*sakhyā*) with God,¹⁴⁹ and is only rarely obtained, Rūpa writes, because it is

¹⁴⁴ *Śraddhā hi śāstrārtha-viśvāsaḥ. Śāstram ca tad-aśaraṇasya bhayaṃ, tac-charaṇasyābhayaṃ vadati. Tato jātāyāḥ śraddhāyāḥ śaraṇāpattir eva liṅgam (Bhakti-sandarbhā 173).* Trust that the Lord will protect you (*rakṣiṣyatīti viśvāsaḥ*) is one of the six aspects of seeking refuge of the *Pañcarātra* verse often quoted in Gauḍīya texts, like *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* 11.676 and *Bhakti-sandarbhā* 236. Later on in this section Jīva refers to these six aspects—having a positive intention, rejecting that which is disagreeable to devotion, the trust that the Lord protects his devotee, choosing to be sustained by the Lord, self-surrender and humility: ‘Now, earlier I taught that seeking refuge is a characteristic [of faith (*śraddhā*)], because the characteristics of seeking refuge are having a positive intention and so on. Thus, even if in [a devotee’s] daily dealings [some aspects of seeking refuge] like humility are absent, one should still see that as a characteristic of faith [because the other elements are present]. (*Tatra ca liṅgatvena pūrvam śaraṇāpattir upadiṣṭaiva, yasmāc ca śaraṇāpattau vakṣyamānāni ānukūlyasya saikalpaḥ ity ādini liṅgāni. Tathā vyavahāra-kārpaṇyādy-abbāvo ’pi śraddhā-liṅgaṃ jñeyam, Bhakti-sandarbhā 173*).

¹⁴⁵ See *Gītā* 18.66, which Jīva quotes immediately after this passage. Later on in the same passage, Jīva comments that such scriptural passages where Kṛṣṇa assures protection for his devotees (as also in *Gītā* 9.22) give the devotee faith: *śāstram hi tathāiva śraddhām utpādayati.*

¹⁴⁶ *Śraddhā-mātrasya tad-bhaktāv adbikāritva-hetutā aṅgatvam asya viśvāsa-viśeṣasya tu keśave (Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.2.191).*

¹⁴⁷ *Yadyapi śraddhā-viśvāsayor eka-paryāyatvam eva, tathāpi tat-pūrvottarāvasthayos tat-tac-chabda-prayoga-prācuryam iti pṛthak-śabda-prayogaḥ (Jīva on Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.2.191).*

¹⁴⁸ *Keśave bhakti-prāpye śrī-kṛṣṇe viśvāsa-viśeṣyānubhava-valīta-viśvāsayā tu aṅgam (Mukundadāsa on Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.2.191).*

¹⁴⁹ The topic of discussion in this section is friendship with Kṛṣṇa (*sakhyā*), which Rūpa explains as trust (*viśvāsa*). See *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.188 and Jīva’s commentary on that verse. This friendship is one of the famous nine practices of devotion which are taught

difficult. It is obtained ‘only by some resolute devotees, who are entitled to it by their spiritual practice’.¹⁵⁰ Thus, though *śraddhā* itself is not a relational faith, it is the sign of a trust in Kṛṣṇa and his promises, and should, ideally, grow into a friendship with him.

The two dimensions of faith we have discussed here—its relation to scripture and its relation with a relational trust—Jīva brings together in a very interesting passage of the *Bhakti-sandarbha*, where he distinguishes between two types of devotees: those for whom attraction (*ruci*) predominates, and those for whom deliberation (*vicāra*) predominates. The path of the former, Jīva explains, ‘consists of the repeated practice of associating with saints, attraction to discussing and hearing about [Kṛṣṇa’s] play, listening with faith, and so on’.¹⁵¹ Jīva argues that the path of those who are impelled by attraction (*ruci*) is ‘for those who desire devotion characterised by love (*prīti*)’, but those who have not yet attained this natural attraction should pursue the path in which deliberation (*vicāra*) predominates.¹⁵² This latter path is much more involved. Jīva describes it as follows:

