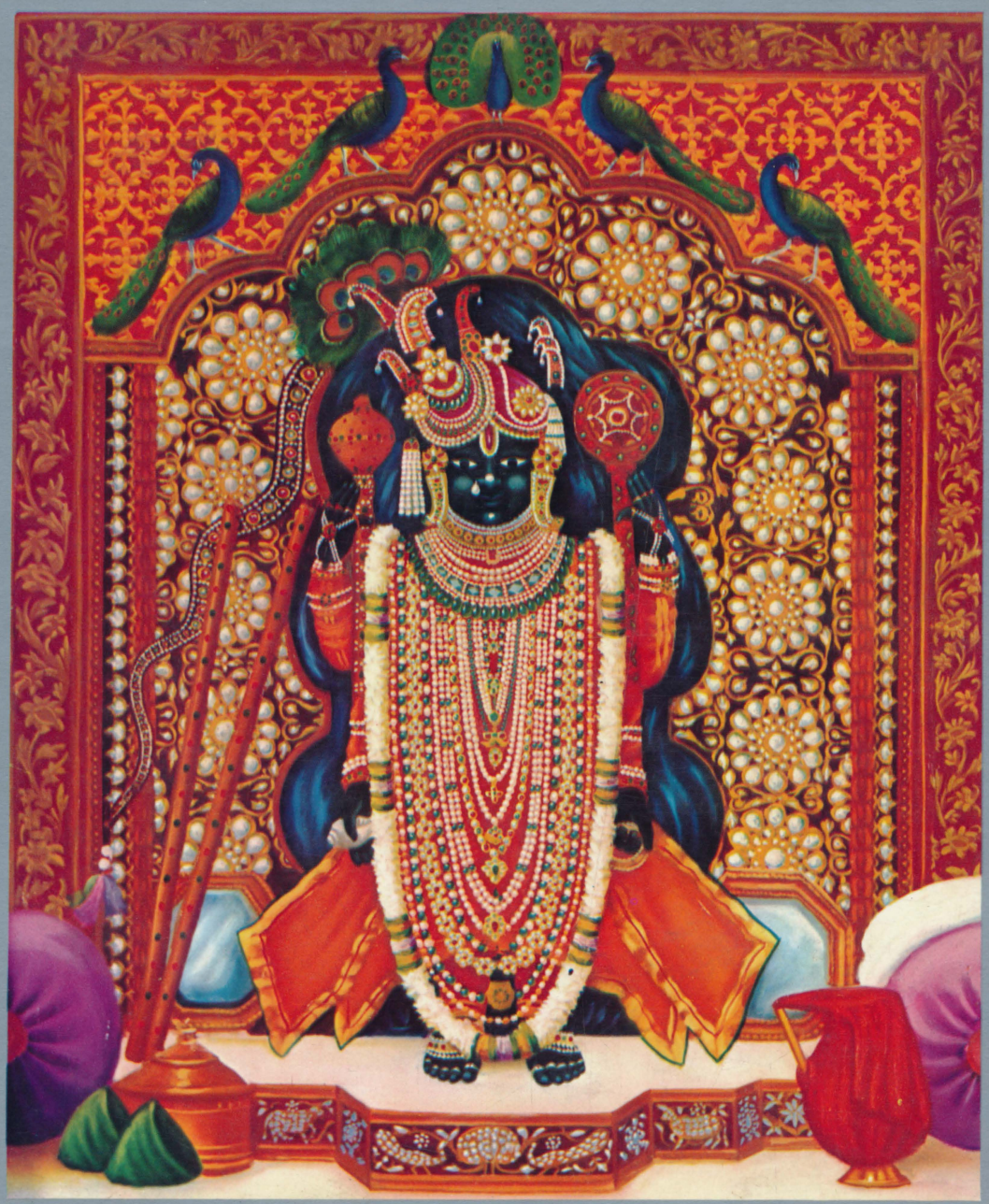
KṚṢṆA

The Supreme Personality of Godhead



His Divine Grace
A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

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The most comprehensive and authoritative Vedic scriptural literature is the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* ("The Beautiful Story of the Personality of Godhead"), the mature contribution of Śrīla Vyāsadeva, the compiler of the *Vedas*. Of the twelve cantos of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the tenth canto is considered the most confidential, since it describes all the transcendental pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. *Kṛṣṇa* is a summary study of the tenth canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

The activities of Kṛṣṇa, which appear to be like those of an ordinary human being, can only be properly understood with the help of a bona fide spiritual master fully realized in the knowledge of this transcendental nature. A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada is authorized by an unbreakable disciplic succession of spiritual masters going back thousands of years to the time when Kṛṣṇa appeared. Because he is the representative of the disciplic succession for this age and because of his complete immersion in love of Kṛṣṇa Prabhupada is uniquely qualified to present Kṛṣṇa as He is.

Śukadeva Gosvāmī, the original speaker of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, has declared that there are three classes of men and that the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa will be relished by each of them. The liberated soul who is no longer interested in mundane topics most certainly hears about Kṛṣṇa with the highest pleasure. The person who is trying to become liberated will also enjoy these topics of the Personality of Godhead, which purify anyone who hears them. And even the gross materialist will enjoy hearing about Kṛṣṇa because of the resemblance between His affairs with the *gopis* and the loving affairs of ordinary boys and girls.

Forseeing the publication of this book, with its fifty-eight full-color illustrations, Prabhupada commented, "No other religion has such a full concept of God. I think our *Kṛṣṇa* book will convince them. Whoever reads it will become a devotee of Kṛṣṇa."

With Introductory note by George Harrison

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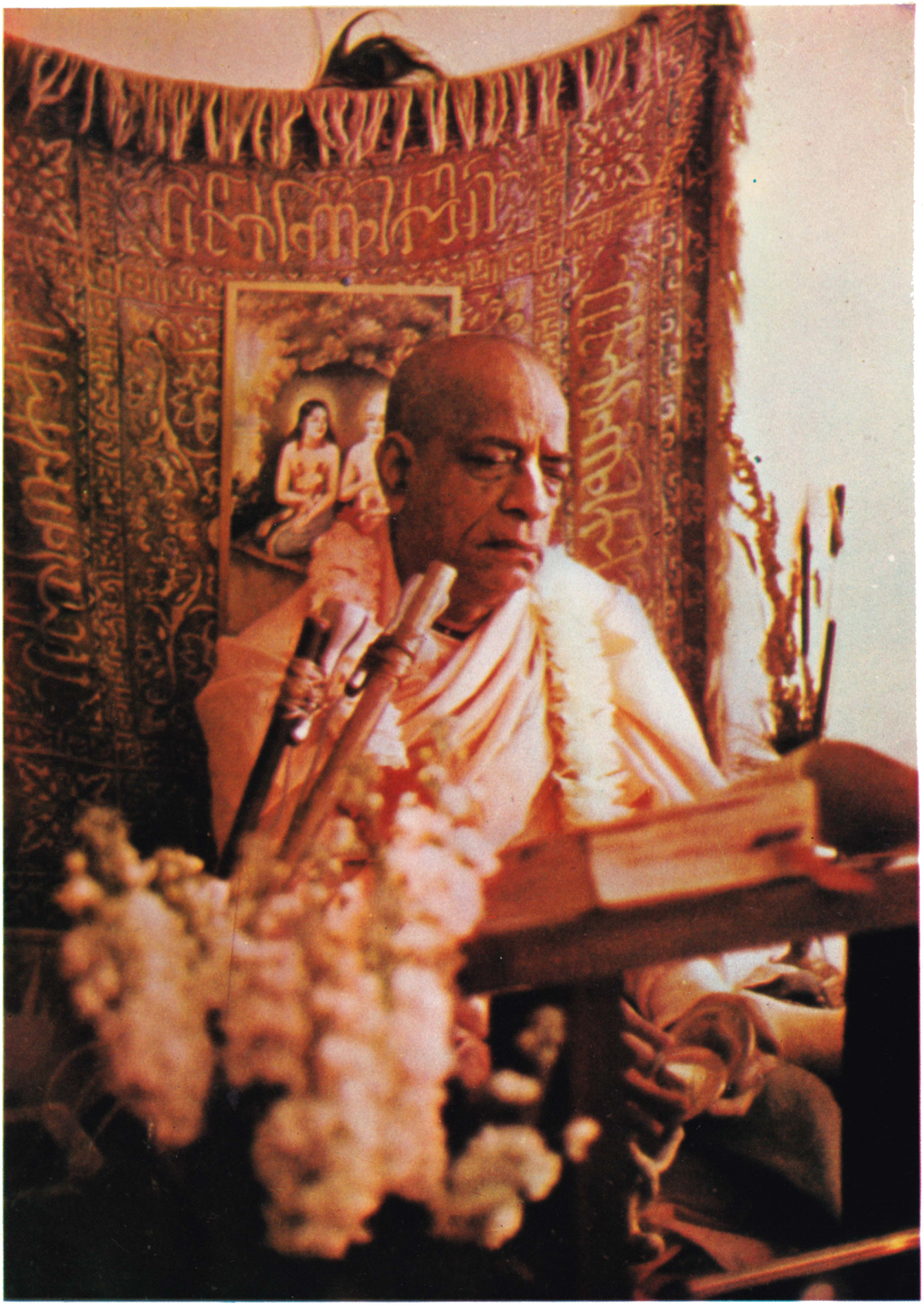
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VOLUME TWO

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Kṛṣṇa and Jāmbavān fought like two opposing vultures. (p. 4)



While Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna were resting and drinking water, they saw a beautiful girl of marriageable age walking alone at the bank of the Yamunā. (p. 18)



Kṛṣṇa pulled them strongly, just as a child pulls a toy wooden bull.



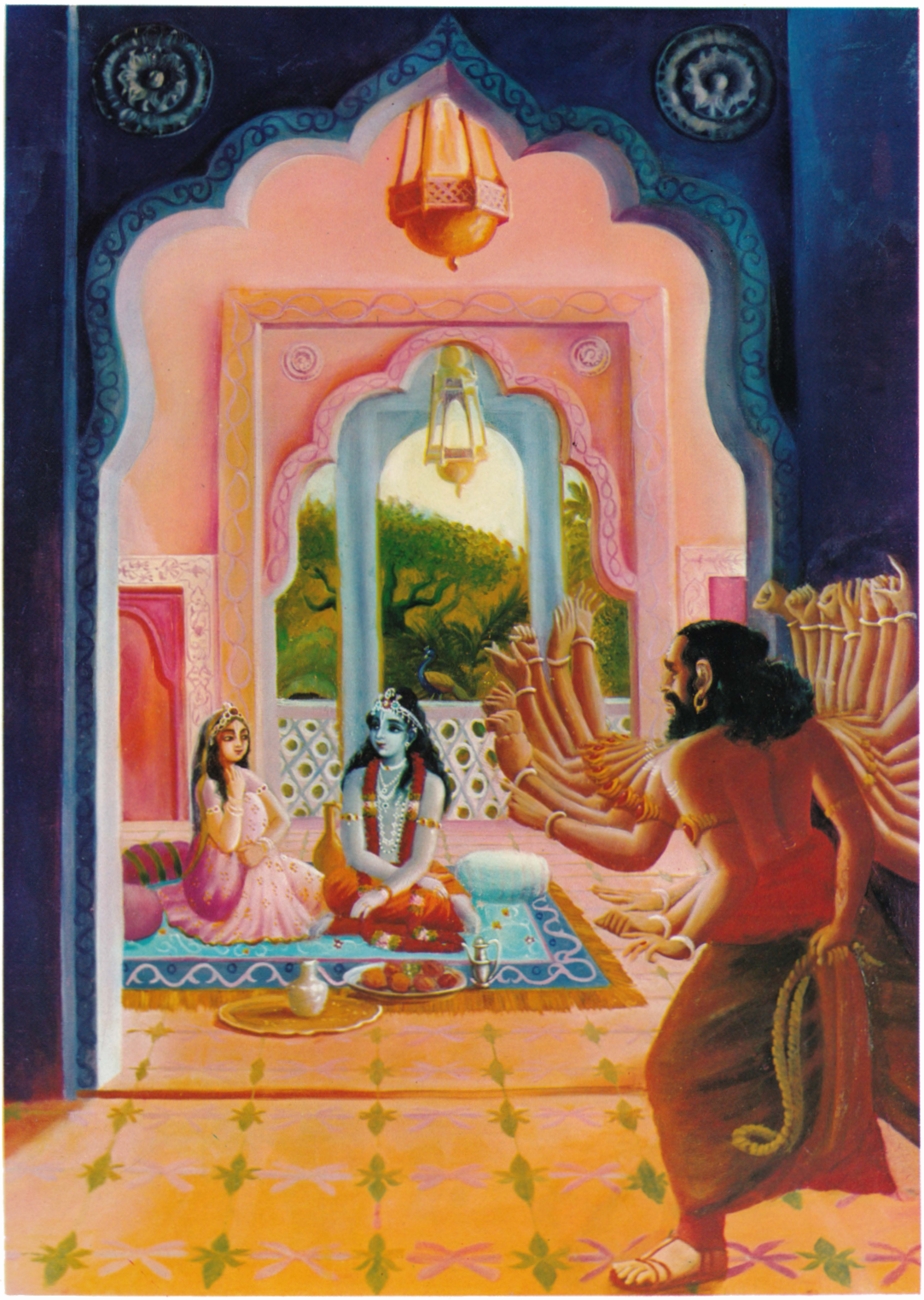
Lord Kṛṣṇa saw that the trident of the Mura demon was gradually rushing toward His carrier, Garuḍa. (p. 26)



Rukmiṇi fell down straight, like a banana tree cut down by a whirlwind. (p. 39)



Balarāma took a club in His hand and, without further talk, struck Rukmī on the head. (p. 52)



When Bāṇāsura saw him, Aniruddha was engaged in playing with Uṣā. (p. 57)



Bāṇāsura rushed towards Kṛṣṇa, simultaneously working 500 bows and 2,000 arrows. (p. 61)



The demigod was obliged to accept the body of a lizard. (p. 69)



Balarāma passed every night with the *gopīs* in the forest of Vṛndāvana. (p. 78)



Seeing Pauṇḍraka imitating His posture and dress, He could not check His laughter. (p. 225)



This time, Nārada Muni saw that Lord Kṛṣṇa was engaged as an affectionate father petting His small children. (p. 103)



Śiśupāla continued to insult Kṛṣṇa, and Kṛṣṇa patiently heard him without protest. (p. 144)



They were all enjoying the occasion by throwing liquid substances on each other. (p. 148)



Kṛṣṇa cut off Śālva's head, and the head, with earrings and helmets, fell on the ground. (p. 160)



Balarāma killed Romaharṣaṇa simply by striking him with a blade of grass. (p. 165)



At the first opportunity Balarāma dragged the demon down with His plow. (p. 168)



The women in the palace were surprised to see that the poor *brāhmaṇa* was seated on the bedstead of Lord Kṛṣṇa. (p. 179)



Arjuna was simply looking over beautiful Subhadrā, who was very enchanting even to the great heroes and kings. (p. 228)



The personified *Vedas* assemble around the Lord and begin to glorify Him. (p. 243)



The Lord would sprinkle water on the bodies of the queens with a syringe-like instrument. (p. 342)



Lord Kṛṣṇa immediately stood up along with His ministers and secretaries to receive the great sage Nārada Muni. (p. 115)



All the members of the Yadu dynasty again took their baths in the lakes created by Lord Paraśurāma. (page not known)

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A Summary Study of Śrīla Vyāsadeva's *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Tenth Canto.



VOLUME TWO

His Divine Grace
A.C. Bhaktiveḍanta Swami Prabhupāda

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1 / The Story of the Syamantaka Jewel

There was a king of the name Satrājit within the jurisdiction of Dvārakādhāma. He was a great devotee of the sun-god, who awarded him the benediction of a jewel known as Syamantaka. Because of this Syamantaka jewel, there was a misunderstanding between King Satrājit and the Yadu dynasty. Later on the matter was settled when Satrājit voluntarily offered Kṛṣṇa his daughter, Satyabhāmā, along with the jewel Syamantaka. Not only was Satyabhāmā married to Kṛṣṇa on account of the Syamantaka jewel, but Jāmbavatī, the daughter of Jāmbavān, was also married to Kṛṣṇa. These two marriages took place before the appearance of Pradyumna, as described in the last chapter. How King Satrājit offended the Yadu dynasty and how he later on came to his senses and offered his daughter and the Syamantaka jewel to Kṛṣṇa is described as follows.

Since he was a great devotee of the sun-god, King Satrājit gradually entered into a very friendly relationship with him. The sun-god was much pleased with him and delivered to him an exceptional jewel known as Syamantaka. When this jewel was worn by Satrājit in a locket around his neck, he appeared exactly like an imitation sun-god. Putting on this jewel, he would enter the city of Dvārakā, and people would think that the sun-god had come into the city to see Kṛṣṇa. They knew that Kṛṣṇa, being the Supreme Personality of Godhead, was sometimes visited by the demigods, so while Satrājit was visiting the city of Dvārakā all the inhabitants except Kṛṣṇa took him to be the sun-god himself. Although King Satrājit was known to everyone, he could not be recognized because of the dazzling effulgence of the Syamantaka jewel.

Once, mistaking him to be the sun-god, some of the important citizens of Dvārakā immediately went to Kṛṣṇa to inform Him that the sun-god had arrived to see Him. At that time, Kṛṣṇa was playing chess. One of the important residents of Dvārakā spoke thus: "My dear Lord Nārāyaṇa, You

are the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In Your plenary portion of Nārāyaṇa or Viṣṇu, You have four hands with different symbols—the conchshell, disc, club and lotus flower. You are actually the owner of everything, but in spite of Your being the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Nārāyaṇa, You have descended in Vṛndāvana to act as the child of Yaśodāmātā, who sometimes used to tie You up with her ropes, and You are celebrated, therefore, by the name Dāmodara."

That Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Nārāyaṇa, as accepted by the citizens of Dvārakā, was later on confirmed by the great Māyāvādī philosophical leader, Śaṅkarācārya. By accepting the Lord as impersonal, he did not reject the Lord's personal form. He meant that everything which has form in this material world is subjected to creation, maintenance and annihilation, but the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Nārāyaṇa, does not have a material form subjected to these limitations. In order to convince the less intelligent class of men who take Kṛṣṇa to be an ordinary human being, Śaṅkarācārya therefore said that God is impersonal. This impersonality means that He is not a person of this material condition. He is a transcendental personality without a material body.

The citizens of Dvārakā addressed Lord Kṛṣṇa not only as Dāmodara, but also as Govinda, which indicates that Kṛṣṇa is very affectionate to the cows and calves; and just to refer to their intimate connection with Kṛṣṇa, they addressed Him as Yadunandana. He is the son of Vasudeva, born in the Yadu dynasty. In this way, the citizens of Dvārakā concluded that they were addressing Kṛṣṇa as the supreme master of the whole universe. They addressed Kṛṣṇa in many different ways, proud of being citizens of Dvārakā who could see Kṛṣṇa daily.

When Satrājit was visiting the city of Dvārakā, the citizens felt great pride to think that although Kṛṣṇa was living in Dvārakā like an ordinary human being, the demigods were coming to see Him. Thus they informed Lord Kṛṣṇa that the sun-god, with his appealing bodily effulgence, was coming to see Him. The citizens of Dvārakā confirmed that the sun-god's coming into Dvārakā was not very wonderful, because people all over the universe who were searching after the Supreme Personality of Godhead knew that He had appeared in the family of the Yadu dynasty and was living in Dvārakā as one of the members of that family. Thus the citizens expressed their joy on this occasion. On hearing the statement of His citizens, the all-pervasive Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, simply smiled. Being pleased with the citizens of Dvārakā, Kṛṣṇa informed them that the person whom they described as the sun-god was actually King Satrājit, who had come to visit Dvārakā City to show his opulence

in the form of the valuable jewel obtained from the sun-god.

Satrājit, however, did not come to see Kṛṣṇa; he was instead overwhelmed by the jewel of Syamantaka. He installed the jewel in a temple to be worshiped by *brāhmaṇas* he engaged for this purpose. This is an instance of a less intelligent person worshiping a material thing. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* it is stated that less intelligent persons, in order to get immediate results from their fruitive activities, worship the demigods who are created within this universe. The word "materialist" means one concerned with gratification of the senses within this material world. Although Kṛṣṇa later asked for this Syamantaka jewel, King Satrājit did not deliver it to Him, but he installed the jewel for his purposes of worship. And who would not worship that jewel? The Syamantaka jewel was so powerful that it was daily producing a large quantity of gold. A quantity of gold is counted by a measurement called a *bhāra.* According to Vedic formulas, one *bhāra* is equal to sixteen pounds of gold; one *mound* equals eighty-two pounds. The jewel was producing about 170 pounds of gold every day. Besides that, it is learned from Vedic literature that in whatever part of the world this jewel is worshiped there is no possibility of famine; not only that, but wherever the jewel is present, there is no possibility of anything inauspicious, such as pestilence or disease.

Lord Kṛṣṇa wanted to teach the world that the best of everything should be offered to the ruling chief of the country. King Ugrasena was the overlord of many dynasties and happened to be the grandfather of Kṛṣṇa, and Kṛṣṇa asked Satrājit to present the Syamantaka jewel to King Ugrasena. Kṛṣṇa pleaded that the best should be offered to the king. But Satrājit, being a worshiper of the demigods, had become too materialistic and, instead of accepting the request of Kṛṣṇa, thought it wiser to worship the jewel in order to get the 170 pounds of gold every day. Materialistic persons who can achieve such huge quantities of gold every day are not interested in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Sometimes, therefore, in order to show special favor, Kṛṣṇa takes away great accumulations of materialistic wealth from a person and thus makes him a great devotee. But Satrājit refused to abide by the order of Kṛṣṇa and did not deliver the jewel to him.

After this incident, Satrājit's younger brother, in order to display the opulence of the family, took the jewel, put it on his neck and rode on horseback into the forest making a show of his material opulence. While the brother of Satrājit, who was known as Prasena, was moving here and there in the forest, a big lion attacked him, killing both him and the horse on which he was riding, and took away the jewel to his cave. The news was received by the gorilla king, Jāmbavān, who then killed that lion in the

cave and took away the jewel. Jāmbavān had been a great devotee of the Lord since the time of Lord Rāmacandra, so he did not take the valuable jewel as something he very much needed. He gave it to his young son to play with as a toy.

In the city, when Satrājit's younger brother Prasena did not return from the forest with the jewel, Satrājit became very upset. He did not know that his brother had been killed by a lion and that the lion had been killed by Jāmbavān. He was thinking instead that because Kṛṣṇa wanted that jewel and it had not been delivered to Him, Kṛṣṇa might have therefore taken the jewel away from Prasena by force and killed him. This idea grew into a rumor which was being spread by Satrājit in every part of Dvārakā.

The false rumor that Kṛṣṇa had killed Prasena and had taken away the jewel was spread everywhere like wildfire. Kṛṣṇa did not like to be defamed in that way, and therefore He decided that He would go to the forest and find the Syamantaka jewel, taking with Him some of the inhabitants of Dvārakā. Along with important men of Dvārakā, Kṛṣṇa went to search out Prasena, the brother of Satrājit, and He found him dead, killed by the lion. At the same time, Kṛṣṇa also found the lion which had been killed by Jāmbavān, who is generally called by the name Ṛkṣa. It was found that the lion had been killed by the hand of Ṛkṣa without the assistance of any weapon. Kṛṣṇa and the citizens of Dvārakā then found in the forest a great tunnel, said to be the path to Ṛkṣa's house. Kṛṣṇa knew that the inhabitants of Dvārakā would be afraid to enter the tunnel; therefore He asked them to remain outside, and He Himself entered the dark tunnel alone to find Ṛkṣa, Jāmbavān. After entering the tunnel, Kṛṣṇa saw that the very valuable jewel known as Syamantaka had been given to the son of Ṛkṣa as a toy, and in order to take the jewel from the child, He went there and stood before him. When the nurse who was taking care of Ṛkṣa's child saw Kṛṣṇa standing before her, she was afraid, thinking the valuable Syamantaka jewel might be taken away by Him. She began to cry loudly out of fear.

Hearing the nurse crying, Jāmbavān appeared on the scene in a very angry mood. Jāmbavān was actually a great devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa, but because he was in an angry mood he could not recognize his master; he thought Him to be an ordinary man. This brings to mind the statement of the *Bhagavad-gītā* in which the Lord advises Arjuna to get free from anger, greed and lust in order to rise up to the spiritual platform. Lust, anger and greed run parallel in the heart and check one's progress on the spiritual path.

Not recognizing his master, Jāmbavān first challenged Him to fight. There was then a great fight between Kṛṣṇa and Jāmbavān in which they

fought like two opposing vultures. Whenever there is an eatable corpse the vultures fight heartily over the prey. Kṛṣṇa and Jāmbavān first of all began fighting with weapons, then with stones, then with big trees, then hand to hand, until at last they were hitting one another with their fists, and the blows were like the striking of thunderbolts. Each was expecting victory over the other, but the fighting continued for days, both in daytime and at night, without stopping. In this way the fighting continued for twenty-eight days.

Although Jāmbavān was the strongest living entity of that time, practically all the joints of his bodily limbs became slackened and his strength reduced to practically nil after being constantly struck by the fists of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Feeling very tired, with perspiration all over his body, Jāmbavān was astonished. Who was this opponent who was weakening him? Jāmbavān was quite aware of his own superhuman bodily strength, but when he felt tired from being struck by Kṛṣṇa, he could understand that Kṛṣṇa was no one else but his worshipable Lord, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This incident has a special significance for the devotees. In the beginning, Jāmbavān could not understand Kṛṣṇa because his vision was obscured by material attachment. He was attached to his boy and to the greatly valuable Syamantaka jewel, which he did not want to spare for Kṛṣṇa. In fact, when Kṛṣṇa came there he became angry, thinking that He had come to take away the jewel. This is the material position; although one is very strong in body, that cannot help him understand Kṛṣṇa.

In a sporting attitude, Kṛṣṇa wanted to engage in a mock fight with His devotee. As we have experienced from the pages of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* the Supreme Personality of Godhead has all the propensities and instincts of a human being. Sometimes, in a sportive spirit, He wishes to fight to make a show of bodily strength, and when He so desires, He selects one of His suitable devotees to give Him that pleasure. Kṛṣṇa desired this pleasure of mock fighting with Jāmbavān. Although Jāmbavān was a devotee by nature, he was without knowledge of Kṛṣṇa while giving service to the Lord by his bodily strength. But as soon as Kṛṣṇa was pleased by the fighting, Jāmbavān immediately understood that his opponent was none other than the Supreme Lord Himself. The conclusion is that he could understand Kṛṣṇa by his service. Kṛṣṇa is sometimes satisfied by fighting also.

Jāmbavān therefore said to the Lord, "My dear Lord, I can now understand who You are. You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Viṣṇu, the source of everyone's strength, wealth, reputation, beauty, wisdom and renunciation." This statement of Jāmbavān's is confirmed by the *Vedānta-sūtra,* wherein the Supreme Lord is declared to be the source

of everything. Jāmbavān identified Lord Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality, Lord Viṣṇu: "My dear Lord, You are the creator of the creators of the universal affairs." This statement is very instructive to the ordinary man, who is amazed by the activities of a person with an exceptional brain. The ordinary man is surprised to see the inventions of a great scientist, but the statement of Jāmbavān confirms that although a scientist may be a creator of many wonderful things, Kṛṣṇa is the creator of the scientist. He is not only the creator of one scientist, but of millions and trillions, all over the universe. Jāmbavān said further, "You are not only creator of the creator, but You are also creator of the material elements which are manipulated by the so-called creators." Scientists utilize the physical elements or laws of material nature and do something wonderful, but actually such laws and elements are also the creation of Kṛṣṇa. This is actual scientific understanding. Less intelligent men do not try to understand who created the brain of the scientist; they are simply satisfied by seeing the wonderful creation or invention of the scientist.

Jāmbavān continued: "My dear Lord, the time factor which combines all the physical elements is also Your representative. You are the supreme time factor in which all creation takes place, is maintained, and is finally annihilated. And not only the physical elements and the time factors but also the persons who manipulate the ingredients and advantages of creation are part and parcel of You. The living entity is not, therefore, an independent creator. By studying all factors in the right perspective, one can see that You are the supreme controller and Lord of everything. My dear Lord, I can therefore understand that You are the same Supreme Personality of Godhead whom I worship as Lord Rāmacandra. My Lord Rāmacandra wanted to construct a bridge over the ocean, and I saw personally how the ocean became agitated simply by my Lord's glancing over it. And when the whole ocean became agitated, the living entities like the whales, alligators and *timiṅgila* fish, all became perturbed. [The *timiṅgila* fish in the ocean can swallow big aquatics like whales in one gulp.] In this way the ocean was forced to give way and allow Rāmacandra to cross to the island known as Laṅkā [now supposed to be Ceylon]. This construction of a bridge over the ocean from Cape Comorin to Ceylon is still well-known to everyone. After the construction of the bridge, a fire was set all over the kingdom of Rāvaṇa. During the fighting with Rāvaṇa, each and every part of Rāvaṇa's limbs was slashed and cut into pieces by Your sharp arrows, and his head fell to the face of the earth. Now I can understand that You are none other than my Lord Rāmacandra. No one else has such immeasurable strength; no one else could defeat me in this way."

Lord Kṛṣṇa became satisfied by the prayers and statements of Jāmbavān, and to mitigate the pains of his body, He began to smear the lotus palm of His hand all over the body of Jāmbavān. Jāmbavān at once felt relieved from the fatigue of the great fight. Lord Kṛṣṇa then addressed him as King Jāmbavān, because he and not the lion was actually the king of the forest; with his naked hand, without a weapon, Jāmbavān had killed the lion. Kṛṣṇa informed Jāmbavān that He had come to him to ask for the Syamantaka jewel because since the Syamantaka jewel had been stolen His name had been defamed by the less intelligent. Kṛṣṇa plainly informed him that he had come there to ask him for the jewel in order to be free from this defamation. Jāmbavān understood the whole situation, and to satisfy the Lord he not only immediately delivered the Syamantaka jewel, but he also brought his daughter Jāmbavatī, who was of marriagable age, and presented her to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

The episode of Jāmbavatī's marriage with Kṛṣṇa and the delivery of the jewel known as Syamantaka was finished within the mountain cave. Although the fighting between Kṛṣṇa and Jāmbavān went on for twenty-eight days, the inhabitants of Dvārakā waited outside the tunnel for twelve days, and after that they decided that something undesirable must have happened. They could not understand what had actually happened for certain, and being very sorry and tired, they had returned to the city of Dvārakā.

All the members of the family, namely the mother of Kṛṣṇa, Devakī, His father Vasudeva, and His chief wife Rukmiṇī, along with all other friends, relatives and residents of the palace, became very sorry when the citizens returned home without Kṛṣṇa. Because of their natural affection for Kṛṣṇa, they began to call Satrājit ill names, for he was the cause of Kṛṣṇa's disappearance. They went to worship the goddess Candrabhāgā, praying for the return of Kṛṣṇa. The goddess was satisfied by the prayers of the citizens of Dvārakā, and she immediately offered them her benediction. Simultaneously, Kṛṣṇa appeared on the scene accompanied by His new wife Jāmbavatī, and all the inhabitants of Dvārakā and relatives of Kṛṣṇa became joyful. The inhabitants of Dvārakā became as joyful as someone receiving a dear relative back from the dead. The inhabitants of Dvārakā had concluded that Kṛṣṇa had been put into great difficulties due to the fighting; therefore, they had become almost hopeless of His return. But when they saw that Kṛṣṇa had actually returned, not alone but with a new wife, Jāmbavatī, they immediately performed another celebration ceremony.

King Ugrasena then called for a meeting of all important kings and chiefs. He also invited Satrājit, and Kṛṣṇa explained before the whole

assembly the incident of the recovery of the jewel from Jāmbavān. Kṛṣṇa wanted to return the valuable jewel to King Satrājit. Satrājit, however, became ashamed because he had unnecessarily defamed Kṛṣṇa. He accepted the jewel in his hand, but he remained silent, bending his head downwards, and without speaking anything in the assembly of the kings and chiefs, he returned home with the jewel. Then he thought about how he could clear himself from the abominable action he had performed by defaming Kṛṣṇa. He was conscious that he had offended Kṛṣṇa very grievously and that he had to find a remedial measure so that Kṛṣṇa would again be pleased with him.

King Satrājit was eager to get relief from the anxiety he had foolishly created due to being attracted by a material thing, specifically the Syamantaka jewel. Satrājit was truly afflicted by the offense he had committed toward Kṛṣṇa, and he sincerely wanted to rectify it. From within, Kṛṣṇa gave him good intelligence, and Satrājit decided to hand over to Kṛṣṇa both the jewel and his beautiful daughter, Satyabhāmā. There was no alternative for mitigating the situation, and therefore he arranged the marriage ceremony of Kṛṣṇa and his beautiful daughter. He gave in charity both the jewel and his daughter to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Satyabhāmā was so beautiful and qualified that Satrājit, in spite of being asked for the hand of Satyabhama by many princes, was waiting to find a suitable son-in-law. By the grace of Kṛṣṇa he decided to hand his daughter over to Him.

Lord Kṛṣṇa, being pleased upon Satrājit, informed him that He did not have any need of the Syamantaka jewel. "It is better to let it remain in the temple as you have kept it," He said, "and every one of us will derive benefit from the jewel. Because of the jewel's presence in the city of Dvārakā, there will be no more famine or disturbances created by pestilence or excessive heat and cold."

Thus ends the Bhaktivedanta purport of the Second Volume, First Chapter, of Kṛṣṇa, "The Story of the Syamantaka Jewel."



2 / The Killing of Satrājit and Śatadhanvā

After Akrūra visited Hastināpura and reported the condition of the Pāṇḍavas to Kṛṣṇa, there were further developments. The Pāṇḍavas were transferred to a house which was made of shellac and was later on set ablaze, and everyone understood that the Pāṇḍavas along with their mother, Kuntī, had been killed. This information was also sent to Lord Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. After consulting together, They decided to go to Hastināpura to show sympathy to Their relatives. Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma certainly knew that the Pāṇḍavas could not have been killed in the devastating fire, but in spite of this knowledge They wanted to go to Hastināpura to take part in the bereavement. On arriving in Hastināpura, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma first of all went to see Bhīṣmadeva, because he was the chief of the Kuru dynasty. They then saw Vidura, Gāndhārī and Droṇa. Other members of the Kuru dynasty were not sorry, because they wanted the Pāṇḍavas and their mother to be killed. But some family members, headed by Bhīṣma, were actually very sorry for the incident, and Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma expressed equal sorrow, without disclosing the actual situation.

When Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were away from the city of Dvārakā, there was a conspiracy to take away the Syamantaka jewel from Satrājit. The chief conspirator was Śatadhanvā. Along with others, Śatadhanvā wanted to marry Satyabhāmā, the beautiful daughter of Satrājit. Satrājit had promised that he would give his beautiful daughter in charity to various candidates, but later on the decision was changed, and Satyabhāmā was given to Kṛṣṇa along with the Syamantaka jewel. Satrājit had no desire to give the jewel away along with his daughter, and Kṛṣṇa, knowing his mentality, accepted his daughter but returned the jewel. After getting back the jewel from Kṛṣṇa, he was satisfied and kept it with him always. But in the absence of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma there was a conspiracy by many

men, including even Akrūra and Kṛtavarmā, who were devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa, to take the jewel from Satrājit. Akrūra and Kṛtavarmā joined the conspiracy because they wanted the jewel for Kṛṣṇa. They knew that Kṛṣṇa wanted the jewel and that Satrājit had not delivered it properly. Others joined the conspiracy because they were disappointed in not having the hand of Satyabhāmā. Some of them incited Śatadhanvā to kill Satrājit and take away the jewel.

The question is generally raised, Why did a great devotee like Akrūra join this conspiracy? And why did Kṛtavarmā, although a devotee of the Lord, join the conspiracy also? The answer is given by great authorities like Jīva Gosvāmī and others that although Akrūra was a great devotee, he was cursed by the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana because of his taking Kṛṣṇa away from their midst. Because of his wounding their feelings, Akrūra was forced to join the conspiracy declared by sinful men. Similarly, Kṛtavarmā was a devotee, but because of his intimate association with Kaṁsa, he was also contaminated by sinful reaction, and he also joined the conspiracy.

Being inspired by all the members of the conspiracy, Śatadhanvā one night entered the house of Satrājit and killed him while he was sleeping. Śatadhanvā was a sinful man of abominable character, and although due to his sinful activities he was not to live for many days, he decided to kill Satrājit while Satrājit was sleeping at home. When he entered the house to kill Satrājit, all the women there began to cry very loudly, but in spite of their great protests, Śatadhanvā mercilessly butchered Satrājit without hesitation, exactly as a butcher kills an animal in the slaughterhouse. Since Kṛṣṇa was absent from home, His wife Satyabhāmā was also present on the night Satrājit was murdered, and she began to cry, "My dear father! My dear father! How mercilessly you have been killed!" The dead body of Satrājit was not immediately removed for cremation because Satyabhāmā wanted to go to Kṛṣṇa in Hastināpura. Therefore the body was preserved in a tank of oil so that Kṛṣṇa could come back and see the dead body of Satrājit and take real action against Śatadhanvā. Satyabhāmā immediately started for Hastināpura to inform Kṛṣṇa about the ghastly death of her father.

When Kṛṣṇa was informed by Satyabhāmā of the murder of His father-in-law, He began to lament like an ordinary man. His great sorrow is, again, a strange thing. Lord Kṛṣṇa has nothing to do with action and reaction, but because he was playing the part of a human being He expressed His full sympathy for the bereavement of Satyabhāmā, and His eyes filled with tears upon hearing about the death of His father-in-law. He thus began to lament, "Oh, what unhappy incidents have taken place!" In this way

both Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, along with Satyabhāmā, the wife of Kṛṣṇa, immediately returned to Dvārakā and began to make plans to kill Śatadhanvā and take away the jewel. Although he was a great outlaw in the city, Śatadhanvā was still very much afraid of Kṛṣṇa's power, and thus he became most afraid on Kṛṣṇa's arrival.

Understanding Kṛṣṇa's plan to kill him, he immediately went to take shelter of Kṛtavarmā. But on being approached by him, Kṛtavarmā said, "I shall never be able to offend Lord Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma because They are not ordinary persons. They are the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Who can be saved from death if he has offended Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa? No one can be saved from Their wrath." Kṛtavarmā further said that Kaṁsa, although powerful and assisted by many demons, could not be saved from the wrath of Kṛṣṇa, and what to speak of Jarāsandha, who had been defeated by Kṛṣṇa eighteen times and each time had to return from the fighting in disappointment.

When Śatadhanvā was refused help by Kṛtavarmā he went to Akrūra and implored him to help. Akrūra also replied, "Both Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa are Themselves the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and anyone who knows Their unlimited strength would never dare to offend Them or fight with Them." He further informed Śatadhanvā, "Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma are so powerful that simply by willing They are creating the whole cosmic manifestation, maintaining it and dissolving it. Unfortunately, persons who are bewildered by the illusory energy cannot understand the strength of Kṛṣṇa, although the whole cosmic manifestation is fully under His control." He cited, as an example, that Kṛṣṇa, even at the age of seven years, had lifted Govardhana Hill and had continued to hold up the mountain for seven days, exactly as a child carries a small umbrella. Akrūra plainly informed Śatadhanvā that he would always offer his most respectful obeisances to Kṛṣṇa, the Supersoul of everything that is created and the original cause of all causes. When Akrūra also refused to give him shelter, Śatadhanvā decided to deliver to the hands of Akrūra the Syamantaka jewel. Then, riding on a horse which could run at great speed and up to four hundred miles at a stretch, he fled the city.

When Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were informed of the flight of Śatadhanvā, They mounted Their chariot, its flag marked by the picture of Garuḍa, and followed immediately. Kṛṣṇa was particularly angry with Śatadhanvā and wanted to kill him because he had killed Satrājit, a superior personality. Satrājit happened to be the father-in-law of Kṛṣṇa, and it is the injunction of the *śāstras* that anyone who has rebelled against a superior person, or *gurudruha,* must be punished in proportion to the volume of

offense. Because Śatadhanvā had killed His father-in-law, Kṛṣṇa was determined to kill him by any means.

Śatadhanvā's horse became exhausted and died near a garden house in Mithilā. Unable to take help of the horse, Śatadhanvā began to run with great speed. In order to be fair to Śatadhanvā, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma also left Their chariot and began to follow Śatadhanvā on foot. While both Śatadhanvā and Kṛṣṇa were running on foot, Kṛṣṇa took His disk and cut off the head of Śatadhanvā. After Śatadhanvā was killed, Kṛṣṇa searched through his clothing for the Syamantaka jewel, but He could not find it. He then returned to Balarāma and said, "We have killed this person uselessly because the jewel is not to be found on his body." Śrī Balarāma suggested, "The jewel might have been kept in custody of another man in Dvārakā, so You'd better return and search it out." Śrī Balarāma expressed His desire to remain in Mithilā City for some days because He enjoyed an intimate friendship with the king. Therefore, Kṛṣṇa returned to Dvārakā, and Balarāma entered the city of Mithilā.

When the King of Mithilā saw the arrival of Śrī Balarāma in his city, he became most pleased and received the Lord with great honor and hospitality. He presented many valuable presents to Balarāmajī in order to seek His pleasure. At this time Śrī Balarāma lived in the city for several years as the honored guest of the King of Mithilā, Janaka Mahārāja. During this time, Duryodhana, the eldest son of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, took the opportunity of coming to Balarāma and learning from Him the art of fighting with a club.

After killing Śatadhanvā, Kṛṣṇa returned to Dvārakā, and in order to please His wife Satyabhāmā, He informed her of the death of Śatadhanvā, the killer of her father. But He also informed her that the jewel had not been found in his possession. Then, according to religious principles, Kṛṣṇa, along with Satyabhāmā, performed all kinds of ceremonies in honor of the death of His father-in-law. In that ceremony all the friends and relatives of the family joined together.

Akrūra and Kṛtavarmā, who were prominent members in the conspiracy to kill Satrājit, had incited Śatadhanvā to kill him, but when they heard of the death of Śatadhanvā at Kṛṣṇa's hand, and when they heard also that Kṛṣṇa had returned to Dvārakā, they both immediately left Dvārakā. The citizens of Dvārakā felt themselves threatened with pestilence and natural disturbances due to the absence of Akrūra from the city. This was a kind of superstition because while Lord Kṛṣṇa was present there could not be any pestilence, famine or natural disturbances. But in the absence of Akrūra there were some disturbances in Dvārakā. Once in the province of Kāśī within the barricade of Vārāṇasī there was severe drought and practically

no rainfall. At that time the King of Kāśī arranged the marriage of his daughter, known as Gāndinī, with Śvaphalka, the father of Akrūra. This was done by the King of Kāśī on the advice of an astrologer, and actually it so happened that after the marriage of the King's daughter with Śvaphalka there was sufficient rainfall in the province. Due to this supernatural power of Śvaphalka, his son Akrūra was also considered equally powerful, and people were under the impression that wherever Akrūra or his father remained, there would be no natural disturbance, famine or drought. That kingdom is considered to be happy where there is no famine, pestilence, or excessive heat and cold and where people are happy mentally, spiritually and bodily. As soon as there is some disturbance, people consider the cause to be due to the absence of an auspicious personality in the city. Thus there was a rumor that because of the absence of Akrūra inauspicious things were happening. After the departure of Akrūra, some of the elderly members of the town began to perceive that there were also inauspicious signs due to the absence of the Syamantaka jewel. When Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa heard these rumors spread by the people He decided to summon Akrūra from the kingdom of Kāśī. Akrūra was Kṛṣṇa's uncle; therefore, when he came back to Dvārakā Lord Kṛṣṇa first of all welcomed him as befitting a superior person. Kṛṣṇa is the Supersoul in everyone's heart; He knows everything going on in everyone's heart. He knew everything that had happened in connection with Akrūra's conspiracy with Śatadhanvā. Therefore, He smilingly began to address Akrūra.

Addressing him as the chief among magnificent men, Kṛṣṇa said, "My dear uncle, it is already known to Me that the Syamantaka jewel was left by Śatadhanvā with you. Presently there is no direct claimant of the Syamantaka jewel, for King Satrājit has no male issue. His daughter Satyabhāmā is not very anxious for this jewel, yet her expected son, as grandson of Satrājit, would, after performing the regulative principles of inheritance, be the legal claimant of the jewel." Lord Kṛṣṇa indicated by this statement that Satyabhāmā was already pregnant and that her son would be the real claimant for the jewel and would certainly take the jewel from him.

Kṛṣṇa continued, "This jewel is so powerful that no ordinary man is able to keep it. I know that you are very pious in activities, so there is no objection to the jewel being kept with you. There is one difficulty, and that is that My elder brother, Śrī Balarāma, does not believe My version that the jewel is with you. I therefore request you, O large-hearted one, to show Me the jewel before My other relatives so that they may be pacified. You cannot deny that the jewel is with you because from various kinds of

rumors we can understand that you have enhanced your opulence and are performing sacrifices on an altar made of solid gold." The properties of the jewel were known: wherever the jewel remained, it would produce for the keeper almost nine *mounds* of pure gold daily. Akrūra was getting gold in that proportion and was distributing it very profusely at sacrificial performances. Lord Kṛṣṇa cited Akrūra's lavishly spending in gold as positive evidence of his possessing the Syamantaka jewel.

When Lord Kṛṣṇa, in friendly terms and in sweet language, impressed Akrūra about the real fact and Akrūra understood that nothing could be concealed from the knowledge of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, he brought the valuable jewel, shining like the sun and covered by cloth, and presented it before Kṛṣṇa. Lord Kṛṣṇa took the Syamantaka jewel in His hand and showed it to all His relatives and friends present there and then again returned the jewel to Akrūra in their presence so that they would know that the jewel was actually being kept by Akrūra in Dvārakā City.

This story of the Syamantaka jewel is very significant. In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* it is said that anyone who hears the story of the Syamantaka jewel or describes it or simply remembers it will be free from all kinds of defamation and the reactions of all impious activities and thus will attain the highest perfectional condition of peace.

Thus ends the Bhaktivedanta purport of the Second Volume, Second Chapter of Kṛṣṇa, *"The Killing of Satrājit and Śatadhanvā."*



3 / Five Queens Married by Kṛṣṇa

There was a great rumor that the five Pāṇḍava brothers, along with their mother Kuntī, had, under the plan of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, died in a fire accident in the house of shellac in which they were living. But then the five brothers were detected at the marriage ceremony of Draupadī; so again another rumor spread that the Pāṇḍavas and their mother were not dead. It was a rumor, but actually it was so; they returned to their capital city, Hastināpura, and people saw them face to face. When this news was carried to Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, Kṛṣṇa wanted to see them personally, and therefore Kṛṣṇa decided to go to Hastināpura.

This time, Kṛṣṇa visited Hastināpura in state, as a royal prince, accompanied by His commander-in-chief, Yuyudhāna, and by many other soldiers. He had not actually been invited to visit the city, yet He went to see the Pāṇḍavas out of His affection for His great devotees. He visited the Pāṇḍavas without warning, and all of them got up from their respective seats as soon as they saw Him. Kṛṣṇa is called Mukunda because as soon as one comes in constant touch with Kṛṣṇa or sees Him in full Kṛṣṇa consciousness, one immediately becomes freed from all material anxieties. Not only that, but he immediately becomes blessed with all spiritual bliss.

On receiving Kṛṣṇa, the Pāṇḍavas became very enlivened, just as if awakened from unconsciousness or from loss of life. When a man is lying unconscious, his senses and the different parts of his body are not active, but when he regains his consciousness, the senses immediately become active. Similarly, the Pāṇḍavas received Kṛṣṇa as if they had just regained their consciousness, and so they became very much enlivened. Lord Kṛṣṇa embraced every one of them, and by the touch of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the Pāṇḍavas immediately became freed from all reactions of material contamination, and therefore they were smiling in spiritual bliss. By seeing the face of Lord Kṛṣṇa, everyone was transcendentally satisfied.

Lord Kṛṣṇa, although the Supreme Personality of Godhead, was playing the part of an ordinary human being, and thus He immediately touched the feet of Yudhiṣṭhira and Bhīma because they were His two older cousins. Arjuna embraced Kṛṣṇa as a friend of the same age, whereas the two younger brothers, namely Nakula and Sahadeva, touched the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa to show Him respect. After an exchange of greetings according to the social etiquette befitting the position of the Pāṇḍavas and Lord Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa was offered an exalted seat. When He was comfortably seated, the newly married Draupadī, young and very beautiful in her natural feminine gracefulness, came before Lord Kṛṣṇa to offer her respectful greetings. The Yādavas who accompanied Kṛṣṇa to Hastināpura were also very respectfully received; specifically, Sātyaki, or Yuyudhāna, was also offered a nice seat. In this way, when everyone else was properly seated, the five brothers took their seats nearby Lord Kṛṣṇa.

After meeting with the five brothers, Lord Kṛṣṇa personally went to visit Śrīmatī Kuntīdevī, the mother of the Pāṇḍavas, who was also the paternal aunt of Kṛṣṇa. In offering His respects to His aunt, Kṛṣṇa also touched her feet. Kuntīdevī's eyes became wet, and, in great love, she feelingly embraced Lord Kṛṣṇa. She then inquired from Him about the well-being of her paternal family members—her brother Vasudeva, his wife, and other members of the family. Similarly, Kṛṣṇa also inquired from His aunt about the welfare of the Pāṇḍava families. Although Kuntīdevī was related to Kṛṣṇa by family ties, she knew immediately after meeting Him that He was the Supreme Personality of Godhead. She remembered the past calamities of her life and how by the grace of Kṛṣṇa the Pāṇḍavas and their mother had been saved. She knew perfectly well that no one, without Kṛṣṇa's grace, could have saved them from the fire accident designed by Dhṛtarāṣṭra and his sons. In a choked up voice, she began to narrate before Kṛṣṇa the past history of their life.

Śrīmatī Kuntī said: "My dear Kṛṣṇa, I remember the day when You sent my brother Akrūra to gather information about us. This means that You always remember us automatically. When You sent Akrūra, I could understand that there was no possibility of our being put into danger. All good fortune in our life began when You sent Akrūra to us. Since then, I have been convinced that we are not without protection. We may be put into various types of dangerous conditions by our family members, the Kurus, but I am confident that You remember us and that You always keep us safe and sound. Devotees who simply think of You are always immune from all kinds of material dangers, and what to speak of ourselves, who are personally remembered by You. So, my dear Kṛṣṇa, there is no question

of bad luck; we are always in an auspicious position because of Your grace. But because You have bestowed a special favor on us, people should not mistakenly think that You are partial to some and inattentive to others. You make no such distinction. No one is Your favorite and no one is Your enemy. As the Supreme Personality of Godhead, You are equal to everyone, and everyone can take advantage of Your special protection. The fact is that although You are equal to everyone, You are especially inclined to the devotees who always think of You. The devotees are related to You by ties of love. As such, they cannot forget You even for a moment. You are present in everyone's heart, but because the devotees always remember You, You also respond accordingly. Although the mother has affection for all the children, she takes special care of the one who is fully dependent. I know certainly, my dear Kṛṣṇa, that being seated in everyone's heart, You always create auspicious situations for Your unalloyed devotees."

