

# Modern Wisdom from Ancient Times

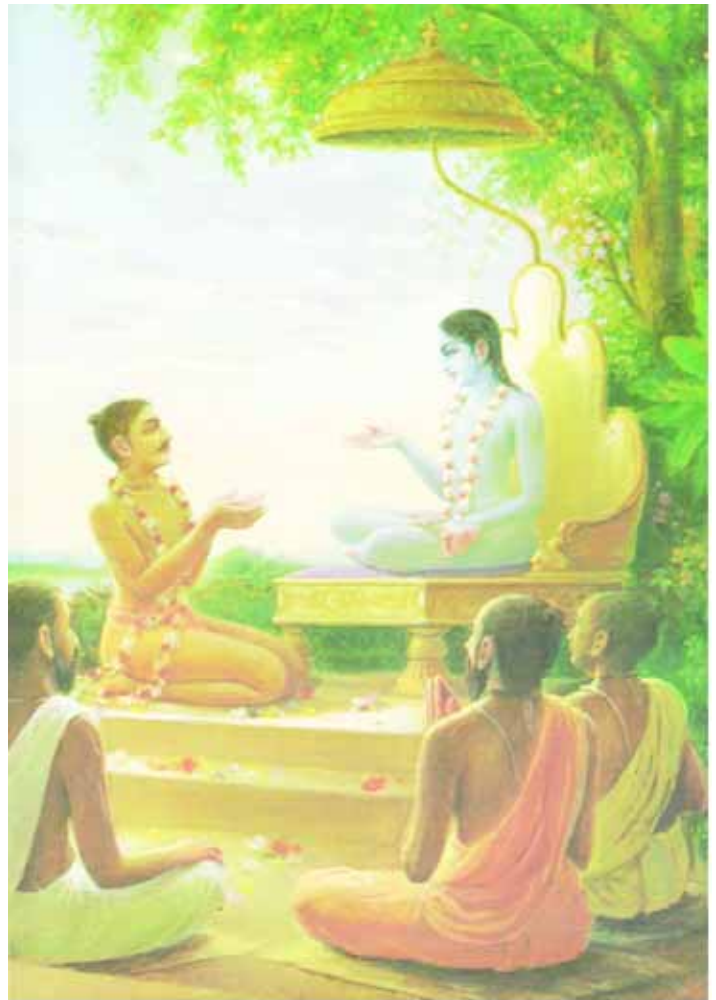
## *Pada Padma*

**W**hat is the oldest literary work in the world? Beowulf, the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Egyptian Book of the Dead? Surprisingly, none of these quite fits that description. The oldest texts existed in oral traditions long before they were written down on scrolls or palm leaves. Classics like the Native American stories of creation, Aztec tales of the blue maize path, the traditional Chinese story of Monkey, and the spiritual classics of India have been carefully passed down by oral reception over many generations.

We may conjecture that this would lead to degradation like the telephone game that children play, in which a message changes when passed from one child to another. However, these messages of great spiritual significance were very strictly transmitted and carefully checked by the master when told by the disciple. As such, their integrity has been preserved throughout the millennia.

One such classic of Indian literature is the Bhagavat Purana, also known as the Srimad Bhagavatam. Within the text itself the very ancient origins, described as disciplic succession of guru to disciple, are chronicled. Apart from such historic curiosities, the complete psychology of spiritual practice is elaborated in full. An example of this is Canto 1, Chapter 2, verse 6, beginning with *sai vai pumsam paro dharmo*. It states that any spiritual path that teaches one unconditional love of God is a true path. And such love must be unmotivated and uninterrupted to completely satisfy the self.

What this means for the modern practitioner of spirituality is that one who wants to attain to an enlightened condition apart from love of the Supreme is bound to fail, but more importantly, religion or spiritual practice that does share these attributes is a true path. In this way, Srimad Bhagavatam transcends religious boundaries to elucidate enlightened understandings of psychology, devotional life, agriculture, socio-economic development, and other topics.



*In August Hanumat Presaka Swami, the Director of the North American Institute for Oriental & Classical Studies (NIOS) will be visiting Houston to kick off a 30-week course on the foundational ancient text, to be held locally and in other groups worldwide. On August 3 and 4, 2007, Swami will present the modern wisdom from ancient times in connected seminars throughout the day. Take this opportunity to enrich your own personal spiritual practice through confidential knowledge passed down for thousands of years. Please contact Dr. Hansa Medley at [hmedley@sbcglobal.net](mailto:hmedley@sbcglobal.net) or 713-782-2156 to register. See ad page 27. 🌸*