First by associating with particular devotees one gains a type of faith like theirs, an attraction to narrations [about Kṛṣṇa] from their particular tradition (*paramparā*), and so on. By continuous association with those devotees, one who has [thus] turned towards the Lord attains then an attraction (*ruci*) to a specific manifestation of the Lord that is to be worshipped in their particular way, and to their specific path of worship. Then, when he desires to know details he listens (*śravaṇa*) to one or more of these devotees, regarding them as his spiritual preceptor (*śrī-guru*). He thus ascertains the meaning [of scripture] with [the sixfold criteria] such as [what is mentioned in] the opening and

in *Bhāgavata* 7.5.23 and thus part of *vaidhī bhakti*. See also Jīva’s comments in *Bhakti-sandarbha* 121 (commenting on *Bhāgavata* 10.2.33): *Yatas tvayi baddha-saubṛdah. Saubṛdam atra śraddhā.*

¹⁵⁰ *Keṣāñcid eva dbirāñām labhate sābhanārhatām (Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.2.198).* Mukundadāsa comments that *dbirāñām* here means ‘those who have mature faith’ (*praudhā-śraddhāvatām*).

¹⁵¹ *Kintu sādhu-saṅga-līlā-kathana-śravaṇa-ruci-śraddhā-śravaṇādy-āvṛtti-rūpa evāsau mārgaḥ (Bhakti-sandarbha 202).*

¹⁵² *Prīti-lakṣaṇa-bhaktīcchānām tu ruci-pradhāna-mārga eva śreyān, nājāta-rucīnām iva vicāra-pradhānaḥ. (Bhakti-sandarbha 202).* Jīva comments later on that the four ‘seed verses’ (*catub-sloki*) of the *Bhāgavata* (2.9.32–35) illustrate part of the path of deliberation (see *Bhakti-sandarbha* 204).

concluding statements (*upakramopasaṃhāra*).¹⁵³ Thereafter he also reflects (*manana*) through his own own deliberation particularly on the [doubts] of considering [the knowledge received] to be impossible or considering it to be wrong.¹⁵⁴ Then, faith (*śraddhā*) arises which is such that it leads him to see that the specific [form of the] Lord [that he has been worshipping] is present everywhere and at all times in every of his manifestations. Then, with the attraction that was initially awakened for a single [form of God], that very faith shines forth as the recognition that the Lord is eminently capable of bestowing what he desires and so on. The specific path of worship should be similarly explained. Therefore, when knowledge is thus established, he should pursue the part of the specific path of worship [he follows] through deep contemplation (*nididhyāsana*) in order to attain experience (*vijñāna*). Thus I have explained the path of those for whom deliberation (*vicāra*) is predominant.¹⁵⁵

The passage is particularly interesting as it highlights the role scripture

¹⁵³ For more on these six criteria, see footnote 133.

¹⁵⁴ Jīva refers to these two doubts earlier in the *Bhakti-sandarbha*, where he states that they are not entirely removed until one obtains a vision of God. Commenting on *Bhāgavata* 1.2.21 he explains that hearing (*śravaṇa*) destroys the doubt that devotion is impossible, while reflection (*manana*) removes wrong conceptions about it, but direct experience (*sākṣātkāra*) removes these two doubts in regard to one's own suitability (thinking that it is impossible for me to attain it, and having the wrong notion about what it takes for me to attain it): *Sarva-saṃśayās chidyanta iti śravaṇa-mananādi-pradbhānānām api tasmin dṛṣṭa eva sarve saṃśayāḥ samāpyante ity arthaḥ. Tatra śravaṇena tāvaj-jñeya-gatāsambhāvanās chidyante iti. Mananena tad-gata-viṣarīta-bhāvanāḥ. Sākṣātkāreṇa tv ātma-yogyatā-gatāsambhāvanā-viṣarīta-bhāvanā ity jñeyam (Bhakti-sandarbha 16).*