Then King Yudhiṣṭhira also praised Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality and universal friend of everyone, but because Kṛṣṇa was taking special care of the Pāṇḍavas, King Yudhiṣṭhira said: "My dear Kṛṣṇa, we do not know what sort of pious activities we have executed in our past lives that have made You so kind and graceful to us. We know very well that the great mystics who are always engaged in meditation to capture You do not find it easy to obtain such grace, nor can they draw any personal attention from You. I cannot understand why You are so kind upon us. We are not *yogīs,* but, on the contrary, we are attached to material contaminations. We are householders dealing in politics, worldly affairs. I do not know why You are so kind upon us."

Being requested by King Yudhiṣṭhira, Kṛṣṇa agreed to stay in Hastināpura for four months during the rainy season. The four months of the rainy season are called *Cāturmāsya.* During this period, the generally itinerant preachers and *brāhmaṇas* stop at a certain place and live under rigid regulative principles. Although Lord Kṛṣṇa is above all regulative principles, He agreed to stay at Hastināpura out of affection for the Pāṇḍavas. Taking this opportunity of Kṛṣṇa's residence in Hastināpura, all the citizens of the town got the privilege of seeing Him now and then, and thus they merged into transcendental bliss simply by seeing Lord Kṛṣṇa eye to eye.

One day while Kṛṣṇa was staying with the Pāṇḍavas, He and Arjuna prepared themselves to go to the forest to hunt. Both of them sat down on the chariot, which flew a flag with a picture of Hanumān. Arjuna's special chariot is always marked with the picture of Hanumān, and therefore his name is also Kapidhvaja. (*Kapi* means Hanumān, and *dhvaja* means "flag.")

Thus Arjuna went to the forest with his bow and infallible arrows. He dressed himself with suitable protective garments, for he was to practice killing many enemies. He specifically entered that part of the forest where there were many tigers, deer and various other animals. Kṛṣṇa did not go with Arjuna to practice animal killing because He doesn't have to practice anything; He is self-sufficient. He accompanied Arjuna to see how he was practicing because in the future he would have to kill many enemies. After entering the forest, Arjuna killed many tigers, boars, bisons, *gavayas* (a kind of wild animal), rhinoceroses, deer, hares, porcupines and similar other animals, which he pierced with his arrows. Some of the dead animals, which were fit to be offered in the sacrifices, were carried by the servants and sent to King Yudhiṣṭhira. Other ferocious animals, such as tigers and rhinoceroses, were killed only to stop disturbances in the forest. Since there are many sages and saintly persons who are residents of the forests, it is the duty of the *kṣatriya* kings to keep even the forest in a peaceful condition for living.

Arjuna felt tired and thirsty from hunting, and therefore he went to the bank of the Yamunā along with Kṛṣṇa. When both the Kṛṣṇas, namely Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna (Arjuna is sometimes called Kṛṣṇa, as is Draupadī), reached the bank of the Yamunā, they washed their hands and feet and mouths and drank the clear water of the Yamunā. While they were resting and drinking water, they saw a beautiful girl of marriagable age walking alone on the bank of the Yamunā. Kṛṣṇa asked His friend Arjuna to go forward and ask the girl who she was. By the order of Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna immediately approached the girl, who was very beautiful. She had an attractive body and nice glittering teeth and smiling face. Arjuna inquired, "My dear girl, you are so beautiful with your raised breasts—may I ask you who you are? We are surprised to see you loitering here alone. What is your purpose in coming here? We can guess only that you are searching after a suitable husband. If you don't mind, you can disclose your purpose. I shall try to satisfy you."

The beautiful girl was the river Yamunā personified. She replied, "Sir, I am the daughter of the sun-god, and I am now performing penance and austerity to have Lord Viṣṇu as my husband. I think He is the Supreme Person and just suitable to become my husband. I disclose my desire thus because you wanted to know it."

The girl continued, "My dear sir, I know you are the hero Arjuna; so I may further say that I'll not accept anyone as my husband besides Lord Viṣṇu, because He is the only protector of all living entities and the bestower of liberation for all conditioned souls. I shall be thankful unto

you if you pray to Lord Viṣṇu to become pleased with me." The girl Yamunā knew it well that Arjuna was a great devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa and that if he would pray, Kṛṣṇa would never deny his request. To approach Kṛṣṇa directly may sometimes be futile, but to approach Kṛṣṇa through His devotee is sure to be successful. She further told Arjuna, "My name is Kālindī, and I live within the water of the Yamunā. My father was kind enough to construct a special house for me within the waters of the Yamunā, and I have vowed to remain in the water as long as I cannot find Lord Kṛṣṇa." The message of the girl Kālindī was duly carried to Kṛṣṇa by Arjuna although Kṛṣṇa, as the Supersoul of everyone's heart, knew everything. Without further discussion, Kṛṣṇa immediately accepted Kālindī and asked her to sit down on the chariot. Then all of them approached King Yudhiṣṭhira.

After this, Kṛṣṇa was asked by King Yudhiṣṭhira to help in constructing a suitable house to be planned by the great architect Viśvakarmā, the celestial engineer in the heavenly kingdom. Kṛṣṇa immediately called for Viśvakarmā, and He made him construct a wonderful city according to the desire of King Yudhiṣṭhira. When this city was constructed, Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira requested Kṛṣṇa to live with them a few days more in order to give them the pleasure of His association. Lord Kṛṣṇa accepted the request of Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira and remained there for many days more.

In the meantime, Kṛṣṇa engaged in the pastime of offering Khāṇḍava Forest, which belonged to King Indra. Kṛṣṇa wanted to give it to Agni, the fire-god. Khāṇḍava Forest contained many varieties of drugs, and Agni required to eat them for rejuvenation. Agni, however, did not touch Khāṇḍava Forest directly, but requested Kṛṣṇa to help him. Agni knew that Kṛṣṇa was very much pleased with him because he had formerly given Him the Sudarśana disc. So in order to satisfy Agni, Kṛṣṇa became the chariot driver of Arjuna, and both went to the Khāṇḍava Forest. After Agni had eaten up the Khāṇḍava Forest, he was very much pleased. This time, he offered a specific bow known as Gāṇḍīva, four white horses, one chariot, and an invincible quiver with two specific arrows considered to be talismans, which had so much power that no warrior could counteract them. When the Khāṇḍava Forest was being devoured by the fire-god, Agni, there was a demon of the name Maya who was saved by Arjuna from the devastating fire. For this reason, that former demon became a great friend of Arjuna, and in order to please Arjuna he constructed a nice assembly house within the city constructed by Viśvakarmā. This assembly house had some corners so puzzling that when Duryodhana came to visit this house he was misdirected, accepting water as land and land as water.

Duryodhana thus became insulted by the opulence of the Pāṇḍavas, and he became their determined enemy.

After a few days, Kṛṣṇa took permission from King Yudhiṣṭhira to return to Dvārakā. When he got permission, he went to his country, accompanied by Sātyaki, the leader of the Yadus who were living in Hastināpura with Him. Kālindī also returned with Kṛṣṇa to Dvārakā. After returning, Kṛṣṇa consulted many learned astrologers to find the suitable moment at which to marry Kālindī, and then He married her with great pomp. This marriage ceremony gave much pleasure to the relatives of both parties, and all of them enjoyed the great occasion.

The kings of Avantīpura (now known as Ujjain) were named Vinda and Anuvinda. Both kings were under the control of Duryodhana. They had one sister named Mitravindā, who was a very qualified, learned and elegant girl. She was the daughter of one of Kṛṣṇa's aunts. She was to select her husband in the assembly of princes, but she strongly desired to have Kṛṣṇa as her husband. During the assembly for selecting her husband, however, Kṛṣṇa was present, and He forcibly carried away Mitravindā in the presence of all other royal princes. Being unable to resist Kṛṣṇa, the princes were left simply looking at each other.

After this incident, Kṛṣṇa married the daughter of the King of Kośala. The King of Kośala Province was called Nagnajit. He was very pious and was a follower of the Vedic ritualistic ceremonies. His most beautiful daughter was named Satyā. Sometimes Satyā was called Nāgnajitī, for she was the daughter of King Nagnajit. King Nagnajit wanted to give the hand of his daughter to any prince who could defeat seven very strong, stalwart bulls maintained by him. No one in the princely order could defeat the seven bulls, and therefore no one could claim the hand of Satyā. The seven bulls were very strong, and they could hardly bear even the smell of any prince. Many princes approached this kingdom and tried to subdue these bulls, but instead of controlling them, they themselves were defeated. This news was spread all over the country, and when Kṛṣṇa heard that the girl Satyā could be achieved only by defeating the seven bulls, He prepared Himself to go to the kingdom of Kośala. With many soldiers, He approached that part of the country, known as Ayodhyā, making a regular state visit.

When it was known to the King of Kośala that Kṛṣṇa had come to ask the hand of his daughter, he became very pleased. With great respect and pomp, he welcomed Kṛṣṇa to the kingdom. When Kṛṣṇa approached him, he offered Him a suitable sitting place and articles for reception. Everything appeared to be very elegant. Kṛṣṇa also offered him respectful obeisances, thinking him to be His future father-in-law.

When Satyā, the daughter of King Nagnajit, understood that Kṛṣṇa Himself had come to marry her, she was very much pleased that the husband of the goddess of fortune had so kindly come there to accept her. She had cherished the idea of marrying Kṛṣṇa for a long time and was following the principles of austerities in order to obtain her desired husband. She then began to think, "If I have performed any pious activities to the best of my capacity and if I have sincerely thought all along to have Kṛṣṇa as my husband, then Kṛṣṇa may be pleased to fulfill my long-cherished desire." She began to offer prayers to Kṛṣṇa mentally, thinking, "I do not know how the Supreme Personality of Godhead can be pleased upon me. He is the master and Lord of everyone. Even the goddess of fortune, whose place is next to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and Lord Śiva, Lord Brahmā and many other demigods of different planets always offer their respectful obeisances unto the Lord. The Lord also sometimes descends on this earth in different incarnations in order to fulfill the desire of His devotees. He is so exalted and great that I do not know how to satisfy Him." She thought that the Supreme Personality of Godhead could be pleased only out of His own causeless mercy upon the devotee; otherwise, there was no other means to please Him. Lord Caitanya, in the same way, prayed in His *Śikṣāṣṭaka* verses, "My Lord, I am Your eternal servant. Somehow or other I have fallen into this material existence. If You kindly pick me up and fix me as an atom of dust at Your lotus feet, it will be a great favor to Your eternal servant." The Lord can be pleased only by a humble attitude in the service spirit. The more we render service unto the Lord under the direction of the spiritual master, the more we make advancement on the path of approaching the Lord. We cannot demand any grace or mercy from the Lord because of our service rendered to Him. He may accept or not accept our service, but the only means to satisfy the Lord is through the service attitude, and nothing else.

King Nagnijit was already a pious king, and having Kṛṣṇa in his palace, he began to worship Him to the best of his knowledge and capacity. He presented himself before the Lord thus: "My dear Lord, You are the proprietor of the whole cosmic manifestation, and You are Nārāyaṇa, the rest of all living creatures. You are self-sufficient and pleased with Your personal opulences, so how can I offer You anything? And how could I please You by such offering? It is not possible, because I am an insignificant living being. Actually I have no capacity to render any service unto You."

Kṛṣṇa is the Supersoul of all living creatures, so He could understand the mind of Satyā, the daughter of King Nagnajit. He was also very much pleased with the respectful worship of the King in offering Him a sitting place, eatables, residence, etc. He was appreciative, therefore, that both the

girl and the father of the girl were anxious to have Him as their intimate relative. He began to smile and in a great voice said, "My dear King Nagnajit, you know very well that anyone in the princely order who is regular in his position will never ask anything from anyone, however exalted he may be. Such requests by a *kṣatriya* king from another person have been deliberately forbidden by the learned Vedic followers. If a *kṣatriya* breaks this regulation, his action is condemned by learned scholars. But in spite of this rigid regulative principle, I am asking you for the hand of your beautiful daughter just to establish our relationship in return for your great reception of Me. You may also be pleased to be informed that in our family tradition there is no scope for our offering anything in exchange for accepting your daughter. We cannot pay any price which you may impose for delivering her." In other words, Kṛṣṇa wanted the hand of Satyā from the King without fulfilling the condition of defeating the seven bulls.

After hearing the statement of Lord Kṛṣṇa, King Nagnajit said, "My dear Lord, You are the reservoir of all pleasure, all opulences and all qualities. The goddess of fortune, Lakṣmījī, always lives on Your chest. Under these circumstances, who can be a better husband for my daughter? Both myself and my daughter have always prayed for this opportunity. You are the chief of the Yadu dynasty. You may kindly know that from the very beginning I have made a vow to marry my daughter to a suitable candidate, one who can come out victorious in the test I have devised. I have imposed this test just to understand the prowess and position of my intended son-in-law. You are Lord Kṛṣṇa, and You are the chief of all heroes. I am sure You shall be able to bring these seven bulls under control without any difficulty. Until now they have never been subdued by any prince; anyone who has attempted to bring them under control has simply had his limbs broken."

King Nagnajit continued his request: "Kṛṣṇa, if You'll kindly bridle the seven bulls and bring them under control, then undoubtedly You will be selected as the desired husband of my daughter, Satyā." After hearing this statement, Kṛṣṇa could understand that the King did not want to break his vow. Thus, in order to fulfill his desire, He tightened His belt and prepared to fight with the bulls. He immediately divided Himself into seven Kṛṣṇas, and each one of Them immediately caught hold of a bull and bridled its nose, thus bringing it under control as if it were a plaything.

Kṛṣṇa's dividing Himself into seven is very significant. It was known to Satyā, the daughter of King Nagnajit, that Kṛṣṇa had already married many

other wives, and still she was attached to Kṛṣṇa. In order to encourage her, He immediately expanded Himself into seven. The purport is that Kṛṣṇa is one, but He has unlimited forms of expansions. He married many hundreds of thousands of wives, but this does not mean that while He was with one wife the others were bereft of His association. Kṛṣṇa could associate with each and every wife by His expansions.

When Kṛṣṇa brought the bulls under His control by bridling their noses, their strength and pride were immediately smashed. The name and fame which the bulls had attained was thus vanquished. When the bulls had been bridled by Kṛṣṇa, He pulled them strongly, just as a child pulls a toy wooden bull. Upon seeing this advantage of Kṛṣṇa, King Nagnajit became very much astonished and immediately, with great pleasure, brought his daughter Satyā before Kṛṣṇa and handed her over to Him. Kṛṣṇa also immediately accepted Satyā as His wife. Then there was a marriage ceremony with great pomp. The queens of King Nagnajit also were very much pleased because their daughter Satyā got Kṛṣṇa as her husband. Since the King and queens were very pleased on this auspicious occasion, there was a celebration all over the city in honor of the marriage. Everywhere was heard the sounds of the conchshell and kettledrum and various other vibrations of music and song. The learned *brāhmaṇas* began to shower their blessings upon the newly married couple. In jubilation, all the inhabitants of the city dressed themselves with colorful garments and ornaments. King Nagnajit was so pleased that he began to give a dowry to the daughter and son-in-law, as follows.

First of all he gave them ten thousand cows and three thousand well-dressed young maidservants, ornamented up to their necks. This system of dowry is still current in India especially for the *kṣatriya* princes. Also, when a *kṣatriya* prince is married, at least a dozen maidservants of similar age are given along with the bride. After giving the cows and maidservants, the King also enriched the dowry by giving 9,000 elephants and a hundred times more chariots than elephants. This means that he gave 900,000 chariots. And he gave a hundred times more horses than chariots, or 90,000,000 horses, and a hundred times more slaves than horses. Such slaves and maidservants were maintained by the royal princes with all provisions, as if they were their own children or family members. After giving this dowry as described, the King of the Kośala Province bade his daughter and great son-in-law be seated on a chariot. He allowed them to go to their home, guarded by a division of well-equipped soldiers. When they were travelling fast to their new home, his heart became enlivened with affection for them.

Before this marriage of Satyā with Kṛṣṇa, there had been many competitive engagements with the bulls of King Nagnajit, and many other princes of the Yadu dynasty and of other dynasties as well had tried to win the hand of Satyā. When the frustrated princes of the other dynasties heard that Kṛṣṇa was successful in getting the hand of Satyā by subduing the bulls, naturally they became envious. While Kṛṣṇa was travelling to Dvārakā, all the frustrated and defeated princes encircled Him and began to shower their arrows on the bridal party. When they attacked Kṛṣṇa's party and threw arrows like incessant torrents of rain, Arjuna, the best friend of Kṛṣṇa, took charge of the challenge, and he alone drove them off very easily to please his great friend Kṛṣṇa on the occasion of His marriage. He immediately took up his bow of the name Gāṇḍīva and chased away all the princes; exactly as a lion drives away all other small animals simply by chasing them, Arjuna drove away all the princes without killing even one of them. After this, the chief of the Yadu dynasty, Lord Kṛṣṇa, along with His newly married wife and a huge dowry, entered the city of Dvārakā with great pomp. Kṛṣṇa then lived there with His wife very peacefully.

Kṛṣṇa had another aunt, His father's sister, whose name was Śrutakīrti, and who was married and lived in the Kekaya province. She had a daughter whose name was Bhadrā. Bhadrā also wanted to marry Kṛṣṇa, and her brother handed her over to Him unconditionally. Kṛṣṇa also accepted her as His bona fide wife. Thereafter, Kṛṣṇa married a daughter of the king of the Madras Province, and her name was Lakṣmaṇā. Lakṣmaṇā had all good qualities. She was also forcibly married by Kṛṣṇa, who took her in the same way that Garuḍa snatched the jar of nectar from the hands of the demons. Kṛṣṇa kidnapped this girl in the presence of many other princes in the assembly of her *svayaṁvara. Svayaṁvara* is a ceremony in which the bride can select her own husband from an assembly of many princes.

The description of Kṛṣṇa's marriage with the five girls mentioned in this chapter is not sufficient. He had many other thousands of wives besides them. The other thousands of wives were accepted by Kṛṣṇa after killing one demon named Bhaumāsura. All these thousands of girls were held captive in the palace of Bhaumāsura, and Kṛṣṇa released them and married them.

Thus ends the Bhaktivedanta purport of the Second Volume, Third Chapter of Kṛṣṇa, *"Five Queens Married by Kṛṣṇa."*



4 / Deliverance of the Demon Bhaumāsura

The story of Bhaumāsura—how he kidnapped and made captive 16,000 princesses by collecting them from the palaces of various kings and how he was killed by Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord of wonderful character—is all described by Śukadeva Gosvāmī to King Parīkṣit in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.* Generally, the demons are always against the demigods. This demon, Bhaumāsura, having become very powerful, took by force the umbrella from the throne of the demigod Varuṇa. He also took the earrings of Aditi, the mother of the demigods. He conquered a portion of heavenly Mount Meru and occupied the portion which was known as Maṇiparvata. The King of the heavenly planets, Indra, therefore came to Dvārakā to complain about Bhaumāsura before Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Hearing this complaint by Indra, the King of heaven, Lord Kṛṣṇa, accompanied by His wife Satyabhāmā, immediately started for the abode of Bhaumāsura. Both of them rode on the back of Garuḍa, who flew them to Prāgjyotiṣapura, the capital city of Bhaumāsura. It was not a very easy task to enter into the city of Prāgjyotiṣapura, because it was very well fortified. First of all, there were four formidable forts guarding the four directions of the city, and it was well-protected on all sides by formidable military strength. The next boundary was a water canal all around the city, and in addition the whole city was surrounded with electric wires. The next fortification was of *anila,* a gaseous substance. After this, there was a network of barbed wiring constructed by a demon of the name Mura. It appeared that the city was well-protected even in terms of today's scientific advancements.

When Kṛṣṇa arrived, He broke all the forts to pieces by the strokes of His club, and the military strength scattered here and there by the constant onslaught of the arrows of Kṛṣṇa. With His celebrated Sudarśana-cakra He counteracted the electrified boundary; the channels of water and the

gaseous boundary were made null and void, and He cut to pieces the electrified network fabricated by the demon Mura. By the vibration of His conchshell, He not only broke the hearts of great fighters, but also the fighting machines which were there. Similarly, the walls around the city were broken by His invincible club.

The vibration of His conchshell sounded like the thunderbolt at the time of the dissolution of the whole cosmic situation. The demon Mura heard the vibration of the conchshell, awakened from his sleep, and personally came out to see what had happened. He had five heads and had long been living within the water. The Mura demon was as brilliant as the sun at the time of the dissolution of the cosmic manifestation, and his temper was like blazing fire. The effulgence of his body was so dazzling that it was difficult to see him with open eyes. When he came out, he first of all took out his trident and began to rush the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The onslaught of the demon Mura was like a big snake attacking Garuḍa. His angry mood was very severe, and he appeared ready to devour the three worlds. First of all he attacked the carrier of Kṛṣṇa, Garuḍa, by whirling his trident and he began to vibrate sounds through his five faces like the roaring of a lion. The roaring produced by the vibration of his mouths spread all over the atmosphere until it extended not only all over the world, but also into outer space, up and down and out to the ten directions. In this way, the sound was rumbling throughout the whole universe.

Lord Kṛṣṇa saw that the trident of the Mura demon was gradually rushing toward His carrier, Garuḍa. Immediately, by a trick of His hand, He took two arrows and threw them toward the trident, cutting it to pieces. Simultaneously, using many arrows, He pierced the mouths of the demon Mura. When he saw himself outmaneuvered by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the Mura demon immediately began to strike Him in great anger with his club. But Lord Kṛṣṇa, with His own club, broke the club of Mura to pieces before it could reach Him. The demon, bereft of his weapon, decided to attack Kṛṣṇa with his strong arms, but by the aid of His Sudarśana-cakra, Kṛṣṇa immediately separated the demon's five heads from his body. The demon then fell into the water, just as the peak of a mountain falls into the ocean after being struck by the thunderbolt of Indra.

This demon Mura had seven sons, named Tāmra, Antarikṣa, Śravaṇa, Vibhāvasu, Vasu, Nabhasvān and Aruṇa. All of them became puffed up and vengeful because of the death of their father, and in order to retaliate, they prepared in great anger to fight with Kṛṣṇa. They equipped themselves with necessary weapons and situated Pīṭha, another demon, to act as

commander in the battle. By the order of Bhaumāsura, all of them combinedly attacked Kṛṣṇa.

When they came before Lord Kṛṣṇa, they began to shower Him with many kinds of weapons, like swords, clubs, lances, arrows and tridents. But they did not know that the strength of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is unlimited and invincible. Kṛṣṇa, with His arrows, cut all the weapons of the men of Bhaumāsura into pieces, like grains. Kṛṣṇa then threw His weapons, and Bhaumāsura's commander-in-chief, Pīṭha, along with his assistants, fell down, their military dress cut off and their heads, legs, arms and thighs severed. All of them were sent to the superintendent of death, Yamarāja.

Bhaumāsura was also known as Narakāsura, for he happened to be the son of the earth personified. When he saw that all his soldiers, commanders and fighters were killed on the battlefield by the strokes of the weapons of the Personality of Godhead, he became exceedingly angry at the Lord. He then came out of the city with a great number of elephants who had all been born and brought up on the seashore. All of them were highly intoxicated. When they came out, they saw that Lord Kṛṣṇa and His wife were beautifully situated high in outer space just like a blackish cloud about the sun, glittering with the light of electricity. The demon Bhaumāsura immediately released a weapon called Śataghnī, by which he could kill hundreds of warriors with one stroke, and simultaneously all his assistants also threw their respective weapons at the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Lord Kṛṣṇa began to counteract all these weapons by releasing His feathered arrows. The result of this fight was that all the soldiers and commanders of Bhaumāsura fell to the ground, their arms, legs and heads separated from their trunks, and all their horses and elephants also fell with them. In this way, all the weapons released by Bhaumāsura were cut to pieces by the reaction of the Lord's arrows.

The Lord was fighting on the back of Garuḍa, and Garuḍa was also helping the Lord by striking the horses and the elephants with his wings and scratching their heads with his nails and sharpened beak. The elephants were feeling much pain by Garuḍa's attack on them, and they were all dispersing from the battlefield. Bhaumāsura alone remained on the battlefield, and he engaged himself in fighting with Kṛṣṇa. He saw that Kṛṣṇa's carrier, Garuḍa, was causing great disturbance to his soldiers and elephants, and in great anger he struck Garuḍa with all his strength, which defied the strength of the thunderbolt. Fortunately, Garuḍa was not an ordinary bird, and he felt the strokes given by Bhaumāsura just as a great elephant feels the impact of a garland of flowers.

Bhaumāsura thus came to see that none of his tricks would act upon Kṛṣṇa, and he became aware that all his attempts to kill Kṛṣṇa would be frustrated. Yet he attempted for the last time, taking a trident in his hand to strike Him. Kṛṣṇa was so dexterous that before Bhaumāsura could touch his trident, his head was cut off by the sharp Sudarśana-cakra. His head, illuminated by earrings and helmets, fell down on the battlefield. On the occasion of Bhaumāsura's being killed by Lord Kṛṣṇa, all the demon's relatives began to scream in disappointment, and the saintly persons began to glorify the chivalrous activities of the Lord. Taking this opportunity, the denizens of the heavenly planets began to shower flowers on the Lord.

At this time, the earth personified appeared before Lord Kṛṣṇa and greeted Him with a garland of *vaijayantī* jewels. She also returned the dazzling earrings of Aditi, bedecked with jewels and gold. She also returned the umbrella of Varuṇa, along with another valuable jewel, which she presented to Kṛṣṇa. After this, the earth personified began to offer her prayers to Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality and master of the world, who is always worshiped by very exalted demigods. She fell down in obeisances and, in great devotional ecstasy, began to speak.

"Let me offer my respectful obeisances unto the Lord, who is always present with four kinds of symbols, namely His conchshell, disc, lotus and club, and who is the Lord of all demigods. Please accept my respectful obeisances unto You. My dear Lord, You are the Supersoul, and in order to satisfy the aspiration of Your devotees, You descend on the earth in Your various transcendental incarnations, which are just appropriate to the devotees' worshipful desire. Kindly accept my respectful obeisances.

"My dear Lord, the lotus flower is grown out of Your navel, and You are always decorated with a garland of lotus flowers. Your eyes are always spread like the petals of the lotus flower, and therefore they are all-pleasing to the eyes of others. Your lotus feet are so soft and delicate that they are always worshiped by Your unalloyed devotees, and they pacify their lotus-like hearts. I therefore repeatedly offer my respectful obeisances unto You.

"You possess all kinds of religions, fame, property, knowledge and renunciation; You are the shelter of all five opulences. Although You are all-pervading, You have nevertheless appeared as the son of Vasudeva. Please, therefore, accept my respectful obeisances. You are the original Supreme Personality of Godhead and the supreme cause of all causes. Only Your Lordship is the reservoir of all knowledge. Let me offer my respectful obeisances unto You. Personally You are unborn; still, You are the father of the whole cosmic manifestation. You are the reservoir and

shelter of all kinds of energies. The manifestive appearance of this world is caused by You, and You are both the cause and effect of this cosmic manifestation. Please therefore accept my respectful obeisances.

"My dear Lord, as for the three gods—Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva—they are also not independent of You. When there is necessity of creating this cosmic manifestation, You create Your passionate appearance of Brahmā, and when You want to maintain this cosmic manifestation, You expand Yourself as Lord Viṣṇu, the reservoir of all goodness. Similarly, You appear as Lord Śiva, master of the modes of ignorance, and thus dissolve the whole creation. Your transcendental position is always maintained, in spite of creating these three modes of material nature. You are never entangled like the ordinary living entities with these modes of material nature.

"Actually, my Lord, You are the material nature, You are the father of the universe, and You are the eternal time that has caused the combination of nature and the material creator. Still, You are always transcendental to all these material activities. My dear Lord, O Supreme Personality of Godhead, I know that earth, water, fire, air, sky, the five sense objects, mind, the senses and their deities, egotism, as well as the total material energy—everything animate and inanimate in this phenomenal world is resting upon You. Since everything is produced of You, nothing can be separated from You. Yet, since You are transcendentally situated, neither can anything material be identified with Your personality. Everything is, therefore, simultaneously one and different from You, and the philosophers who try to separate everything from you are certainly mistaken in their viewpoint.

"My dear Lord, may I inform You that this boy, whose name is Bhagadatta, is the son of my son, Bhaumāsura. He has been very much affected by the ghastly situation created by the death of his father and has become very much confused, being afraid of the present situation. I have therefore brought him to surrender unto Your lotus feet. I request Your Lordship to give shelter to this boy and bless him with Your lotus feet. I am bringing him to You so that he may become relieved from the reactions of all the sinful activities of his father."

When Lord Kṛṣṇa heard the prayers of mother Earth, He immediately assured her of immunity from all fearful situations. He said to Bhagadatta, "Don't be afraid." Then He entered the palace of Bhaumāsura, which was equipped with all kinds of opulences. In the palace of Bhaumāsura Lord Kṛṣṇa saw 16,100 young princesses, who had been kidnapped and held captive there. When the princesses saw the Supreme Personality of

Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, enter the palace, they immediately became captivated by the beauty of the Lord and prayed for His causeless mercy. Within their minds, they decided to accept Lord Kṛṣṇa as their husband without any hesitation. Each one of them began to pray to providence that Kṛṣṇa might become her husband. Sincerely and seriously, they offered their hearts to the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa with an unalloyed devotional attitude. As the Supersoul in everyone's heart, Kṛṣṇa could understand their uncontaminated desire, and He agreed to accept them as His wives. Thus, He arranged for suitable dresses and ornaments for them, and each of them, seated on a palanquin, was dispatched to Dvārakā City. Kṛṣṇa also collected unlimited wealth from the palace, along with chariots, horses, jewels and treasure. He took from the palace fifty white elephants, each with four tusks, and all of them were dispatched to Dvārakā.

After this incident, Lord Kṛṣṇa and Satyabhāmā entered Amarāvatī, the capital city of the heavenly planet, and they immediately entered the palace of King Indra and his wife, Śacīdevī, who welcomed them. Kṛṣṇa then presented Indra with the earrings of Aditi.

When Kṛṣṇa and Satyabhāmā were returning from the capital city of Indra, Satyabhāmā remembered Kṛṣṇa's promise to give her the plant of the *pārijāta* flower. Taking the opportunity of having come to the heavenly kingdom, she plucked a *pārijāta* plant and kept it on the back of Garuḍa. Once Nārada took a *pārijāta* flower and presented it to Kṛṣṇa's senior wife, Śrī Rukmiṇīdevī. On account of this, Satyabhāmā developed an inferiority complex; she also wanted a flower from Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa could understand the competitive womanly nature of His co-wives, and He smiled. He immediately asked Satyabhāmā, "Why are you asking for only one flower? I would like to give you a whole tree of *pārijāta* flowers."

Actually, Kṛṣṇa had purposely taken His wife Satyabhāmā with Him so she could collect the *pārijāta* with her own hand. But the denizens of the heavenly planet, including Indra, became very irritated. Without their permission, Satyabhāmā had plucked a *pārijāta* plant, which is not to be found on the earth planet. Indra, along with other demigods, offered opposition to Kṛṣṇa and Satyabhāmā for taking away the plant, but in order to please His favorite wife Satyabhāmā, Kṛṣṇa became determined and adamant, so there was a fight between the demigods and Kṛṣṇa. As, usual, Kṛṣṇa came out victorious, and He triumphantly brought the *pārijāta* plant chosen by His wife to this earth planet, to Dvārakā. After this, the plant was installed in the palace garden of Satyabhāmā. On account of this extraordinary tree, the garden house of Satyabhāmā became extraordinarily beautiful. As the *pārijāta* plant came down to the earthly

planet, the fragrance of the flower also came down, and the celestial swans also migrated to this earth in search of its fragrance and honey.

King Indra's behavior toward Kṛṣṇa was not very much appreciated by great sages like Śukadeva Gosvāmī. Out of His causeless mercy, Kṛṣṇa had gone to the heavenly kingdom, Amarāvatī, to present King Indra with his mother's earrings, which had been lost to Bhaumāsura, and Indra had been very glad to receive them. But when a flower plant from the heavenly kingdom was taken by Kṛṣṇa, Indra offered to fight with Him. This was self-interest on the part of Indra. He offered his prayer, tipping down his head to the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, but as soon as his purpose was served, he became a different creature. That is the way of the dealings of materialistic men. Materialistic men are always interested in their own profit. For this purpose they can offer any kind of respect to anyone, but when their personal interest is over, they are no longer friends. This selfish nature is not only found among the richer class of men on this planet, but is present even in personalities like Indra and other demigods. Too much wealth makes a man selfish. A selfish man is not prepared to take to Kṛṣṇa consciousness and is condemned by great devotees like Śukadeva Gosvāmī. In other words, possession of too many worldly riches is a disqualification for advancement in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

After defeating Indra, Kṛṣṇa arranged to marry the 16,100 girls brought from the custody of Bhaumāsura. By expanding Himself in 16,100 forms, He simultaneously married them all in different palaces in one auspicious moment. He thus established the truth that Kṛṣṇa and no one else is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. There is nothing impossible, for Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead; He is all-powerful, omnipresent and imperishable, and as such there is nothing wonderful in this pastime. All the palaces of the more than 16,000 queens of Kṛṣṇa were full with suitable gardens, furniture and other paraphernalia, of which there is no parallel in this world. There is no exaggeration in this story from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. The queens of Kṛṣṇa were all expansions of the goddess of fortune, Lakṣmījī. Kṛṣṇa used to live with them in different palaces, and He treated them in exactly the same way as an ordinary man treats his wife.

We should always remember that the Supreme Personality of Godhead Kṛṣṇa was playing exactly like a human being; although He showed His extraordinary opulences by simultaneously marrying more than 16,000 wives in more than 16,000 palaces, He behaved with them just like an ordinary man, and He strictly followed the relationship between husband and wife required in ordinary homes. Therefore, it is very difficult to

understand the characteristics of the Supreme Brahman, the Personality of Godhead. Even demigods like Brahmā and others are unable to probe into the transcendental pastimes of the Lord. The wives of Kṛṣṇa were so fortunate that they got the Supreme Personality of Godhead as their husband, although their husband's personality was unknown even to the demigods like Brahmā.

In their dealings as husband and wife, Kṛṣṇa and His queens would smile, talk, joke, embrace, and so on, and their conjugal relationship ever increasingly developed. In this way, both Kṛṣṇa and the queens enjoyed transcendental happiness in their household life. Although each and every queen had thousands of maidservants engaged for her service, the queens were all personally attentive in serving Kṛṣṇa. Each one of them used to receive Kṛṣṇa personally when He entered the palace. They engaged in getting Him seated on a nice couch, presenting Him with all kinds of worshipable paraphernalia, washing His lotus feet with Ganges water, offering Him betel nuts and massaging His legs. In this way, they were giving Him relief from the fatigue of being away from home. They saw to fanning Him nicely, offering Him fragrant essential floral oil, decorating Him with flower garlands, dressing His hair, asking Him to lie down to take rest, bathing Him personally and feeding Him nice palatable dishes. All these things were done by each queen herself. They did not wait for the maidservants. In other words, Kṛṣṇa and His different queens displayed on this earth an ideal household life.

Thus ends the Bhaktivedanta purport of the Second Volume, Fourth Chapter, of Kṛṣṇa, *"The Deliverance of the Demon Bhaumāsura."*



5 / Talks Between Kṛṣṇa and Rukmiṇī

Once upon a time, Lord Kṛṣṇa the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the bestower of all knowledge to all living entities from Brahmā to the insignificant ant, was sitting in the bedroom of Rukmiṇī, who was engaged in the service of the Lord along with her assistant maidservants. Kṛṣṇa was sitting on the bedstead of Rukmiṇī, and the maidservants were engaged in fanning Him with *cāmaras* (yak-tail fly-whisks).

Lord Kṛṣṇa's dealings with Rukmiṇī as a perfect husband is a perfect manifestation of the supreme perfection of the Personality of Godhead. There are many philosophers who propound a concept of the Absolute Truth in which God cannot do this or that. They deny the incarnation of God, or the Supreme Absolute Truth in human form. But actually, the fact is different: God cannot be subjected to our imperfect sensual activities. He is the all-powerful, omnipresent Personality of Godhead, and by His supreme will, He can not only create, maintain and annihilate the whole cosmic manifestation, but He can also descend as an ordinary human being in order to execute the highest mission. As stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā,* whenever there are discrepancies in the discharge of human occupational duties, He descends. He is not forced to appear by any external agency, but descends by His own internal potency in order to reestablish the standard functions of human activities as well as to simultaneously annihilate the disturbing elements in the progressive march of human civilization. In accordance with this principle of the transcendental pastimes of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, He descended in His eternal form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the dynasty of the Yadus.

The palace of Rukmiṇī was wonderfully finished. There were many canopies hanging on the ceiling with laces bedecked with pearl garlands, and the whole palace was illuminated by the effulgence of valuable jewels. There were many flower orchards of *baela* and *cāmeli,* which are con-

considered to be the most fragrant flowers in India. There were many clusters of these plants, with blooming flowers enhancing the beauty of the palace. And because of the exquisite fragrance of the flowers, little groups of humming bees were gathered around the trees, and at night the pleasing moonshine glittered through the network of holes in the windows. There were many heavily flowered trees of *pārijāta,* and the mild wind stirred the flavor of the flowers all around. Within the walls of the palace, there was incense burning, and the fragrant smoke was leaking out of the window shutters. Within the room there were mattresses covered with white bedsheets resembling the foam of milk; the bedding was as soft and white as milk foam. In this situation, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa was very comfortably sitting and enjoying the service of Rukmiṇījī assisted by her maidservants.

Rukmiṇī was also very eager to get the opportunity of serving the Supreme Personality of Godhead as her husband. She therefore wanted to serve the Lord personally and took the handle of the *cāmara* from the hand of the maidservant and began to move the fan. The handle of the *cāmara* was made of gold, decorated and bedecked with valuable jewels, and it became more beautiful when it was taken by Rukmiṇī, because all of her fingers were beautifully set with jeweled rings. Her legs were decorated with ankle bells and jewels, which rang very softly between the pleats of her sari. Rukmiṇī's raised breasts were smeared with *kuṅkuma* and saffron; thus her beauty was enhanced by the reflection of the reddish color emanating from her covered breasts. The highly raised lower part of her buttocks was decorated with a jeweled lace girdle, and a locket of great effulgence hung on her neck. Above all, because she was engaged in the service of Lord Kṛṣṇa—although at that time she was old enough to have grown-up sons—her beautiful body was beyond compare in the three worlds. When we take account of her beautiful face, it appears that the curling hair on her head, the beautiful earrings on her ears, her smiling mouth, and her necklace of gold, all combined to shower rains of nectar; and it was definitely proved that Rukmiṇī was none other than the original goddess of fortune who is always engaged in the service of the lotus feet of Nārāyaṇa.

The pastimes of Kṛṣṇa and Rukmiṇī in Dvārakā are accepted by great authorities as manifestations of those of Nārāyaṇa and Lakṣmī, which are of an exalted opulence. The pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana are simple and rural, distinguished from the polished urban characteristics of those of Dvārakā. The characteristics of Rukmiṇī were unusually bright, and Kṛṣṇa was very much satisfied with her behavior.

Kṛṣṇa had experienced that when Rukmiṇī was offered a *pārijāta* flower

by Nārada Muni, Satyabhāmā had become envious of her co-wife and had immediately demanded a similar flower from Kṛṣṇa. In fact, she could not be pacified until she was promised the whole tree. That was actually done by Kṛṣṇa; the tree was brought down to the earth planet from the heavenly kingdom. After this episode, Kṛṣṇa expected that because Satyabhāmā had been rewarded by a full tree of *pārijāta,* Rukmiṇī would also demand something. Rukmiṇī did not mention anything of the incident, however, for she was grave and simply satisfied in her service. Kṛṣṇa wanted to see her a bit irritated, and therefore He schemed in order to see the beautiful face of Rukmiṇī in an irritated condition. Although Kṛṣṇa had more than 16,100 wives, He used to behave with each of them with familial affection; He would create a particular situation between Himself and His wife in which the wife would criticize Him in the irritation of love, and Kṛṣṇa would enjoy this. In this case, because Kṛṣṇa could not find any fault with Rukmiṇī, for she was very great and always engaged in His service, He smilingly, in great love, began to speak to her. Rukmiṇī was the daughter of King Bhīṣmaka, a powerful king. Thus Kṛṣṇa did not address her as Rukmiṇī; He addressed her this time as the princess. "My dear princess, it is very surprising. Many great personalities in the royal order wanted to marry you. Although not all of them were kings, all possessed the opulence and riches of the kingly order; they were well-behaved, learned, famous among kings, beautiful in their bodily features and personal qualifications, liberal, very powerful in strength, and advanced in every respect. They were not unfit in any way, and over and above that, your father and your brother had no objection to such marriages. On the contrary, they gave their word of honor that you would be married with Śiśupāla; the marriage was sanctioned by your parents. Śiśupāla was a great king and was so lusty and mad after your beauty that if he had married you, I think he would always have remained with you just like your faithful servant.

"In comparison to Śiśupāla, with his personal qualities, I am nothing. And you may personally realize it. I am surprised that you rejected the marriage with Śiśupāla and accepted Me, who am inferior in comparison to Śiśupāla. I think myself completely unfit to be your husband because you are so beautiful, sober, grave and exalted. May I inquire from you the reason that induced you to accept Me? Now, of course, I can address you as My beautiful wife, but still I may inform you of My actual position—that I am inferior to all those princes who wanted to marry you.

"First of all, you may know that I was so much afraid of Jarāsandha that I could not dare to live on the land, and thus I have constructed this house within the water of the sea. It is not my business to disclose this secret to

others, but you must know that I am not very heroic; I am a coward and am afraid of them. Still I am not safe, because all the great kings of the land are inimical to Me. I have personally created this inimical feeling by fighting with them in many ways. Another fault is that although I am on the throne of Dvārakā, I have no immediate claim. Although I got a kingdom by killing My maternal uncle, Kaṁsa, the kingdom was to go to My grandfather; so actually I have no possession of a kingdom. Besides that, I have no fixed aim in life. People cannot understand Me very well. What is the ultimate goal of My life? They know very well that I was a cowherd boy in Vṛndāvana. People expected that I would follow the footsteps of My foster father, Nanda Mahārāja, and be faithful to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and all Her friends in the village of Vṛndāvana. But all of a sudden I left them. I wanted to become a famous prince. Still I could not have any kingdom, nor could I rule as a prince. People are bewildered about My ultimate goal of life; they do not know whether I am a cowherd boy or a prince, whether I am the son of Nanda Mahārāja or the son of Vasudeva. Because I have no fixed aim in life, people may call Me a vagabond. Therefore, I am surprised that you could select such a vagabond husband.

"Besides this, I am not very much polished, even in social etiquette. A person should be satisfied with one wife, but you see I have married many times, and I have more than 16,000 wives. I cannot please all of them as a polished husband. My behavior with them is not very nice, and I know you are very much conscious of it. I sometimes create a situation with My wives which is not very happy. Because I was trained in a village in My childhood, I am not well acquainted with the etiquette of urban life. I do not know the way to please a wife with nice words and behavior. And from practical experience it is found that any woman who follows My way or who becomes attracted by Me is ultimately left to cry for the rest of her life. In Vṛndāvana, many *gopīs* were attracted to Me, and now I have left them, and they are living but are simply crying for Me in separation. I have heard from Akrūra and Uddhava that since I left Vṛndāvana, all my cowherd boy friends, the *gopīs* and Rādhārāṇī, and My foster father Nanda Mahārāja are simply crying constantly for Me. I have left Vṛndāvana for good and am now engaged with the queens in Dvārakā, but I am not well-behaved with any of you. So you can very easily understand that I have no steadiness of character; I am not a very reliable husband. The net result of being attracted to Me is to acquire a life of bereavement only.

"My dear beautiful princess, you may also know that I am always penniless. Just after My birth, I was carried penniless to the house of Nanda Mahārāja, and I was raised just like a cowherd boy. Although My

foster father possessed many hundreds of thousands of cows, I was not proprietor of even one of them. I was simply entrusted to take care of them and tender them, but I was not the proprietor. Here also, I am not proprietor of anything, but am always penniless. There is no cause to lament for such a penniless condition; I possessed nothing in the past, so why should I lament that I do not possess anything at present? You may note also that My devotees are not very opulent persons; they also are very poor in worldly goods. Those who are very rich, possessing worldly wealth, are not interested in devotion to Me or Kṛṣṇa consciousness. On the contrary, when a person becomes penniless, whether by force or by circumstances, he may become interested in Me if he gets the proper opportunity. Persons who are proud of their riches, even if they are offered association with My devotees, do not take advantage of consciousness of Me. In other words, the poorer class of men may have some interest in Me, but the richer class of men have no interest. I think, therefore, that your selection of Me was not very intelligent. You appear to be very intelligent, trained by your father and brother, but ultimately you have made a great mistake in selecting your life's companion.

"But there is no harm; it is better late than never. You are at liberty to select a suitable husband who is actually an equal to you in opulence, family tradition, wealth, beauty, education—in all respects. Whatever mistakes you may have made may be forgotten. Now you may chalk out your own lucrative path of life. Usually a person does not establish a marital relationship with a person who is either higher or lower than his position. My dear daughter of the King of Vidarbha, I think you did not consider very sagaciously before your marriage. Thus you made a wrong selection by choosing Me as your husband. You mistakenly heard about My having very exalted character, although factually I was nothing more than a beggar. Without seeing Me and My actual position, simply by hearing about Me, you selected Me as your husband. That was not very rightly done. Therefore I advise you that it is better late than never; you can now select one of the great *kṣatriya* princes and accept him as your life's companion, and you can reject Me."

Kṛṣṇa was proposing that Rukmiṇī divorce Him at a time when Rukmiṇī already had many grown-up children. Therefore Kṛṣṇa's whole proposition to Rukmiṇī appeared to be something unexpected, because according to Vedic culture there was no such thing as separation of husband and wife by divorce. Nor was it possible for Rukmiṇī to do so in advanced age, when she had many married sons. Each and every one of Kṛṣṇa's proposals appeared to Rukmiṇī to be crazy, and she was surprised that Kṛṣṇa could

say such things. Simple as she was, her anxiety was increasing more and more at the thought of separation from Kṛṣṇa.

Kṛṣṇa continued: "After all, you have to prepare yourself for your next life. I therefore advise that you select someone who can help you both in this life and the next life, for I am completely unable to help. My dear beautiful princess, you know that all the members of the princely order, including Śiśupāla, Śālva, Jarāsandha, Dantavakra and even your elder brother Rukmī, are all My enemies; they do not like Me at all. They hate Me from the core of their hearts. All these princes were very much puffed up with their worldly possessions, and they did not care a fig for anyone who came before them. In order to teach them some lessons, I agreed to kidnap you according to your desire; otherwise I actually have no love for you, although you loved Me even before the marriage.

"As I have already explained, I am not very much interested in family life or love between husband and wife. By nature, I am not very fond of family life, wife, children, home and opulences. As My devotees are always neglectful of all these worldly possessions, I am also like that. Actually, I am interested in self-realization; that gives Me pleasure, and not this family life." After submitting His statement, Lord Kṛṣṇa suddenly stopped.

The great authority Śukadeva Gosvāmī remarks that Kṛṣṇa almost always passed His time with Rukmiṇī, and Rukmiṇī was a bit proud to be so fortunate that Kṛṣṇa never left her even for a moment. Kṛṣṇa, however, does not like any of His devotees to be proud. As soon as a devotee becomes so, by some tactic He cuts down that pride. In this case also, Kṛṣṇa said many things which were hard for Rukmiṇī to hear. She could only conclude that although she was proud of her position, Kṛṣṇa could be separated from her at any moment.

Rukmiṇī was conscious that her husband was not an ordinary human being. He was the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the master of the three worlds. By the way He was speaking, she was afraid of being separated from the Lord, for she had never heard such harsh words from Kṛṣṇa before. Thus she became perplexed with fear of separation, and her heart began to palpitate. Without replying to a word of Kṛṣṇa's statement, she simply cried in great anxiety, as if being drowned in an ocean of grief. She silently scratched the ground with the nails of her toes, which were reflecting reddish light on the ground. The tears from her eyes were pink, mixed with the black cosmetic ointment from her eyelids, and the waters were dropping down, washing the *kuṅkuma* and saffron from her breasts. Choked up on account of great anxiety, unable to speak even a word, she kept her head downward and remained standing just like a stick. Due to

extremely painful fearfulness and lamentation, she lost all her reasoning powers and became so weak that immediately her body lost so much weight that the bangles on her wrists became slackened. The *cāmara* rod with which she was serving Kṛṣṇa immediately fell from her hand. Her brain and memory became puzzled, and she lost consciousness. The nicely combed hair on her head scattered here and there, and she fell down straight, like a banana tree cut down by a whirlwind.

Lord Kṛṣṇa immediately realized that Rukmiṇī had not taken His words in a joking spirit. She had taken them very seriously, and in her extreme anxiety over immediate separation from Him, she had fallen into this condition. Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is naturally very affectionate toward His devotees, and seeing Rukmiṇī's condition, His heart immediately became softened. At once He became merciful to her. The relationship between Kṛṣṇa and Rukmiṇī was as Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa; therefore, He appeared before her in His four-handed manifestation of Nārāyaṇa. He got down from the bedstead, brought her up by her hands, and, placing His cooling hands on her face, smoothed the scattered hairs on her head. Lord Kṛṣṇa dried the wet breast of Rukmiṇījī with His hand. Understanding the seriousness of Rukmiṇī's love for Him, He embraced her to His chest.

The Supreme Personality is very expert in putting a thing reasonably for one's understanding, and thus He tried to retract all that He said before. He is the only resort for all the devotees, and so He knows very well how to satisfy His pure devotees. Kṛṣṇa understood that Rukmiṇī could not follow the statements which He had made in a joking way. To counteract her confusion, He again began to speak, as follows.

"My dear daughter of King Vidarbha, My dear Rukmiṇī, please do not misunderstand Me. Don't be unkind unto Me like this. I know you are sincerely and seriously attached to Me; you are My eternal companion. The words which have affected you so much are not factual. I wanted to irritate you a bit, and I was expecting you to make counter answers to those joking words. Unfortunately, you have taken them seriously; I am very sorry for it. I expected that your red lips would tremble in anger on hearing My statement and you would chastise Me in many words. O perfection of love, I never expected that your condition would be like this. I expected that you would put your blinking eyes upon Me in retaliation, and in that way, I would be able to see your beautiful face in that angry mood.

"My dear beautiful wife, you know that we are householders. We are always busy in many household affairs, so we long for a time that we can enjoy some joking words between us. That is our ultimate game in

household life. Actually, the householders work very hard day and night, but all fatigue of the day's labor becomes minimized as soon as they meet, husband and wife together, and enjoy life in many ways." Lord Kṛṣṇa wanted to exhibit Himself just as an ordinary householder who delights himself by exchanging joking words with his wife. He therefore repeatedly requested Rukmiṇī not to take those words very seriously.

In this way, when Lord Kṛṣṇa pacified Rukmiṇī by His sweet words, she could understand that what was formerly spoken by Him was not actually meant, but was spoken to evoke some joking pleasure between themselves. She was therefore pacified by hearing the words of Kṛṣṇa. Gradually she was freed from all fearfulness of separation from Him, and she began to look on His face very cheerfully with her naturally smiling face. She said, "My dear lotus-eyed Lord, Your statement that we are not a fit combination is completely right. It is not possible for me to come to an equal level with You because You are the reservoir of all qualities, the unlimited Supreme Personality of Godhead. How can I be a fit match for You? There is no possibility of comparison with You, who are the master of all greatness, controller of the three qualities and the object of worship for great demigods like Brahmā and Lord Śiva. As far as I am concerned, I am a production of the three modes of material nature. The three modes of material nature are impediments towards the progressive advancement of devotional service. When and where can I be a fit match for You? My dear husband, You have rightly said also that being afraid of the kings, You have taken shelter in the water of the sea. But who is the king of this material world? I do not think that the so-called royal families are kings of the material world. The kings of the material world are the three modes of material nature. They are actually the controllers of this material world. You are situated in the core of everyone's heart, where You remain completely aloof from the touch of the three modes of material nature, and there is not doubt about it.