¹⁵⁵ *Tatra prathamam tāvat tat-tat-saṅgā jātena tat-tac-chraddhā-tat-tat-paramparā-kathā-rucy-ādīnā jāta-bhagavat-sāmmukhyasya tat-tad-anuśaṅgenaiva tat-tad-bhajanīye bhagavad-āvīrbhāva-viśeṣe tat-tad-bhajana-mārga-viśeṣe ca rucir jāyate. Tatas ca viśeṣa-bubbhatsāyam satyām teṣu ekato'nekato vā śrī-gurutvenāśrītac chraṇaṇam kriyate. Tac copakramopasaṃhārādibhir arthādvadhāraṇam punaś cāsambhāvanāvīparīta-bhāvanā-viśeṣavatā svayaṃ tad-vicāra-rūpaṃ mananam api kriyate. Tato bhagavataḥ sarvasminn evāvīrbhāve tathāvidho'sau sadā sarvatra virājata ity evaṃrūpā śraddhā jāyate. Tatraikasmimś tv anayā prathamā-jātayā rucyā saba nijābhīṣṭa-dāna-sāmarthyādy-atīśayavattā-nirbhāraṇa-rūpatvena saiva śraddhā samullasati. Tatra yadyapy ekatraivātīśayitā-paryavasānam sambhavati na tu sarvatra, tathāpi keṣāmcit tato viśiṣṭasyājñānād anyatrāpi tathā-buddhi-rūpā śraddhā sambhavaty evaṃ bhajana-mārga-viśeṣaś ca vyākhyātavyaḥ. Tad evaṃ siddhe jñāne vijñānārthaṃ nididhyāsana-lakṣaṇa-tat-tad-upāsānā-mārga-bbedo'nuṣṭhiyata ity evaṃ vicāra-pradbhānānām mārgo darśitaḥ (Bhakti-sandarbha 202).*

plays in the formation of one's faith, but also explains how such faith leads to a trust in God. After the devotee has gained faith in devotional practices, inspired by the company of other devotees, he spends a considerable amount of time scrutinizing scriptural texts, rigorously applying hermeneutic rules in order to understand what it is that scripture really teaches, what it denotes (*abbidheya*). This deep study of scripture, he explains, gives rise to faith (*śraddhā*), but this is not the same faith that the devotee started out with. As is clear from Jīva's description, the faith is now not merely in specific practices of devotion, but rather also directed towards the object of those practices. It is now a relational faith that allows him to see that the specific form or manifestation of God he has been inspired to worship through the company he has kept with a particular group of devotees is present in other forms as well. Jīva demonstrates Rūpa's argument that faith (*śraddhā*) is an aspect of trust (*viśvāsa*) when he writes that 'that very faith shines forth as the recognition that the Lord is eminently capable of bestowing what he desires'. The devotees' trust is no longer merely in devotional acts, but also in the Lord who is worshipped by such devotional acts. It is remarkable, though, that Jīva uses the word *śraddhā* in this context in its old *Ṛg-vedic* sense as a relational trust, even if even here it is not entirely divorced from its ascetical sense.¹⁵⁶

CONCLUSION

W. C. Smith remarks that the term *śraddhā* is 'open, in the sense that it does not itself specify or even suggest what it is on which one puts one's heart. The concept as a concept has no particular object, or type of object.'¹⁵⁷ In the texts we have studied for this essay, this is only partially true. As we have seen above, in Caitanya Vaiṣṇava writings the object of *śraddhā* is primarily a specific action or mode of living, and secondarily sacred texts that teach us those actions. However, though the term is extensively used to refer to a conviction or faith in devotion to God (*bhakti*), faith (*śraddhā*) is not exclusively devotional, but rather denotes the conviction a person has in a particular course of action. It is a type of respect (*ādara*), a form of trust

¹⁵⁶ A little later Jīva makes this even more explicit when he says how this path of deliberation leads to 'faith in the Lord' (*atha taj-jātā bhagavati śraddhā*, *Bhakti-sandarbha* 204), a rare explicitly relational use of the term *śraddhā* in Caitanya Vaiṣṇava texts. See also *Bhāgavata* 10.86.57.

¹⁵⁷ Smith (1998), p. 61.