"You say You always maintain enmity with the worldly kings. But who are the worldly kings? I think the worldly kings are the senses. They are most formidable, and they control everyone. Certainly You maintain enmity with these material senses. You are never under the control of the senses; rather, You are the controller of the senses, Hṛṣīkeśa. My dear Lord, You have said that You are bereft of all royal power, and that is also correct. Not only are You bereft of material world supremacy, but even Your servants, those who have some attachment to Your lotus feet, also give up the material world supremacy because they consider the material position to be the darkest region, which checks the progress of spiritual

enlightenment. Your servants do not like material supremacy, so what to speak of You? My dear Lord, Your statement that You do not act as an ordinary person with a particular aim in life is also perfectly correct. Even Your great devotees and servants, known as great sages and saintly persons, remain in such a state that no one can get any clue to the aim of their lives. They are considered by the human society to be crazy and cynical. Their aim of life remains a mystery to the common human being; the lowest of the mankind can know neither You nor Your servant. A contaminated human being cannot even imagine the pastimes of You and Your devotees. O unlimited one, when the activities and endeavors of Your devotees remain a mystery to the common human being, how can they understand Your motive and endeavor? All kinds of energies and opulences are engaged in Your service, but still they are resting at Your shelter.

"You have described Yourself as penniless, but this condition is not poverty. Since there is nothing in existence but Yourself, You do not require to possess anything—You Yourself are everything. Unlike others, You do not require to purchase anything extraneously. With You all contrary things can be adjusted because You are absolute. You do not possess anything, but no one is richer than You. In the material world no one can be rich without possessing. Since Your Lordship is absolute, You can adjust the contradiction of possessing nothing but at the same time being the richest. In the *Vedas* it is stated that although You have no material hands and legs, You accept everything which is offered in devotion by the devotees. You have no material eyes and ears, but still You can see everything everywhere, and You can hear everything everywhere. Although You do not possess anything, the great demigods who accept prayers and worship from others come and worship You to solicit Your mercy. How can You be categorized among the poor?

"My dear Lord, You have also stated that the richest section of human society does not worship You. This is also correct, because persons who are puffed up with material possessions think of utilizing their property for sense gratification. When a poverty-stricken man becomes rich, he makes a program for sense gratification. This is due to his ignorance of how to utilize his hard-earned money. Under the spell of the external energy, he thinks that his money is properly employed in sense gratification, and thus he neglects to render transcendental service. My dear Lord, You have stated that persons who possess nothing are very dear to You; renouncing everything, Your devotee wants to possess You only. I see, therefore, that a great sage like Nārada Muni who does not possess any

material property is still very dear to You. And such persons do not care for anything but Your Lordship.

"My dear Lord, You have stated that a marriage between persons equal in status of social standing, beauty, riches, strength, influence and renunciation can be a suitable match. But this status of life can only be possible by Your grace. You are the supreme perfectional source of all opulences. Whatever opulent status of life one may have is all derived from You. As described in the *Vedānta-sūtra, janmādyasya yataḥ:* You are the supreme source from which everything emanates, the reservoir of all pleasures. Therefore, persons who are endowed with knowledge desire only to achieve You, and nothing else. To achieve Your favor, they give up everything—even the transcendental realization of Brahman. You are the supreme ultimate goal of life. You are the reservoir of all interests of the living entities. Those who are actually well-motivated desire only You, and for this reason they give up everything to attain success. They therefore deserve to be associated with You. In the society of the servitors and served in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, one is not subjected to the pains and pleasures of material society, which functions according to sex attraction. Therefore, everyone, man or woman, should seek to be an associate in Your society of servitors and served. You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead; no one can excel You, nor can anyone come up to an equal level with You. The perfect social system is that in which You remain in the center, being served as the Supreme, and all others engage as Your servitors. In such a perfectly constructed society, everyone can remain eternally happy and blissful.

"My Lord, You have stated that only the beggars praise Your glories, and that is also perfectly correct. But who are those beggars? Those beggars are all exalted devotees, liberated personalities and those in the renounced order of life. They are all great souls and devotees who have no other business than to glorify You. Such great souls forgive even the worst offender. These so-called beggars execute their spiritual advancement of life, tolerating all kinds of tribulations in the material world. My dear husband, do not think that out of my inexperience I accepted You as my husband; actually, I followed all these great souls. I followed the path of these great beggars and decided to surrender my life unto Your lotus feet.

"You have said that You are penniless, and that is correct. You distribute Yourself completely to these great souls and devotees. Knowing this fact perfectly well, I rejected even such great personalities like Lord Brahmā and King Indra. My Lord, the great time factor acts under Your direction only. The time factor is so great and powerful that within

moments it can effect devastation anywhere within the creation. Considering all these factors, I thought Jarāsandha, Śiśupāla and similar other princes who wanted to marry Me to be no more important than ordinary insects.

"My dear all-powerful son of Vasudeva, Your statement that You have taken shelter within the water of the ocean, being afraid of all the great princes, is quite suitable, but my experience with You contradicts this. I have actually seen that You kidnapped me forcibly in the presence of all these princes. At the time of my marriage ceremony, simply by giving a jerk to the string of Your bow, You very easily drove the others away and kindly gave me shelter at Your lotus feet. I still remember vividly that You kidnapped me in the same way as a lion forcibly takes his share of hunted booty, driving away all other small animals within the twinkling of an eye.

"My dear lotus-eyed Lord, I cannot understand Your statement that women and other persons who have taken shelter under Your lotus feet pass their days only in bereavement. From the history of the world we can see that princes like Aṅga, Pṛthu, Bharata, Yayāti and Gaya were all great emperors of the world, and there were no competitors to their exalted positions. But in order to achieve the favor of Your lotus feet, they renounced their exalted positions and entered into the forest to practice penances and austerities. When they voluntarily accepted such a position, accepting Your lotus feet as all in all, does it mean that they were in lamentation and bereavement?

"My dear Lord, You have advised me that I can still select another from the princely order and divorce myself of Your companionship. But, my dear Lord, it is perfectly well-known to me that You are the reservoir of all good qualities. Great saintly persons like Nārada Muni are always engaged simply in glorifying Your transcendental characteristics. If someone simply takes shelter of such a saintly person, he immediately becomes freed from all material contamination. And by coming in direct contact with Your service the goddess of fortune agrees to bestow all her blessings. Under the circumstances, what woman who has once heard of Your glories from authoritative sources and somehow or other has tasted the nectarean flavor of Your lotus feet can be foolish enough to agree to marry someone of this material world who is always afraid of death, disease; old age and rebirth? I have therefore accepted Your lotus feet, not without consideration, but after mature and deliberate decision. My dear Lord, You are the master of the three worlds. You can fulfill all the desires of all Your devotees in this world and the next, because You are the Supreme Soul of everyone. I have therefore selected You as my husband, considering You

to be the only fit personality. You may throw me in any species of life according to the reaction of my fruitive activities, and I haven't the least concern for this. My only ambition is that I may always remain fast to Your lotus feet, because You can deliver Your devotees from the illusory material existence and are always prepared to distribute Yourself to Your devotees.

"My dear Lord, You have advised me to select one of the princes such as Śiśupāla, Jarāsandha or Dantavakra, but what is their position in this world? They are always engaged in hard labor to maintain their household life, just like the bulls working hard day and night with the oil-pressing machine. They are compared to asses, beasts of burden. They are always dishonored like the dogs, and they are miserly like the cats. They have sold themselves like slaves to their wives. Any unfortunate woman who has never heard of Your glories may accept such a man as her husband, but a woman who has learned about You—that You are praised not only in this world, but in the halls of the great demigods like Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva—will not accept anyone besides Yourself as her husband. A man within this material world is just a dead body. In fact, superficially, the living entity is covered by this body, which is nothing but a bag of skin decorated with beards and moustaches, hairs on the body, nails on the fingers and hairs on the head. Within this decorated bag there are bunches of muscles, bundles of bones, and pools of blood, always mixed up with stool, urine, mucus, bile and polluted air, and enjoyed by different kinds of insects and germs. A foolish woman accepts such a dead body as her husband and, in sheer misunderstanding, loves him as her dear companion. This is only possible because such a woman has never tasted the ever-blissful flavor of Your lotus feet.

"My dear lotus-eyed husband, You are self-satisfied. You do not care whether or not I am beautiful or qualified; You are not at all concerned about it. Therefore Your nonattachment for me is not at all astonishing; it is quite natural. You cannot be attached to any woman, however exalted her position and beauty. Whether You are attached to me or not, may my devotion and attention be always engaged at Your lotus feet. The material mode of passion is also Your creation, so when You passionately glance upon me, I accept it as the greatest boon of my life. I am ambitious only for such auspicious moments."

After hearing Rukmiṇī's statement and her clarification of each and every word which He had used to arouse her anger of love toward Him, Kṛṣṇa addressed Rukmiṇī as follows: "My dear chaste wife, My dear princess, I was expecting such an explanation from you, and for this

purpose only I spoke all those joking words, so that you might be cheated of the real point of view. Now My purpose has been served. The wonderful explanation that you have given to each and every word of Mine is completely factual and approved by Me. O most beautiful Rukmiṇī, You are My dearmost wife. I am greatly pleased to understand how much love you have for Me. Please take it for granted that no matter what ambition and desire you might have and no matter what you might expect from Me, I am always at your service. And it is a fact also that My devotees, My dearmost friends and servitors, are always free from material contamination, even though they are not inclined to ask from Me such liberation. My devotees never desire anything from Me except to be engaged in My service. And yet because they are completely dependent upon Me, even if they are found to ask something from Me, that is not material. Such ambitions and desires, instead of becoming the cause of material bondage, become the source of liberation from this material world.

"My dear chaste and pious wife, I have tested, on the basis of strict chastity, your love for your husband, and you have passed the examination most successfully. I have purposely agitated you by speaking many words which were not applicable to your character, but I am surprised to see that not a pinch of your devotion to Me has been deviated from its fixed position. My dear wife, I am the bestower of all benedictions, even up to the standard of liberation from this material world, and it is I only who can stop the continuation of material existence and call one back to home, back to Godhead. One whose devotion for Me is adulterated worships Me for some material benefit, just to keep himself in the world of material happiness, culminating in the pleasure of sex life. One who engages himself in severe penance and austerities just to attain this material happiness is certainly under the illusion of My external energy. Persons who are engaged in My devotional service simply for the purpose of material gains and sense gratification certainly are very foolish. Material happiness based on sex life is available in the most abominable species of life, such as the hogs and dogs. No one should try to approach Me for such happiness, because it is available even if one is put into a hellish condition of life. It is better, therefore, for persons who are simply after material happiness and not after Me to remain in that hellish condition."

Material contamination is so strong that everyone is working very hard day and night for material happiness. The show of religiousness, austerity penance, humanitarianism, philanthropy, politics, science—everything is aimed at realizing some material benefit. For the immediate success of material benefit, the materialistic persons generally worship different demi-

gods, and under the spell of material propensities they sometimes take to the devotional service of the Lord. Sometimes it so happens that if a person sincerely serves the Lord and at the same time maintains material ambition, the Lord very kindly removes the sources of material happiness. Without finding any recourse in material happiness, the devotee then engages himself absolutely in pure devotional service.

Lord Kṛṣṇa continued, "My dear best of the queens, it is clearly understood by Me that you have no material ambition; your only purpose is to serve Me, and you have long been engaged in unalloyed service. Exemplary unalloyed devotional service not only can bestow upon the devotee liberation from this material world, but it also promotes him to the spiritual world for being eternally engaged in My service. Persons who are too addicted to material happiness cannot render such service. Women whose hearts are polluted and full of material desires devise various means of sense gratification while outwardly showing themselves to be great devotees.

"My dear honored wife, although I have thousands of wives, I do not think that any one of them can love Me more than you. The practical proof of your extraordinary position is that you had never seen Me before your marriage; you had simply heard about Me from a third person, and still your faith in Me was so fixed that even in the presence of many qualified, rich and beautiful men of the royal order, you did not select any one of them as your husband, but insisted on having Me. You neglected all the princes present, and very politely you sent Me a confidential letter inviting Me to kidnap you. While I was kidnapping you, your elder brother Rukmī violently protested and fought with Me. As a result of the fight, I defeated him mercilessly and disfigured his body. At the time of Aniruddha's marriage, when we were all engaged in playing chess, there was another fight with your brother Rukmī on a controversial verbal point, and My elder brother Balarāma finally killed him. I was surprised to see that you did not utter even a word of protest over this incidence. Because of your great anxiety that you might be separated from Me, you suffered all the consequences without speaking even a word. As the result of this great silence, My dear wife, you have purchased Me for all time; I have become eternally under your control. You sent your messenger to Me inviting Me to kidnap you, and when you found that there was a little delay in My arriving on the spot, you began to see the whole world as vacant. At that time you concluded that your beautiful body was not fit to be touched by anyone else; therefore, thinking that I was not coming, you decided to commit suicide and immediately end that body. My dear Rukmiṇī, such great and exalted love for Me will always remain within My soul. As far as

I am concerned, it is not within My power to repay you for your unalloyed devotion to Me."

The Supreme Personality of Godhead Kṛṣṇa certainly has no business being anyone's husband or son or father, because everything belongs to Him and everyone is under His control. He does not require anyone's help for His satisfaction. He is *ātmārāma,* self-satisfied; He can derive all pleasure by Himself, without anyone's help. When the Lord descends to play the part of a human being, He plays a role either as a husband, son, friend or enemy, in full perfection. As such, when He was playing as the perfect husband of the queens, especially of Rukmiṇījī, He enjoyed conjugal love in complete perfection.

According to Vedic culture, although polygamy is allowed, none of the wives should be ill-treated. In other words, one may take many wives only if he is able to satisfy all of them equally as an ideal householder; otherwise it is not allowed. Lord Kṛṣṇa is the world-teacher; therefore, even though He had no need for a wife, He expanded Himself into as many forms as He had wives, and He lived with them as an ideal householder, observing the regulative principles, rules and commitments in accordance with the Vedic injunctions and the social laws and customs of society. For each of His 16,108 wives, He simultaneously maintained different palaces, different establishments and different atmospheres. Thus the Lord, although one, exhibited Himself as 16,108 ideal householders.

Thus ends the Bhaktivedanta purport of the Second Volume, Fifth Chapter, of Kṛṣṇa, *"Talks Between Kṛṣṇa and Rukmiṇī."*



6 / The Genealogical Table of the Family of Kṛṣṇa

Kṛṣṇa had 16,108 wives, and in each of them He begot ten sons, all of them equal to their father in the opulences of strength, beauty, wisdom, fame, wealth and renunciation. "Like father like son." All the 16,108 wives of Kṛṣṇa were princesses, and when each saw that Kṛṣṇa was always present in her respective palace and did not leave home, they considered Kṛṣṇa to be a henpecked husband who was very much attached to them. Every one of them thought that Kṛṣṇa was her very obedient husband, but actually Kṛṣṇa had no attraction for any of them. Although each thought that she was the only wife of Kṛṣṇa and was very, very dear to Him, Lord Kṛṣṇa, since He is *ātmārāma,* self-sufficient, was neither dear nor inimical to any one of them; He was equal to all the wives and treated them as a perfect husband just to please them. For Him, there was no need for even a single wife. In fact, since they were women, the wives could not understand the exalted position of Kṛṣṇa nor the truths about Him.

All the princesses who were wives of Kṛṣṇa were exquisitely beautiful, and each one of them was attracted by Kṛṣṇa's eyes, which were just like lotus petals, and by His beautiful face, long arms, broad ears, pleasing smile, humorous talk and sweet words. Influenced by these features of Kṛṣṇa, they all used to dress themselves very attractively, desiring to attract Kṛṣṇa by their feminine bodily appeal. They used to exhibit their feminine characteristics by smiling and moving their eyebrows, thus throwing sharpened arrows of conjugal love just to awaken Kṛṣṇa's lusty desires for them. Still, they could not arouse the mind of Kṛṣṇa or His sex appetite. This means that Kṛṣṇa never had any sex relations with any of His many wives, save and except to beget children.

The queens of Dvārakā were so fortunate that they got Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa as their husband and personal companion, although He is not approachable by exalted demigods like Brahmā. They remained together as husband and

wife, and Kṛṣṇa, as an ideal husband, treated them in such a way that at every moment there was an increase of transcendental bliss in their smiling exchanges, talking and mixing together. Each and every wife had hundreds and thousands of maidservants, yet when Kṛṣṇa entered the palaces of His thousands of wives, each one of them used to receive Kṛṣṇa personally by seating Him in a nice chair, worshiping Him with all requisite paraphernalia, personally washing His lotus feet, offering Him betel nuts, massaging His legs to relieve them from fatigue, fanning Him to make Him comfortable, offering all kinds of scented sandalwood pulp, oils and aromatics, putting flower garlands on His neck, dressing His hair, getting Him to lie down on the bed and assisting Him in taking His bath. Thus they served always in every respect, especially when Kṛṣṇa was eating. They were always engaged in the service of the Lord.

Of the 16,108 queens of Kṛṣṇa, each of whom had ten sons, there is the following list of the sons of the first eight queens. By Rukmiṇī, Kṛṣṇa had ten sons: Pradyumna, Cārudeṣṇa, Sudeṣṇa, Cārudeha, Sucāru, Cārugupta, Bhadracāru, Cārucandra, Vicāru, and Cāru. None of them were inferior in their qualities to their divine father, Lord Kṛṣṇa. Similarly, Satyabhāmā had ten sons, and their names are as follows: Bhānu, Subhānu, Svarbhānu, Prabhānu, Bhānumān, Candrabhānu, Bṛhadbhānu, Atibhānu, Śrībhānu and Pratibhānu. The next queen, Jāmbavatī, had ten sons, headed by Sāmba. Their names are as follows: Sāmba, Sumitra, Purujit, Śatajit, Sahasrajit, Vijaya, Citraketu, Vasumān, Draviḍa and Kratu. Lord Kṛṣṇa was specifically very affectionate to the sons of Jāmbavatī. By His wife Satyā, the daughter of King Nagnajit, Lord Kṛṣṇa had ten sons. They are as follows: Vīra, Candra, Aśvasena, Citragu, Vegavān, Vṛṣa, Āma, Śaṅku, Vasu and Kunti. Amongst all of them, Kunti was very powerful. Kṛṣṇa had ten sons by Kālindī, and they are as follows: Śruta, Kavi, Vṛṣa, Vīra, Subāhu, Bhadra, Śānti, Darśa, Pūrṇamāsa and the youngest, Somaka. For His next wife, Lakṣmaṇā, the daughter of the King of Madras Province, He begot ten sons, of the names Praghoṣa, Gātravān, Siṁha, Bala, Prabala, Ūrdhvaga, Mahāśakti, Saha, Oja and Aparājita. Similarly, His next wife, Mitravindā, had ten sons. They are as follows: Vṛka, Harṣa, Anila, Gṛdhra, Vardhana, Annāda, Mahāṁsa, Pāvana, Vahni and Kṣudhi. His next wife, Bhadrā, had ten sons, of the names Saṅgrāmajit, Bṛhatsena, Śūra, Praharaṇa, Arijit, Jaya, Subhadra, Vāma, Āyu and Satyaka. Besides these eight chief queens, Kṛṣṇa had 16,100 other wives, and all of them had ten sons each.

The eldest son of Rukmiṇī, Pradyumna, was married with Māyāvatī from his very birth, and afterwards he was again married with Rukmavatī, the daughter of his maternal uncle, Rukmī. From this Rukmavatī, Pradyumna

had a son named Aniruddha. In this way, Kṛṣṇa's family—Kṛṣṇa and His wives, along with their sons and grandsons and even great-grandsons—all combined together to include very nearly one billion family members.

Rukmī, the elder brother of Kṛṣṇa's first wife, Rukmiṇī, was greatly harrassed and insulted in his fight with Kṛṣṇa, but on the request of Rukmiṇī his life was saved. Since then Rukmī had held a great grudge against Kṛṣṇa and was always inimical toward Him. Nevertheless, his daughter was married with Kṛṣṇa's son, and his granddaughter was married with Kṛṣṇa's grandson, Aniruddha. This fact appeared to be a little astonishing to Mahārāja Parīkṣit when he heard it from Śukadeva Gosvāmī. "I am surprised that Rukmī and Kṛṣṇa, who were so greatly inimical to one another, could again be united by marital relationships between their descendants." Parīkṣit Mahārāja was curious about the mystery of this incident, and therefore he inquired further from Śukadeva Gosvāmī. Because Śukadeva Gosvāmī was a practical *yogī,* nothing was hidden from his power of insight. A perfect *yogī* like Śukadeva Gosvāmī can see past, present and future in all details. Therefore, from such *yogīs* or mystics there can be nothing concealed. When Parīkṣit Mahārāja inquired from Śukadeva Gosvāmī, Śukadeva Gosvāmī answered as follows.

Pradyumna, the eldest son of Kṛṣṇa, born of Rukmiṇī, was Cupid himself. He was so beautiful and attractive that the daughter of Rukmī, namely Rukmavatī, could not select any husband other than Pradyumna during her *svayaṁvara.* Therefore, in that selection meeting, she garlanded Pradyumna in the presence of all other princes. When there was a fight among the princes, Pradyumna came out victorious, and therefore Rukmī was obliged to offer his beautiful daughter to him. Although a far-off enmity was always blazing in the heart of Rukmī because of his being insulted by Kṛṣṇa's kidnapping of his sister Rukmiṇī, when his daughter selected Pradyumna as her husband Rukmī could not resist consenting to the marriage ceremony just to please his sister, Rukmiṇī. And so Pradyumna became the nephew of Rukmī. Besides the ten sons described above, Rukmiṇī had one beautiful daughter with big eyes, and she was married to the son of Kṛtavarmā, whose name was Balī.

Although Rukmī was a veritable enemy of Kṛṣṇa, he had great affection for his sister, Rukmiṇī, and he wanted to please her in all respects. On this account, when Rukmiṇī's grandson Aniruddha was to be married, Rukmī offered his granddaughter Rocanā to Aniruddha. Such marriage between immediate cousins is not very much sanctioned by the Vedic culture, but in order to please Rukmiṇī, Rukmī offered his daughter and granddaughter to the son and grandson of Kṛṣṇa. In this way, when the negotiation of the

marriage of Aniruddha with Rocanā was complete, a big marriage party accompanied Aniruddha and started from Dvārakā. They travelled until they reached Bhojakaṭa, which Rukmī had colonized after his sister had been kidnapped by Kṛṣṇa. This marriage party was led by the grandfather, namely Lord Kṛṣṇa, accompanied by Lord Balarāma, as well as Kṛṣṇa's first wife, Rukmiṇī, His son Pradyumna, Jāmbavatī's son Sāmba and many other relatives and family members. They reached the town of Bhojakaṭa, and the marriage ceremony was peacefully performed.

The King of Kaliṅga was a friend of Rukmī's, and he gave him the ill advice to play with Balarāma and thus defeat Him in a bet. Amongst the *kṣatriya* kings, betting and gambling in chess was not uncommon. If someone challenged a friend to play on the chessboard, the friend could not deny the challenge. Śrī Balarāmajī was not a very expert chess player, and this was known to the King of Kaliṅga. So Rukmī was advised to retaliate against the family members of Kṛṣṇa by challenging Balarāma to play chess. Although not a very expert chess player, Śrī Balarāmajī was very enthusiastic in sporting activities. He accepted the challenge of Rukmī and sat down to play. Betting was with gold coins, and Balarāma first of all challenged with one hundred coins, then 1,000 coins, then 10,000 coins. Each time, Balarāma lost, and Rukmī became victorious.

Śrī Balarāma's losing the game was an opportunity for the King of Kaliṅga to criticize Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. Thus the King of Kaliṅga was talking jokingly and purposefully showing his teeth to Balarāma. Because Balarāma was the loser in the game, He was a little intolerant of the sarcastic joking words. He became a little agitated, and when Rukmī again challenged Balarāma, he made a bet of 100,000 gold coins. Fortunately, this time Balarāma won. Although Balarāmajī had won, Rukmī, out of his cunningness, began to claim that Balarāma was the loser and that he himself had won. Because of this lie, Balarāmajī became most angry with Rukmī. His agitation was so sudden and great that it appeared like a tidal wave in the ocean on a full moon day. Balarāma's eyes are naturally reddish, and when He became agitated and angry His eyes became more reddish. This time He challenged and made a bet of a hundred million coins.

Again Balarāma was the winner according to the rules of chess, but Rukmī again cunningly began to claim that he had won. Rukmī appealed to the princes present, and He especially mentioned the name of the King of Kaliṅga. At that time there was a voice from the air during the dispute, and it announced that for all honest purposes Balarāma, the actual winner of this game, was being abused and that the statement of Rukmī that he had won was absolutely false.

In spite of this divine voice, Rukmī insisted that Balarāma had lost, and by his persistence it appeared that he had death upon his head. Falsely puffed up by the ill advice of his friend, he did not give much importance to the oracle, and he began to criticize Balarāmajī. He said, "My dear Balarāmajī, You two brothers, cowherd boys only, may be very expert in tending cows, but how can You be expert in playing chess or shooting arrows on the battlefield? These arts are well-known only to the princely order." Hearing this kind of pinching talk by Rukmī and hearing the loud laughter of all the other princes present there, Lord Balarāma became as agitated as burning cinders. He immediately took a club in His hand and, without any further talk, struck Rukmī on the head. From that one blow, Rukmī fell down immediately and was dead and gone. Thus Rukmī was killed by Balarāma on that auspicious occasion of Aniruddha's marriage.

These things are not very uncommon in *kṣatriya* society, and the King of Kaliṅga, being afraid that he would be the next to be attacked, fled from the scene. Before he could escape even a few steps, however, Balarāmajī immediately captured him and, because the King was always showing his teeth while criticizing Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa, broke all his teeth with His club. The other princes who were supporting the King of Kaliṅga and Rukmī were also captured, and Balarāma beat them with His club, breaking their legs and hands. They did not try to retaliate but thought it wise to run away from the bloody scene.

During this strife between Balarāma and Rukmī, Lord Kṛṣṇa did not utter a word, for He knew that if He supported Balarāma Rukmiṇī would be unhappy, and if He said that the killing of Rukmī was unjust, then Balarāma would be unhappy. Therefore, Lord Kṛṣṇa was silent on the death of His brother-in-law, Rukmī, on the occasion of His grandson's marriage. He did not disturb either His affectionate relationship with Balarāma or with Rukmiṇī. After this, the bride and the bridegroom were ceremoniously seated on the chariot, and they started for Dvārakā, accompanied by the bridegroom's party. The bridegroom's party was always protected by Lord Kṛṣṇa, the killer of the Madhu demon. Thus they left Rukmī's kingdom, Bhojakaṭa, and happily started for Dvārakā.

Thus ends the Bhaktivedanta purport of the Second Volume, Sixth Chapter of Kṛṣṇa, *"The Genealogical Table of the Family of Kṛṣṇa."*



7 / The Meeting of Uṣā and Aniruddha

The meeting of Aniruddha and Uṣā, which caused a great fight between Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Śiva, is very mysterious and interesting. Mahārāja Parīkṣit was anxious to hear the whole story from Śukadeva Gosvāmī, and thus Śukadeva narrated it. "My dear King, you must have heard the name of King Bali. He was a great devotee who gave away in charity all that he had—namely, the whole world—to Lord Vāmana, the incarnation of Viṣṇu as a dwarf *brāhmaṇa.* King Bali had one hundred sons, and the eldest of all of them was Bāṇāsura."

This great hero Bāṇāsura, born of Mahārāja Bali, was a great devotee of Lord Śiva and was always ready to render service unto him. Because of his devotion, he achieved a great position in society, and he was honored in every respect. Actually, he was very intelligent and liberal also, and his activities are all praiseworthy because he never deviated from his promise and word of honor; he was very truthful and fixed in his vow. In those days, he was ruling over the city of Śonitapura. By the grace of Lord Śiva, Bāṇāsura had one thousand hands, and he became so powerful that even demigods like King Indra were serving him as most obedient servants.

Long ago, when Lord Śiva was dancing in his celebrated fashion called *tāṇḍava-nṛtya,* for which he is known as Naṭarāja, Bāṇāsura helped Lord Śiva in his dancing by rythmically beating drums with his one thousand hands. Lord Śiva is well-known as Āśutoṣa, very easily pleased, and he is also very affectionate to his devotees. He is a great protector for persons who take shelter of him and is the master of all living entities in this material world. Being pleased with Bāṇāsura, he said, "Whatever you desire you can have from me because I am very much pleased with you." Bāṇāsura replied, "My dear lord, if you please, you can remain in my city just to protect me from the hands of my enemies."

Once upon a time, Bāṇāsura came to offer his respects to Lord Śiva. By

touching the lotus feet of Lord Śiva with his helmet, which was shining like the sun globe, he offered his obeisances unto him. While offering his respectful obeisances, Bāṇāsura said, "My dear lord, anyone who has not fulfilled his ambition will be able to do so by taking shelter of your lotus feet, which are just like desire trees—one can take from them anything he desires. My dear lord, you have given me one thousand arms, but I do not know what to do with them. Please pardon me, but it appears that I cannot use them properly in fighting. I cannot find anyone competent to fight with me except your lordship, the original father of the material world. Sometimes I feel a great tendency to fight with my arms, and I go out to find a suitable warrior. Unfortunately, everyone flees, knowing my extraordinary power. Being baffled at not finding a match, I simply satisfy the itching of my arms by beating them against the mountains. In this way, I tear many great mountains to pieces."

Lord Śiva realized that his benediction had become troublesome for Bāṇāsura and addressed him, "You rascal! You are very eager to fight, but since you have no one to fight with, you are distressed. Although you think that there is no one in the world to oppose you except me, I say that you will eventually find such a competent person. At that time your days will come to an end, and your flag of victory will no longer fly. Then you will see your false prestige smashed to pieces!"

After hearing Lord Śiva's statement, Bāṇāsura became very puffed up with his power. He was elated that he would meet someone who would be able to smash him to pieces. Bāṇāsura then returned home with great pleasure, and he always waited for the day when the suitable fighter would come to cut down his strength. He was such a foolish demon. It appears that foolish, demonic human beings, when unnecessarily overpowered with material opulences, want to exhibit these opulences, and such foolish people feel satisfaction when these opulences are exhausted. The idea is that they do not know how to expend their energy for right causes, being unaware of the benefit of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Actually, there are two classes of men—one is Kṛṣṇa conscious, the other is non-Kṛṣṇa conscious. The non-Kṛṣṇa conscious men are generally devoted to the demigods, whereas the Kṛṣṇa conscious men are devoted to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Kṛṣṇa conscious persons utilize everything for the service of the Lord. The non-Kṛṣṇa conscious persons utilize everything for sense gratification, and Bāṇāsura is a perfect example of such a person. He was very anxious to utilize for his own satisfaction his extraordinary power to fight. Not finding any combatant, he struck his powerful hands against the mountains, breaking them into pieces. In contrast to this, Arjuna also possessed

extraordinary powers for fighting, but he utilized them only for Kṛṣṇa.

Bāṇāsura had a very beautiful daughter, whose name was Uṣā. When she had attained the age of marriage and was sleeping amongst her many girl friends, she dreamt one night that Aniruddha was by her side and that she was enjoying a conjugal relationship with him, although she had never actually seen him nor heard of him before. She awoke from her dream exclaiming very loudly, "My dear beloved, where are you?" Being exposed to her other friends in this way, she became a little bit ashamed. One of Uṣā's girl friends was Citralekhā, who was the daughter of Bāṇāsura's prime minister. Citralekhā and Uṣā were intimate friends, and out of great curiosity Citralekhā asked, "My dear beautiful princess, as of yet you are not married to any young boy, nor have you seen any boys until now; so I am surprised that you are exclaiming like this. Who are you searching after? Who is your suitable match?"

On hearing Citralekhā's inquiries, Uṣā replied, "My dear friend, in my dream I saw a nice young man who is very, very beautiful. His complexion is swarthy, his eyes are just like lotus petals, and he is dressed in yellow garments. His arms are very long, and his general bodily features are so pleasing that any young girl would be attracted. I feel much pride in saying that this beautiful young man was kissing me, and I was very much enjoying the nectar of his kissing. I am sorry to inform you that just after this he disappeared, and I have been thrown into the whirlpool of disappointment. My dear friend, I am very anxious to find this wonderful young man, the desired lord of my heart."

After hearing Uṣā's words, Citralekhā immediately replied, "I can understand your bereavement, and I assure you that if this boy is within these three worlds—the upper, middle, and lower planetary systems—I must find him for your satisfaction. If you can identify him from your dream, I shall bring you peace of mind. Now, let me draw some pictures for you to inspect, and as soon as you find the picture of your desired husband, let me know. It doesn't matter where he is; I know the art of bringing him here. So, as soon as you identify him, I shall immediately arrange for it."

Citralekhā, while talking, began to draw many pictures of the demigods inhabiting the higher planetary systems, then pictures of the Gandharvas, Siddhas, Cāraṇas, Pannagas, Daityas, Vidyādharas and Yakṣas, as well as many human beings. (The statements of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and other Vedic literature prove definitely that on each and every planet there are living entities of different varieties. Therefore, it is foolish to assert that there are no living entities but those on this earth.) Citralekhā painted many pictures. Among those of the human beings was the Vṛṣṇi dynasty,

including Vasudeva, the father of Kṛṣṇa, Śūrasena, the grandfather of Kṛṣṇa, Śrī Balarāmajī, Lord Kṛṣṇa and many others. When Uṣā saw the picture of Pradyumna, she became a little bashful, but when she saw the picture of Aniruddha, she became so bashful that she immediately lowered her head and smiled, having found the man she was seeking. She identified the picture to Citralekhā as that of the man who had stolen her heart.

Citralekhā was a great mystic *yoginī,* and as soon as Uṣā identified the picture, although neither of them had ever seen him nor knew his name, Citralekhā could immediately understand that the picture was of Aniruddha, a grandson of Kṛṣṇa. That very night she traveled in outer space and within a very short time reached the city of Dvārakā, which was well-protected by Kṛṣṇa. She entered the palace and found Aniruddha sleeping in his bedroom on a very opulent bed. Citralekhā, by her mystic power, immediately brought Aniruddha, in that sleeping condition, to the city of Śonitapura so that Uṣā might see her desired husband. Uṣā immediately bloomed in happiness and began to enjoy the company of Aniruddha with great satisfaction.

The palace in which Uṣā and Citralekhā lived was so well fortified that it was impossible for any male to either enter or see inside. Uṣā and Aniruddha lived together in the palace, and day after day the love of Uṣā for Aniruddha grew four times upon four times. Uṣā pleased Aniruddha with her valuable dresses, flowers, garlands, scents and incense. By his bedside sitting place were other paraphernalia for residential purposes—nice drinks such as milk and sherbet and nice eatables which could be chewed or swallowed. Above all, she pleased him with sweet words and very obliging service. Aniruddha was worshiped by Uṣā as if he were the Supreme Personality of Godhead. By her excellent service, Uṣā made Aniruddha forget all other things and was able to draw his attention and love upon her without deviation. In such an atmosphere of love and service, Aniruddha practically forgot himself and could not recall how many days he had been away from his real home.

In due course of time, Uṣā exhibited some bodily symptoms by which it could be understood that she was having intercourse with a male friend. The symptoms were so prominent that her actions could no longer be concealed from anyone. Uṣā was always cheerful in the association of Aniruddha, but she did not know the bounds of her satisfaction. The housekeeper and the watchmen of the palace could guess very easily that she was having relations with a male friend, and without waiting for further development, all of them informed their master, Bāṇāsura. In Vedic culture, an unmarried girl having association with a male is the greatest

disgrace to the family, and so the caretaker cautiously informed his master that Uṣā was developing symptoms indicating a disgraceful association. The servants informed their master that they were not at all neglectful in guarding the house, being alert day and night against any young man who might enter. They were so careful that a male could not even see what was going on there, and so they were surprised that she had become contaminated. Since they could not trace out the reason for it, they submitted the whole situation before their master.

Bāṇāsura was shocked to understand that his daughter Uṣā was no longer a virgin maiden. This weighed heavily on his heart, and without delay he rushed towards the palace where Uṣā was living. There he saw that Uṣā and Aniruddha were sitting together and talking. Uṣā and Aniruddha looked very beautiful together, Aniruddha being the son of Pradyumna, who was Cupid himself. Bāṇāsura saw his daughter and Aniruddha as a suitable match, yet for family prestige, he did not like the combination at all. Bāṇāsura could not understand who the boy actually was. He appreciated the fact that Uṣā could not have selected anyone in the three worlds more beautiful. Aniruddha's complexion was brilliant and swarthy. He was dressed in yellow garments and had eyes just like lotus petals. His arms were very long, and he had nice, curling, bluish hair. The glaring rays of his glittering earrings and the beautiful smile on his lips were certainly captivating. Still, Bāṇāsura was very angry.

When Bāṇāsura saw him, Aniruddha was engaged in playing with Uṣā. Aniruddha was nicely dressed, and Uṣā had garlanded him with various beautiful flowers. The reddish *kuṅkuma* powder put on the breasts of women was spotted here and there on the garland, indicating that Uṣā had embraced him. Bāṇāsura was struck with wonder that, even in his presence, Aniruddha was peacefully sitting in front of Uṣā. Aniruddha knew, however, that his would-be father-in-law was not at all pleased and that he was gathering many soldiers in the palace to attack him.

Thus, not finding any other weapon, Aniruddha took hold of a big iron rod and stood up before Bāṇāsura and his soldiers. He firmly took a posture indicating that if he were attacked he would strike all of the soldiers down to the ground with the iron rod. Bāṇāsura and his company of soldiers saw that the boy was standing before them just like the superintendent of death with his invincible rod. Now, under the order of Bāṇāsura, the soldiers from all sides attempted to capture and arrest him. When they dared to come before him, Aniruddha struck them with the rod, breaking their heads, legs, arms and thighs, and one after another, they began to fall to the ground. He killed them just as the leader of a flock of hawks kills

barking dogs, one after another. In this way, Aniruddha was able to escape the palace.

Bāṇāsura knew various arts of fighting, and by the grace of Lord Śiva, he knew how to arrest his opposing enemy by the use of a *nāgapāśa,* snake-noose, and so Aniruddha was seized as he came out of the palace. When Uṣā received the news that her father had arrested Aniruddha, she became overwhelmed with grief and confusion. Tears began to glide down her eyes, and being unable to check herself, she began to cry very loudly.

Thus ends the Bhaktivedanta purport of the Second Volume, Seventh Chapter, of Kṛṣṇa, *"The Meeting of Uṣā and Aniruddha."*



8 / Lord Kṛṣṇa Fights with Bāṇāsura

When the four months of the rainy season passed and still Aniruddha had not returned home, all the members of the Yadu family became much perturbed. They could not understand how the boy was missing. Fortunately, one day the great sage Nārada came and informed the family about Aniruddha's disappearance from the palace. He explained how Aniruddha had been carried to the city of Śonitapura, the capital of Bāṇāsura's empire, and how Bāṇāsura had arrested him with the *nāgapāśa,* even though Aniruddha had defeated his soldiers. This news was given in detail, and the whole story was disclosed. Then the members of the Yadu dynasty, all of whom had great affection for Kṛṣṇa, prepared to attack the city of Śonitapura. Practically all the leaders of the family, including Pradyumna, Sātyaki, Gada, Sāmba, Sāraṇa, Nanda, Upananda and Bhadra, combined together and gathered eighteen *akṣauhiṇī* military divisions into phalanxes. Then they all went to Śonitapura and surrounded it with soldiers, elephants, horses and chariots.

Bāṇāsura heard that the soldiers of the Yadu dynasty were attacking the whole city, tearing down various walls, gates and nearby gardens. Becoming very angry, he immediately ordered his soldiers, who were of equal caliber, to go and face them. Lord Śiva was so kind to Bāṇāsura that he personally came as the commander-in-chief of the military force, assisted by his heroic sons Kārttikeya and Gaṇapati. Seated on his favorite bull, Nandīśvara, Lord Śiva, led the fighting against Lord Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. We can simply imagine how fierce the fighting was—Lord Śiva with his valiant sons on one side and Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and His elder brother, Śrī Balarāmajī, on the other. The fighting was so fierce that those who saw the battle were struck with wonder, and the hairs on their bodies stood up. Lord Śiva was engaged in fighting directly with Lord Kṛṣṇa, Pradyumna was engaged with Kārttikeya,

and Lord Balarāma was engaged with Bāṇāsura's commander-in-chief, Kumbhāṇḍa, who was assisted by Kūpakarṇa. Sāmba, the son of Kṛṣṇa, was engaged in fighting with the son of Bāṇāsura, and Bāṇāsura was engaged in fighting with Sātyaki, commander-in-chief of the Yadu dynasty. In this way the fighting was waged.

News of the fighting spread all over the universe. Demigods such as Lord Brahmā, from higher planetary systems, along with great sages and saintly persons, Siddhas, Cāraṇas and Gandharvas—all being very curious to see the fight between Lord Śiva, Lord Kṛṣṇa and their assistants—were hovering over the battlefield in their airplanes. Lord Śiva is called the *bhūta-nātha,* being assisted by various types of powerful ghosts and denizens of the inferno—*bhūtas, pretas, pramathas, guhyakas, ḍākinīs, piśācas, kūṣmāṇḍas, vetālas, vināyakas,* and *brahma-rākṣasas.* (Of all kinds of ghosts, the *brahma-rākṣasas* are very powerful. *Brāhmaṇas* transferred to the role of ghosts become *brahma-rākṣasas.)*

The Supreme Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa simply drove all these ghosts away from the battlefield, beating them with His celebrated bow, Śārṅgadhanu. Lord Śiva then began to release all his selected weapons upon the Personality of Godhead. Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, without any difficulty, counteracted all these weapons with counter-weapons. He counteracted the *brahmāstra,* similar to the atomic bomb, by another *brahmāstra,* and an air weapon by a mountain weapon. When Lord Śiva released a particular weapon bringing about a violent hurricane on the battlefield, Lord Kṛṣṇa presented just the opposing element, a mountain weapon which checked the hurricane on the spot. Similarly when Lord Śiva released his weapon of devastating fire, Kṛṣṇa counteracted it with torrents of rain.

At last, when Lord Śiva released his personal weapon, called *pāśupata-śastra,* Kṛṣṇa immediately counteracted it by the *nārāyaṇa-śastra.* Lord Śiva then became exasperated in fighting with Lord Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa then took the opportunity to release His yawning weapon. When this weapon is released, the opposing party becomes tired, stops fighting, and begins to yawn. Consequently, Lord Śiva became so fatigued that he refused to fight anymore and began to yawn. Kṛṣṇa was now able to turn His attention from the attack of Lord Śiva to the efforts of Bāṇāsura, and He began to kill his personal soldiers with swords and clubs. Meanwhile, Lord Kṛṣṇa's son Pradyumna was fighting fiercely with Kārttikeya, the commander-in-chief of the demigods. Kārttikeya was wounded, and his body was bleeding profusely. In this condition, he left the battlefield and, without fighting anymore, rode away on the back of his peacock carrier. Similarly, Lord Balarāma was smashing Bāṇāsura's commander-in-chief, Kumbhāṇḍa,

with the strokes of his club. Kūpakarṇa was also wounded in this way, and both he and Kumbhāṇḍa fell on the battlefield, the commander-in-chief being fatally wounded. Without guidance, all of Bāṇāsura's soldiers scattered here and there.

When Bāṇāsura saw that his soldiers and commanders had been defeated, his anger only increased. He thought it wise to stop fighting with Sātyaki, Kṛṣṇa's commander-in-chief, and instead directly attacked Lord Kṛṣṇa. Now having the opportunity to use his one thousand hands, he rushed towards Kṛṣṇa, simultaneously working 500 bows and 2,000 arrows. Such a foolish person could never measure Kṛṣṇa's strength. Immediately, without any difficulty, Kṛṣṇa cut each of Bāṇāsura's bows into two pieces and, to check him from going further, made his chariot horses lay on the ground. The chariot then broke to pieces. After doing this, Kṛṣṇa blew His conchshell, Pāñcajanya.

There was a demigoddess named Koṭarā who was worshiped by Bāṇāsura, and their relationship was as mother and son. Mother Koṭarā was upset that Bāṇāsura's life was in danger, so she appeared on the scene. With naked body and scattered hair, she stood before Lord Kṛṣṇa. Śrī Kṛṣṇa did not like the sight of this naked woman, and to avoid seeing her, He turned His face. Bāṇāsura, getting this chance to escape Kṛṣṇa's attack, left the battlefield. All the strings of his bows were broken, and there was no chariot or driver, so he had no alternative than to return to his city. He lost everything in the battle.

Being greatly harassed by the arrows of Kṛṣṇa, all the associates of Lord Śiva, the hobgoblins and ghostly *bhūtas, pretas* and *kṣatriyas,* left the battlefield. Lord Śiva then took to his last resort. He released his greatest death weapon, known as Śivajvara, which destroys by excessive temperature. It is said that at the end of this creation the sun becomes twelve times more scorching than usual. This twelve-times-hotter temperature is called Śivajvara. When the Śivajvara personified was released, he had three heads and three legs, and as he came toward Kṛṣṇa it appeared that he was burning everything into ashes. He was so powerful that he made blazing fire appear in all directions, and Kṛṣṇa observed that he was specifically coming toward Him.

As there is a Śivajvara weapon, there is also a Nārāyaṇajvara weapon. Nārāyaṇajvara is represented by excessive cold. When there is excessive heat, one can somehow or other tolerate it, but when there is excessive cold, everything collapses. This is actually experienced by a person at the time of death. At the time of death, the temperature of the body first of all increases to 107 degrees, and then the whole body collapses and

immediately becomes as cold as ice. To counteract the scorching heat of the Śivajvara, there was no other weapon but Nārāyaṇajvara.

When Lord Kṛṣṇa saw that the Śivajvara had been released by Lord Śiva, He had no other recourse than to release Nārāyaṇajvara. Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the original Narayaṇa and the controller of the Narayaṇajvara weapon. When the Narayaṇajvara was released, there was a great fight between the two *jvaras*. When excessive heat is counteracted by extreme cold, it is natural for the hot temperature to gradually reduce, and this is what occurred in the fight between Śivajvara and Narayaṇajvara. Gradually, Śivajvara's temperature diminished, and Śivajvara began to cry for help from Lord Śiva, but Lord Śiva was unable to help him in the presence of the Narayaṇajvara. Unable to get any help from Lord Śiva, the Śivajvara could understand that he had no means of escape outside surrendering unto Nārāyaṇa, Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself. Lord Śiva, the greatest of the demigods, could not help him, what to speak of the lesser demigods, and therefore Śivajvara ultimately surrendered unto Kṛṣṇa, bowing before Him and offering a prayer so that the Lord might be pleased and give him protection.

By this incidence of the fight between the ultimate weapons of Lord Śiva and Lord Kṛṣṇa it is proved that if Kṛṣṇa gives someone protection, no one can kill him. But if Kṛṣṇa does not give one any protection, then no one can save him. Lord Śiva is called Mahādeva, greatest of all demigods, although sometimes Lord Brahmā is considered the greatest of all demigods, because he can create, whereas Lord Śiva can annihilate the creations of Brahmā. But both Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva act only in one capacity. Lord Brahmā can create, and Lord Śiva can annihilate, but neither of them can maintain. Lord Viṣṇu, however, not only maintains, but He creates, and annihilates also. Factually, the creation is not effected by Brahmā, because Brahmā himself is created by Lord Viṣṇu. Lord Śiva is created, or born, of Brahmā. The Śivajvara thus understood that without Kṛṣṇa or Nārāyaṇa, no one could help him. He therefore rightly took shelter of Lord Kṛṣṇa and, with folded hands, began to pray as follows.

"My dear Lord, I offer my respectful obeisances unto You because You have unlimited potencies. No one can surpass Your potencies, and thus You are the Lord of everyone. Generally people consider Lord Śiva to be the most powerful personality in the material world, but Lord Śiva is not all-powerful; You are all-powerful. This is factual. You are the original consciousness or knowledge. Without knowledge or consciousness, nothing can be powerful. A material thing might be very powerful, but without the touch of knowledge or consciousness it cannot act. A material machine

may be very gigantic and wonderful, but without the touch of someone conscious and in knowledge, the material machine is useless for all purposes. My Lord, You are complete knowledge, and there is not a pinch of material contamination in Your personality. Lord Śiva may be a powerful demigod because of his specific power to annihilate the whole creation, and similarly, Lord Brahmā may be very powerful because he can create the entire universe, but actually neither Brahmā nor Lord Śiva is the original cause of this cosmic manifestation. You are the Absolute Truth, the Supreme Brahman, and You are the original cause. The original cause of the cosmic manifestation is not the impersonal Brahman effulgence. That impersonal Brahman effulgence is resting on Your personality. As is confirmed in the *Bhagavad-gītā,* the cause of the impersonal Brahman is Lord Kṛṣṇa. This Brahman effulgence is likened to the sunshine which emanates from the sun globe. Therefore, impersonal Brahman is not the ultimate cause. The ultimate cause of everything is the supreme eternal form of Kṛṣṇa. All material actions and reactions are taking place in the impersonal Brahman, but in the personal Brahman, the eternal form of Kṛṣṇa, there is no action and reaction. My Lord, Your body is therefore completely peaceful, completely blissful and is devoid of material contamination.

"In the material body there are actions and reactions of the three modes of material nature. The time factor is the most important element and is above all others, because the material manifestation is effected by time agitation. Thus natural phenomena come into existence, and as soon as there is the appearance of phenomena, fruitive activities are visible. As the result of these fruitive activities, a living entity takes his form. He acquires a particular type of nature which is packed up in a subtle body and gross body formed by the life air, the ego, the ten sense organs, the mind and the five gross elements. These then create the type of body which later becomes the root or cause of various other bodies, which are acquired one after another by the transmigration of the soul. All these phenomenal manifestations are the combined actions of Your material energy. Unaffected by the action and reaction of different elements, You are the cause of this external energy, and because You are transcendental to such compulsions of material energy, You are the supreme tranquility. You are the last word in freedom from material contamination. I am therefore taking shelter at Your lotus feet, giving up all other shelter.

"My dear Lord, Your appearance as the son of Vasudeva in Your role as a human being is one of the pastimes of Your complete freedom. To benefit Your devotees and to vanquish the nondevotees, You appear in

multi-incarnations. All such incarnations descend in fulfillment of Your promise in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that You appear as soon as there are discrepancies in the system of progressive life. When there are disturbances by irregular principles, my dear Lord, You appear by Your internal potency. Your main business is to protect and maintain the demigods and spiritually inclined persons and maintain the standard of material law and order. Simultaneous to the maintenance of such law and order, Your violence to the miscreants and demons is quite befitting. This is not the first time You have incarnated; it is to be understood that You have done so many, many times before.

"My dear Lord, I beg to submit that I have been very greatly chastised by the release of Your Nārāyaṇajvara. It is certainly very cooling, yet at the same time very severely dangerous and unbearable for all of us. My dear Lord, as long as one is forgetful of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, driven by the spell of material desires and ignorant of the ultimate shelter at Your lotus feet, one who has accepted this material body becomes disturbed by the three miserable conditions of material nature. Because one does not surrender unto You, he therefore continues to suffer perpetually."

After hearing the Śivajvara, Lord Kṛṣṇa replied, "O three-headed one, I am pleased with your statement. Be assured there is no more suffering for you from the Nārāyaṇajvara. Not only are you now free from fear of Nārāyaṇajvara, but anyone in the future who simply recollects this fight between Śivajvara and Nārāyaṇajvara will also be freed from all kinds of fearfulness." After hearing the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the Śivajvara offered his respectful obeisances unto His lotus feet and left.

In the meantime Bāṇāsura somehow or other recovered from his setbacks and, with rejuvenated energy, returned to fight. This time Bāṇāsura appeared before Lord Kṛṣṇa, who was seated on His chariot, with different kinds of weapons in his one thousand hands. Bāṇāsura was very much agitated. He began to splash his different weapons, like torrents of rain, upon the body of Lord Kṛṣṇa. When Lord Kṛṣṇa saw the weapons of Bāṇāsura coming at Him, like water coming out of a strainer, He took His sharp-edged Sudarśana disc and began to cut off the demon's one thousand hands one after another, just as a gardener trims the twigs of a tree with sharp cutters. When Lord Śiva saw that his devotee Bāṇāsura could not be saved even in his presence, he came to his senses and personally came before Lord Kṛṣṇa and began to pacify Him by offering the following prayers.

Lord Śiva said, "My dear Lord, You are the worshipable object of the Vedic hymns. One who does not know You considers the impersonal

brahmajyoti to be the ultimate Supreme Absolute Truth, without any knowledge that You are existing behind Your spiritual effulgence in Your eternal abode. My dear Lord, You are therefore called *Parambrahman.* This word, *Parambrahman,* has been used in the *Bhagavad-gītā* to identify You. Saintly persons who have completely cleansed their hearts of all material contamination can realize Your transcendental form, although You are all-pervading like the sky, unaffected by any material thing. Only the devotees can realize You, and no one else. In the impersonalists' conception of Your supreme existence, the sky is just like Your navel, the fire is Your mouth, and the water is Your semina. The heavenly planets are Your head, all the directions are Your ears, the Urvī planet is Your lotus feet, the moon is Your mind, and the sun is Your eye. As far as I am concerned, I act as Your ego. The ocean is Your abdomen, and the King of heaven, Indra, is Your arm. Trees and plants are the hairs of Your body, the cloud is the hair on Your head, and Lord Brahmā is Your intelligence. All the great progenitors, known as Prajāpatis, are Your symbolic representatives. And religion is Your heart. The impersonal feature of Your supreme body is conceived of in this way, but You are ultimately the Supreme Person. The impersonal feature of Your supreme body is only a small expansion of Your energy. You are likened to the original fire, and the expansions are Your light and heat."

Lord Śiva continued: "My dear Lord, although You are manifested universally, different parts of the universe are the different parts of Your body, and by Your inconceivable potency You can simultaneously be both localized and universal. In the *Brahma-saṁhitā* we also find it stated that although You always remain in Your abode, Goloka Vṛndāvana, You are nevertheless present everywhere. As stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā,* You appear to protect the devotees, which indicates good fortune for all the universe. All of the demigods are directing different affairs of the universe by Your grace only. Thus the seven upper planetary systems are being maintained by Your grace. At the end of this creation, all manifestations of Your energies, whether in the shape of demigods, human beings or lower animals, enter into You, and all immediate and remote causes of cosmic manifestation rest in You without distinctive features of existence. Ultimately, there is no possibility of distinction between Yourself and any other thing on an equal level with You or subordinate to You. You are simultaneously the cause of this cosmic manifestation and its ingredients as well. You are the Supreme Whole, one without a second. In the phenomenal manifestation there are three stages: the stage of consciousness, the stage of semiconsciousness in dreaming, and the stage of unconsciousness.

But Your Lordship is transcendental to all these different material stages of existence. You exist, therefore, in a fourth dimension, and Your appearance and disappearance do not depend on anything beyond Yourself. You are the supreme cause of everything, but for Yourself there is no cause. You Yourself cause Your own appearance and disappearance. Despite Your transcendental position, my Lord, in order to show Your six opulences and advertise Your transcendental qualities, You have appeared in Your different incarnations—fish, tortoise, boar, Nṛsiṁha, Keśava, etc.—by Your personal manifestation; and You have appeared as different living entities by Your separated manifestations. By Your internal potency, You appear as the different incarnations of Viṣṇu, and by Your external potency You appear as the phenomenal world.

"Because it is a cloudy day to the common man's eyes, the sun appears to be covered. But the fact is that because the sunshine creates the cloud, even though the whole sky is cloudy, the sun can never actually be covered. Similarly, the less intelligent class of men claims that there is no God, but when the manifestation of different living entities and their activities is visible, enlightened persons see You present in every atom and through the via media of Your external and marginal energies. Your unlimited potential activities are experienced by the most enlightened devotees, but those who are bewildered by the spell of Your external energy identify themselves with this material world and become attached to society, friendship and love. Thus they embrace the threefold miseries of material existence and are subjected to the dualities of pain and pleasure. They are sometimes drowned in the ocean of attachment and sometimes taken out of it.

"My dear Lord, only by Your mercy and grace can the living entity get the human form of life, which is a chance to get out of the miserable condition of material existence. However, a person who possesses a human body but who cannot bring the senses under control is carried away by the waves of sensual enjoyment. As such, he cannot take shelter of Your lotus feet and thus engage in Your devotional service. The life of such a person is very unfortunate, and anyone living such a life of darkness is certainly cheating himself and thus cheating others also. Therefore, human society without Kṛṣṇa consciousness is a society of cheaters and the cheated.

"My Lord, You are actually the dearmost Supersoul of all living entities and the supreme controller of everything. The human being who is always illusioned is afraid of ultimate death. A man who is simply attached to sensual enjoyment voluntarily accepts the miserable material existence and thus wanders after the will-o'-the-wisp of sense pleasure. He is certainly the most foolsih man, for he drinks poison and puts aside the nectar. My dear

Lord, all the demigods, including myself and Lord Brahmā, as well as great saintly persons and sages who have cleansed their hearts of this material attachment, have, by Your grace, wholeheartedly taken shelter of Your lotus feet. We have all taken shelter of You, because we have accepted You as the Supreme Lord and the dearmost life and soul of all of us. You are the original cause of this cosmic manifestation, You are its supreme maintainer, and You are the cause of its dissolution also. You are equal to everyone, the most peaceful supreme friend of every living entity. You are the supreme worshipable object for every one of us. My dear Lord, let us always be engaged in Your transcendental loving service so that we may get free from this material entanglement.

"Lastly, my Lord, I may inform You that this Bāṇāsura is very dear to me. He has rendered very valuable service unto me; therefore I want to see him always happy. Being pleased with him, I have given him the assurance of safety. I pray to You, my Lord, that as You were pleased upon his forefathers King Prahlāda and Bali Mahārāja, You will also be pleased with him."

After hearing Lord Śiva's prayer, Lord Kṛṣṇa addressed him also as lord and said, "My dear Lord Śiva, I accept your statements, and your desire for Bāṇāsura is also accepted by Me. I know that this Bāṇāsura is the son of Bali Mahārāja, and as such I cannot kill him because that is My promise. I gave a benediction to King Prahlāda that all the demons who would appear in his family would never be killed by Me. Therefore, without killing this Bāṇāsura, I have simply cut off his arms to deprive him of his false prestige. The large number of soldiers which he was maintaining became a burden on this earth, and I have killed them all in order to minimize the burden. Now he has four remaining arms, and he will remain immortal, without being affected by the material pains and pleasures. I know that he is one of the chief devotees of your lordship, so you can now rest assured that henceforward he need have no fear from anything."

When Bāṇāsura was benedicted by Lord Kṛṣṇa in this way, he came before the Lord and bowed down before Him, touching his head to the earth. He immediately arranged to bring Aniruddha along with his daughter Uṣā, seated on a nice chariot, and presented them before Lord Kṛṣṇa. After this, Lord Kṛṣṇa took charge of Aniruddha and Uṣā, who had become very opulent materially because of the blessings of Lord Śiva. Thus, keeping forward a division of one *akṣauhiṇī* of soldiers, Kṛṣṇa began to proceed toward Dvārakā. In the meantime, all the people at Dvārakā, having received the news that Lord Kṛṣṇa was returning with Aniruddha and Uṣā in great opulence, decorated every corner of the city

with flags, festoons and garlands. All the big roads and crossings were carefully cleansed and sprinkled with sandalwood pulp mixed with water. Everywhere there was the flavor of sandalwood. All the citizens, accompanied by their friends and relatives, welcomed Lord Kṛṣṇa with great pomp and jubilation. At that time, there was a tumultuous vibration of conchshells and drums and bugles to receive the Lord. In this way the Supreme Personality of Godhead Kṛṣṇa entered His capital, Dvārakā.

Śukadeva Gosvāmī assured King Parīkṣit that the narration of the fight between Lord Śiva and Lord Kṛṣṇa is not at all inauspicious like ordinary fights. On the contrary, if one remembers the narration of this fight between Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Śiva in the morning and takes pleasure in the victory of Lord Kṛṣṇa, he will never experience defeat anywhere in his struggle of life.

This episode of Bāṇāsura's fighting with Kṛṣṇa and later on being saved by the grace of Lord Śiva is confirmation of the statement in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that the worshipers of demigods cannot achieve any benediction without its being sanctioned by the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa. Here, in this narration, we find that although Bāṇāsura was a great devotee of Lord Śiva, when he faced death by Kṛṣṇa, Lord Śiva was not able to save him. But Lord Śiva appealed to Kṛṣṇa to save his devotee, and it was thus sanctioned by the Lord. This is the position of Lord Kṛṣṇa. The exact words used in this connection in the *Bhagavad-gītā* are *mayaiva vihitān hi tān.* This means that without the sanction of the Supreme Lord, no demigod can award any benediction to the worshiper.

Thus ends the Bhaktivedanta purport of the Second Volume, Eighth Chapter, of Kṛṣṇa, *Lord Kṛṣṇa Fights with Bāṇāsura."*



9 / The Story of King Nṛga

Once the family members of Lord Kṛṣṇa, such as Sāmba, Pradyumna, Cārubhānu and Gada, all princes of the Yadu dynasty, went for a long picnic in the forest near Dvārakā. In the course of their excursion, all of them became thirsty, and so they began to try to find out where water was available in the forest. When they approached a well, they found that there was no water in it, but on the contrary, within the well was a wonderful living entity. It was a large lizard, and all of them became astonished to see such a wonderful animal. They could understand that the animal was trapped and could not escape by its own effort, so out of compassion they tried to take the large lizard out of the well. Unfortunately, they could not get the lizard out, even though they tried to do so in many ways.

When the princes returned home, their story was narrated before Lord Kṛṣṇa. Lord Kṛṣṇa is the friend of all living entities. Therefore, after hearing the appeal from His sons, He personally went to the well and easily got the great lizard out simply by extending His left hand. Immediately upon being touched by the hand of Lord Kṛṣṇa, that great lizard gave up its former shape and appeared as a beautiful demigod, an inhabitant of the heavenly planets. His bodily complexion glittered like molten gold. He was decorated with fine garments, and he wore costly ornaments around his neck.

How the demigod had been obliged to accept the body of a lizard was not a secret to Lord Kṛṣṇa, but still, for others' information, the Lord inquired, "My dear fortunate demigod, now I see that your body is so beautiful and lustrous. Who are you? We can guess that you are one of the best demigods in the heavenly planets. All good fortune to you. I think that you are not meant to be in this situation. It must be due to the results of your past activities that you have been put into the species of lizard life. Still, I want to hear from you how you were put in this

position. If you think that you can disclose this secret, then please tell us your identity."

Actually this large lizard was King Nṛga, and when he was questioned by the Supreme Personality of Godhead he immediately bowed down before the Lord, touching to the ground the helmet on his head, which was as dazzling as the sunshine. In this way, he first of all offered his respectful obeisances unto the Supreme Lord. He then said, "My dear Lord, I am the son of King Ikṣvāku, and am King Nṛga. If you have ever taken account of all charitably disposed men, I am sure that You must have heard my name. My Lord, You are the witness. You are aware of every bit of work done by the living entities—past, present and future. Nothing can be hidden from Your eternal cognizance. Still, You have ordered me to explain my history, and I shall therefore narrate the full story."

King Nṛga proceeded to narrate the history of his degradation, caused by his *karma-kāṇḍa* activities. He was very charitably disposed and had given away so many cows that he said the number was equal to the amount of dust on the earth, the stars in the sky and the rainfall. According to the Vedic ritualistic ceremonies, a man who is charitably disposed is commanded to give cows to the *brāhmaṇas*. From King Nṛga's statement, it appears that he followed this principle earnestly; however, as a result of a slight discrepancy in his action, he was forced to take birth as a lizard. Therefore it is recommended by the Lord in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that one who is charitably disposed and desires to derive the benefit of his charity should offer his gifts to please Kṛṣṇa. To give in charity means to perform pious activities. As a result of pious activities one may be elevated to the higher planetary systems; but promotion to the heavenly planets is no guarantee that one will never fall down. Rather, from the example of King Nṛga, it is definitely proved that fruitive activities, even if they are very pious, cannot give us eternal blissful life. As stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā,* the result of work, either pious or impious, is sure to bind a man unless it is discharged as *yajña* on behalf of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

King Nṛga continued to say that the cows given in charity were not ordinary cows. Each one was very young and had given birth to only one calf. They were full of milk, very peaceful and healthy. All the cows were purchased with money that had been earned legally. Furthermore, their horns were gold-plated, their hooves were bedecked with silver plates, and they were covered with silken wrappers which were embroidered with pearls and necklaces. He stated that these valuably decorated cows were not given to any worthless person, but were distributed to the first-class *brāhmaṇas,* whom he had also decorated with nice garments and gold

ornaments. The *brāhmaṇas* were well qualified, none of them were rich, and their family members were always in want for the necessities of life. A real *brāhmaṇa* never hoards money for a luxurious life, like the *kṣatriyas* or the *vaiśyas,* but always keeps himself in a poverty-stricken condition, knowing that money diverts the mind to materialistic ways of life. To live in this way is the vow of a qualified *brāhmaṇa,* and all of these *brāhmaṇas* were well situated in that exalted vow. They were well learned in Vedic knowledge. They executed the required austerities and penances in their lives, and were liberal, meeting the standard of qualified *brāhmaṇas.* They were equally friendly to everyone; above all, they were young and quite fit to act as qualified *brāhmaṇas.* Besides the cows, they were also given land, gold, houses, horses and elephants. Those who were not married were given wives, maidservants, grains, silver, utensils, garments, jewels, household furniture, chariots, etc. This charity was nicely performed as a sacrifice according to the Vedic rituals. The King also stated that not only had he bestowed gifts on the *brāhmaṇas,* but he had performed other pious activities, such as digging a well, planting trees on the roadside and installing ponds on the highways.

The King continued, "In spite of all this, unfortunately one of the *brāhmaṇa's* cows chanced to enter amongst my other cows. Not knowing this, I again gave it in charity to another *brāhmaṇa.* As the cow was being taken away by the *brāhmaṇa,* its former master claimed it as his own, stating, 'This cow was formerly given to me, so how is it that you are taking it away?' Thus there was arguing and fighting between the two *brāhmaṇas,* and they came before me and charged that I had taken back a cow that I had previously given in charity." To give something to someone and then to take it away is considered a great sin, especially in dealing with a *brāhmaṇa.* When both the *brāhmaṇas* charged the King with the same complaint, he was simply puzzled as to how it had happened. Thereafter, with great humility, the King offered each of them one hundred thousand cows in exchange for the one cow that was causing the fight between them. He prayed to them that he was their servant and that there had been some mistake. Thus, in order to rectify it, he prayed that they would be very kind upon him and accept his offer in exchange for the cow. The King fervently appealed to the *brāhmaṇas* not to cause his downfall into hell because of this mistake. A *brāhmaṇa's* property is called *brahma-sva,* and according to Manu's law, it cannot be acquired even by the government. Both *brāhmaṇas* insisted that the cow was theirs and could not be taken back under any condition; neither of them agreed to exchange it for the one hundred thousand cows. Thus disagreeing with the King's proposal,

both *brāhmaṇas* left the palace in anger, thinking that their lawful position had been usurped.

After this incident, when the time came for the King to give up his body, he was taken before Yamarāja, the superintendent of death. Yamarāja asked him whether he wanted to first enjoy the results of his pious activities or first suffer the results of his impious activities. Yamarāja also hinted that since the King had executed so many pious activities and charities, the limit of Nṛga's enjoyment would be unknown to him. There was practically no end to the King's material happiness, but in spite of this hint, he was bewildered. He decided to first suffer the results of his impious activities and then to accept the results of his pious activities; therefore Yamarāja immediately turned him into a lizard.

King Nṛga had remained in a well as a big lizard for a very long time. He told Lord Kṛṣṇa: "In spite of being put into that degraded condition of life, I simply thought of You, my dear Lord, and my memory was never vanquished." It appears from these statements of King Nṛga that persons who follow the principles of fruitive activities and derive some material benefits are not very intelligent. Being given the choice by the superintendent of death, Yamarāja, King Nṛga could have first accepted the results of his pious activities. Instead he thought it would be better to first receive the effects of his impious activities and then enjoy the effects of his pious activities without disturbance. On the whole, he had not developed Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The Kṛṣṇa conscious person develops love of God, Kṛṣṇa, not love for pious or impious activities; therefore he is not subjected to the results of such action. As stated in the *Brahma-saṁhitā,* a devotee, by the grace of the Lord, does not become subjected to the resultant reactions of fruitive activities.

Somehow or other, as a result of his pious activities, King Nṛga had aspired to see the Lord. He continued to say: "My dear Lord, I had a great desire that someday I might be able to see You personally. I think that my tendency to perform ritualistic and charitable activities, combined with this great desire to see You personally, has enabled me to retain the memory of who I was in my former life, even though I became a lizard." (Such a person, who remembers his past life, is called *jāti-smara.*) "My dear Lord, You are the Supersoul seated in everyone's heart. There are many great mystic *yogīs* who have eyes to see You through the *Vedas* and *Upaniṣads.* In order to achieve the elevated position of being equal in quality with You, they always meditate on You within their hearts. Although such exalted saintly persons may see You constantly within their hearts, they still cannot see You eye to eye; therefore I am very much

surprised that I am able to see You personally. I know that I was engaged in so many activities, especially as a king. Although I was in the midst of luxury and opulence and was subjected to so much of the happiness and misery of material existence, I am so fortunate to be seeing You personally. As far as I know, when one becomes liberated from material existence, he can see You in this way."

When King Nṛga elected to receive the results of his impious activities, he was given the body of a lizard because of the mistake in his pious activities; thus he could not be directly converted to a higher status of life like a great demigod. However, along with his pious activities, he thought of Kṛṣṇa, so he was quickly released from the body of a lizard and given the body of a demigod. By worshiping the Supreme Lord, those who desire material opulences are given the bodies of powerful demigods. Sometimes these demigods can see the Supreme Personality of Godhead eye to eye, but they are still not yet eligible to enter into the spiritual kingdom, the Vaikuṇṭha planets. However, if the demigods continue to become devotees of the Lord, the next chance they get they will enter into the Vaikuṇṭha planets.

Having attained the body of a demigod, King Nṛga, continuing to remember everything, said, "My dear Lord, You are the Supreme Lord and are worshiped by all the demigods. You are not one of the living entities, but You are the Supreme Person, Puruṣottama. You are the source of all happiness to all living entities; therefore You are known as Govinda. You are the Lord of those living entities who have accepted a material body and those who have not yet accepted a material body." (Among the living entities who have not accepted a material body are those who are hovering in the material world as evil spirits or living in the ghostly atmosphere. However, those who live in the spiritual kingdom, the Vaikuṇṭhalokas, have bodies that are not made of material elements.) "You are, my Lord, infallible. You are the Supreme, the purest of all living entities. You are living in everyone's heart. You are the shelter of all living entities, Nārāyaṇa. Being seated in the heart of all living entities, You are the supreme director of everyone's sensual activities; therefore, You are called Hṛṣīkeśa.

"My dear Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, because You have given me this body of a demigod, I will have to go to some heavenly planet; so I am taking this opportunity to beg for Your mercy, that I may have the benediction of never forgetting Your lotus feet, no matter to which form of life or planet I may be transferred. You are all-pervading, present everywhere as cause and effect. You are the cause of all causes, and Your potency and power

are unlimited. You are the Absolute Truth, the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the Supreme Brahman. I therefore offer my respectful obeisances unto You again and again. My dear Lord, Your body is full of transcendental bliss and knowledge, and You are eternal. You are the master of all mystic powers; therefore You are known as Yogeśvara. Kindly accept me as insignificant dust at Your lotus feet."

Before entering the heavenly planets, King Nṛga circumambulated the Lord. He touched his helmet to the lotus feet of the Lord and bowed before Him. Seeing the airplane from the heavenly planets present before him, he was given permission by the Lord to board it. After the departure of King Nṛga, Lord Kṛṣṇa expressed His appreciation for the King's devotion to the *brāhmaṇas* as well as his charitable disposition and his performance of Vedic rituals. Therefore, it is recommended that if one cannot directly become a devotee of the Lord, one should follow the Vedic principles of life. This will enable him, one day, to see the Lord by being promoted either directly to the spiritual kingdom or indirectly to the heavenly kingdom, where he has hope of being transferred to the spiritual planets.

At this time, Lord Kṛṣṇa was present among His relatives who were members of the *kṣatriya* class. To teach them through the exemplary character of King Nṛga, He said: "Even though a *kṣatriya* king may be as powerful as fire, it is not possible for him to usurp the property of a *brāhmaṇa* and utilize it for his own purpose. If this is so, how can ordinary kings, who falsely think of themselves as the most powerful beings within the material world, usurp a *brāhmaṇa's* property? I do not think that taking poison is as dangerous as taking a *brāhmaṇa's* property. For ordinary poison there is treatment—one can be relieved from its effects; but if one drinks the poison of taking a *brāhmaṇa's* property, there is no remedy for the mistake. The perfect example was King Nṛga. He was very powerful and very pious, but due to the small mistake of unknowingly usurping a *brāhmaṇa's* cow, he was condemned to the abominable life of a lizard. Ordinary poison affects only those who drink it, and ordinary fire can be extinguished simply by pouring water on it; but the *araṇi* fire ignited by the spiritual potency of a *brāhmaṇa* can burn to ashes the whole family of a person who provokes such a *brāhmaṇa.*" (Formerly, the *brāhmaṇas* used to ignite the fire of sacrifice not with matches or any other external fire but with their powerful *mantras,* called *araṇi.)* "If someone even touches a *brāhmaṇa's* property, he is ruined for three generations. However, if a *brāhmaṇa's* property is forcibly taken away, the taker's family for ten generations before him and for ten generations after him will become

subject to ruination. On the other hand, if someone becomes a Vaiṣṇava or devotee of the Lord, ten generations of his family before his birth and ten generations after will become liberated."

Lord Kṛṣṇa continued: "If some foolish king who is puffed up by his wealth, prestige and power wants to usurp a *brāhmaṇa's* property, it should be understood that such a king is clearing his path to hell; he does not know how much he has to suffer for such unwise action. If someone takes away the property of a very liberal *brāhmaṇa* who is encumbered by a large dependent family, then such a usurper is put into the hell known as Kumbhīpāka; not only is he put into this hell, but his family members also have to accept such a miserable condition of life. A person who takes away property which has either been awarded to a *brāhmaṇa* or given away by him is condemned to live for at least 60,000 years as miserably as an insect in stool. Therefore I instruct you, all My boys and relatives present here, do not, even by mistake, take the possession of a *brāhmaṇa* and thereby pollute Your whole family. If someone even wishes to possess such property, let alone attempts to take it away by force, the duration of his life will be reduced. He will be defeated by his enemies, and after being bereft of his royal position, when he gives up his body he will become a serpent. A serpent gives trouble to all other living entities. My dear boys and relatives, I therefore advise you that even if a *brāhmaṇa* becomes angry with you and calls you by ill names or cuts you, still you should not retaliate. On the contrary, you should smile, tolerate him and offer your respects to the *brāhmaṇa.* You know very well that even I Myself offer My obeisances to the *brāhmaṇas* with great respect three times daily. You should therefore follow My instruction and example. I shall not forgive anyone who does not follow them, and I shall punish him. You should learn from the example of King Nṛga that even if someone unknowingly usurps the property of a *brāhmaṇa,* he is put into a miserable condition of life."

Thus Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is always engaged in purifying the conditioned living entities, gave instruction not only to His family members and the inhabitants of Dvārakā, but to all the members of human society. After this the Lord entered His palace.

Thus ends the Bhaktivedanta purport of the Second Volume, Ninth Chapter, of Kṛṣṇa, *"The Story of King Nṛga."*



10 / Lord Balarāma Visits Vṛndāvana

Lord Balarāma became very anxious to see His father and mother, Mahārāja Nanda and Yaśodā. Therefore He started for Vṛndāvana on a chariot with great enthusiasm. The inhabitants of Vṛndāvana had been anxious to see Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma for a very long time. When Lord Balarāma returned to Vṛndāvana, all the cowherd boys and the *gopīs* had grown up; but still, on His arrival, they all embraced Him, and Balarāma embraced them in reciprocation. After this He came before Mahārāja Nanda and Yaśodā and offered His respectful obeisances unto them. In response, mother Yaśodā and Nanda Mahārāja offered their blessings unto Him. They addressed Him as Jagadīśvara, or the Lord of the universe who maintains everyone. The reason for this was that both Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma maintain all living entities, and yet Nanda and Yaśodā were put into such difficulties on account of Their absence. Feeling like this, they embraced Balarāma and, seating Him on their laps, began their perpetual crying, wetting Balarāma with their tears. Lord Balarāma then offered His respectful obeisances to the elderly cowherd men and accepted the obeisances of the younger cowherd men. Thus, according to their different ages and relationships, Lord Balarāma exchanged feelings of friendship with them. He shook hands with those who were His equals in age and friendship, and with loud laughing embraced each one of them.

After being received by the cowherd men and boys, the *gopīs,* and King Nanda and Yaśodā, Lord Balarāma sat down, feeling satisfied, and they all surrounded Him. First Lord Balarāma inquired from them about their welfare, and then, not having seen Him for such a long time, they began to ask Him different questions. The inhabitants of Vṛndāvana had sacrificed everything for Kṛṣṇa, simply being captivated by the lotus eyes of the Lord. Because of their great desire to love Kṛṣṇa, they never desired anything like elevation to the heavenly planets or merging into the effulgence of Brahman to become one with the Absolute Truth. They were

not even interested in enjoying a life of opulence, but were satisfied in living a simple life in the village as cowherd men. They were always absorbed in thoughts of Kṛṣṇa and did not desire any personal benefits, and they were all so much in love with Him that in His absence their voices faltered when they began to inquire from Balarāmajī.

First Nanda Mahārāja and Yaśodāmayī inquired, "My dear Balarāma, are our friends like Vasudeva and others in the family doing well? Now You and Kṛṣṇa are grown-up married men with children. In the happiness of family life, do You sometimes remember Your poor father and mother, Nanda Mahārāja and Yaśodādevī? It is very good news that the most sinful King Kaṁsa has been killed by You and that our friends like Vasudeva and the others, who had been harrassed by him, have now been relieved. It is also very good news that both You and Kṛṣṇa defeated Jarāsandha and Kālayavana, who now is dead, and that You are now living in a fortified residence in Dvārakā."

When the *gopīs* arrived, Lord Balarāma glanced over them with loving eyes. Being overjoyed, the *gopīs,* who had so long been mortified on account of Kṛṣṇa's and Balarāma's absence, began to ask about the welfare of the two brothers. They specifically asked Balarāma whether Kṛṣṇa was enjoying His life surrounded by the enlightened women of Dvārakā Purī. "Does He sometimes remember His father Nanda and His mother Yaśodā and the other friends with whom He so intimately behaved while He was in Vṛndāvana? Does Kṛṣṇa have any plans to come here to see His mother Yaśodā, and does He remember us *gopīs* who are now pitiably bereft of His company? Kṛṣṇa might have forgotten us in the midst of the cultured women of Dvārakā, but as far as we are concerned, we are still remembering Him by collecting flowers and sewing them into garlands. When He does not come, however, we simply pass our time by crying. If only He would come here and accept these garlands that we have made. Dear Lord Balarāma, descendant of Daśārha, You know that we would give up everything for Kṛṣṇa's friendship. Even in great distress one cannot give up the connection of family members, but although it might be impossible for others, we gave up our fathers, mothers, sisters and relatives without caring at all about our renunciation. Then, all of a sudden, Kṛṣṇa renounced us and went away. He broke off our intimate relationship without any serious consideration and left for a foreign country. But He was so clever and cunning that He manufactured very nice words. He said, 'My dear *gopīs,* please do not worry. The service that you have rendered Me is impossible for Me to repay.' After all, we are women, so how could we disbelieve Him? Now we can understand that His sweet words were simply for cheating us."

Another *gopī,* protesting Kṛṣṇa's absence from Vṛndāvana, began to say: "My dear Balarāmajī, we are of course village girls, so Kṛṣṇa could cheat us in that way, but what about the women of Dvārakā? Don't think they are as foolish as we are! We village women might be misled by Kṛṣṇa, but the women in the city of Dvārakā are very clever and intelligent. Therefore I would be surprised if such city women could be misled by Kṛṣṇa and could believe His words."

Then another *gopī* began to speak. "My dear friend," she said, "Kṛṣṇa is very clever in using words. No one can compete with Him in that art. He can manufacture such colorful words and talk so sweetly that the heart of any woman would be misled. Besides that, He has perfected the art of smiling very attractively, and by seeing His smile women become mad after Him and would give themselves to Him without any hesitation."

Another *gopī,* after hearing this, said, "My dear friends, what is the use in talking about Kṛṣṇa? If you are at all interested in passing away time by talking, let us talk on some subject other than Him. If cruel Kṛṣṇa can pass His time without us, why can't we pass our time without Kṛṣṇa? Of course, Kṛṣṇa is passing His days very happily without us, but the difference is that we cannot pass our days very happily without Him."

When the *gopīs* were talking in this way, their feelings for Kṛṣṇa became more and more intensified, and they were experiencing Kṛṣṇa's smiling, Kṛṣṇa's words of love, Kṛṣṇa's attractive features, Kṛṣṇa's characteristics and Kṛṣṇa's embraces. By the force of their ecstatic feelings, it appeared to them that Kṛṣṇa was personally present and dancing before them. Because of their sweet remembrance of Kṛṣṇa, they could not check their tears, and they began to cry without consideration.

Lord Balarāma could, of course, understand the ecstatic feelings of the *gopīs,* and therefore He wanted to pacify them. He was expert in presenting an appeal, and thus, treating the *gopīs* very respectfully, He began to narrate the stories of Kṛṣṇa so tactfully that the *gopīs* became satisfied. In order to keep the *gopīs* in Vṛndāvana satisfied, Lord Balarāma stayed there continually for two months, namely the months of Caitra (March-April) and Vaiśākha (April-May). For those two months He kept Himself among the *gopīs,* and He passed every night with them in the forest of Vṛndāvana in order to satisfy their desire for conjugal love. Thus Balarāma also enjoyed the *rāsa* dance with the *gopīs* during those two months. Since the season was springtime, the breeze on the bank of the Yamunā was blowing very mildly, carrying the aroma of different flowers, especially of the flower known as *kaumudī.* Moonlight filled the sky and spread everywhere, and thus the banks of the Yamunā appeared to be very bright

and pleasing, and Lord Balarāma enjoyed the company of the *gopīs* there.

The demigod known as Varuṇa sent his daughter Vāruṇī in the form of liquid honey oozing from the hollows of the trees. Because of this honey the whole forest became aromatic, and the sweet aroma of the liquid honey, Vāruṇī, captivated Balarāmajī. Balarāmajī and all the *gopīs* became very much attracted by the taste of Vāruṇī, and all of them drank it together. While drinking this natural beverage, Vāruṇī, all the *gopīs* chanted the glories of Lord Balarāma, and Lord Balarāma felt very happy, as if He had become intoxicated by drinking that Vāruṇī beverage. His eyes rolled in a pleasing attitude. He was decorated with long garlands of forest flowers, and the whole situation appeared to be a great function of happiness because of this transcendental bliss. Lord Balarāma smiled beautifully, and the drops of perspiration decorating His face appeared to be soothing morning dew.

While Balarāma was in that happy mood, He desired to enjoy the company of the *gopīs* in the water of the Yamunā. Therefore He called Yamunā to come nearby. But Yamunā neglected the order of Balarāmajī, considering Him to be intoxicated. Lord Balarāma became very much displeased at Yamunā's neglecting His order. He immediately wanted to scratch the land near the river with His plowshare. Lord Balarāma has two weapons, a plow and a club, and He takes service from them when they are required. This time He wanted to bring the Yamunā by force, and He took the help of His plow. He wanted to punish Yamunā because she did not come in obedience to His order. He addressed Yamunā: "You wretched river! You did not care for My order. Now I shall teach you a lesson! You did not come to Me voluntarily. Now with the help of My plow I shall force you to come. I shall divide you into hundreds of scattered streams!"

When Yamunā was threatened like this, she became greatly afraid of the power of Balarāma and immediately came in person, falling at His lotus feet and praying thus: "My dear Balarāma, You are the most powerful personality, and You are pleasing to everyone. Unfortunately, I forgot Your glorious, exalted position, but now I have come to my senses, and I remember that You hold all the planetary systems on Your head merely by Your partial expansion as Śeṣa. You are the sustainer of the whole universe. My dear Supreme Personality of Godhead, You are full of six opulences. Because I forgot Your omnipotence, I have mistakenly disobeyed Your order, and thus I have become a great offender. But, my dear Lord, please know that I am a surrendered soul unto You. You are very much affectionate to Your devotees. Therefore please excuse my impudence and mistakes and, by Your causeless mercy, may You now release me."

Upon displaying this submissive attitude, Yamunā was forgiven, and when she came nearby, Lord Balarāma wanted to enjoy the pleasure of swimming within her water along with the *gopīs* in the same way an elephant enjoys himself along with his many she-elephants. After a long time, when Lord Balarāma had enjoyed to His full satisfaction, He came out of the water, and immediately a goddess of fortune offered Him a nice blue garment and a valuable necklace made of gold. After taking bath in the Yamunā, Lord Balarāma, dressed in blue garments and decorated with golden ornaments, looked very attractive to everyone. Lord Balarāma's complexion is white, and when He was properly dressed He looked exactly like the white elephant of King Indra in the heavenly planet. The River Yamunā still has many small branches due to being scratched by the plowshare of Lord Balarāma. And all these branches of the River Yamunā are still glorifying the omnipotency of Lord Balarāma.

Lord Balarāma and the *gopīs* enjoyed transcendental pastimes together every night for two months, and time passed away so quickly that all those nights appeared to be only one night. In the presence of Lord Balarāma, all the *gopīs* and inhabitants of Vṛndāvana became as cheerful as they had been before in the presence of both brothers, Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Balarāma.

Thus ends the Bhaktivedanta purport of the Second Volume, Tenth Chapter of Kṛṣṇa, *"Lord Balarāma Visits Vṛndāvana."*



11 / Deliverance of Pauṇḍraka and the King of Kāśī

The story of King Pauṇḍraka is very interesting because there have always been many rascals and fools who have considered themselves to be God. Even in the presence of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, there was such a foolish person. His name was Pauṇḍraka, and He wanted to declare himself to be God. While Lord Balarāma was absent in Vṛndāvana, this King Pauṇḍraka, the King of the Karūṣa province, being foolish and puffed up, sent a messenger to Lord Kṛṣṇa. Lord Kṛṣṇa is accepted as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and King Pauṇḍraka directly challenged Kṛṣṇa through the messenger, who stated that Pauṇḍraka, and not Kṛṣṇa, was Vāsudeva. In the present day there are many foolish followers of such rascals. Similarly, in his day, many foolish men accepted Pauṇḍraka as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Because he could not estimate his own position, Pauṇḍraka falsely thought himself to be Lord Vāsudeva. Thus the messenger declared to Kṛṣṇa that out of his causeless mercy, King Pauṇḍraka, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, had descended on the earth just to deliver all distressed persons.

Surrounded by many other foolish persons, this rascal Pauṇḍraka had actually concluded that he was Vāsudeva, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This kind of conclusion is certainly childish. When children are playing, they sometimes create a king amongst themselves, and the child who is so selected thinks that he is the king. Similarly, many foolish persons, due to ignorance, select another fool as God, and then the rascal considers himself God, as if God could be created by childish play or by the votes of men. Under this false impression, thinking himself the Supreme Lord, Pauṇḍraka sent his messenger to Dvārakā to challenge the position of Kṛṣṇa. The messenger reached the royal assembly of Kṛṣṇa in Dvārakā and conveyed the message given by his master, Pauṇḍraka. The message contained the following statements.

"I am the only Supreme Personality of Godhead, Vāsudeva. There is no man who can compete with me. I have descended as King Pauṇḍraka, taking compassion on the distressed conditioned souls out of my unlimited causeless mercy. You have falsely taken the position of Vāsudeva without authority, but you should not propagate this false idea. You must give up Your position. O descendant of the Yadu dynasty, please give up all the symbols of Vāsudeva which You have falsely assumed. And after giving up this position, come and surrender unto me. If out of Your gross impudence You do not care for my words, then I challenge You to fight. I am inviting You to a battle in which the decision will be settled."

When all the members of the royal assembly, including King Ugrasena, heard this message sent by Pauṇḍraka, they laughed very loudly for a considerable time. After enjoying the loud laughter of all the members of the assembly, Kṛṣṇa replied to the messenger as follows. "O messenger of Pauṇḍraka, you may carry My message to your master: He is a foolish rascal. I directly call him a rascal, and I refuse to follow his instructions. I shall never give up the symbols of Vāsudeva, especially My disc. I shall use this disc to kill not only King Pauṇḍraka but all his followers also. I shall destroy this Pauṇḍraka and his foolish associates, who merely constitute a society of cheaters and cheated. When this action is taken, foolish King, you will have to conceal your face in disgrace, and when your head is severed from your body by My disc, it will be surrounded by meat-eating birds like vultures, hawks and eagles. At that time, instead of becoming My shelter as you have demanded, you will be subjected to the mercy of these low-born birds. At that time your body will be thrown to the dogs, who will eat it with great pleasure."

The messenger carried the words of Lord Kṛṣṇa to his master, Pauṇḍraka, who patiently heard all these insults. Without waiting longer, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa immediately started out on His chariot to punish the rascal Pauṇḍraka. Because at that time the King of Karūṣa was living with his friend the King of Kāśī, Kṛṣṇa surrounded the whole city of Kāśī.

King Pauṇḍraka was a great warrior, and as soon as he heard of Kṛṣṇa's attack, he came out of the city along with two *akṣauhiṇī* divisions of soldiers. The King of Kāśī was also a friend to King Pauṇḍraka, and he came out with three *akṣauhiṇī* divisions. When the two kings came before Lord Kṛṣṇa to oppose Him, Kṛṣṇa saw Pauṇḍraka face to face for the first time. Kṛṣṇa saw that Pauṇḍraka had decorated himself with the symbols of the conchshell, disc, lotus and club. He carried the Śārṅga bow, and on his chest was the insignia of Śrīvatsa. His neck was decorated with a false Kaustubha jewel, and he wore a flower garland in exact imitation of Lord

Vāsudeva. He was dressed in yellow colored silken garments, and the flag on his chariot carried the symbol of Garuḍa, exactly imitating Kṛṣṇa's. He had a very valuable helmet on his head, and his earrings, like swordfish, glittered brilliantly. On the whole, however, his dress and makeup were clearly imitation. Anyone could understand that he was just like someone onstage playing the part of Vāsudeva in false dress. When Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa saw Pauṇḍraka imitating His posture and dress, He could not check His laughter, and thus He laughed with great satisfaction.

The soldiers on the side of King Pauṇḍraka began to shower their weapons upon Kṛṣṇa. The weapons, including various kinds of tridents, clubs, poles, lances, swords, daggers and arrows, came flying in waves, and Kṛṣṇa counteracted them. He smashed not only the weapons but also the soldiers and assistants of Pauṇḍraka, just as during the dissolution of this universe the fire of devastation burns everything to ashes. The elephants, chariots, horses, and infantry belonging to the opposite party were scattered by the weapons of Kṛṣṇa. The whole battlefield became scattered with the bodies of animals and chariots. There were fallen horses, elephants, men, asses and camels. Although the devastated battlefield appeared like the dancing place of Lord Śiva at the time of the dissolution of the world, the warriors who were on the side of Kṛṣṇa were very much encouraged by seeing this, and they fought with greater strength.

At this time, Lord Kṛṣṇa told Pauṇḍraka, "Pauṇḍraka, you requested Me to give up the symbols of Lord Viṣṇu, specifically My disc. Now I will give it up to you. Be careful! You falsely declare yourself to be Vāsudeva, imitating Myself. Therefore no one is a greater fool than you." From this statement of Kṛṣṇa's it is clear that any rascal who advertises himself as God is the greatest fool in human society. Kṛṣṇa continued: "Now, Pauṇḍraka, I shall force you to give up this false representation. You wanted Me to surrender unto you. Now this is your opportunity. We shall now fight, and if I am defeated and you become victorious, I shall certainly surrender unto you." In this way, after chastising Pauṇḍraka very severely, He smashed his chariot to pieces by shooting an arrow. With the help of His disc He separated the head of Pauṇḍraka from his body, just as Indra shaves off the peaks of mountains by striking them with his thunderbolt. Similarly, He also killed the King of Kāśī with His arrows. Lord Kṛṣṇa specifically arranged to throw the head of the King of Kāśī into the city of Kāśī itself so that his relatives and family members could see it. This was done by Kṛṣṇa just as a hurricane carries a lotus petal here and there. Lord Kṛṣṇa killed Pauṇḍraka and his friend Kāśīrāja on the battlefield, and then He returned to His capital city, Dvārakā.

When Lord Kṛṣṇa returned to the city of Dvārakā, all the Siddhas from the heavenly planets were singing the glories of the Lord. As far as Pauṇḍraka was concerned, somehow or other he was always thinking of Lord Vāsudeva by falsely dressing himself in that way, and therefore Pauṇḍraka achieved *sārūpya,* one of the five kinds of liberation, and was thus promoted to the Vaikuṇṭha planets, where the devotees have the same bodily features as Viṣṇu, with four hands holding the four symbols. Factually, his meditation was concentrated on the Viṣṇu form, but because he thought himself to be Lord Viṣṇu, it was offensive. After being killed by Kṛṣṇa, however, that offense was also mitigated. Thus he was given *sārūpya* liberation, and he attained the same form as the Lord.

When the head of the King of Kāśī was thrown through the city gate, people gathered and were astonished to see that wonderful thing. When they found out that there were earrings on it, they could understand that it was someone's head. They conjectured as to whose head it might be. Some thought it was Kṛṣṇa's head because Kṛṣṇa was the enemy of Kāśīrāja, and they calculated that the King of Kāśī might have thrown Kṛṣṇa's head into the city so that the people might take pleasure that the enemy was killed. But it was finally detected that the head was not Kṛṣṇa's, but that of Kāśīrāja himself. When it was so ascertained, the queens of the King of Kāśī immediately approached and began to lament the death of their husband. "My dear lord," they cried, "upon your death, we have become just like dead bodies."

The King of Kāśī had one son whose name was Sudakṣiṇa. After observing the ritualistic funeral ceremonies, he took a vow that since Kṛṣṇa was the enemy of his father, he would kill Kṛṣṇa and in this way liquidate his debts to his father. Therefore, accompanied by a learned priest qualified to help him, he began to worship Mahādeva, Lord Śiva. The lord of the kingdom of Kāśī is Viśvanātha (Lord Śiva). The temple of Lord Viśvanātha is still existing in Vārāṇasī, and many thousands of pilgrims still gather daily in that temple. By the worship of Sudakṣiṇa, Lord Śiva was very much pleased, and he wanted to give a benediction to his devotee. Sudakṣiṇa's purpose was to kill Kṛṣṇa, and therefore he prayed for a specific power by which he could kill Him. Lord Śiva advised that Sudakṣiṇa, assisted by the *brāhmaṇas,* execute the ritualistic ceremony for killing one's enemy. This ceremony is also mentioned in some of the *Tantras.* Lord Śiva informed Sudakṣiṇa that if such a black ritualistic ceremony were performed properly then the evil spirit named Dakṣiṇāgni would appear to carry out any order given to him. He would have to be employed, however, to kill someone other than a qualified *brāhmaṇa.* In

such a case he would be accompanied by Lord Śiva's ghostly companions, and the desire of Sudakṣiṇa to kill his enemy would be fulfilled.

When Sudakṣiṇa was encouraged by Lord Śiva in that way, he became assured that he would be able to kill Kṛṣṇa. With a determined vow of austerity, he began to execute the black art of chanting *mantras,* assisted by the priests. After this, out of the fire came a great demonic form, whose hair, beard and moustache were exactly the color of hot copper. This form was very big and fierce. As the demon arose from the fire, cinders of fire emanated from the sockets of his eyes. The giant fiery demon appeared still more fierce due to the movements of his eyebrows. He exhibited long sharp teeth and, sticking out his long tongue, licked both sides of his lips. He was naked, and he carried a big trident, which was blazing like fire. After appearing from the fire of sacrifice, he stood wielding the trident in his hand. Instigated by Sudakṣiṇa, the demon proceeded toward the capital city, Dvārakā, along with many hundreds of ghostly companions, and it appeared that he was going to burn all outer space to ashes. The surface of the earth trembled because of his striking steps. When he entered the city of Dvārakā, all the residents panicked, just like animals at the time of a forest fire.

At that time Kṛṣṇa was engaged in playing chess in the royal assembly council hall. All the residents of Dvārakā approached and addressed Him, "Dear Lord of the three worlds, there is a great fiery demon ready to burn the whole city of Dvārakā. Please save us." Thus, after approaching Lord Kṛṣṇa, all the inhabitants of Dvārakā began to appeal to Him for protection from the fiery demon who had just appeared in Dvārakā to devastate the whole city.

Lord Kṛṣṇa, who specifically protects His devotees, saw that the whole population of Dvārakā was most perturbed by the presence of the great fiery demon. He immediately began to smile and assured them, "Don't worry. I shall give you all protection." The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, is all-pervading. He is within everyone's heart, and He is without also in the form of the cosmic manifestation. He could understand that the fiery demon was a creation of Lord Śiva, and in order to vanquish him He took His Sudarśana-cakra and ordered him to take the necessary steps. The Sudarśana-cakra appeared with the effulgence of millions of suns, his temperature being as powerful as that of the fire created at the end of the cosmic manifestation. By his own effulgence, the Sudarśana-cakra began to illuminate the entire universe, on the surface of the earth as well as in outer space. Then the Sudarśana-cakra began to freeze the fiery demon created by Lord Śiva. In this way, the fiery demon was

checked by the Sudarśana-cakra of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and being defeated in his attempt to devastate the city of Dvārakā, he turned back.

Having failed to set fire to Dvārakā, he went back to Vārāṇasī, the kingdom of Kāśīrāja. As a result of his return, all the priests who had helped instruct the black art of *mantras,* along with their employer, Sudakṣiṇa were burned into ashes by the glaring effulgence of the fiery demon. According to the methods of black art *mantras* instructed in the *Tantra,* if the *mantra* fails to kill the enemy, then, because it must kill someone, it kills the original creator. Sudakṣiṇa was the originator, and the priests assisted him; therefore all of them were burned to ashes. This is the way of the demons: the demons create something to kill God, but by the same weapon the demons themselves are killed.

Following just behind the fiery demon, the Sudarśana-cakra also entered Vārāṇasī. This city of Vārāṇasī had been very opulent and great for a very long time. Even now, the city of Vārāṇasī is very opulent and famous, and it is one of the important cities of India. There were then many big palaces, assembly houses, marketplaces and gates, with very important large monuments by the palaces and gates. Lecturing platforms could be found at each and every crossing of the roads. There was a treasury house, and elephant heads, horse heads, chariots, granaries and places for distribution of foodstuff. The city of Vārāṇasī had been filled with all these material opulences for a very long time, but because the king of Kāśī and his son Sudakṣiṇa were against Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Viṣṇu-cakra Sudarśana (the disc weapon of Lord Kṛṣṇa) devastated the whole city by burning all these important places. This excursion was more ravaging than modern bombing. The Sudarśana-cakra, having thus finished his duty, came back to his Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa at Dvārakā.

This narration of the devastation of Vārāṇasī by Kṛṣṇa's disc weapon, the Sudarśana-cakra, is transcendental and auspicious. Anyone who narrates this story or anyone who hears this story with faith and attention will be released from all reaction to sinful activities. This is the assurance of Śukadeva Gosvāmī who narrated this story to Parīkṣit Mahārāja.

Thus ends the Second Volume, Eleventh Chapter, of Kṛṣṇa, *"Deliverance of Pauṇḍraka and the King of Kāśī."*



12 / Deliverance of Dvivida Gorilla

While Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued to speak on the transcendental pastimes and characteristics of Lord Kṛṣṇa, King Parīkṣit, upon hearing him, became more and more enthusiastic and wanted to hear further. Śukadeva Gosvāmī next narrated the story of Dvivida, the gorilla who was killed by Lord Balarāma.

This gorilla was a great friend of Baumāsura's or Narakāsura's, who was killed by Kṛṣṇa in connection with his kidnapping sixteen thousand princesses from all over the world. Dvivida was the minister of King Sugrīva. His brother, Mainda, was also a very powerful gorilla king. When Dvivida gorilla heard the story of his friend Baumāsura's being killed by Lord Kṛṣṇa, he planned to create mischief throughout the country in order to avenge the death of Baumāsura. His first business was to set fires in villages, towns, and industrial and mining places, as well as the residential quarters of the mercantile men who were busy dairy farming and protecting cows. Sometimes he would uproot a big mountain and tear it to pieces. In this way he created great disturbances all over the country, especially in the province of Kathwar. The city of Dvārakā was situated in this Kathwar province, and because Lord Kṛṣṇa used to live in this city, Dvivida specifically made it his target of disturbance.

Dvivida was as powerful as 10,000 elephants. Sometimes he would go to the seashore, and with his powerful hands he would create so much disturbance in the sea that he would overflood the neighboring cities and villages. Often he would go to the hermitages of great saintly persons and sages and cause a great disturbance by smashing their beautiful gardens and orchards. Not only did he create disturbances in that way, but sometimes he would pass urine and stool on their sacred sacrificial arena. He would thus pollute the whole atmosphere. He also kidnapped both men and women, taking them away from their residential places to the

caves of the mountains. Putting them within the caves, he would close the entrances with large chunks of stone, like the *bhṛṅgī* insect, which arrests and carries away many flies and other insects and puts them within the holes of the trees where he lives. He thus regularly defied the law and order of the country. Not only that, but he would sometimes pollute the female members of many aristocratic families by forcibly raping them.