(*viśvāsa*), and is directed to whatever action a person considers worthy of pursuing. This notion of *śraddhā* thus resembles Paul Tillich's notion of faith as 'being ultimately concerned' which is 'the unconditional demand made by that which is one's ultimate concern' and 'the promise of ultimate fulfilment which is accepted in the act of faith'.¹⁵⁸ The particular nature of this state of 'being ultimately concerned' is, as the *Gītā* states, inseparable from a human person: a human being 'consists of faith' (17.3), and the nature of his faith is determined by the particular modes of matter (*guṇa*) that constitute his being. As he changes, and as his notion of what is of ultimate concern changes, so does his faith.

The notion of faith (*śraddhā*) is thus closely linked to 'conversion'. As Kṛṣṇa teaches in the *Bhāgavata* (11.20.8–9), only when faith in devotional acts awakens in a person—or, when that person makes devotion his ultimate concern—he pursues 'the yoga of devotion, which awards fulfilment (*siddhi*)', but he should perform Vedic ritual acts (*karma*) 'as long as faith (*śraddhā*) in [devotional acts] like listening to narrations about me does not arise'.¹⁵⁹ How does such faith arise? 'By some great fortune', Rūpa Gosvāmī states, 'a person develops faith in his [Kṛṣṇa's] service.'¹⁶⁰ Both Viśvanātha and Jīva comment that their fortune is their 'mental impression (*saṃskāra*) born from the company of great men'.¹⁶¹ When they hear from faithful devotees the teachings of scripture on devotion, Jīva argues, their faith arises.¹⁶²

The newly converted devotee's faith in devotion awakens upon hearing a devotional reading of sacred texts, because such scriptural texts teach, ultimately, as we have seen above, only about devotion, either by teaching it directly (in the form of injunctions) or by praising devotional practises. From a systematic and analytic study of scripture, his faith grows from being pliable to being firm and unshakeable,¹⁶³ until he has as it were internalised

¹⁵⁸ Tillich (1957), pp. 1–2.

¹⁵⁹ *Tāvat karmāṇi kurvita na nirvidyeta yāvatā mat-kathā-śravaṇādaḥ vā śraddhā yāvan na jāyate* (*Bhāgavata* 11.20.9).

¹⁶⁰ *Kenāpy atibhāgyena jāta-śraddho'sya sevane...* (*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.14).

¹⁶¹ *Atibhāgyena mahat-saṅgādi-jāta-saṃskāra-viśeṣeṇa* (Jīva and Viśvanātha on *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.14). Viśvanātha states something similar in *Mādhurya-kādambinī* 1.3: *ato yaḥ kenāpy atibhāgyena jāta-śraddho'sya sevane* [*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.14] *ity atra atibhāgyena śubha-karma-jānya-bhāgyam atikrāntena kenāpi bhakta-kāruṇyeni tattvārtho jñeyah*.

¹⁶² *Ādau prathame sādhu-saṅga-śāstra-śravaṇa-dvārā śraddhā tad-artba-viśvāsaḥ* (Jīva on *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.4.15–16).

¹⁶³ *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.17–19.

the injunctions of scripture and his unshakeable conviction is that of the devotional sacred texts.¹⁶⁴

As he matures in his devotion, the devotee's faith in devotion is not just grounded in the injunctions of scripture, but also in God, since these texts contain Kṛṣṇa's injunctions. His faith (*śraddhā*) in devotional practices and scriptural injunctions thus becomes an aspect of a relational faith, namely his trust (*viśvāsa*) in Kṛṣṇa. That trust too grows as the devotee matures. Though his faith is initially grounded in and shaped by the practices and theology of the specific devotees that teach him, as he progresses he is able to see the presence of the divine not just in the Lord he worships as taught by his tradition, but also in all his other manifestations. This only strengthens his faith that his Lord can bestow that which he most dearly desires.¹⁶⁵ The devotee thus starts on his spiritual path with a faith in devotion (*śraddhā*), progresses as his faith in devotional practices is strengthened by his systematic study of devotional scriptures, and approaches his goal with a trust or faith in the God he has been searching for through his faithful pursuit of devotional practices.

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¹⁶⁴ *Bhakti-sandarbha* 173.

¹⁶⁵ *Bhakti-sandarbha* 202.

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