While creating such great disturbance all over the country, sometimes he heard very sweet musical sounds from the Raivataka mountain, and so he entered that mountainous region. There he saw that Lord Balarāma was present in the midst of many beautiful young girls, enjoying their company while engaged in singing and dancing. He became captivated by the beautiful features of Lord Balarāma's body, each and every part of which was very beautiful, decorated as He was with a garland of lotus flowers. Similarly, all the young girls present, dressed and garlanded with flowers, exhibited much beauty. Lord Balarāma seemed to be fully intoxicated from drinking the Vāruṇī beverage, and His eyes appeared to be rolling in a drunken state. Lord Balarāma appeared just like the king of the elephants in the midst of many she-elephants.

This gorilla by the name of Dvivida could climb up on the trees and jump from one branch to another. Sometimes he would jerk the branches, creating a particular type of sound, "Kila, kila," so that Lord Balarāma was greatly distracted from the pleasing atmosphere. Sometimes Dvivida would come before the women and exhibit different types of caricatures. By nature young women are apt to enjoy everything with laughter and joking, and when the gorilla came before them they did not take him seriously, but simply laughed at him. However, the gorilla was so rude that even in the presence of Balarāma he began to show the lower part of his body to the women, and sometimes he would come forward to show his teeth while moving his eyebrows. He disrespected the women, even in the presence of Balarāma. Lord Balarāma's name suggests that He is not only very powerful, but that He takes pleasure in exhibiting extraordinary strength. So He took a stone and threw it at Dvivida. The gorilla, however, artfully avoided being struck by the stone. In order to insult Balarāma, the gorilla took away the earthen pot in which the Vāruṇī was kept. Dvivida, being thus intoxicated, with his limited strength began to tear off all the valuable clothes worn by Balarāma and the accompanying young girls. He was so puffed up that he thought that Balarāma could not do anything to chastise him, and he continued to offend Balarāmajī and His companions.

When Lord Balarāma personally saw the disturbances created by the

gorilla and heard that he had already performed many mischievous activities all over the country, He became very angry and decided to kill him. Immediately He took His club in His hands. The gorilla could understand that now Balarāma was going to attack him. In order to counteract Balarāma, he immediately uprooted a big oak tree, and with great force he came and struck at Lord Balarāma's head. Lord Balarāma, however, immediately caught hold of the big tree and remained undisturbed, just like a great mountain. To retaliate, He took His club by the name of Sunanda and began to hit the gorilla with it. The gorilla's head was severely injured. Currents of blood flowed from his head with great force, but the stream of blood enhanced his beauty like a stream of liquid manganese coming out of a great mountain. The striking of Balarāma's club did not even slightly disturb him. On the contrary, he immediately uprooted another big oak tree, and after clipping off all its leaves, he began to strike Balarāma's head with it. But Balarāma, with the help of His club, tore the tree to pieces. Since the gorilla was very angry, he took another tree in his hands and began to strike Lord Balarāma's body. Again Lord Balarāma tore the tree to pieces, and the fighting continued. Each time the gorilla would bring out a big tree to strike Balarāma, Lord Balarāma would tear the tree to pieces by the striking of His club. The gorilla Dvivida would clutch another tree from another direction and again attack Balarāma in the same way. As a result of this continuous fighting, the forest became treeless. When no more trees were available, Dvivida took help from the hills and threw large pieces of stone, like rainfall, upon the body of Balarāma. Lord Balarāma, also in a great sporting mood, began to smash those big pieces of stone into mere pebbles. The gorilla, being bereft of all trees and stone slabs, now stood before Him and waved his strong fists. Then, with great force, he began to beat the chest of Lord Balarāma with his fists. This time Lord Balarāma became most angry. Since the gorilla was striking Him with his hands, He would not strike him back with His own weapons, the club or the plow. Simply with His fist He began to strike the collarbone of the gorilla. This striking proved to be fatal to Dvivida, who immediately vomited blood and fell unconscious upon the ground. When the gorilla fell, it appeared that all the hills and forests tottered.

After this horrible incident, all the Siddhas, great sages and saintly persons from the upper planetary system began to shower flowers on the person of Lord Balarāma, and sounds glorifying the supremacy of Lord Balarāma were vibrated. All of them began to chant, "All glories to Lord Balarāma! Let us offer our respectful obeisances unto Your lotus feet. By

Your killing this great demon, Dvivida, You have initiated an auspicious era for the world." All such jubilant sounds of victory were heard from outer space. After killing the great demon Dvivida and being worshiped by showers of flowers and glorious sounds of victory, Balarāma returned to His capital city, Dvārakā.

Thus ends the Bhaktivedanta purport of the Second Volume, Twelfth Chapter, of Kṛṣṇa, *"Deliverance of Dvivida Gorilla."*



13 / The Marriage of Sāmba

Duryodhana, the son of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, had a marriageable daughter by the name of Lakṣmaṇā. She was a very highly qualified girl of the Kuru dynasty, and many princes wanted to marry her. In such cases, the *svayaṁvara* ceremony is held so that the girl may select her husband according to her own choice. In Lakṣmaṇā's *svayaṁvara* assembly, when the girl was to select her husband, Sāmba appeared. He was the son of Kṛṣṇa by Jāmbavatī, one of the chief wives of Lord Kṛṣṇa. This son Sāmba is so named because he was a very bad child, and he always lived close to his mother. The name Sāmba indicates a son who is very much his mother's pet. *Ambā* means mother, and *sa* means with. So this special name was given to him because he always remained with his mother. He was also known as Jāmbavatīsuta for the same reason. As previously explained, all the sons of Kṛṣṇa were as qualified as their great father, Lord Kṛṣṇa. Sāmba wanted the daughter of Duryodhana, Lakṣmaṇā, although she was not inclined to have him. Therefore Sāmba kidnapped Lakṣmaṇā by force from the *svayaṁvara* assembly.

Because Sāmba took Lakṣmaṇā away from the assembly by force, all the members of the Kuru dynasty, namely, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Bhīṣma, Vidura, Ujahan and Arjuna, thought it an insult to their family tradition that the boy, Sāmba, could possibly have kidnapped their daughter. All of them knew that Lakṣmaṇā was not at all inclined to select him as a husband and that she was not given the chance to select her own husband; instead she was forcibly taken away by this boy. Therefore, they decided that he must be punished. They unanimously declared that he was most impudent and that he had degraded the Kurus' family tradition. Therefore, all of them, under the counsel of the elderly members of the Kuru family, decided to arrest the boy but not kill him. They concluded that the girl could not be married to any boy other than Sāmba since she had already been touched

by him. (According to the Vedic system, once being used by some boy, a girl cannot be married or given to any other boy. Nor would anyone agree to marry a girl who had already thus associated with another boy.) The elderly members of the family, such as Bhīṣma, wanted to arrest him. All the members of the Kuru dynasty, especially the great fighters, joined together just to teach him a lesson, and Karṇa was made the commander-in-chief for this small battle.

While the plan was being made to arrest Sāmba, the Kurus counciled amongst themselves that upon his arrest, the members of the Yadu dynasty would be very angry with them. There was every possibility of the Yadus' accepting the challenge and fighting with them. But they also thought, "If they came here to fight with us, what could they do? The members of the Yadu dynasty cannot equal the members of the Kuru dynasty because the kings of the Kuru dynasty are the emperors, whereas the kings of the Yadu dynasty are able to enjoy their landed property." The Kurus thought, "If they come here to challenge us because their son was arrested, we will nevertheless accept the fight. All of us will teach them a lesson, so that automatically they will become subdued under pressure, as the senses are subdued by the mystic *yoga* process, *prāṇāyāma*." (In the mechanical system of mystic *yoga*, the airs within the body are controlled, and the senses are subdued and checked from being engaged in anything other than meditation upon Lord Viṣṇu.)

After consultation and after receiving permission from the elderly members of the Kuru dynasty, such as Bhīṣma and Dhṛtarāṣṭra, six great warriors —Karṇa, Śala, Bhuriśravā, Yajñaketu, and Duryodhana, the father of the girl—all *mahā-rathīs* and guided by the great fighter Bhīṣmadeva, attempted to arrest the boy Sāmba. There are different grades of fighters, including *mahā-rathī, eka-rathī,* and *rathī,* classified according to their fighting capacity. These *mahā-rathīs* could fight alone with many thousands of men. All of them combined together to arrest Sāmba. Sāmba was also a *mahā-rathī,* but he was alone and had to fight with the six other *mahā-rathīs.* Still he was not deterred when he saw all the great fighters of the Kuru dynasty coming up behind him to arrest him.

Alone, he turned towards them and took his nice bow, posing exactly as a lion stands adamant in the face of other animals. Karṇa was leading the party, and he challenged Sāmba, "Why are you fleeing? Just stand, and we shall teach you a lesson!" When challenged by another *kṣatriya* to stand and fight, a *kṣatriya* cannot go away; he must fight. Therefore, as soon as Sāmba accepted the challenge and stood alone before them, he was overpowered by showers of arrows thrown by all the great warriors. As a

lion is never afraid of being chased by many wolves and jackals, similarly, Sāmba, the glorious son of the Yadu dynasty, endowed with inconceivable potencies as the son of Lord Kṛṣṇa, became very angry at the warriors of the Kuru dynasty for improperly using arrows against him. He fought them with great talent. First of all, he struck each of the six charioteers with six separate arrows. Another four arrows were used to kill the charioteers' horses, four on each chariot. One arrow was used to kill the driver, and one arrow was used for Karṇa as well as the other celebrated fighters. While Sāmba was so diligently fighting alone with the six great warriors, they all appreciated the inconceivable potency of the boy. Even in the midst of fighting, they admitted frankly that this boy Sāmba was wonderful. But the fighting was conducted in the *kṣatriya* spirit, so all together, although it was improper, they obliged Sāmba to get down from his chariot, now broken to pieces. Of the six warriors, four took care to kill Sāmba's four horses, and one of them managed to cut the string of Sāmba's bow so that he could no longer fight with them. In this way, with great difficulty and after a severe fight, Sāmba was left bereft of his chariot, and they were able to arrest him. Thus, the warriors of the Kuru dynasty accepted their great victory and took their daughter, Lakṣmaṇā, away from him. Thereafter, they entered the city of Hastināpura in great triumph.

The great sage Nārada immediately carried the news to the Yadu dynasty that Sāmba was arrested and told them the whole story. The members of the Yadu dynasty became very angry at Sāmba's being arrested, and improperly so by six warriors. Now, with the permission of the head of the Yadu dynasty's king, Ugrasena, they prepared to attack the capital city of the Kuru dynasty.

Although Lord Balarāma knew very well that by slight provocation people are prepared to fight with one another in the age of Kali, He did not like the idea that the two great dynasties, the Kuru dynasty and the Yadu dynasty, would fight amongst themselves, even though they were influenced by Kali-yuga. "Instead of fighting with them," He wisely thought, "let Me go there and see the situation, and let Me try to see if the fight can be settled by mutual understanding." Balarāma's idea was that if the Kuru dynasty could be induced to release Sāmba along with his wife, Lakṣmaṇā, then the fight could be avoided. He therefore immediately arranged for a nice chariot to go to Hastināpura, accompanied by learned priests and *brāhmaṇas,* as well as by some of the elderly members of the Yadu dynasty. He was confident that the members of the Kuru dynasty would agree to this marriage and avoid fighting amongst themselves. As

Lord Balarāma proceeded towards Hastināpura in this chariot, accompanied by the learned *brāhmaṇas* and the elderly members of the Yadu dynasty, He looked like the moon shining in the clear sky amongst the glittering stars. When Lord Balarāma reached the precincts of the city of Hastināpura, He did not enter, but stationed Himself in a camp outside the city in a small garden house. Then He asked Uddhava to see the leaders of the Kuru dynasty and inquire from them whether they wanted to fight with the Yadu dynasty or to make a settlement. Uddhava went to see the leaders of the Kuru dynasty, and he met all the important members, including Bhīṣmadeva, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Droṇācārya, Bali, Duryodhana and Bāhlīka. After offering them due respects, he informed them that Lord Balarāma had already arrived at the garden, outside the city door.

The leaders of the Kuru dynasty, especially Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Duryodhana, were very joyful because they knew very well that Lord Balarāma was a great well-wisher of their family. There were no bounds to their joy on hearing the news, and so immediately they welcomed Uddhava. In order to properly receive Lord Balarāma, they all took auspicious paraphernalia for His reception in their hands and went to see Him outside the city door. According to their respective positions, they welcomed Lord Balarāma by giving Him in charity nice cows and *argha* (an assortment of articles such as *ārātrika* water, sweet preparations of honey, butter, etc., and flowers, and garlands scented with pulp). Because all of them knew the exalted position of Lord Balarāma as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, they bowed their heads before the Lord with great respect. They all exchanged words of reception by asking one another of their welfare, and when such formality was finished, Lord Balarāma, in a great voice and very patiently, submitted before them the following words for their consideration. "My dear friends, this time I have come to you as a messenger with the order of the all-powerful King Ugrasena. Please, therefore, hear the order with attention and great care. Without wasting a single moment, please try to carry out the order. King Ugrasena knows very well that you warriors of the Kuru dynasty improperly fought with the pious Sāmba, who was alone, and that with great difficulty and tactics you have arrested him. We have all heard this news, but we are not very agitated because we are most intimately related to each other. I do not think we should disturb our good relationship; we should continue our friendship without any unnecessary fighting. Please, therefore, immediately release Sāmba and bring him, along with his wife, Lakṣmaṇā, before Me."

When Lord Balarāma spoke in a commanding tone full of heroic assertion, supremacy and chivalry, His statements were not appreciated by

the leaders of the Kuru dynasty. Rather, all of them became agitated, and with great anger they said: "Hello! These words are very astonishing but quite befitting the age of Kali; otherwise how could Balarāma speak so vituperatively? The language and tone used by Balarāma are simply abusive, and due to the influence of this age, it appears that the shoes befitting the feet want to rise to the top of the head where the helmet is worn. We are connected with the Yadu dynasty by marriage, and because of this they have been given the chance to come live with us, dine with us, and sleep with us; now they are taking advantage of these privileges. They had practically no position before we gave them a portion of our kingdom to rule, and now they are trying to command us. We have allowed the Yadu dynasty to use the royal insignias like the whisk, fan, conchshell, white umbrella, crown, royal throne, sitting place, bedstead, and everything befitting the royal order. They should not have used such royal paraphernalia in our presence, but we did not check them due to our family relationships. Now they have the audacity to order us to do things. Well, this is enough of their impudence! We cannot allow them to do any more of these things, nor shall we allow them to use these royal insignias. It would be best to take all these things away; it is improper to feed a snake with milk, since such merciful activities simply increase his venom. The Yadu dynasty is now trying to go against those who have fed them so nicely. Their flourishing condition is due to our gifts and merciful behavior, and still they are so shameless that they are trying to order us. How regrettable are all these activities! No one in the world can enjoy anything if the members of the Kuru dynasty like Bhīṣma, Droṇācārya and Arjuna do not allow them to. Exactly as a lamb cannot enjoy life in the presence of a lion, without our desire it is not even possible for the demigods in heaven, headed by King Indra, to find enjoyment in life, not to speak of ordinary human beings!" Actually the members of the Kuru dynasty were very puffed up due to their opulence, kingdom, aristocracy, family tradition, great warriors, family members and vast expansive empire. They did not even observe common formalities of civilized society, and in the presence of Lord Balarāma they uttered insulting words about the Yadu dynasty. Speaking in this unmannerly way, they returned to their city of Hastināpura.

Although Lord Balarāma patiently heard their insulting words and simply observed their uncivil behavior, from His appearance it was clear that He was burning with anger and was thinking of retaliating with great vengeance. His bodily features became so agitated that it was difficult for anyone to look at Him. He laughed very loudly and said: "It is true that if

a man becomes too puffed up because of his family, opulence, beauty and material advancement, he no longer wants a peaceful life but becomes belligerent toward all others. It is useless to give such a person good instruction for gentle behavior and peaceful life, but on the contrary, one should search out the ways and means to punish him." Generally, due to material opulence a man becomes exactly like an animal. To give an animal peaceful instructions is useless, and the only means is *argumentum vaculum.* In other words, the only means to keep animals in order is a stick. "Just see how impudent the members of the Kuru dynasty are! I wanted to make a peaceful settlement despite the anger of all the other members of the Yadu dynasty, including Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself. They were preparing to attack the whole kingdom of the Kuru dynasty, but I pacified them and took the trouble to come here to settle the affair without any fighting. Still these rascals behave like this! It is clear that they do not want a peaceful settlement, but that they are factually warmongers. With great pride they have repeatedly insulted Me by calling the Yadus dynasty ill names.

"Even the King of heaven, Indra, abides by the order of the Yadu dynasty; and you consider King Ugrasena, who is the head of the Bhojas, Vṛṣṇis, Andhakas and Yādavas, to be the leader of a small phalanx! Your conclusion is wonderful! You do not care for King Ugrasena, whose order is obeyed even by King Indra. Consider the exalted position of the Yadu dynasty. They have forcibly used both the assembly house and the *pārijāta* tree of the heavenly planet, and still you think that they cannot order you. Don't you even think that Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, can sit on the exalted royal throne and command everyone? All right! If your thinking is like that, then you deserve to be taught a very good lesson. You have thought it wise that the royal insignias like the whisk, fan, white umbrella, royal throne and other princely paraphernalia not be used by the Yadu dynasty. Does this mean that even Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of the whole creation and the husband of the goddess of fortune, cannot use this royal paraphernalia? The dust of Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet is worshiped by all the great demigods. The Ganges water is inundating the whole world, and since it is emanating from His lotus feet, its banks have turned into great places of pilgrimage. The principal deities of all planets are engaged in His service, and they consider themselves most fortunate to take the dust of the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa on their helmets. Great demigods like Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva, and even the goddess of fortune and I are simply plenary parts of His spiritual identity, and still you think that He is not fit to use the royal insignia or even sit on the royal throne? Alas,

how regrettable it is that these fools consider us, the members of the Yadu dynasty, to be like shoes and themselves like helmets. It is clear now that these leaders of the Kuru dynasty have become mad over their worldly possessions and opulence. Every statement they made was full of crazy proposals. I should immediately take them to task and bring them to their senses. If I do not take steps against them, it will be improper on My part. Therefore, on this very day, I shall rid the whole world of any trace of the Kuru dynasty. I shall finish them off immediately!" While talking like this, Lord Balarāma seemed so furious that He looked as if He could burn the whole cosmic creation to ashes. He stood up steadily, and taking His plow in His hand, began striking the earth with it. In this way the whole city of Hastināpura was separated from the earth. Lord Balarāma then began to drag the city toward the flowing water of the river Ganges. Because of this, there was a great tremor throughout Hastināpura, as if there had been an earthquake, and it seemed that the whole city would be dismantled.

When all the members of the Kuru dynasty saw that their city was about to fall into the water of the Ganges and when they heard their citizens howling in great anxiety, they immediately came to their senses and understood what was happening. Thus without waiting another second they brought forward their daughter Lakṣmaṇā. They also brought Sāmba, who had forcibly tried to take her away, keeping him in the forefront with Lakṣmaṇā at his back. All the members of the Kuru dynasty appeared before Lord Balarāma with folded hands just to beg the pardon of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Now using good sense, they said: "O Lord Balarāma, You are the reservoir of all pleasures. You are the maintainer and support of the entire cosmic situation. Unfortunately we were all unaware of Your inconceivable potencies. Dear Lord, please consider us most foolish. Our intelligence was bewildered and not in order. Therefore we have come before You to beg Your pardon. Please excuse us. You are the original creator, sustainer and annihilator of the whole cosmic manifestation, and still Your position is always transcendental. O all-powerful Lord, great sages speak about You. You are the original puppeteer, and everything in the world is just like Your toys. O unlimited one, You have a hold on everything, and like child's play You hold all the planetary systems on Your head. When the time for dissolution comes, You close up the whole cosmic manifestation within Yourself. At that time nothing remains but Yourself lying in the Causal Ocean as Mahā-Viṣṇu. Our dear Lord, You have appeared on this earth in Your transcendental body just for the maintenance of the cosmic situation. You are above all anger, envy and enmity. Whatever You do, even in the form of chastisement, is

auspicious for the whole material existence. We are offering our respectful obeisances unto You because You are the imperishable Supreme Personality of Godhead, the reservoir of all opulences and potencies. O creator of innumerable universes, let us fall down and offer You our respectful obeisances, again and again. We are now completely surrendered unto You. Please, therefore, be merciful upon us and give us Your protection." When the prominent members of the Kuru dynasty, beginning with grandfather Bhīṣmadeva down to Arjuna and Duryodhana, had offered their respectful prayers in that way, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Balarāma, immediately became softened and assured them there was no cause for fear and that they need not worry.

For the most part it was the practice of the *kṣatriya* kings to inaugurate some kind of fighting between the parties of the bride and bridegroom before the marriage. When Sāmba forcibly took away Lakṣmaṇā, the elderly members of the Kuru dynasty were pleased to see that he was actually the suitable match for her. In order to see his personal strength, however, they fought with him, and without any respect for the regulations of fighting, they all arrested him. When the Yadu dynasty decided to release Sāmba from the confinement of the Kurus, Lord Balarāma came personally to settle the matter, and as a powerful *kṣatriya,* He ordered them to free Sāmba immediately. The Kauravas became superficially insulted by this order, so they challenged Lord Balarāma's power. They simply wanted to see Him exhibit His inconceivable strength. Thus with great pleasure they handed over their daughter to Sāmba, and the whole matter was settled. Duryodhana, being affectionate towards his daughter Lakṣmaṇā, had her married to Sāmba in great pomp. For her dowry, he first gave 1,200 elephants, each of which were at least sixty years old; then he gave 10,000 nice horses, 6,000 chariots, which were dazzling just like the sunshine, and 1,000 maidservants who were decorated with golden ornaments. Lord Balarāma, the most prominent member of the Yadu dynasty, acted as guardian of the bridegroom Sāmba and very pleasingly accepted the dowry. Balarāma was very satisfied after His great reception from the side of the Kurus, and accompanied by the newly married couple, He started towards His capital city of Dvārakā.

Lord Balarāma triumphantly reached Dvārakā, where He met with many citizens who were all His devotees and friends. When they all assembled, Lord Balarāma narrated the whole story of the marriage, and they were astonished to hear how Balarāma had made the city of Hastināpura tremble. It is confirmed by Śukadeva Gosvāmī that the site of Hastināpura is now known as New Delhi, and the river flowing through the city is called

the Yamunā, although in those days it was known as the Ganges. From authorities like Jīva Gosvāmī it is also confirmed that the Ganges and Yamunā are the same river flowing in different courses. The part of the Ganges which flows through Hastināpura to the area of Vṛndāvana is called the Yamunā because it is sanctified by the transcendental pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa. The part of Hastināpura which slopes towards the Yamunā becomes inundated during the rainy season and reminds everyone of Lord Balarāma's threatening to cast the city into the Ganges.

Thus ends the Bhaktivedanta purport of the Second Volume, Thirteenth Chapter, of Kṛṣṇa, *"The Marriage of Sāmba."*



14 / The Great Sage Nārada Visits the Different Homes of Lord Kṛṣṇa

The great sage Nārada heard that Lord Kṛṣṇa had married 16,000 wives after He had killed the demon Narakāsura, sometimes called Bhaumāsura. Nārada became astonished that Lord Kṛṣṇa had expanded Himself into 16,000 forms and married these wives simultaneously in different palaces. Being inquisitive as to how Kṛṣṇa was managing His household affairs with so many wives, Nārada desired to see these pastimes and so set out to visit Kṛṣṇa's different homes. When Nārada arrived in Dvārakā, he saw that the gardens and parks were full of various flowers of different colors and orchards that were overloaded with a variety of fruits. Beautiful birds were chirping, and peacocks were delightfully crowing. There were tanks and ponds full of blue and red lotus flowers, and some of these sites were filled with varieties of lilies. The lakes were full of nice swans and cranes whose voices resounded everywhere. In the city there were as many as 900,000 great palaces built of first-class marble with gates and doors made of silver. The posts of the houses and palaces were bedecked with jewels such as touchstone, sapphires and emeralds, and the floors gave off a beautiful luster. The highways, lanes, streets, crossings and marketplaces were all beautifully decorated. The whole city was full of residential homes, assembly houses, and temples, all of different architectural beauty. All of this made Dvārakā a glowing city. The big avenues, crossings, lanes, streets, and also the thresholds of every residential house, were very clean. On both sides of every path there were bushes, and at regular intervals there were large trees that shaded the avenues so that the sunshine would not bother the passersby.

In this greatly beautiful city of Dvārakā, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, had many residential quarters. The great kings and princes of the world used to visit these palaces just to worship Him. The architectural plans were made personally by Viśvakarmā, the engineer

of the demigods, and in the construction of the palaces he exhibited all of his talents and ingenuity. These residential quarters numbered more than 16,000, and a different queen of Lord Kṛṣṇa resided in each of them. The great sage Nārada entered one of these houses and saw that the pillars were made of coral and the ceilings were bedecked with jewels. The walls as well as the arches between the pillars glowed from the decorations of different kinds of sapphires. Throughout the palace there were many canopies made by Viśvakarmā that were decorated with strings of pearls. The chairs and other furniture were made of ivory, bedecked with gold and diamonds, and jeweled lamps dissipated the darkness within the palace. There was so much incense and flavored gum burning that the scented fumes were coming out of the windows. The peacocks sitting on the steps became illusioned by the fumes, mistaking them for clouds, and began dancing jubilantly. There were many maidservants, all of whom were decorated with gold necklaces, bangles and beautiful saris. There were also many male servants, who were nicely dressed in cloaks and turbans and jeweled earrings. Beautiful as they were, the servants were all engaged in different household duties.

Nārada saw that Lord Kṛṣṇa was sitting with Rukmiṇīdevī, the mistress of that particular palace, who was bearing the rod of a *cāmara* whisk. Even though there were many thousands of maidservants who were equally beautiful and qualified, and who were of the same age, Rukmiṇīdevī personally was engaged in fanning Lord Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, worshiped even by Nārada, but still, as soon as He saw Nārada enter the palace, Kṛṣṇa got down immediately from Rukmiṇī's bedstead and stood up to honor him. Lord Kṛṣṇa is the teacher of the whole world, and in order to instruct everyone how to respect a saintly person like Nārada Muni, Kṛṣṇa bowed down, touching His helmet to the ground. Not only did Kṛṣṇa bow down, but He also touched the feet of Nārada and with folded hands requested him to sit on His chair. Lord Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality worshiped by all devotees. He is the most worshiped spiritual master of everyone. The Ganges water which emanates from His feet sanctifies the three worlds. All qualified *brāhmaṇas* worship Him, and therefore He is called *brahmaṇya-deva.*

Brahmaṇya means one who fully possesses the brahminical qualifications, which are said to be as follows: truthfulness, self-control, purity, mastery of the senses, simplicity, full knowledge by practical application, and engagement in devotional service. Lord Kṛṣṇa personally possesses all these qualities, and He is worshiped by persons who themselves possess such qualities. There are thousands and millions of names of Lord Kṛṣṇa—

Viṣṇu-sahasra-nāma—and all of them are given to Him because of His transcendental qualities.

Lord Kṛṣṇa in Dvārakā enjoyed the pastimes of a perfect human being. When, therefore, He washed the feet of the sage Nārada and took the water on His head, Nārada did not object, knowing well that the Lord did so to teach everyone how to respect saintly persons. The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, who is the original Nārāyaṇa and eternal friend of all living entities, thus worshiped the sage Nārada according to Vedic regulative principles. Welcoming him with sweet nectarean words, He addressed Nārada as *bhagavān,* or one who is self-sufficient, possessing all kinds of knowledge, renunciation, strength, fame, beauty, and similar other opulences. He particularly asked Nārada, "What can I do in your service?"

Nārada replied, "My dear Lord, this kind of behavior by Your Lordship is not at all astonishing because You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead and master of all species of living entities. You are the supreme friend of all living entities, but at the same time You are the supreme chastiser of the miscreants and the envious. I know that Your Lordship has descended on this earth for the proper maintenance of the whole universe. Your appearance, therefore, is not forced by any other agency. By Your sweet will only, You agree to appear and disappear. It is my great fortune that I have been able to see Your lotus feet today. Anyone who becomes attached to Your lotus feet is elevated to the supreme position of neutrality and is uncontaminated by the material modes of nature. My Lord, You are unlimited; there is no limit to Your opulences. Great demigods like Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva are always busy placing You within their hearts and meditating upon You. The conditioned souls who have now been put into the blind well of material existence can get out of this eternal captivity only by accepting Your lotus feet. Thus, You are the only shelter of all conditioned souls. My dear Lord, You have very kindly asked what You can do for me. In answer to this I simply request that I may not forget Your lotus feet at any time. I do not care where I may be, but I pray that I may be allowed to constantly remember Your lotus feet."

The benediction which the sage Nārada asked from the Lord is the ideal prayer of all pure devotees. A pure devotee never asks for any kind of material or spiritual benediction from the Lord, but his only prayer is that he may not forget the lotus feet of the Lord in any condition of life. A pure devotee does not care whether he is put in heaven or hell; he is satisfied anywhere, provided he can constantly remember the lotus feet of the Lord. Lord Caitanya also taught this same process of prayer in His

Śikṣāṣṭaka, in which He clearly stated that all He wanted was devotional service, birth after birth. A pure devotee does not even want to stop the repetition of birth and death. To a pure devotee, it does not matter whether he has to take birth again in the various species of life. His only ambition is that he may not forget the lotus feet of the Lord in any condition of life.

After departing from the palace of Rukmiṇī, Nāradajī wanted to see the activities of Lord Kṛṣṇa's internal potency, *yogamāyā;* thus he entered the palace of another queen. There he saw Lord Kṛṣṇa engaged in playing chess, along with His dear wife and Uddhava. The Lord immediately got up from His seat and invited Nārada Muni to sit on His personal seat. The Lord again worshiped him with as much paraphernalia for reception as He had in the palace of Rukmiṇī. After worshiping him properly, Lord Kṛṣṇa acted as if He did not know what had happened in the palace of Rukmiṇī. He therefore told Nārada, "My dear sage, when your holiness comes here, you are full in yourself. Although we are householders and are always in need, you don't require anyone's help because you are self-satisfied. Under the circumstances, what reception can we offer you, and what can we possibly give you? Yet, since your holiness is a *brāhmaṇa,* it is our duty to offer you something as far as possible. Therefore, I beg your pleasure to order Me. What can I do for you?"

Nāradajī knew everything about the pastimes of the Lord, so without any further discussion, he simply left the palace silently, in great astonishment over the Lord's activities. He then entered another palace. This time Nāradajī saw that Lord Kṛṣṇa was engaged as an affectionate father petting His small children. From there he entered another palace and saw Lord Kṛṣṇa preparing to take His bath. In this way, Saint Nārada entered each and every one of the sixteen thousand residential palaces of the queens of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and in each of them he found Kṛṣṇa engaged in different ways.

In one place he found Kṛṣṇa engaged in offering oblations to the sacrificial fire and performing the ritualistic ceremonies of the *Vedas* as enjoined for householders. In another palace, Kṛṣṇa was found performing the *pañca-yajña* sacrifice, which is compulsory for a householder. This *yajña* is also known as *pañca-śūna.* Knowingly or unknowingly, everyone, specifically the householder, is committing five kinds of sinful activities. When we receive water from a water pitcher, we kill many germs that are in it. Similarly, when we use a grinding machine or take foodstuff, we kill many germs. When sweeping a floor or igniting a fire we kill many germs, and when we walk on the street we kill many ants and other insects.

Consciously or unconsciously, in all our different activities, we are killing. Therefore, it is incumbent upon every householder to perform the *pañca-śūna* sacrifice to rid himself of the reactions to such sinful activities.

In one palace Lord Kṛṣṇa was found engaged in feeding *brāhmaṇas* after performing ritualistic *yajñas.* In another palace, Nārada found Kṛṣṇa engaged in silently chanting the Gāyatrī *mantra,* and in a third he found Him practicing fighting with a sword and shield. In some palaces Lord Kṛṣṇa was found riding on horses or elephants or chariots and wandering hither and thither. Elsewhere He was found lying down on His bedstead taking rest, and somewhere else He was found sitting in His chair, being praised by the prayers of His different devotees. In some of the palaces He was found consulting with ministers like Uddhava and others on important matters of business. In one palace He was found surrounded by many young society girls, enjoying in a swimming pool. In another palace He was found engaged in giving well-decorated cows in charity to the *brāhmaṇas,* and in another palace He was found hearing the narrations of the *Purāṇas* or histories, such as the *Mahābhārata,* which are supplementary literatures for disseminating Vedic knowledge to common people by narrating important instances in the history of the universe. Somewhere Lord Kṛṣṇa was found enjoying the company of a particular wife by exchanging joking words with her. Somewhere else He was found engaged along with His wife in religious ritualistic functions. Since it is necessary for householders to increase their financial assets for various expenditures, Kṛṣṇa was found somewhere engaged in matters of economic development. Somewhere else He was found enjoying family life according to the regulative principles of the *śāstras.*

In one palace He was found sitting in meditation as if He were concentrating His mind on the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is beyond these material universes. Meditation, as recommended in authorized scripture, is meant for concentrating one's mind on the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Viṣṇu. Lord Kṛṣṇa is Himself the original Viṣṇu, but because He played the part of a human being, He taught us definitely by His personal behavior what is meant by meditation. Somewhere Lord Kṛṣṇa was found satisfying elderly superiors by supplying them things which they needed. Somewhere else Nāradajī found that Lord Kṛṣṇa was engaged in discussing topics of fighting, and somewhere else in making peace with enemies. Somewhere Lord Kṛṣṇa was found discussing the ultimate auspicious activity for the entire human society with His elder brother Lord Balarāma. Nārada saw Lord Kṛṣṇa engaged in getting His sons and daughters married with suitable brides and bridegrooms in due course of time, and the marriage ceremonies were being performed with great pomp.

In one palace He was found bidding farewell to His daughters, and in another He was found receiving a daughter-in-law. People throughout the whole city were astonished to see such pomp and ceremonies.

Somewhere the Lord was seen engaged in performing different types of sacrifices to satisfy the demigods, who are only His qualitative expansions. Somewhere He was seen engaged in public welfare activities, establishing deep wells for water supply, rest houses and gardens for unknown guests, and great monastaries and temples for saintly persons. These are some of the duties enjoined in the *Vedas* for householders for fulfillment of their material desires. Somewhere Kṛṣṇa was found as a *kṣatriya* king engaged in hunting animals in the forest and riding on very beautiful *sindhi* horses. According to Vedic regulations, the *kṣatriyas* were allowed to kill prescribed animals on certain occasions, either to maintain peace in the forests or to offer the animals in the sacrificial fire. *Kṣatriyas* are allowed to practice this killing art because they have to kill their enemies mercilessly to maintain peace in society. In one situation the great sage Nārada saw Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead and master of mystic powers, acting as a spy by changing His usual dress in order to understand the motives of different citizens in the city and within the palaces.

Saint Nārada saw all these activities of the Lord, who is the Supersoul of all living entities but who played the role of an ordinary human being in order to manifest the activities of His internal potency. He was smiling within himself and began to address the Lord as follows: "My dear Lord of all mystic powers, object of the meditation of great mystics, the extent of Your mystic power is certainly inconceivable, even to mystics like Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva. But by Your mercy, because of my being always engaged in the transcendental loving service of Your lotus feet, Your Lordship has very kindly revealed to me the actions of Your internal potency. My dear Lord, You are worshipable by all, and demigods and predominating deities of all fourteen planetary systems are completely aware of Your transcendental fame. Now please give me Your blessings so that I may be able to travel all over the universes singing the glories of Your transcendental activities."

The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Kṛṣṇa, replied to Nārada as follows: "My dear Nārada, O sage among the demigods, you know that I am the supreme instructor and perfect follower of all religious principles, as well as the supreme enforcer of such principles. I am therefore personally executing such religious principles in order to teach the whole world how to act. My dear son, it is My desire that you not be bewildered by such demonstrations of My internal energy."

The Supreme Personality of Godhead was engaged in His so-called household affairs in order to teach people how one can sanctify one's household life although he may be attached to the imprisonment of material existence. Actually, one is obliged to continue the term of material existence because of household life. But the Lord, being very kind upon householders, demonstrated the path of sanctifying ordinary household life. Because Kṛṣṇa is the center of all activities, a Kṛṣṇa conscious householder's life is transcendental to Vedic injunctions and is automatically sanctified.

Thus Nārada saw one single Kṛṣṇa living in sixteen thousand palaces by His plenary expansions. Due to His inconceivable energy, He was visible in each and every individual queen's palace. Lord Kṛṣṇa has unlimited power, and Nārada's astonishment was boundless upon observing again and again the demonstration of Lord Kṛṣṇa's internal energy. Lord Kṛṣṇa behaved by His personal example as if He were very much attached to the four principles of civilized life, namely religiousness, economic development, sense gratification and salvation. These four principles of material existence are necessary for the spiritual advancement of human society, and although Lord Kṛṣṇa had no need to do so, He exhibited His household activities so that people might follow in His footsteps for their own interest. Lord Kṛṣṇa satisfied the sage Nārada in every way. Nārada was very much pleased by seeing the Lord's activities in Dvārakā, and thus he departed.

In narrating the activities of Lord Kṛṣṇa in Dvārakā, Śukadeva Gosvāmī explained to King Parīkṣit how Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, descends on this material universe by the agency of His internal potency and personally exhibits the principles which, if followed, can lead one to achieve the ultimate goal of life. All the queens in Dvārakā, more than sixteen thousand in number, engaged their feminine attractive features in the transcendental service of the Lord by smiling and serving, and the Lord was pleased to behave with them exactly as a perfect husband enjoying household life. One should know definitely that such pastimes cannot be performed by anyone but Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the original cause of the creation, maintenance and dissolution of the whole cosmic manifestation. Anyone who attentively hears the narrations of the Lord's pastimes in Dvārakā or supports a preacher of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement will certainly find it very easy to traverse the path of liberation and taste the nectar of the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa. And thus he will be engaged in His devotional service.

Thus ends the Bhaktivedanta purport of the Second Volume, Fourteenth Chapter, of Kṛṣṇa, *"The Great Sage Nārada Visits the Different Homes of Lord Kṛṣṇa."*



15 / Lord Kṛṣṇa's Daily Activities

From the Vedic *mantras* we learn that the Supreme Personality of Godhead has nothing to do: *na tasya karyaṁ kranaṁ ca vidyate.* If the Supreme Lord has nothing to do, then how can we speak of the activities of the Supreme Lord? From the previous chapter it is clear that no one can act in the way that Lord Kṛṣṇa does. We should clearly note this fact: the activities of the Lord should be followed, but they cannot be imitated. For example, Kṛṣṇa's ideal life as a householder can be followed, but if one wants to imitate Kṛṣṇa by expanding into many forms, that is not possible. We should always remember, therefore, that Lord Kṛṣṇa, although playing the part of a human being, nevertheless simultaneously maintains the position of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. We can follow Lord Kṛṣṇa's dealing with His wives as an ordinary human being, but His dealing with more than sixteen thousand wives at one time cannot be imitated. The conclusion is that to become ideal householders we should follow in the footsteps of Lord Kṛṣṇa as He displayed His daily activities, but we cannot imitate Him at any stage of our life.

Lord Kṛṣṇa used to lie down with His sixteen thousand wives, but also He would rise up from bed very early in the morning, three hours before sunrise. By nature's arrangement the crowing of the cocks warns of the *brāhma-muhūrta* hour. There is no need of alarm clocks; as soon as the cocks crow early in the morning, it is to be understood that it is time to rise from bed. Hearing that sound, Kṛṣṇa would get up from bed, but His rising early was not very much to the liking of His wives. The wives of Kṛṣṇa were so much attached to Him that they would lie in bed embracing Him, but as soon as the cocks crowed, Kṛṣṇa's wives would be very sorry and would immediately condemn the crowing.

In the garden within the compound of each palace there were *pārijāta* flowers. *Pārijāta* is not an artificial flower. We remember that Kṛṣṇa

brought the *pārijāta* trees from heaven and implanted them in all His palaces. Early in the morning, a mild breeze would carry the aroma of the *pārijāta* flower, and Kṛṣṇa would smell it just after rising from bed. Due to this aroma, the honeybees would begin their humming vibration, and the birds also would begin their sweet chirping sounds. All together it would sound like the singing of professional chanters engaged in offering prayers to Kṛṣṇa. Although Śrīmatī Rukmiṇīdevī, the first queen of Lord Kṛṣṇa, knew that *brāhma-muhūrta* is the most auspicious time in the entire day, she would feel disgusted at the appearance of *brāhma-muhūrta* because she was not very happy to have Kṛṣṇa leave her side in bed. Despite Śrīmatī Rukmiṇīdevī's disgust, Lord Kṛṣṇa would immediately get up from bed exactly on the appearance of *brāhma-muhūrta.* An ideal householder should learn from the behavior of Lord Kṛṣṇa how to rise early in the morning, however comfortably he may be lying in bed embraced by his wife.

After rising from bed, Lord Kṛṣṇa would wash His mouth, hands and feet and would immediately sit down and meditate on Himself. This does not mean, however, that we should also sit down and meditate on ourselves. We have to meditate upon Kṛṣṇa, Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. That is real meditation, Kṛṣṇa is Kṛṣṇa Himself; therefore He was teaching us that *brāhma-muhūrta* should be utilized for meditation on Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. By doing so, Kṛṣṇa would feel very much satisfied, and similarly we will also feel transcendentally pleased and satisfied if we utilize the *brāhma-muhūrta* period to meditate on Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa and if we think of how Śrī Rukmiṇīdevī and Kṛṣṇa acted as ideal householders to teach the whole human society to rise early in the morning and immediately engage in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. There is no difference between meditating on the eternal forms of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and chanting the *mahāmantra,* Hare Kṛṣṇa. As for Kṛṣṇa's meditation, He had no alternative but to meditate on Himself. The object of meditation is Brahman, Paramātmā or the Supreme Personality of Godhead, but Kṛṣṇa Himself is all three: He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Bhagavān; the localized Paramātmā is His plenary parcel expansion; and the all-pervading Brahman effulgence is the personal rays of His transcendental body. Therefore Kṛṣṇa is always one, and for Him there is no differentiation. That is the difference between an ordinary living being and Kṛṣṇa. For an ordinary living being there are many distinctions. An ordinary living being is different from his body, and he is different from other species of living entities. A human being is different from other human beings and different from the animals. Even in his own body, there are different bodily limbs. We have our hands and legs, but our hands are

different from our legs. The hand cannot act like the leg, nor can the leg act like the hand. The eyes cannot hear like the ears, nor can the ears see like the eyes. All these differences are technically called *svajtiya vijtiya.*

The bodily limitation whereby one part of the body cannot act as another part is totally absent in the Supreme Personality of Godhead. There is no difference between His body and Himself. He is completely spiritual, and therefore there is no material difference between His body and His soul. Similarly, He is not different from His millions of incarnations and plenary expansions. Baladeva is the first expansion of Kṛṣṇa, and from Baladeva expand Saṅkarṣaṇa, Vāsudeva, Pradyumna and Aniruddha. From Saṅkarṣaṇa there is again an expansion of Nārāyaṇa, and from Nārāyaṇa there is a second quadruple expansion of Saṅkarṣaṇa, Vāsudeva, Pradyumna and Aniruddha. Similarly there are innumerable expansions of Kṛṣṇa, but all of them are one. Kṛṣṇa has many incarnations, such as Lord Nṛsiṁha, Lord Boar, Lord Fish and Lord Tortoise, but there is no difference between Kṛṣṇa's original two-handed form, like that of a human being, and these incarnations of gigantic animal forms. Nor is there any difference between the action of one part of His body and that of another. His hands can act as His legs, His eyes can act as His ears, or His nose can act as another part of His body. Kṛṣṇa's smelling and eating and hearing are all the same. We limited living entities have to use a particular part of our body for a particular purpose, but there is no such distinction for Kṛṣṇa. In the *Brahma-saṁhitā* it is said, *aṅgāni yasya sakalendriya-vṛtti*: He can perform the activities of one limb with any other limb. So by analytical study of Kṛṣṇa and His person, it is concluded that He is the complete whole. When He meditates, therefore, He meditates on Himself. The self-meditation by ordinary men, designated in Sanskrit as *so'ham,* is simply imitation. Kṛṣṇa may meditate on Himself because He is the complete whole, but we cannot imitate Him and meditate on ourselves. Our body is a designation; Kṛṣṇa's body is not a designation. Kṛṣṇa's body is also Kṛṣṇa. There is no existence of anything foreign in Kṛṣṇa. Whatever there is in Kṛṣṇa is also Kṛṣṇa. He is therefore the supreme, indestructible complete existence, or the supreme truth.

Kṛṣṇa's existence is not relative existence. Everything else but Kṛṣṇa is a relative truth, but Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Absolute Truth. Kṛṣṇa does not depend on anything but Himself for His existence. Our existence, however is relative. For example, only when there is the light of the sun, the moon or electricity are we able to see. Our seeing, therefore, is relative, and the light of the sun and moon and electricity is also relative; they are called illuminating only because we see them as such. Dependence and relativity

do not exist in Kṛṣṇa. His activities are not dependent on anyone else's appreciation, nor does He depend on anyone else's help. He is beyond the existence of limited time and space, and because He is transcendental to time and space, He cannot be covered by the illusion of *māyā,* whose activities are limited. In the Vedic literature we find that the Supreme Personality of Godhead has multi-potencies. Since all such potencies are emanations from Him, there is no difference between Him and His potencies. Certain philosophers say, however, that when Kṛṣṇa comes He accepts a material body. But even if it is accepted that when He comes to the material world He accepts a material body, it should be concluded also that because the material energy is not different from Him, this body does not act materially. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* it is said, therefore, that He appears by His own internal potency, *ātma-māyā.*

Kṛṣṇa is called the Supreme Brahman because He is the cause of creation, the cause of maintenance and the cause of dissolution. Lord Brahmā, Lord Viṣṇu and Lord Śiva are different expansions of these material qualities. All these material qualities can act upon the conditioned souls, but there is no such action and reaction upon Kṛṣṇa because these qualities are all simultaneously one and different from Him. Kṛṣṇa Himself is simply *sac-cid-ānanda-vigraha,* the eternal form of bliss and knowledge, and because of His inconceivable greatness, He is called the Supreme Brahman. His meditation on Brahman or Paramātmā or Bhagavān is on Himself only and not on anything else beyond Himself. This meditation cannot be imitated by the ordinary living entity.

After His meditation, the Lord would regularly bathe early in the morning with clear sanctified water. Then He would change into fresh clothing, cover Himself with a wrapper and then engage Himself in His daily religious functions. Out of His many religious duties, the first was to offer oblations into the sacrificial fire and silently chant the Gāyatrī *mantra.* Lord Kṛṣṇa, as the ideal householder, executed all the religious functions of a householder without deviation. When the sunrise became visible, the Lord would offer specific prayers to the sun-god. The sun-god and other demigods mentioned in the Vedic scriptures are described as different limbs of the body of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and it is the duty of the householder to offer respects to the demigods and great sages, as well as the forefathers.

As it is said in the *Bhagavad-gītā,* The Lord has no specific duty to perform in this world, and yet He acts just like an ordinary man living an ideal life within this material world. In accordance with Vedic ritualistic principles, the Lord would offer respects to the demigods. The regulative principle by which the demigods and forefathers are worshiped is called

tarpaṇa, which means pleasing. One's forefathers might have to take a body on another planet, but by performance of this *tarpaṇa* system, they become very happy wherever they may be. It is the duty of the householder to make his family members happy, and by following this *tarpaṇa* system he can make his forefathers happy also. As the perfect exemplary householder, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa followed this *tarpaṇa* system and offered respectful obeisances to the elderly superior members of His family.

His next duty was to give cows in charity to the *brāhmaṇas.* Lord Kṛṣṇa used to give as many as 13,084 cows. Each of them was decorated with a silken cover and pearl necklace, their horns were covered with gold plating, and their hooves were silver-plated. All of them were full of milk, due to having their first-born calves with them, and they were very tame and peaceful. When the cows were given in charity to the *brāhmaṇas*, the *brāhmaṇas* also were given nice silken garments, and each was given a deerskin and sufficient quantity of sesame grains. The Lord is generally known as *go-brāhmaṇa-hitāya ca,* which means that His first duty is to see to the welfare of the cows and the *brāhmaṇas.* Thus He used to give cows in charity to the *brāhmaṇas,* with opulent decorations and paraphernalia. Then, wishing for the welfare of all living entities, He would touch auspicious articles such as milk, fire, honey, ghee (clarified butter), gold, jewels and fire. Although the Lord is by nature very beautiful due to the perfect figure of His transcendental body, still He would dress Himself in yellow colored garments and put on His necklace of Kaustubha jewels. He would wear flower garlands, smear His body with the pulp of sandalwood and decorate Himself with other similar cosmetics and ornaments. It is said that the ornaments themselves became beautiful upon being placed on the transcendental body of the Lord. After decorating Himself in this way, the Lord would then look at marble statues of the cow and calf and visit temples of God or demigods like Lord Śiva. There were many *brāhmaṇas* who would come daily to see the Supreme Lord before taking their breakfast; they were anxious to see Him, and He welcomed them.

His next duty was to please all kinds of men belonging to the different castes, both in the city and within the palace compound. He made them happy by fulfilling their different desires, and when the Lord saw them happy He also became very much pleased. The flower garlands, betel nuts, sandalwood pulp and other fragrant cosmetic articles which were offered to the Lord would be distributed by Him, first to the *brāhmaṇas* and elderly members of the family, then to the queens, then to the ministers, and if there were still some balance He would utilize it for His own personal use. By the time the Lord finished all these daily duties and activities,

His charioteer Dāruka would come with His wonderful chariot to stand before the Lord with folded hands, intimating that the chariot was ready, and the Lord would come out of the palace to travel. Then the Lord, accompanied by Uddhava and Sātyaki, would ride on the chariot just as the sun-god rides on his chariot in the morning, appearing with his blazing rays on the surface of the world. When the Lord was about to leave His palaces, all the queens would look at Him with feminine gestures. The Lord would respond to their greetings with smiles, attracting their hearts so much so that they would feel intense separation from the Lord.

Then the Lord would go to the assembly house known as Sudharmā. It may be remembered that the Sudharmā assembly house was taken away from the heavenly planet and was reestablished in the city of Dvārakā. The specific significance of the assembly house was that anyone who entered it would be freed from the six kinds of material pangs, namely hunger, thirst, lamentation, illusion, old age and death. These are the webs of material existence, and as long as one remained in that assembly house of Sudharmā he would not be infected by these six material webs. The Lord would say good-bye in all the sixteen thousand palaces, and again He would become one and enter the Sudharmā assembly house in procession with other members of the Yadu dynasty. After entering the assembly house, He used to sit on the exalted royal throne and would be seen to emanate glaring rays of transcendental effulgence. In the midst of all the great heroes of the Yadu dynasty, Kṛṣṇa resembled the full moon in the sky, surrounded by multi-luminaries. In the assembly house there were professional jokers, dancers, musicians and ballet girls, and as soon as the Lord sat on His throne, they would begin their respective functions in order to please the Lord and put Him in a happy mood. First of all the jokers would talk in such a way that the Lord and His associates would enjoy their humor which would refresh the morning mood. The dramatic actors would then play their parts, and the dancing ballet girls would separately display their artistic movements. All these functions would be accompanied by the beating of *mṛdaṅga* drums and the sounds of the *vīṇā* and flutes and bells, followed by the sound of the *pākhvaj,* another type of drum. Along with these musical vibrations, the auspicious sound of the conchshell would also be added. The professional singers called *sūtas* and *māgadhas* would sing, and others would perform their dancing art. In this way, as devotees, they would offer respectful prayers to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Sometimes the learned *brāhmaṇas* present in that assembly would chant Vedic hymns and explain them to the audience to their best knowledge, and sometimes some of them would

recite old historical accounts of the activities of prominent kings. The Lord, accompanied by His associates, would be very much pleased to hear them.

Once upon a time, a person arrived at the gateway of the assembly house who was unknown to all the members of the assembly, and with the permission of Lord Kṛṣṇa he was admitted into the assembly by the doorkeeper. The doorkeeper was ordered to present him before the Lord, and the man appeared and offered his respectful obeisances unto the Lord with folded hands. It had happened that when King Jarāsandha conquered all other kingdoms many kings did not bow their heads before Jarāsandha, and as a result of this all of them, numbering twenty thousand, were arrested and made his prisoners. The man who was brought before Lord Kṛṣṇa by the doorkeeper was a representative messenger from all these imprisoned kings. Being duly presented before the Lord, the man began to explain the actual situation as follows:

"My dear Lord, You are the eternal form of transcendental bliss and knowledge. As such, You are beyond the reach of the mental speculation or vocal description of any materialistic man within this world. A slight portion of Your glories can be known by persons who are fully surrendered unto Your lotus feet, and by Your grace only such persons become freed from all material anxieties. My dear Lord, I am not one of these surrendered souls; I am still within the duality and illusion of this material existence. I have therefore come to take shelter of Your lotus feet, for I am afraid of the cycle of birth and death. My dear Lord, I think that there are many living entities like me who are eternally entangled in fruitive activities and their resultant reactions. They are never inclined to follow Your instructions by performance of devotional service, although it is pleasing to the heart and most auspicious for one's existence. On the contrary, they are against the path of Kṛṣṇa conscious life, and they are wandering within the three worlds impelled by the illusory energy of material existence.

"My dear Lord, who can estimate Your mercy and Your powerful activities? You are present always as the insurmountable force of eternal time, engaged in baffling the indefatigable desires of the materialists, who are thus repeatedly becoming confused and frustrated. I therefore offer my respectful obeisances unto You in Your form of eternal time. My dear Lord, You are the proprietor of all the worlds, and You have incarnated Yourself along with Your plenary expansion Lord Balarāma. It is said that Your appearance in this incarnation is for the purpose of protecting the faithful and destroying the miscreants. Under the circumstances, how is it possible that miscreants like Jarāsandha can put us into

such deplorable conditions of life against Your authority? We are puzzled at the situation and cannot understand how it is possible. It may be that Jarāsandha has been deputed to give us such trouble because of our past misdeeds, but we have heard from revealed scriptures that anyone who surrenders unto Your lotus feet immediately becomes immuned to the reactions of sinful life. I have therefore been deputed by all the imprisoned kings to whole-heartedly offer ourselves unto Your shelter, and we hope that Your Lordship will now give us full protection. We have now come to the real conclusion of our lives. Our kingly positions are nothing but the reward of our past pious activities, just as our suffering imprisonment by Jarāsandha is the result of our past impious activities. We realize now that the resultant reactions of both pious and impious activities are temporary and that we can never be happy in this conditioned life. This material body is awarded to us by the modes of material nature, and on account of this we are full of anxieties. The material condition of life simply involves bearing the burden of this dead body. As a result of fruitive activities we have thus been subjected to being beasts of burden for these bodies, and being forced by conditional life, we have given up the pleasing life of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Now we realize that we are the most foolish persons. We have been entangled in the network of material reaction due to our ignorance. We have therefore come to the shelter of Your lotus feet, which can immediately eradicate all the results of fruitive action and thus free us from the contamination of material pains and pleasures.

Dear Lord, because we are now surrendered souls at Your lotus feet, You can give us relief from the entrapment of fruitive action made possible by the form of Jarāsandha. Dear Lord, it is known to You that Jarāsandha possesses the power of ten thousand elephants, and with this power he has imprisoned us, just as a lion hypnotizes a flock of sheep. My dear Lord, You have already fought with Jarāsandha eighteen times consecutively, out of which You have defeated him seventeen times by surpassing his extraordinary powerful position. But in Your eighteenth fight, You exhibited Your human behavior, and thus it appeared that You were defeated. My dear Lord, we know very well that Jarāsandha cannot defeat You at any time because Your power, strength, resources and authority are all unlimited. No one can equal You or surpass You. The appearance of defeat by Jarāsandha in the eighteenth engagement is nothing but an exhibition of human behavior. Unfortunately, foolish Jarāsandha could not understand Your tricks, and he has since then become puffed up over his material power and prestige. Specifically, he has arrested us and imprisoned us, knowing fully that as Your devotees, we are subordinate to Your sovereignty.

"Now I have explained our awful position, and Your Lordship can consider and do whatever You like. As the messenger and representative of all those imprisoned kings, I have submitted my words before Your Lordship and presented our prayers to You. All the kings are very anxious to see You so that they can all personally surrender at Your lotus feet. My dear Lord, be merciful upon them and act for their good fortune."

At the very moment the messenger of the imprisoned kings was presenting his appeal before the Lord, the great sage Nārada also arrived. Because he was a great saint, his hair was dazzling like gold, and when he entered the assembly house it appeared that the sun-god was personally present in the midst of the assembly. Lord Kṛṣṇa is the worshipable master of even Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva, yet as soon as He saw that the sage Nārada had arrived, He immediately stood up along with His ministers and secretaries to receive the great sage and offer His respectful obeisances by bowing His head. The great sage Nārada took a comfortable seat, and Lord Kṛṣṇa worshiped him with all paraphernalia, as required for the regular reception of a saintly person. While He was trying to satisfy Nāradajī, Lord Kṛṣṇa spoke the following words in His sweet and natural voice.

"My dear great sage among the demigods, I think that now everything is well within the three worlds. You are perfectly eligible to travel everywhere in space in the upper, middle and lower planetary systems of this universe. Fortunately, when we meet you we can very easily take information from your holiness of all the news of the three worlds; within this cosmic manifestation of the Supreme Lord, there is nothing concealed from your knowledge. You know everything, and so I wish to question you. Are the Pāṇḍavas doing well, and what is the present plan of King Yudhiṣṭhira? Will you kindly let Me know what they want to do at present?"

The great sage Nārada spoke as follows: "My dear Lord, You have spoken about the cosmic manifestation created by the Supreme Lord, but I know that You are the all-pervading creator. Your energies are so extensive and inconceivable that even powerful personalities like Brahmā, the lord of this particular universe, cannot measure Your inconceivable power. My dear Lord, You are present as the Supersoul in everyone's heart by Your inconceivable potency, exactly like the fire which is present in everyone but which no one can see directly. In conditioned life, every living entity is within the jurisdiction of the three modes of material nature. As such, they are unable to see Your presence everywhere with their material eyes. By Your grace, however, I have seen many times the

action of Your inconceivable potency, and therefore when You ask me for news of the Pāṇḍavas, which is not at all unknown to You, I am not surprised at Your inquiry. My dear Lord, by Your inconceivable potencies You create this cosmic manifestation, maintain it and again dissolve it. It is by dint of Your inconceivable potency only that this material world, although a shadow representation of the spiritual world, appears to be factual. No one can understand what You plan to do in the future. Your transcendental position is always inconceivable to everyone. As far as I am concerned, I can simply offer my respectful obeisances unto You again and again. In the bodily concept of knowledge, everyone is driven by material desires, and thus everyone develops new material bodies one after another in the cycle of birth and death. Being absorbed in such a concept of existence, one does not know how to get out of this encagement of the material body. Out of Your causeless mercy, my Lord, You descend to exhibit Your different transcendental pastimes, which are illuminating and full of glory. Therefore I have no alternative but to offer my respectful obeisances unto You. My dear Lord, You are the supreme Parambrahman, and Your pastimes as an ordinary human are another tactical resource, exactly like a play on the stage in which the actor plays parts different from his own identity. You have inquired about Your cousins the Pāṇḍavas in the role of their well-wisher, and therefore I shall let You know about their intentions. Now please hear me. First of all may I inform You that King Yudhiṣṭhira has all material opulences which are possible to achieve in the highest planetary system, Brahmaloka. He has no mateirla opulence for which to aspire, and yet he wants to perform Rājasūya sacrifices only to get Your association and please You.

Nārada informed Lord Kṛṣṇa, "King Yudhiṣṭhira is so opulent that he has attained all the opulences of Brahmaloka even on this earthly planet. He is fully satisfied, and he does not need anything more. He is full in everything, but now he wants to worship You in order to achieve Your causeless mercy, and I beg to request You to fulfill his desires. My dear Lord, in these great sacrificial performances by King Yudhiṣṭhira there will be an assembly of all the demigods and all the famous kings of the world.

"My dear Lord, You are the Supreme Brahman, Personality of Godhead. One who engages himself in Your devotional service by the prescribed methods of hearing, chanting and remembering certainly becomes purified from the contamination of the modes of material nature, and what to speak of those who have the opportunity to see You and touch You directly. My dear Lord, You are the symbol of everything auspicious. Your transcendental name and fame have spread all over the universe,

including the higher, middle and lower planetary systems. The transcendental water which washes Your lotus feet is known in the higher planetary system as Mandākinī, in the lower planetary system as Bhogavatī, and in this earthly planetary system as the Ganges. This sacred, transcendental water flows throughout the entire universe, purifying wherever it flows."

Just before the great sage Nārada arrived in the Sudharmā assembly house of Dvārakā, Lord Kṛṣṇa and His ministers and secretaries had been considering how to attack the kingdom of Jarāsandha. Because they were seriously considering this subject, Nārada's proposal that Lord Kṛṣṇa go to Hastināpura for Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira's great Rājasūya sacrifice did not much appeal to them. Lord Kṛṣṇa could understand the intentions of his associates because He is the ruler of even Lord Brahmā. Therefore, in order to pacify them, He smilingly said to Uddhava, "My dear Uddhava, you are always my well-wishing confidential friend. I therefore wish to see everything through you because I believe that your counsel is always right. I believe that you understand the whole situation perfectly. Therefore I am asking your opinion. What should I do? I have faith in you, and therefore I shall do whatever you advise." It was known to Uddhava that although Lord Kṛṣṇa was acting like an ordinary man, He knew everything—past, present and future. However, because the Lord was trying to consult with him, Uddhava, in order to render service to the Lord, began to speak.

Thus ends the Bhaktivedanta purport of the Second Volume, Fifteenth Chapter, of Kṛṣṇa, *"Lord Kṛṣṇa's Daily Activities."*



16 / Lord Kṛṣṇa in Indraprastha City

In the presence of the great sage Nārada and all the other associates of Lord Kṛṣṇa, Uddhava considered the situation and then spoke as follows: "My dear Lord, first of all let me say that the great sage Nārada Muni has requested You to go to Hastināpura to satisfy King Yudhiṣṭhira, your cousin, who is making arrangements to perform the great sacrifice known as Rājasūya. I think, therefore, that Your Lordship should immediately go there to help the King in this great adventure. However, although to accept the invitation offered by the sage Nārada Muni as primary is quite appropriate, at the same time, my Lord, it is Your duty to give protection to the surrendered souls. Both purposes can be served if we understand the whole situation. Unless we are victorious over all the kings, no one can perform this Rājasūya sacrifice. In other words, it is to be understood that King Yudhiṣṭhira cannot perform this great sacrifice without gaining victory over the belligerent King Jarāsandha. The Rājasūya sacrifice can only be performed by one who has gained victory over all directions. Therefore, to execute both purposes, we first of all have to kill Jarāsandha. I think that if we can somehow or other gain victory over Jarāsandha, then automatically all our purposes will be served. The imprisoned kings will be released, and with great pleasure we shall enjoy the spread of Your transcendental fame at having saved the innocent kings whom Jarāsandha has imprisoned.

"But King Jarāsandha is not an ordinary man. He has proved a stumbling block even to great warriors because his bodily strength is equal to the strength of 10,000 elephants. If there is anyone who can conquer this king, he is none other than Bhīmasena because he also possesses the strength of 10,000 elephants. The best thing would be for Bhīmasena to fight alone with him. Then there would be no unnecessary killing of many soldiers. In fact, it will be very difficult to conquer Jarāsandha when he stands with

his *akṣauhiṇī* divisions of soldiers. We may therefore adopt a policy more favorable to the situation. We know that King Jarāsandha is very much devoted to the *brāhmaṇas.* He is very charitably disposed towards them; he never refuses any request from a *brāhmaṇa.* I think, therefore, that Bhīmasena should approach Jarāsandha in the dress of a *brāhmaṇa,* beg charity from Him, and then personally engage in fighting Him. And in order to assure Bhīmasena's victory, I think that Your Lordship should also accompany him. If the fighting takes place in Your presence, I am sure Bhīmasena will emerge victorious because simply by Your presence everything impossible is made possible, just as Lord Brahmā creates this universe and Lord Śiva destroys it simply through Your influence.

"Actually, You are creating and destroying the entire cosmic manifestation; Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva are only the superficially visible causes. Creation and destruction are actually being performed by the invisible time factor, which is Your impersonal representation. Everything is under the control of this time factor. If Your invisible time factor can perform such wonderful acts through Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva, will not Your personal presence help Bhīmasena to conquer Jarāsandha? My dear Lord, when Jarāsandha is killed, then the queens of all the imprisoned kings will be so joyful at their husbands' being released by Your mercy that they will all begin to sing Your glories. They will be as pleased as the *gopīs* were when they were relieved from the hands of Śaṅkhāsura. All the great sages, the King of the elephants, Gajendra, the goddess of fortune, Sītā, and even Your father and mother, were all delivered by Your causeless mercy. We also have been thus delivered, and we are always singing the transcendental glories of Your activities.

"Therefore, I think that if the killing of Jarāsandha is undertaken first, that will automatically solve many other problems. As for the Rājasūya sacrifice arranged in Hastināpura, it will be held, either because of the pious activities of the imprisoned kings or the impious activities of Jarāsandha.

"My Lord, it appears that You are also personally to go to Hastināpura to perform this great sacrifice so that demoniac kings like Jarāsandha and Śiśupāla may be conquered, the pious imprisoned kings released, and at the same time the great Rājasūya sacrifice performed. Considering all these points, I think that Your Lordship should immediately proceed to Hastināpura."

This advice of Uddhava's was appreciated by all who were present in the assembly, and everyone considered that Lord Kṛṣṇa's going to Hastināpura would be beneficial from all points of view. The great sage Nārada, the

elderly personalities of the Yadu dynasty, and the Supreme Personality of Godhead Kṛṣṇa Himself all supported the statement of Uddhava. Lord Kṛṣṇa then took permission from His father Vasudeva and grandfather Ugrasena, and He immediately ordered His servants Dāruka and Jaitra to arrange for travel to Hastināpura. When everything was prepared, Lord Kṛṣṇa especially bid farewell to Lord Balarāma and the King of the Yadus, Ugrasena, and after dispatching His queens along with their children and sending their necessary luggage ahead, He mounted His chariot, which bore the flag marked with the symbol of Garuḍa.

Before starting the procession, Lord Kṛṣṇa satisfied the great sage Nārada by offering him different kinds of worshipable articles. Nāradajī wanted to fall at the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, but because the Lord was playing the part of a human being, he simply offered his respects within his mind, and fixing the transcendental form of the Lord within his heart, he left the assembly house by the airways. Usually the sage Narada never walks on the surface of the globe, but travels in outer space. After the departure of Nārada, Lord Kṛṣṇa addressed the messenger who had come from the imprisoned kings. He told him that they should not be worried. He would very soon arrange to kill the King of Magadha, Jarāsandha. Thus He wished good fortune to all the imprisoned kings and the messenger. After receiving this assurance from Lord Kṛṣṇa, the messenger returned to the imprisoned kings and informed them of the happy news of the Lord's forthcoming visit. All the kings became joyful at the news and began to wait very anxiously for the Lord's arrival.

The chariot of Lord Kṛṣṇa began to proceed, accompanied by many other chariots, along with elephants, cavalry, infantry and similar royal paraphernalia. Bugles, drums, trumpets, conchshells, horns and coronets all began to produce a loud auspicious sound which vibrated in all directions. The 16,000 queens, headed by the goddess of fortune Rukmiṇīdevī, the ideal wife of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and accompanied by their respective sons, all followed behind Lord Kṛṣṇa. They were dressed in costly garments decorated with ornaments, and their bodies were smeared with sandalwood pulp and garlanded with fragrant flowers. Riding on palanquins which were nicely decorated with silks, flags, and golden lace, they followed their exalted husband, Lord Kṛṣṇa. The infantry soldiers carried shields, swords and lances in their hands and acted as royal bodyguards to the queens. In the rear of the procession were the wives and children of all the other followers, and there were many society girls also following. Many beasts of burden like bulls, buffaloes, mules, and asses carried the camps, bedding and carpets, and the women who were following were seated in separate

palanquins on the backs of camels. This panoramic procession was accompanied by the shouts of the people and was full with the display of different colored flags, umbrellas and whisks and different varieties of weapons, dress, ornaments, helmets and armaments. The procession, being reflected in the sunshine, appeared just like an ocean with high waves and sharks.

In this way the procession of Lord Kṛṣṇa's party advanced towards Hastināpura (New Delhi) and gradually passed through the kingdoms of Ānarta (Gujarat Province), Sauvīra (Sauret), the great desert of Rājasthān, and then Kurukṣetra. In between those kingdoms there were many mountains, rivers, towns, villages, pasturing grounds and mining fields. The procession passed through all of these places in its advance. On His way to Hastināpura, the Lord crossed two big rivers, the Dṛṣvatī and the Sarasvatī. Then He crossed the province of Pañchāla and the province of Matsya. In this way, ultimately He arrived at Indraprastha.

The audience of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, is not very commonplace. Therefore, when King Yudhiṣṭhira heard that Lord Kṛṣṇa had already arrived in his capital city, Hastināpura, he became so joyful that all his hairs stood on end in great ecstasy, and he immediately came out of the city to properly receive Him. He ordered the musical vibration of different instruments and songs, and the learned *brāhmaṇas* of the city began to chant the hymns of the *Vedas* very loudly. Lord Kṛṣṇa is known as Hṛṣīkeśa, the master of the senses, and King Yudhiṣṭhira went forward to receive Him exactly as the senses meet the consciousness of life. King Yudhiṣṭhira was the elderly cousin of Kṛṣṇa. Naturally he had great affection for the Lord, and as soon as he saw Him, his heart became filled with great love and affection. He had not seen the Lord for many days, and therefore he thought himself most fortunate to see Him present before him. The King therefore began to embrace Lord Kṛṣṇa again and again in great affection.

The eternal form of Lord Kṛṣṇa is the everlasting residence of the goddess of fortune. As soon as King Yudhiṣṭhira embraced Him, he became free from all the contamination of material existence. He immediately felt transcendental bliss, and he merged in an ocean of happiness. There were tears in his eyes, and his body shook due to ecstasy. He completely forgot that he was living in this material world. After this, Bhīmasena, the second brother of the Pāṇḍavas, smiled and embraced Lord Kṛṣṇa, thinking of Him as his own maternal cousin, and thus he was merged in great ecstasy. Bhīmasena also was so filled with ecstasy that for the time being he forgot his material existence. Then Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself embraced the other

three Pāṇḍavas, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva. The eyes of all three brothers were inundated with tears, and Arjuna began to embrace Kṛṣṇa again and again because they were intimate friends. The two younger Pāṇḍava brothers, after being embraced by Lord Kṛṣṇa, fell down at His lotus feet to offer their respects. Lord Kṛṣṇa thereafter offered His obeisances to the *brāhmaṇas* present there, as well as to the elderly members of the Kuru dynasty, like Bhīṣma, Droṇa and Dhṛtarāṣṭra. There were many kings of different provinces such as Kuru, Sṛñjaya and Kekaya, and Lord Kṛṣṇa duly reciprocated greetings and respects with them. The professional reciters like the *sūtas, māgadhas,* and *vandinas,* accompanied by the *brāhmaṇas,* began to offer their respectful prayers to the Lord. Artists and musicians like the Gandharvas, as well as the royal jokers, began to play their drums, conchshells, kettledrums, *vīṇās, mṛdaṅgas,* and bugles, and they exhibited their dancing art in order to please the Lord. Thus the all-famous Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Kṛṣṇa, entered the great city of Hastināpura, which was opulent in every respect. While Lord Kṛṣṇa was entering the city, everyone was talking amongst themselves about the glories of the Lord, praising His transcendental name, quality, form, etc.

The roads, streets and lanes of Hastināpura were all sprinkled with fragrant water through the trunks of intoxicated elephants. In different places of the city there were colorful festoons and flags decorating the houses and streets. At important road crossings there were gates with golden decorations, and at the two sides of the gates there were golden water jugs. These beautiful decorations glorified the opulence of the city. Participating in this great ceremony, all the citizens of the city gathered here and there, dressed in colorful new clothing, decorated with ornaments, flower garlands, and fragrant scents. Each and every house was illuminated by hundreds and thousands of lamps placed in different corners of the cornices, walls, columns, bases and architraves, and from far away the rays of the lamps resembled the festival of Dīpāvalī (a particular festival observed on the New Year's Day of the Hindu calendar). Within the walls of the houses, fragrant incense was burning, and smoke rose through the windows, making the entire atmosphere very pleasing. On the top of every house flags were flapping, and the gold water pots kept on the roofs shone very brilliantly.

Lord Kṛṣṇa thus entered the city of the Pāṇḍavas, enjoyed the beautiful atmosphere and slowly proceeded ahead. When the young girls in every house heard that Lord Kṛṣṇa, the only object worth seeing, was passing on the road, they became very anxious to see this all-famous personality. Their hair loosened, and their tightened saris became slack due to their hastily

rushing to see Him. They gave up their household engagements, and those who were lying in bed with their husbands immediately left them and came directly down onto the street to see Lord Kṛṣṇa.

The procession of elephants, horses, chariots, and infantry was very crowded; some, being unable to see properly in the crowd, got up on the roofs of the houses. They were pleased to see Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa passing with His thousands of queens. They began to shower flowers on the procession, and they embraced Lord Kṛṣṇa within their minds and gave Him a hearty reception. When they saw Him in the midst of His many queens, like the full moon situated amidst many luminaries, they began to talk amongst themselves.

One girl said to another, "My dear friend, it is very difficult to guess what kind of pious activities these queens might have performed, for they are always enjoying the smiling face and loving glances of Kṛṣṇa." While Lord Kṛṣṇa was thus passing on the road, at intervals some of the opulent citizens, who were all rich, respectable and freed from sinful activities presented auspicious articles to the Lord, just to offer Him a reception to the city. Thus they worshiped Him as humble servitors.

When Lord Kṛṣṇa entered the palace, all the ladies there became overwhelmed with affection just upon seeing Him. They immediately received Lord Kṛṣṇa with glittering eyes expressing their love and affection for Him, and Lord Kṛṣṇa smiled and accepted their feelings and gestures of reception. When Kuntī, the mother of the Pāṇḍavas, saw her nephew Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, she became overpowered with love and affection. She at once got up from her bedstead and appeared before Him with her daughter-in-law, Draupadī, and in maternal love and affection she embraced Him. As he brought Kṛṣṇa within the palace, King Yudhiṣṭhira became so confused in his jubilation that he practically forgot what he was to do at that time in order to receive Kṛṣṇa and worship Him properly. Lord Kṛṣṇa delightfully offered His respects and obeisances to Kuntī and other elderly ladies of the palace. His younger sister, Subhadrā, was also standing there with Draupadī, and both offered their respectful obeisances unto the lotus feet of the Lord. At the indication of her mother-in-law, Draupadī brought clothing, ornaments and garlands, and with this paraphernalia they received the queens Rukmiṇī, Satyabhāmā, Bhadrā, Jāmbavatī, Kālindī, Mitravindā, Lakṣmaṇā and the devoted Satyā. These principal queens of Lord Kṛṣṇa were first received, and then the remaining queens were also offered a proper reception. King Yudhiṣṭhira arranged for Kṛṣṇa's rest and saw that all who came along with Him—namely His queens, His soldiers, His ministers and His secretaries—were comfortably

situated. He had arranged that they would experience a new feature of reception everyday while staying as guests of the Pāṇḍavas.

It was during this time that Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, with the help of Arjuna, for the satisfaction of the fire-god, Agni, allowed Agni to devour the Khāṇḍava Forest. During the forest fire, Kṛṣṇa saved the demon Mayāsura, who was hiding in the forest. Upon being saved, Mayāsura felt obliged to the Pāṇḍavas and Lord Kṛṣṇa, and he constructed a wonderful assembly house within the city of Hastināpura. In this way, Lord Kṛṣṇa, in order to please King Yudhiṣṭhira, remained in the city of Hastināpura for several months. During His stay, He enjoyed strolling here and there. He used to drive on chariots along with Arjuna, and many warriors and soldiers used to follow them.

Thus ends the Bhaktivedanta purport of the Second Volume, Sixteenth Chapter, of Kṛṣṇa, *"Lord Kṛṣṇa in Indraprastha City."*



17 / Liberation of King Jarāsandha

In the great assembly of respectable persons, citizens, friends, relatives, *brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas* and *vaiśyas,* King Yudhiṣṭhira, in the presence of all, including his brothers, directly addressed Lord Kṛṣṇa as follows: "My dear Lord Kṛṣṇa, the sacrifice known as the Rājasūya *yajña* is to be performed by the emperor, and it is considered to be the king of all sacrifices. By performing this sacrifice, I wish to satisfy all the demigods, who are Your empowered representatives within this material world, and I wish that You will kindly help me in this great adventure so that it may be successfully executed. As far as the Pāṇḍavas are concerned, we have nothing to ask from the demigods. We are personally fully satisfied by being Your devotees. As You say in the *Bhagavad-gītā,* "Persons who are bewildered by material desires worship the demigods," but our purpose is different. I want to perform this Rājasūya sacrifice and invite the demigods to show them that they have no power independent of You. They are all Your servants, and You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Foolish persons with a poor fund of knowledge consider Your Lordship an ordinary human being. Sometimes they try to find fault in You, and sometimes they defame You. Therefore I wish to perform this Rājasūya *yajña.* I wish to invite all the demigods, beginning from Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva and other exalted chiefs of the heavenly planets, and in that great assembly of demigods from all parts of the universe, I want to substantiate that You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead and that everyone is Your servant.

"My dear Lord, those who are constantly in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and who think of Your lotus feet or of Your shoes certainly become free from all contamination of material life. Persons who are engaged in Your service in full Kṛṣṇa consciousness, who meditate upon You only or who offer prayers unto You, are purified souls. Being constantly engaged in Kṛṣṇa conscious service, such persons become freed from the cycle of repeated

birth and death. They do not even desire to become freed from this material existence or to enjoy material opulences; their desires are fulfilled by Kṛṣṇa conscious activities. As far as we are concerned, we are fully surrendered unto Your lotus feet, and by Your grace we are so fortunate to see You personally. Therefore, naturally we have no desire for material opulences. The verdict of the Vedic wisdom is that You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead. I want to establish this fact, and I also want to show the world the difference between accepting You as the Supreme Personality of Godhead and accepting You as an ordinary powerful historical person. I wish to show the world that one can attain the highest perfection of life simply by taking shelter at Your lotus feet, exactly as one can satisfy the branches, twigs, leaves and flowers of an entire tree simply by watering the root. Thus, if one takes to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, his life becomes fulfilled both materially and spiritually.

"This does not mean that You are partial to the Kṛṣṇa conscious person and are indifferent to the non-Kṛṣṇa conscious person. You are equal to everyone; that is Your declaration. You cannot be partial to one and not interested in others because You are sitting in everyone's heart as the Supersoul and giving everyone the respective results of his fruitive activities. You give every living entity the chance to enjoy this material world as he desires. As Supersoul, You are sitting in the body along with the living entity, giving him the results of his own actions as well as opportunities to turn toward Your devotional service by developing Kṛṣṇa consciousness. You openly declare that one should surrender unto You, giving up all other engagements, and that You will take charge of him, giving him relief from the reactions of all sins. You are like the desire tree in the heavenly planets, which awards benediction according to one's desires. Everyone is free to achieve the highest perfection, but if one does not so desire, then Your awarding of lesser benedictions is not due to partiality."

On hearing this statement of King Yudhiṣṭhira, Lord Kṛṣṇa replied as follows: "My dear King Yudhiṣṭhira, O killer of enemies, O ideal justice personified, I completely support your decision to perform the Rājasūya sacrifice. By performing this great sacrifice, your good name will remain well established forever in the history of human civilization. My dear King, may I inform you that it is the desire of all great sages, your forefathers, the demigods, and your relatives and friends, including Myself, that you perform this sacrifice, and I think that it will satisfy every living entity. But, because it is necessary, I request that you first of all conquer all the kings of the world and collect all requisite paraphernalia for executing this

great sacrifice. My dear King Yudhiṣṭhira, your four brothers are direct representatives of important demigods like Varuṇa, Indra, etc. [It is said that Bhīma was born of the demigod Varuṇa, and Arjuna was born of the demigod Indra, whereas King Yudhiṣṭhira himself was born of the demigod Yamarāja.] Your brothers are great heroes, and you are the most pious and self-controlled king and are therefore known as Dharmarāja. All of you are so qualified in devotional service unto Me that automatically I have become rivalled by you."

Lord Kṛṣṇa told King Yudhiṣṭhira that He becomes conquered by the love of one who has conquered his senses. One who has not conquered his senses cannot conquer the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This is the secret of devotional service. To conquer the senses means to engage them constantly in the service of the Lord. The specific qualification of all the Pāṇḍava brothers was that they always engaged their senses in the service of the Lord. One who thus engages his senses becomes purified, and with purified senses one can actually render service to the Lord. The Lord can thus be conquered by the devotee by loving transcendental service.

Lord Kṛṣṇa continued: "There is no one in the three worlds of the universe, including the powerful demigods, who can surpass My devotees in any of the six opulences, namely, wealth, strength, reputation, beauty, knowledge and renunciation. Therefore, if you want to conquer the worldly kings, there is no possibility of their emerging victorious."

When Lord Kṛṣṇa thus encouraged King Yudhiṣṭhira, the King's face brightened like a blossoming flower because of transcendental happiness, and thus he ordered his younger brothers to conquer all the worldly kings in all directions. Lord Kṛṣṇa empowered the Pāṇḍavas to execute His great mission of chastising the infidel miscreants of the world and giving protection to His faithful devotees. In His Viṣṇu form, the Lord therefore carries four kinds of weapons in His four hands. He carries a lotus flower and a conchshell in two hands, and in the other two hands He carries a club and a disc. The club and disc are meant for the nondevotees, but because the Lord is the Supreme Absolute, the resultant action of all His weapons is one and the same. With the club and the disc He chastises the miscreants so that they may come to their senses and know that they are not all in all. Over them there is the Supreme Lord. And by bugling with the conchshell and by offering blessings with the lotus flower, He always assures the devotees that no one can vanquish them, even in the greatest calamity. King Yudhiṣṭhira, being thus assured by the indication of Lord Kṛṣṇa, ordered his youngest brother, Sahadeva, accompanied by soldiers of the Sṛñjaya tribe, to conquer the southern countries. Similarly, he

ordered Nakula, accompanied by the soldiers of Matsyadeśa, to conquer the kings of the western side. He sent Arjuna, accompanied by the soldiers of Kekayadeśa, to conquer the kings of the northern side, and Bhīmasena, accompanied by the soldiers of Madradeśa (Madras), was ordered to conquer the kings on the eastern side.

It may be noted that by dispatching his younger brothers to conquer in different directions, King Yudhiṣṭhira did not actually intend that they declare war with the kings. Actually, the brothers started for different directions to inform the respective kings about King Yudhiṣṭhira's intention to perform the Rājasūya sacrifice. The kings were thus informed that they were required to pay taxes for the execution of the sacrifice. This payment of taxes to Emperor Yudhiṣṭhira meant that the king accepted his subjugation before him. In case of a king's refusal to act accordingly, there was certainly a fight. Thus by their influence and strength, the brothers conquered all the kings in different directions, and they were able to bring in sufficient taxes and presentations. These were brought before King Yudhiṣṭhira by his brothers.

King Yudhiṣṭhira was very anxious, however, when he heard that King Jarāsandha of Magadha did not accept his sovereignty. Seeing King Yudhiṣṭhira's anxiety, Lord Kṛṣṇa informed him of the plan explained by Uddhava for conquering King Jarāsandha. Bhīmasena, Arjuna and Lord Kṛṣṇa then started together for Girivraja, the capital city of Jarāsandha, dressing themselves in the garb of *brāhmaṇas.* This was the plan devised by Uddhava before Lord Kṛṣṇa started for Hastināpura, and now it was given practical application.

King Jarāsandha was a very dutiful householder, and he had great respect for the *brāhmaṇas.* He was a great fighter, a *kṣatriya* king, but he was never neglectful of the Vedic injunctions. According to Vedic injunctions, the *brāhmaṇas* are considered to be the spiritual masters of all other castes. Lord Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna and Bhīmasena were actually *kṣatriyas,* but they dressed themselves as *brāhmaṇas,* and at the time when King Jarāsandha was to give charity to the *brāhmaṇas* and receive them as guests, they approached him.

Lord Kṛṣṇa, in the dress of a *brāhmaṇa,* said to the King: "We wish all glories to your majesty. We are three guests at your royal palace, and we are coming from a great distance. We have come to ask you for charity, and we hope that you will kindly bestow upon us whatever we ask from you. We know about your good qualities. A person who is tolerant is always prepared to tolerate everything, even though distressful. Just as a criminal can perform the most abominable acts, so a greatly charitable person like you

can give anything and everything he is asked for. For a great personality like you, there is no distinction between relatives and outsiders. A famous man lives forever, even after his death; therefore, any person who is completely fit and able to execute acts which will perpetuate his good name and fame and yet does not do so becomes abominable in the eyes of great persons. Such a person cannot be condemned enough, and his refusal to give charity is lamentable throughout his whole life. Your majesty must have heard the glorious names of charitable personalities such as Hariścandra, Rantideva and Mudgala, who used to live only on grains picked up from the paddy field, and the great Mahārāja Śibi, who saved the life of a pigeon by supplying flesh from his own body. These great personalities have attained immortal fame simply by sacrificing this temporary and imperishable body." Lord Kṛṣṇa, in the garb of a *brāhmaṇa,* thus informed Jarāsandha that fame is imperishable, but the body is perishable. If one can attain imperishable name and fame by sacrificing his perishable body, he becomes a very respectable figure in the history of human civilization.

While Lord Kṛṣṇa was speaking in the garb of a *brāhmaṇa* along with Arjuna and Bhīma, Jarāsandha marked that the three of them did not appear to be actual *brāhmaṇas.* There were signs on their bodies by which Jarāsandha could understand that they were *kṣatriyas.* Their shoulders were marked with an impression due to carrying bows; they had beautiful bodily structure, and their voices were grave and commanding. Thus he definitely concluded that they were not *brāhmaṇas,* but *kṣatriyas.* He was also thinking that he had seen them somewhere before. Although these three persons were *kṣatriyas,* they had come to his door begging alms like *brāhmaṇas.* Therefore he decided that he would fulfill their desires, in spite of their being *kṣatriyas.* He thought in this way because their position had already been diminished by their appearing before him as beggars. "Under the circumstances," he thought, "I am prepared to give them anything. Even if they ask for my body, I shall not hesitate to offer it to them." In this regard, he began to think of Bali Mahārāja. Lord Viṣṇu in the dress of a *brāhmaṇa* appeared as a beggar before Bali, and in that way He snatched away all of his opulence and kingdom. He did this for the benefit of Indra, who, having been defeated by Bali Mahārāja, was bereft of his kingdom. Although Bali Mahārāja was cheated, his reputation as a great devotee who was able to give anything and everything in charity is still glorified throughout the three worlds. Bali Mahārāja could guess that the *brāhmaṇa* was Lord Viṣṇu Himself and that He had come to him just to take away his opulent kingdom on behalf of Indra. Bali's spiritual master and family priest, Śukrācārya, repeatedly warned him about this,

and yet Bali did not hesitate to give in charity whatever the *brāhmaṇa* wanted, and at last he gave up everything to that *brāhmaṇa.* "It is my strong determination," thought Jarāsandha, "that if I can achieve immortal reputation by sacrificing this perishable body, I must act for that purpose; the life of a *kṣatriya* who does not live for the benefit of the *brāhmaṇa* is certainly condemned."

Actually King Jarāsandha was very liberal in giving charity to the *brāhmaṇas,* and thus he informed Lord Kṛṣṇa, Bhīma and Arjuna: "My dear *brāhmaṇas,* you can ask from me whatever you like. If you so desire, you can take my head also. I am prepared to give it."

After this, Lord Kṛṣṇa addressed Jarāsandha as follows: "My dear King, please note that we are not actually *brāhmaṇas,* nor have we come to ask for foodstuffs or grains. We are all *kṣatriyas,* and we have come to beg a duel with you. We hope that you will agree to this proposal. You may note that here is the second son of King Pāṇḍu, Bhīmasena, and the third son of Pāṇḍu, Arjuna. As for Myself, you may know that I am your old enemy, Kṛṣṇa, the cousin of the Pāṇḍavas."

When Lord Kṛṣṇa disclosed their disguise, King Jarāsandha began to laugh very loudly, and then in great anger and in a grave voice he exclaimed, "You fools! If you want to fight with me, I immediately grant your request. But, Kṛṣṇa, I know that You are a coward. I refuse to fight with You because You become very confused when You face me in fighting. Out of fear of me You left Your own city, Mathurā, and now You have taken shelter within the sea; therefore I must refuse to fight with You. As far as Arjuna is concerned, I know that he is younger than me and is not an equal fighter. I refuse to fight with him because he is not in any way an equal competitor. But as far as Bhīmasena is concerned, I think he is a suitable competitor to fight with me." After speaking in this way, King Jarāsandha immediately handed a very heavy club to Bhīmasena, and he himself took another, and thus all of them went outside the city walls to fight.

Bhīmasena and King Jarāsandha engaged themselves in fighting, and with their respective clubs, which were as strong as thunderbolts, they began to strike one another very severely, both of them being eager to fight. They were both expert fighters with clubs, and their techniques of striking one another were so beautiful that they appeared to be two dramatic artists dancing on a stage. When the clubs of Jarāsandha and Bhīmasena loudly collided, they sounded like the impact of the big tusks of two fighting elephants or like a thunderbolt in a flashing electrical storm. When two elephants fight together in a sugarcane field, each of them

snatches a stick of sugarcane and, by catching it tightly in its trunk, strikes the other. Each elephant heavily strikes his enemy's shoulders, arms, collarbones, chest, thighs, waist, and legs, and in this way the sticks of sugarcane are smashed. Similarly, all the clubs used by Jarāsandha and Bhīmasena were broken, and so the two enemies prepared to fight with their strong-fisted hands. Both Jarāsandha and Bhīmasena were very angry, and they began to smash each other with their fists. The striking of their fists sounded like the striking of iron bars or like the sound of thunderbolts, and they appeared to be like two elephants fighting. Unfortunately, however, neither was able to defeat the other because both were very expert in fighting, both were of equal strength, and their fighting techniques were equal also. Neither Jarāsandha nor Bhīmasena became fatigued or defeated in the fighting, although they struck each other continually. At the end of a day's fighting, both lived at night as friends in Jarāsandha's palace, and the next day they fought again. In this way they passed twenty-seven days in fighting.

On the twenty-eighth day, Bhīmasena told Kṛṣṇa, "My dear Kṛṣṇa, I must frankly admit that I cannot conquer Jarāsandha." Lord Kṛṣṇa, however, knew the mystery of the birth of Jarāsandha. Jarāsandha was born in two different parts from two different mothers. When his father saw that the baby was useless, he threw the two parts in the forest, where they were later found by a black-hearted witch named Jarā. She managed to join the two parts of the baby from top to bottom. Knowing this, Lord Kṛṣṇa therefore also knew how to kill him. He gave hints to Bhīmasena that since Jarāsandha was brought to life by the joining of the two parts of his body, he could be killed by the separation of these two parts. Thus Lord Kṛṣṇa transferred His power into the body of Bhīmasena and informed him of the device by which Jarāsandha could be killed. Lord Kṛṣṇa immediately picked up a twig from a tree and, taking it in His hand, bifurcated it. In this way He hinted to Bhīmasena how Jarāsandha could be killed. Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is omnipotent, and if He wants to kill someone, no one can save that person. Similarly, if He wants to save someone, no one can kill him.

Informed by the hints of Lord Kṛṣṇa, Bhīmasena immediately took hold of the legs of Jarāsandha and threw him to the ground. When Jarāsandha fell to the ground, Bhīmasena immediately pressed one of Jarāsandha's legs to the ground and took hold of the other leg with his two hands. Catching Jarāsandha in this way, he tore his body in two, beginning from the anus up to the head. As an elephant breaks the branches of a tree in two, so Bhīmasena separated the body of Jarāsandha. The audience

standing nearby saw that the body of Jarāsandha was now divided into two halves, so that each half had one leg, one thigh, one testicle, one breast, half a backbone, half a chest, one collarbone, one arm, one eye, one ear, and half a face.

As soon as the news of Jarāsandha's death was announced, all the citizens of Magadha began to cry, "Alas, alas," while Lord Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna embraced Bhīmasena to congratulate him. Although Jarāsandha was killed, neither Kṛṣṇa nor the two Pāṇḍava brothers made a claim to the throne. Their purpose in killing Jarāsandha was to stop him from creating a disturbance against the proper discharge of world peace. A demon always creates disturbances, whereas a demigod always tries to keep peace in the world. The mission of Lord Kṛṣṇa is to give protection to the righteous persons and to kill the demons who disturb a peaceful situation. Therefore Lord Kṛṣṇa immediately called for the son of Jarāsandha, whose name was Sahadeva, and with due ritualistic ceremonies He asked him to occupy the seat of his father and reign over the kingdom peacefully. Lord Kṛṣṇa is the master of the whole cosmic creation, and He wants everyone to live peacefully and execute Kṛṣṇa consciousness. After installing Sahadeva on the throne, He released all the kings and princes who had been imprisoned unnecessarily by Jarāsandha.

Thus ends the Bhaktivedanta purport of the Second Volume, Seventeenth Chapter, of Kṛṣṇa, *"Liberation of King Jarāsandha."*



18 / Lord Kṛṣṇa Returns to the City of Hastināpura

The kings and the princes released by Lord Kṛṣṇa after the death of Jarāsandha were rulers of different parts of the world. Jarāsandha was so powerful in military strength that he had conquered all these princes and kings, numbering 20,800. They were all incarcerated within a mountain cave especially constructed as a fort, and for a long time they were kept in that situation. When they were released by the grace of Lord Kṛṣṇa, they all looked very unhappy, their garments were niggardly, and their faces were almost dried up for want of proper bodily care. They were very weak due to hunger, and their faces had lost all beauty and luster. Because of the kings' long imprisonment, every part of their bodies had become slackened and invalid. But although suffering in that miserable condition of life, they had the opportunity to think about the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Viṣṇu.

Now before them they saw the color of the transcendental body of Lord Kṛṣṇa, exactly like the hue of a newly arrived cloud in the sky. He appeared before them nicely covered by yellow colored silken garments, with four hands like Viṣṇu, and carrying the different symbols of the club, the conchshell, the disc and the lotus flower. There were marks of golden lines on His chest, and the nipples of His breast appeared to be like the whorl of a lotus flower. His eyes appeared to be spread like the petals of a lotus flower, and His smiling face exhibited the symbol of eternal peace and prosperity. His glittering earrings were set beautifully, and His helmet was bedecked with valuable jewels. The Lord's necklace of pearls and the bangles and bracelets nicely situated on His body all shone with a transcendental beauty. The Kaustubha jewel hanging on His chest glittered with great luster, and the Lord wore a beautiful flower garland. After so much distress, when the kings and princes saw Lord Kṛṣṇa, with His beautiful transcendental features, they looked upon Him to their hearts'

content, as if they were drinking nectar through their eyes, licking His body with their tongues, smelling the aroma of His body with their noses, and embracing Him with their arms. Just by dint of their being in front of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, all reactions to their sinful activities were washed away. Therefore, without reservation, they surrendered themselves at the lotus feet of the Lord. It is stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that unless one is freed from all kinds of sinful reactions, one cannot fully surrender unto the lotus feet of the Lord. All the princes who saw Lord Kṛṣṇa forgot all their past tribulations. With folded hands and with great devotion, they began to offer prayers to Lord Kṛṣṇa, as follows.

"Dear Lord, O Supreme Personality of Godhead, master of all demigods, You can immediately remove all Your devotees' pangs because Your devotees are fully surrendered unto You. O dear Lord Kṛṣṇa, O eternal Deity of transcendental bliss and knowledge, You are imperishable, and we offer our respectful obeisances unto Your lotus feet. It is by Your causeless mercy that we have been released from the imprisonment of Jarāsandha, but now we pray unto You to release us from the imprisonment with the illusory energy of this material existence. Please, therefore, stop our continuous cycle of birth and death. We now have sufficient experience of the miserable material condition of life in which we are fully absorbed, and having tasted its bitterness, we have come to take shelter under Your lotus feet. Dear Lord, O killer of the demon Madhu, we can now clearly see that Jarāsandha was not at fault in the least; it is actually by Your causeless mercy that we were bereft of our kingdoms because we were very proud of calling ourselves rulers and kings. Any ruler or king who becomes too puffed up with false prestige and power does not get the opportunity to understand his real constitutional position and eternal life. Such foolish so-called rulers and kings become falsely proud of their position under the influence of Your illusory energy; they are just like a foolish person who considers a mirage in the desert to be a reservoir of water. Foolish persons think that their material possessions will give them protection, and those who are engaged in sense gratification falsely accept this material world as a place of eternal enjoyment. O Lord, O Supreme Personality of Godhead, we must admit that, before this, we were puffed up with our material opulences. Because we were all envious of each other and wanted to conquer one another, we all engaged in fighting for supremacy, even at the cost of sacrificing the lives of many citizens."

This is the disease of political power. As soon as a king or a nation becomes rich in material opulences, it wants to dominate other nations by

military aggression. Similarly, mercantile men want to monopolize a certain type of business and control other mercantile groups. Degraded by false prestige and infatuated by material opulences, human society, instead of striving for Kṛṣṇa consciousness, creates havoc and disrupts peaceful living. Thus men naturally forget the real purpose of life: to attain the favor of Lord Viṣṇu, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

The kings continued: "O Lord, we were simply engaged in the abominable task of killing citizens and alluring them to be unnecessarily killed, just to satisfy our political whims. We did not consider that Your Lordship is always present before us in the form of cruel death. We were so fooled that we became the cause of death for others, forgetting our own impending death. But, dear Lord, the retaliation of the time element, which is Your representative, is certainly insurmountable. The time element is so strong that no one can escape its influence; therefore we have received the reactions of our atrocious activities, and we are now bereft of all opulences and stand before You like street beggars. We consider our position to be Your causeless, unalloyed mercy upon us because now we can understand that we were falsely proud and that our material opulences could be withdrawn from us within a second by Your will. By Your causeless mercy only, we are now able to think of Your lotus feet. This is our greatest gain. Dear Lord, it is known to everyone that the body is a breeding ground of diseases. Now we are sufficiently aged, and instead of being proud of our bodily strength, we are getting weaker day by day. We are no longer interested in sense gratification or the false happiness derived through the material body. By Your grace, we have now come to the conclusion that hankering after such material happiness is just like searching for water in a desert mirage. We are no longer interested in the results of our pious activities, such as performing great sacrifices in order to be elevated to the heavenly planets. We now understand that such elevation to a higher material standard of life in the heavenly planets may sound very relishable, but actually there cannot be any happiness within this material world. We pray for Your Lordship to favor us by instructing us how to engage in the transcendental loving service of Your lotus feet so that we may never forget our eternal relationship with Your Lordship. We do not want liberation from the entanglement of material existence. By Your will we may take birth in any species of life; it does not matter. We simply pray that we may never forget Your lotus feet under any circumstances. Dear Lord, we now surrender unto Your lotus feet by offering our respectful obeisances unto You because You are the Supreme Lord, the Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, the son of Vasudeva. You are the Super-

soul in everyone's heart, and You are Lord Hari, who can take away all miserable conditions of material existence. Dear Lord, Your name is Govinda, the reservoir of all pleasure. One who is engaged in satisfying Your senses automatically satisfies his own senses also, and therefore You are known as Govinda. Dear Lord, You are ever famous, for You can put an end to all the miseries of Your devotees. Please, therefore, accept us as Your surrendered servants."

After hearing the prayers of the kings released from the prison of Jarāsandha, Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is always the protector of surrendered souls and the ocean of mercy for the devotees, replied to them as follows in His sweetly transcendental voice, which was grave and full of meaning. "My dear kings," He said, "I bestow upon you My blessings. From this day forth you will be attached to My devotional service without fail. I give you this benediction, as you have desired. You may know from Me that I am always sitting within your hearts as Supersoul, and because you have now turned your faces towards Me, I, as master of everyone, shall always give you good counsel so that you may never forget Me and so that gradually you will come back home, back to Godhead. My dear kings, your decision to give up all conceptions of material enjoyment and turn instead toward My devotional service is factually the symptom of your good fortune. Henceforward you will always be blessed with blissful life. I confirm that all you have spoken about Me in your prayers is factual. It is a fact that the materially opulent position of one who is not fully Kṛṣṇa conscious is the cause of his downfall and of his becoming a victim of the illusory energy. In the past, there were many rebellious kings, such as Haihaya, Nahuṣa, Vena, Rāvaṇa and Narakāsura. Some of them were demigods, and some of them were demons, but because of their false perception of their positions, they fell from their exalted posts, and thus they no longer remained the kings of their respective kingdoms.

"While lost in the violence of conditional life, every one of you must understand that anything material has its starting point, growth, expansion, deterioration, and, finally, disappearance. All material bodies are subjected to these six conditions, and any relative acquisitions which are accumulated by this body are definitely subject to final destruction. Therefore, no one should be attached to perishable things. As long as one is within this material body, he should be very cautious in worldly dealings. The most perfect way of life in this material world is simply to be devoted to My transcendental loving service and to honestly execute the prescribed duties of one's particular position of life. As far as you are concerned, you all belong to *kṣatriya* families. Therefore, you should live honestly, according

to the prescribed duties befitting the royal order, and you should make your citizens happy in all respects. Keep to the standard of *kṣatriya* life. Do not beget children out of sense gratification, but simply take charge of the welfare of the people in general. Everyone takes birth in this material world because of the contaminated desires of his previous life, and thus he is subjected to the stringent laws of nature, such as birth and death, distress and happiness, profit and loss. One should not be disturbed by duality, but should always be fixed in My service and thus remain balanced in mind and satisfied in all circumstances, considering all things to be given by Me, and one should remain undeviated from engagement in devotional service. Thus one can live a very happy and peaceful life, even within this material condition. In other words, one should actually be callous to this material body and its by-products and should remain unaffected by them. He should remain fully satisfied in the interests of the spirit soul and be engaged in the service of the Supersoul. One should engage his mind only on Me, one should simply become My devotee, one should simply worship Me, and one should offer his respectful obeisances unto Me alone. In this way, one can cross over this ocean of nescience very easily and at the end come back to Me. In conclusion, your lives should constantly be engaged in My service."

After delivering His instructions to the kings and princes, Lord Kṛṣṇa immediately arranged for their comfort and asked many servants and maidservants to take care of them. Lord Kṛṣṇa requested Sahadeva, the son of King Jarāsandha, to supply all necessities to the kings and also asked him to show them all respect and honor. In pursuance of the order of Lord Kṛṣṇa, Sahadeva offered them all honor, and presented them with ornaments, garments, garlands, and other paraphernalia. After taking their baths and dressing very nicely, the kings appeared happy and gentle. Then they were supplied nice foodstuffs. Lord Kṛṣṇa supplied everything for their comfort, as was befitting their royal positions. Since the kings were so mercifully treated by Lord Kṛṣṇa, they felt great happiness, and all their bright faces appeared just like the stars in the sky after the end of the rainy season. They were all nicely dressed and ornamented, and their earrings glittered. Each one was then seated on a chariot bedecked with gold and jewels and drawn by decorated horses. After seeing that each was taken care of, Lord Kṛṣṇa, in a sweet voice, asked them to return to their respective kingdoms. By His very liberal behavior, unparalleled in the history of the world, Lord Kṛṣṇa released all the kings who had been in the clutches of Jarāsandha, and being fully satisfied, the kings began to engage in chanting His holy name, thinking of His holy form, and glorify-

ing His transcendental pastimes as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. So engaged, they returned to their respective kingdoms. The citizens of their kingdoms were very greatly pleased to see them return, and when they heard of the kind dealings of Lord Kṛṣṇa, they all became very happy. The kings began to manage the affairs of their kingdoms in accordance with the instructions of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and all those kings and their subjects passed their days very happily. This is the vivid example of the Kṛṣṇa conscious society. If the people of the world divide the whole society, in terms of their respective material qualities, into four orders for material and spiritual progress, centering around Kṛṣṇa and following the instructions of Kṛṣṇa as stated in *Bhagavad-gītā,* the entire human society will undoubtedly be happy. This is the lesson that we have to take from this incident.

After thus causing the annihilation of Jarāsandha by Bhīmasena and after being properly honored by Sahadeva, the son of Jarāsandha, Lord Kṛṣṇa, accompanied by Bhīmasena and Arjuna, returned to the city of Hastināpura. When they reached the precincts of Hastināpura, they blew their respective conchshells, and by hearing the sound vibrations and understanding who was arriving, everyone immediately became cheerful. But upon hearing the conchshells, the enemies of Kṛṣṇa became very sorry. The citizens of Indraprastha felt their hearts become joyful simply by hearing the vibration of Kṛṣṇa's conchshell because they could understand that Jarāsandha had been killed. Now the performance of the Rājasūya sacrifice by King Yudhiṣṭhira was almost certain. Bhīmasena, Arjuna, and Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, arrived before King Yudhiṣṭhira and offered their respects to the King. King Yudhiṣṭhira attentively heard the narration of the killing of Jarāsandha and the setting free of the kings. He also heard of the tactics which were adopted by Kṛṣṇa to kill Jarāsandha. The king was naturally affectionate toward Kṛṣṇa, but after hearing the story, he became even more bound in love for Kṛṣṇa; tears of ecstasy glided from his eyes, and he became so stunned that he was almost unable to speak.

Thus ends the Bhaktivedanta purport of the Second Volume, Eighteenth Chapter, of Kṛṣṇa, *"Lord Kṛṣṇa Returns to the City of Hastināpura."*



19 / The Deliverance of Śiśupāla

King Yudhiṣṭhira became very happy after hearing the details of the Jarāsandha episode, and he spoke as follows: "My dear Kṛṣṇa, O eternal form of bliss and knowledge, all the exalted directors of the affairs of this material world, including Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva and King Indra, are always anxious to receive and carry out orders from You, and whenever they are fortunate enough to receive such orders, they immediately take them and keep them in their hearts. O Kṛṣṇa, You are unlimited, and although we sometimes think of ourselves as royal kings and rulers of the world and become puffed up over our paltry positions, we are very poor in heart. Actually, we are fit to be punished by You, but the wonder is that instead of punishing us, You so kindly and mercifully accept our orders and carry them out properly. Others are very surprised that Your Lordship can play the part of an ordinary human, but we can understand that You are performing these activities just like a dramatic artist. Your real position is always exalted, exactly like that of the sun, which always remains at the same temperature both during the time of its rising and the time of its setting. Although we feel the difference in temperature between the rising and the setting sun, the temperature of the sun never changes. You are always transcendentally equiposed, and thus You are neither pleased nor disturbed by any condition of material affairs. You are the Supreme Brahman, the Personality of Godhead, and for You there are no relativities. My dear Mādhava, You are never defeated by anyone. Material distinctions—'This is me.' 'This is you.' 'This is mine.' 'This is yours.'—are all conspicious by dint of their absence in You. Such distinctions are visible in the lives of everyone, even the animals, but those who are pure devotees are freed from these false distinctions. Since these distinctions are absent in Your devotees, they cannot possibly be present in You."

After satisfying Kṛṣṇa in this way, King Yudhiṣṭhira arranged to perform

the Rājasūya sacrifice. He invited all the qualified *brāhmaṇas* and sages to take part and appointed them to different positions as priests in charge of the sacrificial arena. He invited the most expert *brāhmaṇas* and sages, whose names are as follows: Kṛṣṇa-dvaipāyana Vyāsadeva, Bharadvāja, Sumantu, Gautama, Asita, Vasiṣṭha, Cyavana, Kaṇva, Maitreya, Kavaṣa, Trita, Viśvāmitra, Vāmadeva, Sumati, Jaimini, Kratu, Paila, Parāśara, Garga, Vaiśampāyana, Atharvā, Kaśyapa, Dhaumya, Paraśurāma, Śukrācārya, Āsuri, Vītihotra, Madhucchandā, Vīrasena, and Akṛtavraṇa. Besides all these *brāhmaṇas* and sages, he invited such respectful old men as Droṇācārya, Bhīṣma, the grandfather of the Kurus, Kṛpācārya, and Dhṛtarāṣṭra. He also invited all the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, headed by Duryodhana, and the great devotee Vidura was also invited. Kings from different parts of the world, along with their ministers and secretaries, were also invited to see the great sacrifice performed by King Yudhiṣṭhira, and the citizens, comprising learned *brāhmaṇas,* chivalrous *kṣatriyas,* well-to-do *vaiśyas,* and faithful *śūdras,* all visited the ceremony.

The *brāhmaṇa* priests and sages in charge of the sacrificial ceremony constructed the sacrificial arena as usual with a plow of gold, and they initiated King Yudhiṣṭhira as the performer of the great sacrifice, in accordance with Vedic rituals. Long years ago, when Varuṇa performed a similar sacrifice, all the sacrificial utensils were made of gold. Similarly, in the Rājasūya sacrifice of King Yudhiṣṭhira, all the utensils required for the sacrifice were golden.

In order to participate in the great sacrifice performed by King Yudhiṣṭhira, all the exalted demigods like Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva, and Indra the King of heaven, accompanied by their associates, as well as the predominating deities of higher planetary systems like Gandharvaloka, Siddhaloka, Janaloka, Tapoloka, Nāgaloka, Yakṣaloka, Rākṣasaloka, Pakṣiloka and Cāraṇaloka, as well as famous kings and their queens, were all present by the invitation of King Yudhiṣṭhira. All the respectable sages, kings and demigods who assembled there unanimously agreed that King Yudhiṣṭhira was quite competent to take the responsibility of performing the Rājasūya sacrifice; no one was in disagreement on this fact. All of them knew thoroughly the position of King Yudhiṣṭhira; because he was a great devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa, no accomplishment was extraordinary for him. The learned *brāhmaṇas* and priests saw to it that the sacrifice by Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira was performed in exactly the same way as in bygone ages by the demigod Varuṇa. According to the Vedic system, whenever there is an arrangement for sacrifice, the members participating in the sacrifice are offered the juice of the *soma* plant. The juice of the *soma* plant is a kind

of life-giving beverage. On the day of extracting the *soma* juice, King Yudhiṣṭhira very respectfully received the special priest who had been engaged to detect any mistake in the formalities of sacrificial procedures. The idea is that the Vedic *mantras* must be enuciated perfectly and chanted with the proper accent; if the priests who are engaged in this business commit any mistake, the checker or referee priest immediately corrects the procedure, and thus the ritualistic performances are perfectly executed. Unless it is perfectly executed, a sacrifice cannot yield the desired result. In this age of Kali there is no such learned *brāhmaṇa* or priest available; therefore, all such sacrifices are forbidden. The only sacrifice recommended in the *śāstras* is the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra.*

Another important procedure is that the most exalted personality in the assembly of such a sacrificial ceremony is first offered worship. After all arrangements were made for Yudhiṣṭhira's sacrifice, the next consideration was who should be worshiped first in the ceremony. This particular ceremony is called Agrapūjā. *Agra* means first, and *pūjā* means worship. This Agrapūjā is similar to election of the president. In the sacrificial assembly, all the members were very exalted. Some proposed to elect one person as the perfect candidate for accepting Agrapūjā, and others proposed someone else.

When the matter remained undecided, Sahadeva began to speak in favor of Lord Kṛṣṇa. He said, "Lord Kṛṣṇa, the best amongst the members of the Yadu dynasty and the protector of His devotees, is the most exalted personality in this assembly. Therefore I think that He should without any objection be offered the honor of being worshiped first. Although demigods such as Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva, Indra, the King of heavenly planets, and many other exalted personalities are present in this assembly, no one can be equal to or greater than Kṛṣṇa in terms of time, space, riches, strength, reputation, wisdom, renunciation or any other consideration. Anything which is considered opulent is present originally in Kṛṣṇa. As an individual soul is the basic principle of the growth of his material body, similarly Kṛṣṇa is the Supersoul of this cosmic manifestation. All kinds of Vedic ritualistic ceremonies, such as the performance of sacrifices, the offering of oblations in the fire, the chanting of the Vedic hymns and the practice of mystic *yoga*—all are meant for realizing Kṛṣṇa. Whether one follows the path of fruitive activities or the path of philosophical speculation, the ultimate destination is Kṛṣṇa; all bona fide methods of self-realization are meant for understanding Kṛṣṇa. Ladies and gentlemen, it is superfluous to speak about Kṛṣṇa, because every one of you exalted personalities know the Supreme Brahman, Lord Kṛṣṇa, for whom there are no

material differences between body and soul, between energy and the energetic, or between one part of the body and another. Since everyone is a part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa, there is no qualitative difference between Kṛṣṇa and all living entities. Everything is an emanation of Kṛṣṇa's energies, the material and spiritual energies. Kṛṣṇa's energies are like the heat and light of the fire; there is no difference between the quality of heat and light and the fire itself.

"Also, Kṛṣṇa can do anything He likes with any part of His body. We can execute a particular action with the help of a particular part of our body, but He can do anything and everything with any part of His body. And because His transcendental body is full of knowledge and bliss in eternity, He doesn't undergo the six kinds of material changes—birth, existence, growth, fruitive action, dwindling and vanishing. Unforced by any external energy, He is the supreme cause of the creation, maintenance and dissolution of everything that be. By the grace of Kṛṣṇa only, everyone is engaged in the practice of religiousness, the development of economic conditions, the satisfaction of the senses and, ultimately, the achievement of liberation from material bondage. These four principles of progressive life can be executed by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa only. He should therefore be offered the first worship of this great sacrifice, and no one should disagree. As by watering the root, the watering of the branches, twigs, leaves and flowers is automatically accomplished, or as by supplying food to the stomach, the nutrition and metabolism of all parts of the body are automatically established, so by offering the first worship to Kṛṣṇa, everyone present in this meeting—including the great demigods—will be satisfied. If anyone is charitably disposed, it will be very good for him to give in charity only to Kṛṣṇa, who is the Supersoul of everyone, regardless of his particular body or individual personality. Kṛṣṇa is present as the Supersoul in every living being, and if we can satisfy Him, then automatically every living being becomes satisfied."

Sahadeva was fortunate to know of the glories of Kṛṣṇa, and after describing them in brief, he stopped speaking. After this speech was delivered, all the members present in that great sacrificial assembly applauded, confirming his words continuously by saying, "Everything that you have said is completely perfect. Everything that you have said is completely perfect." King Yudhiṣṭhira, after hearing the confirmation of all present, especially of the *brāhmaṇas* and learned sages, worshiped Lord Kṛṣṇa according to the regulative principles of the Vedic injunctions. First of all, King Yudhiṣṭhira—along with his brothers, wives, children, other relatives and ministers—washed the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa and sprinkled the water on their heads. After this, Lord Kṛṣṇa was offered various kinds of silken

garments of yellow color, and heaps of jewelry and ornaments were presented before Him for His use.

King Yudhiṣṭhira felt such ecstasy by honoring Kṛṣṇa, who was his only lovable object, that tears glided down from his eyes, and although He wanted to, he could not see Lord Kṛṣṇa very well. Lord Kṛṣṇa was thus worshiped by King Yudhiṣṭhira. At that time all the members present in that assembly stood up with folded hands and began to chant, *"Jaya! Jaya! Namaḥ! Namaḥ!"* When all joined together to offer their respectful obeisances to Kṛṣṇa, there were showers of flowers from the sky.

In that meeting, King Śiśupāla was also present. He was an avowed enemy of Kṛṣṇa for many reasons, especially because of Kṛṣṇa's having stolen Rukmiṇī from the marriage ceremony; therefore, he could not tolerate such honor to Kṛṣṇa and glorification of His qualities. Instead of being happy to hear the glories of the Lord, he became very angry. When everyone offered respect to Kṛṣṇa by standing up, Śiśupāla remained in his seat, but when he became angry at Kṛṣṇa's being honored, Śiśupāla stood up suddenly, and, raising his hand, began to speak very strongly and fearlessly against Lord Kṛṣṇa. He spoke in such a way that Lord Kṛṣṇa could hear him very distinctly.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I can appreciate now the statement of the *Vedas* that, after all, time is the predominating factor. In spite of all endeavors to the contrary, the time element executes its own plan without opposition. For example, one may try his best to live, but when the time for death comes, no one can check it. I see here that although there are many stalwart personalities present in this assembly, the influence of time is so strong that they have been misled by the statement of a boy who has foolishly spoken about Kṛṣṇa. There are many learned sages and elderly persons present, but still they have accepted the statement of a foolish boy. This means that by the influence of time, even the intelligence of such honored persons as are present in this meeting can be misdirected. I fully agree with the respectable persons present here that they are competent enough to select the personality who can be first worshiped, but I cannot agree with the statement of a boy like Sahadeva, who has spoken so highly about Kṛṣṇa and has recommended that Kṛṣṇa is fit to accept the first worship in the sacrifice. I can see that in this meeting there are many personalities who have undergone great austerities, who are highly learned and who have performed many penances. By their knowledge and direction, they can deliver many persons who are suffering from the pangs of material existence. There are great *ṛṣis* here whose knowledge has no bounds, as well as many self-realized persons and *brāhmaṇas* also, and therefore I think that any one of them could have been selected for the first worship

because they are worshipable even by the great demigods, kings and emperors. I cannot understand how you could have selected this cowherd boy, Kṛṣṇa, and have left aside all these other great personalities. I think Kṛṣṇa to be no better than a crow—how can He be fit to accept the first worship in this great sacrifice?

"We cannot even ascertain as yet to which caste this Kṛṣṇa belongs or what His actual occupational duty is." Actually, Kṛṣṇa does not belong to any caste, nor does He have to perform any occupational duty. It is stated in the *Vedas* that the Supreme Lord has nothing to do as His prescribed duty. Whatever has to be done on His behalf is executed by His different energies.

Śiśupāla continued: "Kṛṣṇa does not belong to a high family. He is so independent that no one knows His principles of religious life. It appears that He is outside the jurisdiction of all religious principles. He always acts independently, not caring for the Vedic injunctions and regulative principles. Therefore He is devoid of all good qualities." Śiśupāla indirectly praised Kṛṣṇa by saying that He is not within the jurisdiction of Vedic injunction. This is true because He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. That He has no qualities means that Kṛṣṇa has no material qualities, and because He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, He acts independently, not caring for conventions or social or religious principles.

Siśupāla continued: "Under these circumstances, how can He be fit to accept the first worship in the sacrifice? Kṛṣṇa is so foolish that He has left Mathurā, which is inhabited by highly elevated persons following the Vedic culture, and He has taken shelter in the ocean, where there is not even talk of the *Vedas.* Instead of living openly, He has constructed a fort within the water and is living in an atmosphere where there is no discussion of Vedic knowledge. And whenever He comes out of the fort, He simply harrasses the citizens like a dacoit, thief or rogue."

Śiśupāla went crazy because of Kṛṣṇa's being elected the supreme first-worshiped person in that meeting, and he spoke so irresponsibly that it appeared that he had lost all his good fortune. Being overcast with misofrutne, Śiśupāla continued to insult Kṛṣṇa further, and Lord Kṛṣṇa patiently heard him without protest. Just as a lion does not care when a flock of jackals howl, Lord Kṛṣṇa remained silent and unprovoked. Kṛṣṇa did not reply to even a single accusation made by Śiśupāla, but all the members present in the meeting, except a few who agreed with Śiśupāla, became very agitated because it is the duty of any respectable person not to tolerate blasphemy against God or His devotee. Some of them, who thought that they could not properly take action against Śiśupāla, left the assembly in protest, covering their ears with their hands in order not to

hear further accusations. Thus they left the meeting condemning the action of Śiśupāla. It is the Vedic injunction that whenever there is blasphemy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, one must immediately leave. If he does not do so, he becomes bereft of his pious activities and is degraded to the lower condition of life.

All the kings present, belonging to the Kuru dynasty, Matsya dynasty, Kekaya dynasty and Sṛñjaya dynasty, became very angry and immediately took up their swords and shields to kill Śiśupāla. Śiśupāla was so foolish that he did not become even slightly agitated, although all the kings present were ready to kill him. He did not care to think of the pros and cons of his foolish talking, and when he saw that all the kings were ready to kill him, instead of stopping, he stood to fight with them and took up his sword and shield. When Lord Kṛṣṇa saw that they were going to engage in fighting in the arena of the auspicious Rājāsūya *yajña,* He personally pacified them. Out of His causeless mercy He Himself decided to kill Śiśupāla. When Śiśupāla was abusing the kings who were about to attack him, Lord Kṛṣṇa took up His disc, which was as sharp as the blade of a razor, and immediately separated the head of Śiśupāla from his body.

When Śiśupāla was thus killed, a great roar and howl went up from the crowd of that assembly. Taking advantage of that disturbance, the few kings who were supporters of Śiśupāla quickly left the assembly out of fear of their lives. But despite all this, the fortunate Śiśupāla's spirit soul immediately merged into the body of Lord Kṛṣṇa in the presence of all members, exactly as a burning meteor falls to the surface of the globe. Śiśupāla's soul's merging into the transcendental body of Kṛṣṇa reminds us of the story of Jaya and Vijaya, who fell to the material world from the Vaikuṇṭha planets upon being cursed by the four Kumāras. For their return to the Vaikuṇṭha world, it was arranged that both Jaya and Vijaya for three consecutive births would act as deadly enemies of the Lord, and at the end of these lives they would again return to the Vaikuṇṭha world and serve the Lord as His associates.

Although Śiśupāla acted as the enemy of Kṛṣṇa, he was not for a single moment out of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. He was always absorbed in thought of Kṛṣṇa, and thus he got first the salvation of *sāyujya-mukti,* merging into the existence of the Supreme, and finally became reinstated in his original position of personal service. The *Bhagavad-gītā* corroborates the fact that if one is absorbed in the thought of the Supreme Lord at the time of death, he immediately enters the kingdom of God after quitting his material body. After the salvation of Śiśupāla, King Yudhiṣṭhira rewarded all the members present in the sacrificial assembly. He sufficiently remunerated the priests and the learned sages for their engagement in the execution of the sacrifice,

and after performing all this routine work, he took his bath. This bath at the end of the sacrifice is also technical. It is called the *avabhṛtha* bath.

Lord Kṛṣṇa thus enabled the performance of the Rājasūya *yajña* arranged by King Yudhiṣṭhira to be successfully completed, and, being requested by His cousins and relatives, He remained in Hastināpura for a few months more. Although King Yudhiṣṭhira and his brothers were not willing to have Lord Kṛṣṇa leave Hastināpura, Kṛṣṇa arranged to take permission from the King to return to Dvārakā, and thus He returned home along with His queens and ministers.

The story of the fall of Jaya and Vijaya from the Vaikuṇṭha planets to the material world is described in the Seventh Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.* The killing of Śiśupāla has a direct link with that narration of Jaya and Vijaya, but the most important instruction that we get from this incident is that the Supreme Personality of Godhead, being absolute, can give salvation to everyone, whether one acts as His enemy or as His friend. It is therefore a misconception that the Lord acts with someone in the relationship of a friend and with someone else in the relationship of an enemy. His being an enemy or friend is always on the absolute platform. There is no material distinction.

After King Yudhiṣṭhira took his bath after the sacrifice and stood in the midst of all the learned sages and *brāhmaṇas,* he seemed exactly like the King of heaven and thus looked very beautiful. King Yudhiṣṭhira sufficiently rewarded all the demigods who participated in the *yajña,* and being greatly satisfied, all of them left praising the King's activities and glorifying Lord Kṛṣṇa.

When Śukadeva Gosvāmī was narrating these incidents of Kṛṣṇa's killing Śiśupāla and describing the successful execution of the Rājasūya *yajña* by Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, he pointed out also that after the successful termination of the *yajña* there was only one person who was not happy. He was Duryodhana. Duryodhana by nature was very envious because of his sinful life, and he appeared in the dynasty of the Kurus as a chronic disease personified in order to destroy the whole family.

Śukadeva Gosvāmī assured Mahārāja Parīkṣit that the pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa—the killing of Śiśupāla and Jarāsandha and the releasing of the imprisoned kings—are all transcendental vibrations, and anyone who hears these narrations from the authorized persons will be immediately freed from all the reactions of the sinful activities of his life.

Thus ends the Bhaktivedanta purport of the Second Volume, Nineteenth Chapter of Kṛṣṇa, *"The Deliverance of Śiśupāla."*



20 / Why Duryodhana Felt Insulted at the End of the Rājasūya Sacrifice

King Yudhiṣṭhira was known as *ajātaśatru,* or a person who has no enemy. Therefore, when all men, all demigods, all kings, sages and saints saw the successful termination of the Rājasūya *yajña* performed by King Yudhiṣṭhira, they became very happy. That Duryodhana alone was not happy was astonishing to Mahārāja Parīkṣit, and therefore he requested Śukadeva Gosvāmī to explain this.

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said, "My dear King Parīkṣit, your grandfather, King Yudhiṣṭhira, was a great soul. His congenial disposition attracted everyone as his friend, and therefore he was known as *ajātaśatru,* one who never created an enemy. He engaged all the members of the Kuru dynasty in taking charge of different departments for the management of the Rājasūya sacrifice. For example, Bhīmasena was put in charge of the kitchen department, Duryodhana in charge of the treasury department, Sahadeva in charge of the reception department, Nakula in charge of the store department, and Arjuna was engaged in looking after the comforts of the elderly persons. The most astonishing feature was that Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, took charge of washing the feet of all the incoming guests. The Queen, the goddess of fortune Draupadī, was in charge of administering the distribution of food, and because Karṇa was famous for giving charity, he was put in charge of the charity department. In this way Sātyaki, Vikarṇa, Hārdikya, Vidura, Bhūriśravā, and Santardana, the son of Bāhlīka, were all engaged in different departments for managing the affairs of the Rājasūya sacrifice. They were all so bound in loving affection for King Yudhiṣṭhira that they simply wanted to please him.

After Śiśupāla had died by the mercy of Lord Kṛṣṇa and had become merged in the spiritual existence, and after the end of the Rājasūya *yajña,* when all friends, guests and well-wishers had been sufficiently honored and rewarded, King Yudhiṣṭhira went to bathe in the Ganges. The city of

Hastināpura is today standing on the bank of the Yamunā, and the statement of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that King Yudhiṣṭhira went to bathe in the Ganges indicates, therefore, that during the time of the Pāṇḍavas, the River Yamunā was also known as the Ganges. While the King was taking the *avabhṛtha* bath, different musical instruments, such as *mṛdaṅgas,* conchshells, drums, kettledrums and bugles, vibrated. In addition, the ankle bells of the dancing girls jingled. Many groups of professional singers played *vīṇās,* flutes, gongs and cymbals, and thus a tumultuous sound vibrated in the sky. The princely guests from many kingdoms, like Sṛñjaya, Kāmboja, Kuru, Kekaya and Kośala, were present with their different flags and gorgeously decorated elephants, chariots, horses and soldiers. All were passing in a procession, and King Yudhiṣṭhira was in the forefront. The executive members, such as the priests, religious ministers and *brāhmaṇas,* were performing a sacrifice, and all were loudly chanting the Vedic hymns. The demigods, the inhabitants of the Pitṛloka and Gandharvaloka, as well as many sages, showered flowers from the sky. The men and women of Hastināpura, Indraprastha, their bodies smeared with scents and floral oils, were nicely dressed in colorful garments and decorated with garlands, jewels and ornaments. They were all enjoying the ceremony, and they threw on each other liquid substances like water, oil, milk, butter and yogurt. Some even smeared these on each other's bodies. In this way, they were enjoying the occasion. The professional prostitutes were also engaged by jubilantly smearing these liquid substances on the bodies of the men, and the men reciprocated in the same way. All the liquid substances had been mixed with turmeric and saffron, and their color was a lustrous yellow.

In order to observe the great ceremony, many wives of the demigods had come in different airplanes, and they were visible in the sky. Similarly, the queens of the royal family arrived gorgeously decorated and surrounded by bodyguards on the surface on different palaquins. During this time, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the maternal cousin of the Pāṇḍavas, and His special friend Arjuna, were both throwing the liquid substances on the bodies of the queens. The queens became bashful, but at the same time their beautiful smiling brightened their faces. Because of the liquid substances thrown on their bodies, the saris covering them became completely wet. The different parts of their beautiful bodies, particularly their breasts and their waists, became partially visible because of the wet cloth. The queens also brought in buckets of liquid substances and sprinkled them on the bodies of their brothers-in-law. As they engaged in such jubilant activities, their hair fell loose, and the flowers decorating their bodies began to fall. When Lord

Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna and the queens were thus engaged in these jubilant activities, persons who were not clean in heart became agitated by lustful desires. In other words, such behavior between pure males and females is enjoyable, but persons who are materially contaminated become lustful.

King Yudhiṣṭhira, in a gorgeous chariot yoked by excellent horses, was present with his queens, including Draupadī and others. The festivities of the sacrifice were so beautiful that it appeared as if Rājasūya was standing there in person with the functions of the sacrifice.

Following the Rājasūya sacrifice, there was the Vedic ritualistic duty known as *patnīsaṁyāja.* This sacrifice was performed along with one's wife, and it was also duly performed by the priests of King Yudhiṣṭhira. When Queen Draupadī and King Yudhiṣṭhira were taking their *avabhṛtha* bath, the citizens of Hastināpura as well as the demigods began to beat on drums and blow trumpets out of feelings of happiness, and there was a shower of flowers from the sky. When the King and the Queen finished their bath in the Ganges, all the other citizens, consisting of all the *varṇas* or castes—the *brāhmaṇas,* the *kṣatriyas,* the *vaiśyas,* and the *śūdras*—took their baths in the Ganges. Bathing in the Ganges is recommended in the Vedic literatures because by such bathing one becomes freed from all sinful reactions. This is still current in India, especially at particularly auspicious moments. At such times, millions of people bathe in the Ganges.

After taking his bath, King Yudhiṣṭhira dressed in a new silken cloth and wrapper and decorated himself with valuable jewelry. The King not only dressed himself and decorated himself, but he also gave clothing and ornaments to all the priests and to the others who had participated in the *yajñas.* In this way, they were all worshiped by King Yudhiṣṭhira. He constantly worshiped his friends, his family members, his relatives, his well-wishers and everyone present, and because he was a great devotee of Lord Nārāyaṇa, or because he was a Vaiṣṇava, he therefore knew how to treat everyone well. The Māyāvadi philosophers' endeavor to see everyone as God is an artificial way towards oneness, but a Vaiṣṇava or a devotee of Lord Nārāyaṇa sees every living entity as part and parcel of the Supreme Lord. Therefore, a Vaiṣṇava's treatment of other living entities is on the absolute platform. Since one cannot treat one part of his body differently from another part because they all belong to the same body, so a Vaiṣṇava does not see a human being as distinct from an animal because in both of them he sees the soul and the Supersoul seated simultaneously.

When everyone was refreshed after bathing and was dressed in silken clothing with jeweled earrings, flower garlands, turbans, long wrappers and pearl necklaces, they looked, altogether, like the demigods from heaven.

This was especially true of the women, who were very nicely dressed. Each wore a golden belt around the waist. They were all smiling. Spots of *tilaka* and curling hair were scattered here and there. This combination was very attractive.

Persons who had participated in the Rājasūya sacrifice—including the most cultured priests, the *brāhmaṇas* who had assisted in the performance of the sacrifice, the citizens of all *varṇas,* kings, demigods, sages, saints and citizens of the Pitṛloka—were all very much satisfied by the dealings of King Yudhiṣṭhira, and at the end they happily departed for their residences. While returning to their homes, they talked of the dealings of King Yudhiṣṭhira, and even after continuous talk of his greatness they were not satiated, just as one may drink nectar over and over again and never be satisfied. After the departure of all others, Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira restrained the inner circle of his friends, including Lord Kṛṣṇa, by not allowing them to leave. Lord Kṛṣṇa could not refuse the request of the King. He therefore sent back all the heroes of the Yadu dynasty, like Sāmba and others. All of them returned to Dvārakā, and Lord Kṛṣṇa personally remained in order to give pleasure to the King.

In the material world, everyone has a particular type of desire to be fulfilled, but one is never able to fulfill his desires to his full satisfaction. But King Yudhiṣṭhira, because of his unflinching devotion to Kṛṣṇa, could fulfill all his desires successfully by the performance of the Rājasūya *yajña.* From the description of the execution of the Rājasūya *yajña,* it appears that such a function is a great ocean of opulent desires. It is not possible for an ordinary man to cross over such an ocean; nevertheless, by the grace of Lord Kṛṣṇa, King Yudhiṣṭhira was able to cross over it very easily, and thus he became freed from all anxieties.

When Duryodhana saw that Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira had become very famous after performance of the Rājasūya *yajña* and was fully satisfied in every respect, he began to burn with the fire of envy because his mind was always poisonous. For one thing, he envied the imperial palace which had been constructed by the demon Maya for the Pāṇḍavas. The palace was excellent in its puzzling artistic workmanship and was befitting the position of great princes, kings or leaders of the demons. In that great palace, the Pāṇḍavas were living with their family members, and Queen Draupadī was serving her husbands very peacefully. And because in those days Lord Kṛṣṇa was also there, the palace was also decorated by His thousands of queens. When the queens, with their heavy breasts and thin waists, moved within the palace, and their ankle bells rang very melodiously with their movement, the whole palace appeared to be more opulent than

the heavenly kingdoms. Because a portion of their breasts was sprinkled with saffron powder, the pearl necklaces on their breast appeared to be reddish. With their full earrings and flowing hair, the queens appeared very beautiful. After looking at such beauties in the palace of King Yudhiṣṭhira, Duryodhana became envious. He became especially envious and lustful upon seeing the beauty of Draupadī because he had cherished a special attraction for her from the very beginning of her marriage with the Pāṇḍavas. In the marriage selection assembly of Draupadī, Duryodhana had also been present, and with other princes he had been very much captivated by the beauty of Draupadī, but had failed to achieve her.

Once upon a time, King Yudhiṣṭhira was sitting on the golden throne in the palace constructed by the demon Maya. His four brothers and other relatives, as well as his great well-wisher, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, were present and the material opulence of King Yudhiṣṭhira seemed no less than that of Lord Brahmā. When he was sitting on the throne surrounded by his friends, and the reciters were offering prayers to him in the form of nice songs, Duryodhana, with his younger brother, came to the palace. Duryodhana was decorated with a helmet, and he carried a sword in his hand. He was always in an envious and angry mood, and therefore, on a slight provocation, he spoke sharply with the doorkeepers and became angry. He was irritated because he failed to distinguish between water and land. By the craftmanship of the demon Maya, the palace was so decorated in different places that one who did not know the tricks would consider water to be land and land to be water. Duryodhana was also illusioned by this craftmanship, and when he was crossing water thinking it to be land, he fell down. When Duryodhana, out of his foolishness, had thus fallen, the queens enjoyed the incident by laughing. King Yudhiṣṭhira, could understand the feelings of Duryodhana, and he tried to restrain the queens from laughing, but Lord Kṛṣṇa indicated that King Yudhiṣṭhira should not restrain them from enjoying the incident. Kṛṣṇa desired that Duryodhana might be fooled in that way and that all of them might enjoy his foolish behavior. When everyone laughed, Duryodhana felt very insulted, and his hair stood up in anger. Being thus insulted, he immediately left the palace, bowing his head. He was silent and did not protest. When Duryodhana left in such an angry mood, everyone regretted the incident, and King Yudhiṣṭhira also became very sorry. But despite all occurrences, Kṛṣṇa was silent. He did not say anything against or in favor of the incident. It appeared that Duryodhana had been put into illusion by the supreme will of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and this was the beginning of the enmity between the two sects of the Kuru dynasty. It appeared that it was a part

of Kṛṣṇa's plan in His mission to decrease the burden of the world.

King Parīkṣit had inquired from Śukadeva Gosvāmī as to why Duryodhana was not satisfied after the termination of the great Rājasūya sacrifice, and thus it was explained by Śukadeva Gosvāmī.

Thus ends the Bhaktivedanta purport of the Second Volume, Twentieth Chapter, of Kṛṣṇa, *"Why Duryodhana Felt Insulted at the End of the Rājasūya Sacrifice."*



21 / The Battle Between Śālva and the Members of the Yadu Dynasty

While Śukadeva Gosvāmī was narrating various activities of Lord Kṛṣṇa in playing the role of an ordinary human being, he also narrated the history of the battle between the dynasty of Yadu and a demon of the name Śālva, who had managed to possess a wonderful airship named Saubha. King Śālva was a great friend of Śiśupāla's. When Śiśupala went to marry Rukmiṇī, Śālva was one of the members of the bridegroom's party. When there was a fight between the soldiers of the Yadu dynasty and the kings of the opposite side, Śālva was defeated by the soldiers of the Yadu dynasty. But, despite his defeat, he made a promise before all the kings that he would in the future rid the whole world of all the members of the Yadu dynasty. Since his defeat in the fight during the marriage of Rukmiṇī, he had maintained within himself an unforgettable envy of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and he was, in fact, a fool, because he had promised to kill Kṛṣṇa.

Usually such foolish demons take shelter of a demigod like Lord Śiva to execute their ulterior plans, and so Śālva, in order to get strength, took shelter of the lotus feet of Lord Śiva. He underwent a severe type of austerity during which he would eat no more than a handful of ashes daily. Lord Śiva, the husband of Pārvatī, is generally very merciful, and he becomes very quickly satisfied if someone undertakes severe austerities in order to please him. So after continued austerities by Śālva for one year, Lord Śiva became pleased with him and asked him to beg for the fulfillment of his desire.

Śālva begged from Lord Śiva the gift of an airplane which would be so strong that it could not be destroyed by any demigod, demon, human being, Gandharva, Nāga, or even by any Rākṣasa. Moreover, he desired that the airplane be able to fly anywhere and everywhere he would like to pilot it, and be specifically very dangerous and fearful to the dynasty of the Yadus. Lord Śiva immediately agreed to give him the benediction, and

Śālva took the help of the demon Maya to manufacture this iron airplane, which was so strong and formidable that no one could crash it. It was a very big machine, almost like a big city, and it could fly so high and at such a great speed that it was almost impossible to see where it was, and so there was no question of attacking it. Although it might be dark outside, the pilot could fly it anywhere and everywhere. Having acquired such a wonderful airplane, Śālva flew it to the city of Dvārakā, because his main purpose in obtaining the airplane was to attack the city of the Yadus, toward whom he maintained a continual feeling of animosity.

Śālva thus not only attacked the city of Dvārakā from the sky, but he also surrounded the city by a large number of infantry. The soldiers on the surface began to attack the beautiful spots of the city. They began to destroy the baths, the city gates, the palaces and the skyscraper houses, the high walls around the city and the beautiful spots where people would gather for recreation. While the soldiers were attacking on the surface, the airplane began to drop big slabs of stone, tree trunks, thunderbolts, poisonous snakes and many other dangerous things. Śālva also managed to create such a strong whirlwind within the city that all of Dvārakā became dark because of the dust that covered the sky. The airplane occupied by Śālva put the entire city of Dvārakā into distress equal to that caused on the earth long, long ago by the disturbing activities of Tripurāsura. The inhabitants of Dvārakā Purī became so harrassed that they were not in a peaceful condition for even a moment.

The great heroes of Dvārakā City, headed by commanders such as Pradyumna, counterattacked the soldiers and the airplane of Śālva. When he saw the extreme distress of the citizens, Pradyumna immediately arranged his soldiers and personally got upon a chariot, encouraging the citizens by assuring safety. Following his command, many warriors like Sātyaki, Cārudeṣṇa and Sāmba, all young brothers of Pradyumna, as well as Akrūra, Kṛtavarmā, Bhānuvinda, Gada, Śuka and Sāraṇa—all came out of the city to fight with Śālva. All of them were great fighters; each one could fight with thousands of men. All were fully equipped with necessary weapons and assisted by hundreds and thousands of charioteers, elephants, horses and infantry soldiers. Fierce fighting began between the two parties, exactly as was formerly carried on between the demigods and the demons. The fighting was very severe, and whoever observed the fierce nature of the fight felt his hairs stand on end.

Pradyumna immediately counteracted the mystic demonstration occasioned by the airplane of Śālva, the King of Saubha. By the mystic power of the airplane, Śālva had created a darkness as dense as night, but Pradyumna all of a sudden appeared like the rising sun. As with the rising

of the sun the darkness of night is immediately dissipated, so with the appearance of Pradyumna the power exhibited by Śālva became null and void. Each and every one of Pradyumna's arrows had a golden feather at the end, and the shaft was fitted with a sharp iron edge. By releasing twenty-five such arrows, Pradyumna severely injured Śālva's commander-in-chief. He then released another one hundred arrows toward the body of Śālva. After this, he pierced each and every soldier by releasing one arrow, and he killed the chariot drivers by firing ten arrows at each one of them. The carriers like the horses and elephants were killed by the release of three arrows directed toward each one of them. When everyone present on the battlefield saw this wonderful feat of Pradyumna, the great fighters on both the sides began to praise his acts of chivalry.

But still the airplane occupied by Śālva was very mysterious. It was so extraordinary that sometimes there would appear to be many airplanes in the sky, and sometimes it would be seen that there was none. Sometimes it was visible, and sometimes it was not visible, and the warriors of the Yadu dynasty became puzzled about the whereabouts of the peculiar airplane. Sometimes they would see the airplane on the ground, and sometimes they would see it flying in the sky. Sometimes they would see the airplane resting on the peak of a hill, and sometimes it was seen floating on the water. The wonderful airplane was flying in the sky like a firefly in the wind—it was not steady even for a moment. But despite the mysterious maneuvering of the airplane, the commanders and the soldiers of the Yadu dynasty would immediately rush toward Śālva wherever he was present with his airplane and soldiers. The arrows released by the dynasty of the Yadus were as brilliant as the sun and as dangerous as the tongues of serpents. All the soldiers fighting on behalf of Śālva became soon distressed by the incessant release of arrows upon them by the heroes of the Yadu dynasty, and Śālva himself became unconscious from the attack of these arrows.

The soldiers and the fighters fighting on behalf of Śālva were also very strong, and the release of their arrows also harassed the heroes of the Yadu dynasty. But still the Yadus were so strong and determined that they did not move from their strategic positions. The heroes of the Yadu dynasty were determined to either die in the battlefield or gain victory. They were confident of the fact that if they would die in the fighting they would attain a heavenly planet, and if they would come out victorious they would enjoy the world. The name of Śālva's commander-in-chief was Dyumān. He was very powerful, and although bitten by twenty-five of Pradyumna's arrows, he suddenly attacked Pradyumna with his fierce

club and struck him so strongly that Pradyumna became unconscious. Immediately there was a roaring, "Now he is dead! Now he is dead!" The force of the club on the chest of Pradyumna was very severe, enough to tear asunder the chest of an ordinary man.

Pradyumna's chariot was being driven by the son of Dāruka. According to Vedic military principles, the chariot driver and the hero on the chariot have to cooperate during the fighting. As such, it was the duty of the chariot driver to take care of the hero on the chariot during the dangerous and precarious fighting on the battlefield. Thus Dāruka removed the body of Pradyumna from the battlefield. Two hours later, in a quiet place, Pradyumna regained his consciousness, and when he saw that he was in a place other than the battlefield he addressed the charioteer and condemned him:

"Oh, you have done the most abominable act! Why have you moved me from the battlefield? My dear charioteer, I have never heard that anyone in our family was ever removed from the battlefield. None of them left the battlefield while fighting. By this removal you have overburdened me with a great defamation. It will be said that I left the battlefield while fighting was going on. My dear charioteer, I must accuse you—you are a coward and emasculator! Tell me, how can I go before my uncle Balarāma and before my father Kṛṣṇa, and what shall I say before them? Everyone will talk about me and say that I fled from the fighting place, and if they inquire from me about this, what will be my reply? My sisters-in-law will play jokes upon me with sarcastic words: 'My dear hero, how have you become such a coward? How have you become a eunuch? How have you become so low in the eyes of the fighters who opposed you?' I think, my dear charioteer, that you have committed a great offense by removing me from the battlefield."

The charioteer of Pradyumna replied, "My dear sir, I wish a long life for you. I think I did not do anything wrong, as it is the duty of the charioteer to help the fighter in the chariot when he is in a precarious condition. My dear sir, you are completely competent in the battlefield activities. It is the mutual duty of the charioteer and the warrior to give protection to each other in a precarious condition. I was completely aware of the regulative principles of fighting, and I did my duty. The enemy all of a sudden struck you with his club so severely that you lost consciousness. You were in a dangerous position, surrounded by your enemies. Therefore I was obliged to act as I did."

Thus ends the Bhaktivedanta purport of the Second Volume, Twenty-first chapter, of Kṛṣṇa, *"The Battle between Śālva and the Members of the Yadu Dynasty."*



22 / The Deliverance of Śālva

After talking with his charioteer, the son of Dāruka, Pradyumna could understand the real circumstances, and therefore he refreshed himself by washing his mouth and hands. Arming himself properly with bows and arrows, he asked his charioteer to take him near the place where Śālva's commander-in-chief was standing. During the short absence of Pradyumna from the battlefield, Dyumān, Śālva's commander-in-chief, had been taking over the position of the soldiers of the Yadu dynasty. By appearing in the battlefield, Pradyumna immediately stopped him and struck him with eight arrows. With four arrows he killed his four horses, with one arrow he killed his chariot driver and with another arrow he cut his bow in two; with another arrow, he cut his flag into pieces, and with another he severed his head from his body.

On the other fronts, heroes like Gada, Sātyaki and Sāmba were engaged in killing the soldiers of Śālva. The soldiers who were staying with Śālva in the airplane were also killed in the fighting, and they fell into the ocean. Each party began to strike the opposite party very severely. The battle was fierce and dangerous and continued for twenty-seven days without stop. While the fight was going on in the city of Dvārakā, Kṛṣṇa was staying at Indraprastha along with the Pāṇḍavas and King Yudhiṣṭhira. This fighting with Śālva took place after the Rājasūya *yajña* had been performed by King Yudhiṣṭhira and after the killing of Śiśupāla. When Lord Kṛṣṇa understood that there was great danger in the city of Dvārakā, He took permission from the elderly members of the Pāṇḍava family, especially from his aunt Kuntīdevī, and started immediately for Dvārakā.

Lord Kṛṣṇa began to think that while He was arriving in Hastināpura with Balarāma after the killing of Śiśupāla, Śiśupāla's men must have attacked Dvārakā. On reaching Dvārakā, Lord Kṛṣṇa saw that the whole city was greatly endangered. He placed Balarāmajī in a strategic position for the protection of the city, and He Himself asked His charioteer Dāruka

to prepare to start. He said, "Dāruka, please immediately take Me to where Śālva is staying. You may know that this Śālva is a very powerful, mysterious man. Don't fear him in the least." As soon as he got his orders from Lord Kṛṣṇa, Dāruka had Him seated on the chariot and drove very quickly toward Śālva.

The chariot of Lord Kṛṣṇa was marked with the flag bearing the insignia of Garuḍa, and as soon as the soldiers and warriors of the Yadu dynasty saw the flag, they could understand that Lord Kṛṣṇa was on the battlefield. By this time, almost all the soldiers of Śālva had been killed, but when Śālva saw that Kṛṣṇa had come to the battlefield, he released a great, powerful weapon which flew through the sky with a roaring sound like a great meteor. It was so bright that the whole sky lit up by its presence. But as soon as Lord Kṛṣṇa appeared, He tore the great weapon into hundreds and thousands of pieces by releasing His own arrow.

Lord Kṛṣṇa struck Śālva with sixteen arrows, and with showers of arrows He overpowered the airplane, just as the sun in a clear sky overpowers the whole sky by an unlimited number of molecules of sunshine. Śālva struck a severe blow to Kṛṣṇa's left side, where the Lord was carrying His bow, Śārṅga, and as a result the Śārṅga bow fell from Lord Kṛṣṇa's hand. This dropping of the bow was indeed wonderful. Great personalities and demigods who were observing the fighting between Śalva and Kṛṣṇa became most perturbed by this, and they began to exclaim, "Alas! Alas!"

Śālva thought that he had become victorious, and with a roaring sound began to address Lord Kṛṣṇa as follows: "You rascal, Kṛṣṇa! You kidnapped Rukmiṇī forcibly, even in our presence. You baffled my friend Śiśupāla and married Rukmiṇī Yourself. And in the great assembly at King Yudhiṣṭhira's Rājasūya *yajña,* while my friend Śiśupāla was a little absentminded, You took an opportunity to kill him. Everyone thinks that You are a great fighter and that no one can conquer You. So now You'll have to prove Your strength. I think that if You stand before me any longer, with my sharpened arrows I shall send You to a place wherefrom You will never return." "

To this Lord Kṛṣṇa replied, "Foolish Śālva, you are talking nonsensically. You do not know that the moment of death is already upon your head. Those who are actually heroes do not talk much. They prove their prowess by practical exhibition of chivalrous activities." After saying this, Lord Kṛṣṇa, in great anger, struck Śālva on the collarbone with His club so severely that he began to bleed internally and tremble as if he were going to collapse from severe cold. Before Kṛṣṇa was able to strike him again, however, Śālva became invisible by his mystic power.

Within a few moments, a mysterious unknown man came before Lord Kṛṣṇa. Crying loudly, he bowed down at the Lord's lotus feet and said to Him, "Since You are the most beloved son of Your father Vasudeva, Your mother Devakī has sent me to inform You of the unfortunate news that Your father has been arrested by Śālva and taken away by force. He took him just as a butcher mercilessly takes away an animal." When Lord Kṛṣṇa heard this unfortunate news from the unknown man, He at first became most perturbed, just like an ordinary human being. His face showed signs of grief, and He began to cry in a pitious tone, "How could that happen? My brother Lord Balarāma is there, and it is impossible for anyone to conquer Balarāmajī. He is in charge of Dvārakā City, and I know He is always alert. How could Śālva possibly enter the city and arrest My father in that way? Whatever he may be, Śālva's power is limited, so how could it be possible that he has conquered the strength of Balarāmajī and taken away My father, arresting him as described by this man? Alas! Destiny is, after all, very powerful."

While Śrī Kṛṣṇa was thinking like this, Śālva brought before Him in custody a man exactly resembling Vasudeva, His father. These were all creations of the mystic power of Śālva.

Śālva began to address Kṛṣṇa, "You rascal, Kṛṣṇa! Look. This is Your father who has begotten You and by whose mercy You are still living. Now just see how I kill Your father. If You have any strength, try to save him." The mystic juggler, Śālva, speaking in this way before Lord Kṛṣṇa, immediately cut off the head of the false Vasudeva. Without hesitation he took away the dead body and got into his airplane. Lord Kṛṣṇa is the self-sufficient Supreme Personality of Godhead, yet because He was playing the role of a human being, He became very depressed for a moment, as if He had actually lost His father. But at the next moment He could understand that the arrest and killing of His father were demonstrations of the mystic powers which Śālva had learned from the demon Maya. Coming to His right consciousness, He could see that there was no messenger and no head of His father, but that only Śālva had left in his airplane, which was flying in the sky. He then began to think of slaying Śālva.

Kṛṣṇa's reaction is a controversial point among great authorities and saintly persons. How could Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the reservoir of all power and knowledge, be bewildered in such a way? Lamentation, aggrievement and bewilderment are characteristics of persons who are conditioned souls, but how can such things affect the person of the Supreme, who is full of knowledge, power and all opulence? Actually, it is not at all possible that Lord Kṛṣṇa was misled by the mystic jugglery

of Śālva. He was displaying His pastime in playing the role of a human being. Great saintly persons and sages who are engaged in the devotional service of the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa and who have thus achieved the greatest perfection of self-realization have transcended the bewilderments of the bodily concept of life. Lord Kṛṣṇa is the ultimate goal of life for such saintly persons. How then could Kṛṣṇa have been bewildered by the mystic jugglery of Śālva? The conclusion is that Lord Kṛṣṇa's bewilderment was another opulence of His supreme personality.

When Śālva thought that Kṛṣṇa had been bewildered by his mystic representations, he became encouraged and began to attack the Lord with greater strength and energy by showering volumes of arrows upon Him. But the enthusiasm of Śālva can be compared to the speedy march of flies into a fire. Lord Kṛṣṇa, by hurling His arrows with unfathomable strength, injured Śālva, whose armor, bow and jewelled helmet all scattered into pieces. With a crashing blow from Kṛṣṇa's club, Śālva's wonderful airplane burst into pieces and fell into the sea. Śālva was very careful, and instead of crashing with the airplane, he managed to jump onto the land. He again rushed towards Lord Kṛṣṇa. When Śālva ran swiftly to attack Kṛṣṇa with His club, Lord Kṛṣṇa cut off his hand, which fell to the ground with the club. Finally deciding to kill him, the Lord took up His wonderful disc, which was shining like the brilliant sun at the time of the dissolution of the material creation. When Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa stood up with His disc to kill Śālva, He appeared just like the red sun rising over a mountain. Lord Kṛṣṇa then cut off his head, and the head, with its earrings and helmet, fell on the ground. Śālva was thus killed in the same way as Vṛtrāsura was killed by Indra, the King of heaven.

When Śālva was killed, all his soldiers and followers began to cry, "Alas! Alas!" While Śālva's men were thus crying, the demigods from the heavenly planets showered flowers on Kṛṣṇa and announced the victory by beating on drums and blowing bugles. At this very moment, other friends of Śiśupāla, such as Dantavakra, appeared on the scene to fight with Kṛṣṇa in order to avenge the death of Śiśupāla. When Dantavakra appeared before Lord Kṛṣṇa, he was extremely angry.

Thus ends the Bhaktivedanta purport of the Second Volume, Twenty-second Chapter, of Kṛṣṇa, *"The Deliverance of Śālva."*



23 / The Killing of Dantavakra, Vidūratha and Romaharṣaṇa

After the demise of Śiśupāla, Śālva and Pauṇḍra, another foolish demoniac king of the name Dantavakra wanted to kill Kṛṣṇa in order to avenge the death of his friend Śālva. He became so agitated that he personally appeared on the battlefield without the proper arms and ammunition and without even a chariot. His only weapon was his great anger, which was red-hot. He carried only a club in his hand, but he was so powerful that when he moved, everyone felt the earth tremble. When Lord Kṛṣṇa saw him approaching in a very heroic mood, He immediately got down from His chariot, for it was a rule of military etiquette that fighting should take place only between equals. Knowing that Dantavakra was alone and armed with only a club, Lord Kṛṣṇa responded similarly and prepared Himself by taking His club in His hand. When Kṛṣṇa appeared before him, Dantavakra's heroic march was immediately stopped just as the great, furious waves of the ocean are stopped by the beach.

At that time, Dantavakra, who was the King of Karūṣa, stood up firmly with his club and spoke to Lord Kṛṣṇa as follows: "It is a great pleasure and fortunate opportunity, Kṛṣṇa, that we are facing each other eye to eye. My dear Kṛṣṇa, after all, You are my eternal cousin, and I should not kill You in this way, but unfortunately You have commited a great mistake by killing my friend Śālva. Moreover, You are not satisfied by killing my friend, but I know that You want to kill me also. Because of Your determination, I must kill You by tearing You into pieces with my club. Kṛṣṇa, although You are my relative, You are foolish. You are our greatest enemy, so I must kill You today just as a person removes a boil on his body by a surgical operation. I am always very much obliged to my friends, and I therefore consider myself indebted to my dear friend Śālva. I can only liquidate my indebtedness to him by killing You."

As the caretaker of an elephant tries to control the animal by striking it with his trident, so Dantavakra tried to control Kṛṣṇa simply by speaking strong words. After finishing his vituperation, he struck Kṛṣṇa on the head with his club and made a roaring sound like a lion. Although struck strongly by the club of Dantavakra, Kṛṣṇa did not move even an inch, nor did He feel any pain. Taking His Kaumodakī club and moving very skillfully, Kṛṣṇa struck the chest of Dantavakra so fiercely that the heart of Dantavakra split in twain. As a result, Dantavakra began to vomit blood, his hairs became scattered, and he fell to the ground, spreading his hands and legs. Within only a few minutes all that remained of Dantavakra was a dead body on the ground. After the death of Dantavakra, just as at the time of Śiśupāla's death, in the presence of all persons standing there, a small particle of spiritual effulgence came out of the demon's body and very wonderfully merged into the body of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Dantavakra had a brother named Vidūratha who became overwhelmed with grief at the death of Dantavakra. Out of grief and anger, Vidūratha was breathing very heavily, and just to avenge the death of his brother he also appeared before Lord Kṛṣṇa with a sword and a shield in his hands. He wanted to kill Kṛṣṇa immediately. When Lord Kṛṣṇa understood that Vidūratha was looking for the opportunity to strike Him with his sword, He employed His Sudarśana cakra, His disc, which was as sharp as a razor, and without delay he cut off the head of Vidūratha, with its helmet and earrings.

In this way, after killing Śālva and destroying his wonderful airplane and then killing Dantavakra and Vidūratha, Lord Kṛṣṇa at last entered His city, Dvārakā. It would not have been possible for anyone but Kṛṣṇa to kill these great heroes, and therefore all the demigods from heaven and the human beings on the surface of the globe were glorifying Him. Great sages and ascetics, the denizens of the Siddha and Gandharva planets, the denizens known as Vidyādharas, Vāsuki and the Mahānāgas, the beautiful angels, the inhabitants of Pitṛloka, the Yakṣas, the Kinnaras and the Cāraṇas all began to shower flowers upon Him and sing the songs of His victory in great jubilation. Decorating the entire city very festively, the citizens of Dvārakā held a great celebration, and when Lord Kṛṣṇa passed through the city all the members of the Vṛṣṇi dynasty and the heroes of the Yadu dynasty followed Him with great respect. These are some of the transcendental pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is the master of all mystic power and the Lord of all cosmic manifestations. Those who are fools, who are like animals, sometimes think that Kṛṣṇa is defeated, but factually He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and no one can defeat Him. He always remains victorious over everyone. He is the only one God, and all others are His subservient order carriers.

Once upon a time, Lord Balarāma heard that there was an arrangement being made for a fight between the two rival parties in the Kuru dynasty, one headed by Duryodhana and the other by the Pāṇḍavas. He did not like the idea that He was to be only a mediator to stop the fighting. Finding it unbearable not to take an active part on behalf of either of the parties, He left Dvārakā on the plea of visiting various holy places of pilgrimage. He first of all visited the place of pilgrimage known as Prabhāsakṣetra. He took His bath there, and He pacified the local *brāhmaṇas* and offered oblations to the demigods, *pitās,* great sages and people in general, in accordance with Vedic ritualistic ceremonies. That is the Vedic method of visiting holy places. After this, accompanied by some respectable *brāhmaṇas,* He decided to visit different places on the bank of the River Sarasvatī. He gradually visited such places as Pṛthūdaka, Bindusara, Tritakūpa, Sudarśanatīrtha, Viśālatīrtha, Brahmatīrtha and Cakratīrtha. Besides these, He also visited all the holy places on the bank of Sarasvatī River running toward the east. After this He visited all the principal holy places on the bank of the Yamunā and on the bank of the Ganges. Thus He gradually came to the holy place known as Naimiṣāraṇya.

This holy place, Naimiṣāraṇya, is still existing in India, and in ancient times it was especially used for the meetings of great sages and saintly persons with the aim of understanding spiritual life and self-realization. When Lord Balarāma visited that place there was a great sacrifice being performed by a great assembly of transcendentalists. Such meetings were planned to last thousands of years. When Lord Balarāma arrived, all the participants of the meeting—great sages, ascetics, *brāhmaṇas* and learned scholars—immediately arose from their seats and welcomed Him with great honor and respect. Some offered Him respectful obeisances, and those who were elderly great sages and *brāhmaṇas* offered Him blessings by standing up. After this formality, Lord Balarāma was offered a suitable seat, and everyone present worshiped Him. Everyone in the assembly stood up in the presence of Balarāma because they knew Him to be the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Education or learning means to understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead; therefore, although Lord Balarāma appeared on the earth as a *kṣatriya,* all the *brāhmaṇas* and sages stood up because they knew who Lord Balarāma was.

Unfortunately, after being worshiped and seated at His place, Lord Balarāma saw Romaharṣaṇa, the disciple of Vyāsadeva (the literary incarnation of Godhead), still sitting on the Vyāsāsana. He had neither gotten up from his seat nor offered Him respects. Because he was seated on the Vyāsāsana, he foolishly thought himself greater than the Lord; therefore he did not get down from his seat or bow down before the Lord. Lord

Balarāma then considered the history of Romaharṣaṇa: he was born in a *sūta* family or a mixed family, born of a *brāhmaṇa* woman and *kṣatriya* man. Therefore although Romaharṣaṇa considered Balarāma a *kṣatriya,* he should not have remained sitting on a higher seat. Lord Balarāma considered that Romaharṣaṇa, according to his position by birth, should not have accepted the higher sitting position, because there were many learned *brāhmaṇas* and sages present. He also observed that Romaharṣaṇa not only did not come down from his exalted seat, but he did not even stand up and offer his respects when Balarāmajī entered the assembly. Lord Balarāma did not like the audacity of Romaharṣaṇa, and he became very angry with him.

When a person is seated on the Vyāsāsana, he does not generally have to stand up to receive a particular person entering the assembly, but in this case the situation was different because Lord Baladeva is not an ordinary human being. Therefore, although Romaharṣaṇa Sūta was voted to the Vyāsāsana by all the *brāhmaṇas,* he should have followed the behavior of other learned sages and *brāhmaṇas* who were present and should have known that Lord Balarāma is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Respects are always due to Him, even though such respects can be avoided in the case of an ordinary man. The appearances of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma are especially meant for reestablishment of the religious principles. As stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā,* the highest religious principle is to surrender unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead. It is also confirmed in the *Śrīmad-Bhagavatam* that the topmost perfection of religiousness is to be engaged in the devotional service of the Lord.

When Lord Balarāma saw that Romaharṣaṇa Sūta did not understand the highest principle of religiousness in spite of having studied all the *Vedas,* He certainly could not support his position. Romaharṣaṇa Sūta had been given a chance to become a perfect *brāhmaṇa,* but because of his ill behavior in his relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, his low birth was immediately remembered. Romaharṣaṇa Sūta had been given the position of a *brāhmaṇa,* but he had not been born in the family of a *brāhmaṇa;* he had been born in a *pratiloma* family. According to the Vedic concept, there are two kinds of mixed family heritage. They are called *anuloma* and *pratiloma.* When a male is united with a female of a lower caste, the offspring is called *anuloma;* but when a male unites with a woman of a higher caste, the offspring is called *pratiloma.* Romaharṣaṇa Sūta belonged to the *pratiloma* family because his father was a *kṣatriya* and his mother a *brāhmaṇa.* Because Romaharṣaṇa's transcendental realization was not perfect, Lord Balarāma remembered his *pratiloma* heritage. The idea is that any man can be given the chance to become a

brāhmaṇa, but if he improperly uses the position of a *brāhmaṇa* without actual realization, then his elevation to the brahminical position is not valid.

After seeing the deficiency of realization in Romaharṣaṇa Sūta, Lord Balarāma decided to chastise him for being puffed up. Lord Balarāma therefore said, "This man is liable to be awarded the death punishment because, although he has the good qualification of being a disciple of Lord Vyāsadeva and although he has studied all the Vedic literature from this exalted personality, he was not submissive in the presence of the Supreme Personality of Godhead." As stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā,* a person who is actually a *brāhmaṇa* and is very learned must automatically become very gentle also. In the case of Romaharṣaṇa Sūta, although he was very learned and had been given the chance to become a *brāhmaṇa,* he had not become gentle. From this we can understand that when one is puffed up by material acquisition, he cannot acquire the gentle behavior befitting a *brāhmaṇa.* The learning of such a person is as good as a valuable jewel decorating the hood of a serpent. Despite the valuable jewel on the hood, a serpent is still a serpent and is as fearful as an ordinary serpent. If a person does not become meek and humble, all his studies of the *Vedas* and *Purāṇas* and his vast knowledge in the *śāstras* become simply outward dress, like the costume of a theatrical artist dancing on the stage. Lord Balarāma began to consider thus: "I have appeared in order to chastise false persons who are internally impure but externally pose themselves to be very learned and religious. My killing of such persons is proper to check them from further sinful activity."

Lord Balarāma had avoided taking part in the Battle of Kurukṣetra, and yet because of His position, the reestablishment of religious principles was his prime duty. Considering these points, He killed Romaharṣaṇa Sūta simply by striking him with a *kuśa* straw, which was nothing but a blade of grass. If someone questions how Lord Balarāma could kill Romaharṣaṇa Sūta simply by striking him with a blade of *kuśa* grass, the answer is given in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* by the use of the word *prabhu* (master). The Lord's position is always transcendental, and because He is omnipotent He can act as He likes without being obliged to the material laws and principles. Thus it was possible for Him to kill Romaharṣaṇa Sūta simply by striking him with a blade of *kuśa* grass.

At the death of Romaharṣaṇa Sūta, everyone present became much aggrieved, and there was roaring and crying. Although all the *brāhmaṇas* and sages present there knew Lord Balarāma to be the Supreme Personality of Godhead, they did not hesitate to protest the Lord's action, and they humbly submitted, "Our dear Lord, we think that Your action is not

in line with the religious principles. Dear Lord Yadunandana, we may inform You that we *brāhmaṇas* posted Romaharṣaṇa Sūta on that exalted position for the duration of this great sacrifice. He was seated on the Vyāsāsana by our election, and when one is seated on the Vyāsāsana, it is improper for him to stand up to receive a person. Moreover, we awarded Romaharṣaṇa Sūta an undisturbed duration of life. Under the circumstances, since Your Lordship has killed him without knowing all these facts, we think that Your action has been equal to that of killing a *brāhmaṇa.* Dear Lord, deliverer of all fallen souls, we know certainly that You are the knower of all Vedic principles. You are the master of all mystic powers; therefore ordinarily the Vedic injunctions cannot be applied to Your personality. But we request that You show Your causeless mercy upon others by kindly atoning for this killing of Romaharṣaṇa Sūta. We do not, however, suggest what kind of act You should perform to atone for killing him; we simply suggest that some method of atonement be adopted by You so that others may follow Your action. What is done by a great personality is followed by the ordinary man."

The Lord replied, "Yes, I must atone for this action, which may have been proper for Me, but is improper for others; therefore, I think it is My duty to execute a suitable act of atonement enjoined in the authorized scriptures. Simultaneously I can also give this Romaharṣaṇa Sūta life again, with a span of long duration, sufficient strength, and full power of the senses. Not only this, if you desire, I shall be glad to award him anything else which you may ask. I shall be very glad to grant all these boons in order to fulfill your desires."

This statement of Lord Balarāma definitely confirms that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is free to act in any way. Although it may be considered that His killing of Romaharṣaṇa Sūta was improper, He could immediately counteract the action with greater profit to all. Therefore, one should not imitate the actions of the Supreme Personality of Godhead; one should simply follow the instructions of the Lord. All the great learned sages present realized that although they considered the action of Lord Balarāma to be improper, the Lord was able to immediately compensate with greater profits. Not wanting to detract from the mission of the Lord in killing Romaharṣaṇa Sūta, all of them prayed, "Our dear Lord, the uncommon use of Your *kuśa* weapon to kill Romaharṣaṇa Sūta may remain as it is; because of Your desire to kill him, he should not be brought to life again. At the same time Your Lordship may remember that we sages and *brāhmaṇas* voluntarily gave him long life; therefore, such a benediction should not be nullified." Thus the request of all the learned *brāhmaṇas* in

the assembly was ambiguous because they wanted to keep intact the benediction given by them that Romaharṣaṇa Sūta would continue to live until the end of the great sacrifice, but at the same time they did not want to nullify Balarāma's killing him.

The Supreme Personality of Godhead therefore solved the problem in a manner befitting His exalted position, and said, "Because the son is produced from the body of the father, it is the injunction of the *Vedas* that the son is the father's representative. Therefore I say that Ugraśravā Sūta, the son of Romaharṣaṇa Sūta, should henceforth take his father's position and continue the discourses on the *Purāṇas,* and because you wanted Romaharṣaṇa to have a long duration of life, this benediction will be transferred to his son. The son, Ugraśravā, will therefore have all the facilities you offered—long duration of life in a good and healthy body, without any disturbances and full strength of all the senses.

Lord Balarāma then implored all the sages and *brāhmaṇas* that aside from the benediction offered to the son of Romaharṣaṇa, they should ask from Him any other benediction, and He would be prepared to fulfill it immediately. The Lord thus placed Himself in the position of an ordinary *kṣatriya* and informed the sages that He did not know in what way He could atone for His killing of Romaharṣaṇa, but whatever they would suggest He would be glad to accept.

The *brāhmaṇas* could understand the purpose of the Lord, and thus, they suggested that He atone for His action in a manner which would be beneficial for them. They said, "Our dear Lord, there is a demon of the name Balvala. He is the son of Ilvala, but he is a very powerful demon, and he visits this sacred place of sacrifice every fortnight on the full moon and moonless days and creates a great disturbance to the discharge of our duties in the sacrifice. O descendant of the Daśārha family, we all request You to kill this demon. We think that if You kindly kill him, that will be Your atonement on our behalf. The demon occasionally comes here and profusely throws upon us contaminated, impure things like puss, blood, stool, urine and wine, and he pollutes this sacred place by showering such filth upon us. After killing Balvala, You may continue touring all these sacred places of pilgrimage for twelve months, and in that way You will be completely freed from all contamination. That is our prescription."

Thus ends the Bhaktivedanta purport of the Second Volume, Twenty-third Chapter, of Kṛṣṇa, *"The Killing of Dantavakra, Vidūratha and Romaharṣaṇa."*



24 / The Liberation of Balvala, and Lord Balarāma's Touring the Sacred Places

Lord Balarāma prepared Himself to meet the demon Balvala. At the time when the demon usually attacked the sacred place, there appeared a great hailstorm, the whole sky became covered with dust and the atmosphere became surcharged with a filthy smell. Just after this, the mischievous demon Balvala began to shower torrents of stool and urine and other impure substances on the arena of sacrifice. After this onslaught, the demon himself appeared with a great trident in his hand. He was a gigantic person, and his black body was like a huge mass of carbon. His hair, his beard and his moustache appeared reddish, like copper, and because of his great beard and moustache, his mouth appeared to be very dangerous and fierce. As soon as He saw the demon, Lord Balarāma prepared to attack him. He first began to consider how He could smash the great demon to pieces. Lord Balarāma called for His plow and club, and they immediately appeared before Him. The demon Balvala was flying in the sky, and at the first opportunity Lord Balarāma dragged him down with His plow and angrily smashed the demon's head with His club. By Balarāma's striking, the forehead of the demon became fractured. There was a profuse flow of blood from his forehead, and he began to scream loudly. In this way the demon, who had been such a great disturbance to the pious *brāhmaṇas,* fell to the ground. His falling was like a great mountain with a red oxide peak being struck by a thunderbolt and smashed to the ground.

The inhabitants of Naimiṣāraṇya, learned sages and *brāhmaṇas,* became most pleased by seeing this, and they offered their respectful prayers to Lord Balarāma. They offered their heartfelt blessings upon the Lord, and all agreed that Lord Balarāma's attempt to do anything would never be a failure. The sages and *brāhmaṇas* then performed a ceremonial bathing of Lord Balarāma, just as King Indra is bathed by the demigods when he is victorious over the demons. The *brāhmaṇas* and sages honored Lord

Balarāma by presenting Him first-class new clothing and ornaments and the lotus flower garland of victory, the reservoir of all beauty, which was never to be dried up, being in everlasting existence.

After this incidence, Lord Balarāma took permission from the *brāhmaṇas* assembled at Naimiṣāraṇya and, accompanied by other *brāhmaṇas,* went to the bank of the River Kauṣikī. After taking His bath in this holy place, He proceeded toward the River Sarayū and visited the source of the river. He began to travel on the bank of the Sarayū River, and He gradually reached Prayāga, where there is a confluence of three rivers, the Ganges, Yamunā and Sarasvatī. Here also He regularly took His bath, worshiped the local temples of God and, as it is enjoined in the Vedic literature, offered oblations to the forefathers and sages. He gradually reached the *āśrama* of the sage Pulaha and from there went to Gaṇḍakī on the River Gomatī. After this He took His bath in the River Vipāśā. Then gradually He came to the bank of the Śoṇa River. (The Śoṇa River is still running as one of the big rivers in the Behar Province.) He also took His bath there and performed the Vedic ritualistic ceremonies. He continued His travels and gradually came to the pilgrimage city of Gayā where there is a celebrated Viṣṇu temple. According to the advice of His father Vasudeva, He offered oblations to the forefathers in this Viṣṇu temple. From here He traveled to the delta of the Ganges, where the sacred River Ganges mixes with the Bay of Bengal. This sacred place is called Gaṅgāsāgara, and at the end of January every year there is still a great assembly of saintly persons and pious men, just as there is an assembly of saintly persons in Prayāga every year which is called the Magh Mela Fair.

After finishing His bathing and ritualistic ceremonies at Gaṅgāsāgara, Lord Balarāma proceeded toward the mountain known as Mahendra Parvata. At this place He met Paraśurāma, the incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and He offered him respect by bowing down before him. After this He gradually turned toward southern India and visited the banks of the River Godāvarī. After taking His bath in the River Godāvarī and performing the necessary ritualistic ceremonies, He gradually visited the other rivers—the Veṇā, Pampā and Bhīmarathī. On the bank of the River Bhīmarathī there is the deity called Svāmī Kārttikeya. After visiting Kārttikeya Lord Balarāma gradually proceeded to Śailapura, a pilgrimage city in the province of Mahārāṣṭra. Śailapura is one of the biggest districts in Mahārāṣṭra Province. He then gradually proceeded towards the Draviḍadeśa. Southern India is divided into five parts, called Pañcadraviḍa. Northern India is also divided into five parts, called Pañcagaura. All the important *ācāryas* of the modern age, namely Śaṅkarācārya, Rāmānujācārya,

Madhvācārya, Viṣṇusvāmī, and Nimbārka, advented themselves in these Draviḍa Provinces. Lord Caitanya appeared in Bengal, which is part of the five Gauradeśas.

The most important place of pilgrimage in southern India, or Draviḍa, is Veṅkaṭācala, commonly known as Bālajī. After visiting this place Lord Balarāma proceeded toward Viṣṇukāñcī, and from there He proceeded on the bank of the Kāverī. He took His bath in the River Kāverī; then He gradually reached Raṅgakṣetra. The biggest temple in the world is in Raṅgakṣetra, and the Viṣṇu deity there is celebrated as Raṅganātha. A similar temple of Raṅganātha is in Vṛndāvana, although it is not as big as the temple in Raṅgakṣetra.

While going to Viṣṇukāñcī, Lord Balarāma also visited Śivakāñcī. After visiting Raṅgakṣetra, He gradually proceeded toward Mathurā, commonly known as the Mathurā of southern India. After visiting this place, He gradually proceeded toward Setubandha. Setubandha is the place where Lord Rāmacandra constructed the stone bridge from India to Laṅkā (Ceylon). In this particularly holy place, Lord Balarāma distributed ten thousand cows to the local *brāhmaṇa* priests. It is the Vedic custom that when a rich visitor goes to any place of pilgrimage he gives in charity to the local priests gifts of horses, cows, ornaments and garments. This system of visiting places of pilgrimage and providing the local *brāhmaṇa* priests with all necessities of life has greatly deteriorated in this age of Kali. The richer section of the population, because of its degradation in Vedic culture, is no longer attracted by these places of pilgrimage, and the *brāhmaṇa* priests who depended on such visitors have also deteriorated in their professional duty of helping the visitors. These *brāhmaṇa* priests in the places of pilgrimage are called *paṇḍa* or *paṇḍit.* This means that they formerly were very learned *brāhmaṇas* and used to guide the visitors in all details of the purpose of coming there, and thus both the visitors and the priests were benefitted by mutual cooperation.

It is clear from the description of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that when Lord Balarāma was visiting the different places of pilgrimage, He properly followed the Vedic system. After distributing cows at Setubandha, Lord Balarāma proceeded toward the Kṛtamālā and Tāmraparṇī Rivers. These two rivers are celebrated as sacred, and Lord Balarāma bathed in both. He then proceeded toward Malaya Hill. This Malaya Hill is very great, and it is said that it is one of seven peaks called the Malaya Hills. The great sage Agastya used to live there, and Lord Balarāma visited him and offered His respects by bowing down before him. After taking the sage's blessings, Lord Balarāma, with the sage's permission, proceeded toward the Indian Ocean.

At the point of the cape there is a big temple of the goddess Durgā where she is known as Kanyākumārī. This temple of Kanyākumārī was also visited by Lord Rāmacandra, and therefore it is to be understood that the temple has been existing for millions of years. From there, Lord Balarāma went on to visit the pilgrimage city known as Phālgunatīrtha, which is on the shore of the Indian Ocean, or the Southern Ocean. Phālgunatīrtha is celebrated because Lord Viṣṇu in His incarnation of Ananta is lying there. From Phālgunatīrtha, Lord Balarāma went on to visit another pilgrimage spot known as Pañcāpsarasa. There also He bathed according to the regulative principles and observed the ritualistic ceremonies. This site is also celebrated as a shrine of Lord Viṣṇu; therefore Lord Balarāma distributed ten thousand cows to the local *brāhmaṇa* priests.

From Cape Comarin Lord Balarāma turned toward Kerala. The country of Kerala is still existing in southern India under the name of South Kerala. After visiting this place, He came to Gokarṇatīrtha, where Lord Śiva is constantly worshiped. Balarāma then visited the temple of Āryādevī, which is completely surrounded by water. From that island, He went on to a place known as Śūrpāraka. After this He bathed in the rivers known as Tāpī, Payoṣṇī, and Nirvindhyā, and He came to the forest known as Daṇḍakāraṇya. This is the same Daṇḍakāraṇya Forest where Lord Rāmacandra lived while He was in exile. Lord Balarāma next came to the bank of the River Narmadā, the biggest river in central India. On the bank of this sacred Narmadā there is a pilgrimage spot known as Māhiṣmati Purī. After bathing there, according to regulative principles, Lord Balarāma returned to Prabhāsatīrtha, wherefrom He had begun His journey.

When Lord Balarāma returned to Prabhāsatīrtha He heard from the *brāhmaṇas* that most of the *kṣatriyas* in the Battle of Kurukṣetra had been killed. Balarāma felt relieved to hear that the burden of the world had been reduced. Lord Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma appeared on this earth to lessen the burden of military strength created by the ambitious *kṣatriya* kings. This is the way of materialistic life: not being satisfied by the absolute necessities of life, people ambitiously create extra demands, and their illegal desires are checked by the laws of nature or by laws of God, appearing as famine, war, pestilence and similar catastrophes. Lord Balarāma heard that although most of the *kṣatriyas* had been killed, the Kurus were still engaged in fighting. Therefore He returned to the battlefield just on the day Bhīmasena and Duryodhana were engaged in a personal duel As well-wisher of both of them, Lord Balarāma wanted to stop them, but they would not stop.

When Lord Balarāma appeared on the scene, King Yudhiṣṭhira and his young brothers, Nakula, Sahadeva, Lord Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, immediately

offered Him their respectful obeisances, but they did not speak at all. The reason they were silent was that Lord Balarāma was somewhat affectionate toward Duryodhana, and Duryodhana had learned from Balarāmajī the art of fighting with a club. Thus, when the fighting was going on, King Yudhiṣṭhira and others thought that Balarāma might come there to say something in favor of Duryodhana, and they therefore remained silent. Both Duryodhana and Bhīmasena were very enthusiastic in fighting with clubs, and in the midst of large audiences, each was very skillfully trying to strike the other, and while attempting to do so they appeared to be dancing. But although they appeared to be dancing, it was clear that both of them were very angry.

Lord Balarāma, wanting to stop the fighting, said, "My dear King Duryodhana and Bhīmasena, I know that both of you are great fighters and are well known in the world as great heroes, but still I think that Bhīmasena is superior to Duryodhana in bodily strength. On the other hand, Duryodhana is superior in the art of fighting with a club. Taking this into consideration, My opinion is that neither of you is inferior to the other in fighting. Under the circumstances, there is very little chance of one of you being defeated by the other. Therefore I request you not to waste your time in fighting in this way. I wish you to stop this unnecessary fight."

The good instruction given by Lord Balarāma to both Bhīmasena and Duryodhana was intended for the equal benefit of both of them. But they were so enwrapped in anger against each other that they could only remember their long-lasting personal enmity. Each thought only of killing the other, and they did not give much importance to the instruction of Lord Balarāma. Both of them then became like madmen in remembering the strong accusations and ill behavior they had exchanged with one another. Lord Balarāma, being able to understand the destiny which was awaiting them, was not eager to go further in the matter. Therefore, instead of staying, He decided to return to the city of Dvārakā.

When He returned to Dvārakā, He was received with great jubilation by relatives and friends, headed by King Ugrasena and other elderly persons; all of them came forward to welcome Lord Balarāma. After this, He again went to the holy place of pilgrimage at Naimiṣāraṇya, and the sages, saintly persons and *brāhmaṇas* all received Him standing. They understood that Lord Balarāma, although a *kṣatriya,* was now retired from the fighting business. The *brāhmanas* and the sages, who were always for peace and tranquility, were very pleased at this. All of them embraced Balarāma with great affection and induced Him to perform various kinds of sacrifices in

that sacred spot of Naimiṣāraṇya. Actually Lord Balarāma had no business performing the sacrifices recommended for ordinary human beings; He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and therefore He Himself is the enjoyer of all such sacrifices. As such, His exemplary action in performing sacrifices was only to give a lesson to the common man to show how one should abide by the injunction of the *Vedas*.

The Supreme Personality of Godhead Balarāma instructed the sages and saintly persons at Naimiṣāranya on the subject matter of the living entities' relationship with this cosmic manifestation, on how one should accept this whole universe and on how one should relate with the cosmos in order to achieve the highest goal of perfection, the understanding that the whole cosmic manifestation is resting on the Supreme Personality of Godhead and that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is also all-pervading, even within the minutest atom, by the function of His Paramātmā feature.

Lord Balarāma then took the *avabhṛtha* bath which is accepted after finishing sacrificial performances. After taking His bath, He dressed Himself in new silken garments and decorated Himself with beautiful jewelry amidst His relatives and friends. He appeared to be a shining full moon amidst the luminaries in the sky. Lord Balarāma is the Personality of Godhead Ananta Himself; therefore He is beyond the scope of understanding by mind, intelligence or body. He descended exactly like a human being and behaved in that way for His own purpose; we can only explain His activities as the Lord's pastimes. No one can even estimate the extent of the unlimited demonstrations of His pastimes because He is all-powerful. Lord Balarāma is the original Viṣṇu; therefore anyone remembering these pastimes of Lord Balarāma in the morning and evening, will certainly become a great devotee of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and thus his life will become successful in all respects.

Thus ends the Bhaktivedanta purport of the Second Volume, Twenty-fourth Chapter, of Kṛṣṇa, *"The Liberation of Balvala, and Lord Balarāma's Touring Sacred Places."*



25 / Meeting of Lord Kṛṣṇa with Sudāmā Brāhmaṇa

King Parīkṣit was hearing the narrations of the pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Balarāma from Śukadeva Gosvāmī. These pastimes are all transcendentally pleasurable to hear, and Mahārāja Parīkṣit addressed Śukadeva Gosvāmī as follows: "My dear Lord, the Supreme Personality of Godhead Kṛṣṇa is the bestower of both liberation and love of God simultaneously. Anyone who becomes a devotee of the Lord automatically attains liberation without having to make a separate attempt. The Lord is unlimited, and as such, His pastimes and activities for creating, maintaining and destroying the whole cosmic manifestation are unlimited. I therefore wish to hear about His other pastimes of which you may not have spoken as yet. My dear master, the conditioned souls within this material world have been frustrated by searching out the pleasure of happiness derived from sense gratification. Such desires for material enjoyment are always piercing the heart of conditioned souls. But I am actually experiencing how the transcendental topics of Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes can relieve one from the state of being affected by such sense gratificatory material activities. I think that no intelligent person can reject this method of hearing the transcendental pastimes of the Lord again and again; simply by hearing, one can remain always steeped in transcendental pleasure. Thus one will not be attracted by material sense gratification."

In this statement, Mahārāja Parīkṣit has used two important words: *viṣaṇṇaḥ* and *viśeṣajñaḥ: viṣaṇṇaḥ* means "morose." The materialistic persons are inventing many ways and means to become fully satisfied, but actually they remain morose. The point may be raised that sometimes those who are transcendentalists also remain morose. Parīkṣit Mahārāja has used, however, the word *viśeṣajñaḥ*. There are two kinds of transcendentalists, namely the impersonalists and the personalists. *Viśeṣajñaḥ* refers to the personalists, who are interested in transcendental variegatedness. The

devotees become jubilant by hearing the descriptions of the personal activities of the Supreme Lord, whereas the impersonalists, who are actually more attracted by the impersonal feature of the Lord, are only superficially attracted by the personal activities of the Lord. As such, in spite of coming in contact with the pastimes of the Lord, the impersonalists do not fully realize the benefit to be derived, and thus they remain in exactly the same morose position, due to fruitive activity, with the materialists.

King Parīkṣit continued: "The capacity for talking can be perfected only by describing the transcendental qualities of the Lord. The capacity for working with one's hands can be successful only when one engages himself in the service of the Lord with those hands. Similarly, one's mind can be pacified only when he simply thinks of Kṛṣṇa in full Kṛṣṇa consciousness. This does not mean that one has to be very thoughtful, but one simply has to understand that Kṛṣṇa, the Absolute Truth, is all-pervasive, by His localized aspect as Paramātmā. If only one can think that Kṛṣṇa, as Paramātmā, is everywhere, even within the atom, then one can perfect the thinking, feeling and willing function of his mind. The perfect devotee does not see the material world as it appears to material eyes, but he sees everywhere the presence of his worshipable Lord in His Paramātmā feature."

Mahārāja Parīkṣit continued to say that the function of the ear can be perfected simply by engagement in hearing the transcendental activities of the Lord. He said further that the function of the head can be fully utilized when the head is engaged in bowing down before the Lord and His representative. That the Lord is represented in everyone's heart is a fact, and therefore the highly advanced devotee offers his respects to every living entity, considering that the body is the temple of the Lord. But it is not possible for all men to come to that stage of life immediately, because that stage is for the first-class devotee. The second-class devotee can consider the Vaiṣṇavas, or the devotees of the Lord, to be representatives of Kṛṣṇa, and the devotee who is just beginning, the neophyte or third-class devotee, can bow his head before the Deity in the temple and before the spiritual master, who is the direct manifestation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In the neophyte stage, in the intermediate stage, or in the fully advanced perfected stage, one can make the function of the head perfect by bowing down before the Lord or His representative. Similarly, he can perfect the function of the eyes by seeing the Lord and His representative. In this way, everyone can elevate the functions of the different parts of his body to the highest perfectional stage simply by

engaging them in the service of the Lord or His representative. If one is able to do nothing more, he can simply bow down before the Lord and His representative and drink the *caraṇāmṛta,* the water which has washed the lotus feet of the Lord or His devotee.

On hearing these statements of Mahārāja Parīkṣit, Śukadeva Gosvāmī became overwhelmed with devotional ecstasy because of King Parīkṣit's advanced understanding of the Vaiṣṇava philosophy. Śukadeva Gosvāmī was already engaged in describing the activities of the Lord, and when he was asked by Mahārāja Parīkṣit to describe them further, he continued with great pleasure to narrate *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.*

There was a very nice *brāhmaṇa* friend of Lord Kṛṣṇa. As a perfect *brāhmaṇa,* he was very elevated in transcendental knowledge, and because of his advanced knowledge, he was not at all attached to material enjoyment. Therefore he was very peaceful and had achieved supreme control over his senses. This means that the *brāhmaṇa* was a perfect devotee because unless one is a perfect devotee, he cannot achieve the highest standard of knowledge. It is stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that a person who has come to the point of perfection of knowledge surrenders unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In other words, any person who has surrendered his life for the service of the Supreme Personality of Godhead has come to the point of perfect knowledge. The result of perfect knowledge is that one becomes detached from the materialistic way of life. This detachment means complete control of the senses, which are always attracted by material enjoyment. The senses of the devotee become purified, and in that stage the senses are engaged in the service of the Lord. That is the complete field of devotional service.

Although the *brāhmaṇa* friend of Lord Kṛṣṇa was a householder, he was not busy accumulating wealth for very comfortable living; therefore he was satisfied by the income which automatically came to him according to his destiny. This is the sign of perfect knowledge. A man who is in perfect knowledge knows that one cannot be happier than he is destined to be. In this material world, everyone is destined to suffer a certain amount of distress and to enjoy a certain amount of happiness. The amount of happiness and distress is already predestined for every living entity. No one can increase or decrease the happiness of the materialistic way of life. The *brāhmaṇa,* therefore, did not exert himself for more material happiness, but he used his time for advancement of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Externally he appeared to be very poor because he had no rich dress and could not provide a very rich dress for his wife, and because their material condition was not very opulent they were not even eating sufficiently, and thus both

he and his wife appeared to be very thin. The wife was not very anxious for her personal comfort, but she felt very concerned for her husband, who was such a pious *brāhmaṇa.* She was trembling due to her weak health, and although she did not like to dictate to her husband, she spoke as follows:

"My dear lord, I know that Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is the husband of the goddess of fortune, is your personal friend. You are also a devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and He is always ready to help His devotee. Even if you think that you are not rendering any devotional service to the Lord, still you are surrendered to Him, and the Lord is the protector of the surrendered soul. Moreover, I know that Lord Kṛṣṇa is the ideal personality of Vedic culture. He is always in favor of brahminical culture and is very kind to the qualified *brāhmaṇas.* You are the most fortunate person because you have as your friend the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Lord Kṛṣṇa is the only shelter for personalities like you because you are fully surrendered unto Him. You are saintly, learned and fully in control of your senses. Under the circumstances, Lord Kṛṣṇa is your only shelter. Please, therefore, go to Him. I am sure that He will immediately understand your impoverished position. You are also a householder; therefore without any money you are in a distressed condition. But as soon as He understands your position, He will certainly give you sufficient riches so that you can live very comfortably. Lord Kṛṣṇa is now the King of the Bhoja, Vṛṣṇi and Andhaka dynasties, and I have heard that He never leaves His capital city, Dvārakā. He is living there without outside engagements. He is so kind and liberal that He immediately gives everything, even His personal self, to any person who surrenders unto Him. When He is prepared to give Himself personally to His devotee, then there is nothing wonderful in giving some material riches. Of course, He does not give much material wealth to His devotee if the devotee is not very fixed, but I think in your case He knows perfectly well how much you are fixed in devotional service. Therefore He will not hesitate to award you some material benefit for the bare necessities of life."

In this way, the wife of the *brāhmaṇa* again and again requested, in great humility and submission, that he go to Lord Kṛṣṇa. The *brāhmaṇa* thought that there was no need to ask any material benefit from Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, but he was induced by the repeated requests of his wife. Moreover, he thought, "If I go there I shall be able to see the Lord personally. That will be a great opportunity, even if I don't ask any material benefit from Him." When he had decided to go to Kṛṣṇa, he asked his wife if she had anything in the home that he could offer to Kṛṣṇa, because he must take

some presentation for his friend. The wife immediately collected four palmsful of chipped rice from her neighboring friends and tied it in a small cloth, like a handkerchief, and gave it to her husband to present to Kṛṣṇa. Without waiting any longer, the *brāhmaṇa* took the presentation and began to proceed toward Dvārakā to see his Lord. While he was proceeding toward Dvārakā he was absorbed in the thought of how he could be able to see Lord Kṛṣṇa. He had no thought within his heart other than Kṛṣṇa.

It was of course very difficult to reach the palaces of the kings of the Yadu dynasty, but *brāhmaṇas* were allowed to visit, and when the *brāhmaṇa* friend of Lord Kṛṣṇa went there, he, along with other *brāhmaṇas,* had to pass through three military encampments. In each camp there were very big gates, and he also had to pass through them. After the gates and the camps, there were sixteen thousand big palaces, the residential quarters of the sixteen thousand queens of Lord Kṛṣṇa. The *brāhmaṇa* entered one palace which was very gorgeously decorated. When he entered this beautiful palace, he felt that he was swimming in the ocean of transcendental pleasure. He felt himself constantly diving and surfacing in that transcendental ocean.

At that time, Lord Kṛṣṇa was sitting on the bedstead of Queen Rukmiṇī. Even from a considerable distance He could see the *brāhmaṇa* coming to His home, and He could recognize him as His friend. Lord Kṛṣṇa immediately left His seat and came forward to receive His *brāhmaṇa* friend and, upon reaching him, embraced the *brāhmaṇa* with His two arms. Lord Kṛṣṇa is the reservoir of all transcendental pleasure, and yet He Himself felt great pleasure upon embracing the poor *brāhmaṇa* because He was meeting His very dear friend. Lord Kṛṣṇa had him seated on His own bedstead and personally brought him all kinds of fruits and drinks to offer him, as is proper in receiving a worshipable guest. Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the supreme pure, but because He was playing the role of an ordinary human being, He immediately washed the *brāhmaṇa's* feet and, for His own purification, sprinkled the water onto His head. After this the Lord smeared the body of the *brāhmaṇa* with different kinds of scented pulp, such as sandalwood, *aguru* and saffron. He immediately burned several kinds of scented incense, and, as is usual, He offered him *ārātrika* with burning lamps. After thus offering him an adequate welcome and after the *brāhmaṇa* had taken food and drink, Lord Kṛṣṇa said, "My dear friend, it is a great fortune that you have come here."

The *brāhmaṇa,* being very poor, was not dressed nicely; his clothing was torn and dirty, and his body was also very lean and thin. He appeared not

to be very clean, and because of his weak body, his bones were distinctly visible. The goddess of fortune Rukmiṇīdevī personally began to fan him with the *cāmara* fan, but the other women in the palace became astonished at Lord Kṛṣṇa's behavior in receiving the *brāhmaṇa* in that way. They were surprised to see how eager Lord Kṛṣṇa was to welcome this particular *brāhmaṇa.* They began to wonder how Lord Kṛṣṇa could personally receive a *brāhmaṇa* who was poor, not very neat or clean, and poorly dressed; but at the same time they could realize that the *brāhmaṇa* was not an ordinary living being. They knew that he must have performed great pious activities; otherwise why was Lord Kṛṣṇa, the husband of the goddess of fortune, taking so much care for him? They were still more surprised to see that the *brāhmaṇa* was seated on the bedstead of Lord Kṛṣṇa. They were especially surprised to see that Lord Kṛṣṇa had embraced him exactly as He embraced His elder brother, Balarāmaji, because Lord Kṛṣṇa used to embrace only Rukmiṇī or Balarāma, and no one else.

After receiving the *brāhmaṇa* nicely, and seating him on His own cushioned bed, Lord Kṛṣṇa said, "My dear *brāhmaṇa* friend, you are a most intelligent personality, and you know very well the principles of religious life. I believe that after you finished your education at the house of our teacher and after you sufficiently remunerated him, you must have gone back to your home and accepted a suitable wife. I know very well that from the beginning you were not at all attached to the materialistic way of life, nor did you desire to be very opulent materially, and therefore you are in need of money. In this material world, persons who are not attached to material opulence are very rarely found. Such unattached persons haven't the least desire to accumulate wealth and prosperity for sense gratification, but sometimes they are found to collect money just to exhibit the exemplary life of a householder. They show how by proper distribution of wealth one can become an ideal householder and at the same time become a great devotee. Such ideal householders are to be considered followers of My footsteps. I hope, My dear *brāhmaṇa* friend, you remember all those days of our school life when both you and I were living together at the boarding house. Actually, whatever knowledge both you and I received in our life was accumulated in our student life.

"If a man is sufficiently educated in student life under the guidance of a proper teacher, then his life becomes successful in the future. He can very easily cross over the ocean of nescience, and he is not subjected to the influence of illusory energy. My dear friend, everyone should consider his father to be his first teacher because by the mercy of one's father one gets this body. The father is therefore the natural spiritual master. Our next

spiritual master is he who initiates us into transcendental knowledge, and he is to be worshiped as much as I am. The spiritual master may be more than one. The spiritual master who instructs the disciples about spiritual matters is called *śikṣa-guru*, and the spiritual master who initiates the disciple is called *dīkṣā-guru*. Both of them are My representatives. There may be many spiritual masters who instruct, but the initiator spiritual master is one. A human being who takes advantage of these spiritual masters and, receiving proper knowledge from them, crosses the ocean of material existence, is to be understood as having properly utilized his human form of life. He has practical knowledge that the ultimate interest of life, which is to be gained only in this human form, is to achieve spiritual perfection and thus be transferred back home, back to Godhead.

"My dear friend, I am Paramātmā, the Supersoul present in everyone's heart, and it is My direct order that human society must follow the principles of *varṇa* and *āśrama*. As I have stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, the human society should be divided, according to quality and action, into four *varṇas*. Similarly, everyone should divide his life into four parts. One should utilize the first part of life in becoming a bona fide student, receiving adequate knowledge and keeping oneself in the vow of *brahmacarya*, so that one may completely devote his life for the service of the spiritual master without indulging in sense gratification. A *brahmacārī* is meant to lead a life of austerities and penance. The householder is meant to live a regulated life of sense gratification, but no one should remain a householder for the third stage of life. In that stage, one has to return to the austerities and penances formerly practiced in *brahmacārī* life and thus relieve himself of the attachment to household life. After being relieved of his attachments to the materialistic way of life, one may accept the order of *sannyāsa*.

"As the Supersoul of the living entities, sitting in everyone's heart, I observe everyone's activity in every stage and order of life. Regardless of which stage one is in, when I see that one is engaged seriously and sincerely in discharging the duties ordered by the spiritual master, and is thus dedicating his life to the service of the spiritual master, that person becomes most dear to Me. As far as the life of *brahmacarya* is concerned, if one can continue the life of a *brahmacārī* under the direction of a spiritual master, that is extremely good; but if in *brahmacārī* life one feels sex impulses, then he should take leave of his spiritual master, satisfying him according to the *guru's* desire. According to the Vedic system, a gift is offered to the spiritual master, which is called *guru-dakṣiṇā*. Then the disciple should take to householder life and accept a wife according to religious rites."

These instructions given by Lord Kṛṣṇa while talking with His friend the learned *brāhmaṇa* are very good for the guidance of human society. A system of human civilization that does not promote *varṇa* and *āśrama* is nothing but polished animal society. Indulgence in sex life by a man or woman living single is never acceptable in human society. A man should either strictly follow the principles of *brahmacārī* life or, with the permission of the spiritual master, should get married. Single life with illicit sex is animal life. For the animals there is no marriage institution.

Modern society does not aim at fulfilling the mission of human life. The mission of human life is to go back home, back to Godhead. To fulfill this mission, the system of *varṇa* and *āśrama* must be followed. When the system is followed rigidly and consciously, it fulfills this mission of life. When it is followed indirectly, without guidance of superior order, then it simply creates a disturbing condition in human society, and there is no peace and prosperity.

Kṛṣṇa continued to talk with His *brāhmaṇa* friend: "My dear friend, I think you remember our activities during the days when we were living as students. You may remember that once we went to collect fuel from the forest on the order of the *guru's* wife. While we were collecting the dried wood, we by chance entered the dense forest and became lost. There was an unexpected dust storm and then clouds and lightning in the sky and the explosive sound of thunder. Then sunset came, and we were lost in the dark jungle. After this, there was severe rainfall; the whole ground was overflooded with water, and we could not trace out the way to return to our *guru's āśrama.* You may remember that heavy rainfall—it was not actually rainfall but a sort of devastation. On account of the dust storm and the heavy rain, we began to feel greatly pained, and in whichever direction we turned we were bewildered. In that distressed condition, we took each other's hand and tried to find our way out. We passed the whole night in that way, and early in the morning when our absence became known to our *gurudeva,* he sent his other disciples to search us out. He also came with them, and when they reached us in the jungle they found us to be very distressed.

"With great compassion our *gurudeva* said, 'My dear boys, it is very wonderful that you have suffered so much trouble for me. Everyone likes to take care of his body as the first consideration, but you are so good and faithful to your *guru* that without caring for bodily comforts you have taken so much trouble for me. I am also glad to see that bona fide students like you will undergo any kind of trouble for the satisfaction of the spiritual master. That is the way for a bona fide disciple to become free

from his debt to the spiritual master. It is the duty of the disciple to dedicate his life to the service of the spiritual master. My dear best of the twice-born, I am greatly pleased by your action, and I bless you: May all your desires and ambitions be fulfilled. May the understanding of the *Vedas* which you have learned from me always continue to remain within your memory, so that at every moment you can remember the teachings of the *Vedas* and quote their instructions without difficulty. Thus you will never be disappointed in this life or in the next.'"

Kṛṣṇa continued: "My dear friend, you may remember that many such incidents occurred while we were in the *āśrama* of our spiritual master. Both of us can realize that without the blessings of the spiritual master no one can be happy. By the mercy of the spiritual master and by his blessings, one can achieve peace and prosperity and be able to fulfill the mission of human life."

On hearing this, the learned *brāhmaṇa* replied, "My dear Kṛṣṇa, You are the Supreme Lord and the supreme spiritual master of everyone, and since I was fortunate enough to live with You in the house of our *guru,* I think I have nothing more to do in the matter of prescribed Vedic duties. My dear Lord, the Vedic hymns, ritualistic ceremonies, religious activities, and all other necessities for the perfection of human life, including economic development, sense gratification and liberation, are all derived from one source: Your supreme personality. All the different processes of life are ultimately meant for the understanding of Your personality. In other words, they are the different parts of Your transcendental form. And yet You played the role of a student and lived with us in the house of the *guru.* This means that You adopted all these pastimes for Your pleasure only; otherwise there was no need for Your playing the role of a human being."

Thus ends the Bhaktivedanta purport of the Second Volume, Twenty-fifth Chapter, of Kṛṣṇa, *"Meeting of Lord Kṛṣṇa with Sudāmā Brāhmaṇa."*



26 / The Brāhmaṇa Sudāmā Benedicted by Lord Kṛṣṇa

Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the Supersoul of all living entities, knows very well everyone's heart. He is especially inclined to the *brāhmaṇa* devotees. Lord Kṛṣṇa is also called *brahmaṇyadeva,* which means that He is worshiped by the *brāhmaṇas.* Therefore it is understood that a devotee who is fully surrendered unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead has already acquired the position of a *brāhmaṇa.* Without becoming a *brāhmaṇa,* one cannot approach the Supreme Brahman, Lord Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is especially concerned with vanquishing the distress of His devotees, and He is the only shelter of pure devotees.

Lord Kṛṣṇa was engaged for a long time in talking with Sudāmā Vipra about their past association. Then, just to enjoy the company of an old friend, Lord Kṛṣṇa began to smile, and asked, "My dear friend, what have you brought for Me? Has your wife given you some nice eatable for Me?" While He was addressing His friend, Lord Kṛṣṇa was looking upon him and smiling with great love. He continued: "My dear friend, you must have brought some presentation for Me from your home."

Lord Kṛṣṇa knew that Sudāmā was hesitating to present Him the paltry chipped rice which was actually unfit for His eating, and understanding the mind of Sudāmā Vipra the Lord said, "My dear friend, certainly I am not in need of anything, but if My devotee gives Me something as an offering of love, even though it may be very insignificant, I accept it with great pleasure. On the other hand, if a person is not a devotee, even though he may offer Me very valuable things, I do not like to accept them. I actually accept only things which are offered to Me in devotion and love; otherwise, however valuable the thing may be, I do not accept it. If My pure devotee offers Me even the most insignificant things—a little flower, a little piece of leaf, a little water—but saturates the offering in devotional love, then I not only gladly accept such an offering, but I eat it with great pleasure."

Lord Kṛṣṇa assured Sudāmā Vipra that He would be very glad to accept the chipped rice which he had brought from home, yet out of great shyness, Sudāmā Vipra hesitated to present it to the Lord. He was thinking, "How can I offer such insignificant things to Kṛṣṇa?" and he simply bowed his head.

Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supersoul, knows everything in everyone's heart. He knows everyone's determination and everyone's want. He knew, therefore, the reason for Sudāmā Vipra's coming to Him. He knew that, driven by extreme poverty, he had come there at the request of his wife. Thinking of Sudāmā as His very dear class friend, He knew that Sudāmā's love for Him as a friend was never tainted by any desire for material benefit. Kṛṣṇa thought, "Sudāmā has not come asking anything from Me, but being obliged by the request of his wife, he has come to see Me just to please her." Lord Kṛṣṇa therefore decided that He would give more material opulence to Sudāmā Vipra than could be imagined even by the King of heaven.

He then snatched the bundel of chipped rice which was hanging on the shoulder of the poor *brāhmaṇa,* packed in one corner of his wrapper, and said, "What is this? My dear friend, you have brought Me nice, palatable chipped rice!" He encouraged Sudāmā Vipra, saying, "I consider that this quantity of chipped rice will not only satisfy Me, but will satisfy the whole creation." It is understood from this statement that Kṛṣṇa, being the original source of everything, is the root of the entire creation. As watering the root of a tree immediately distributes water to every part of the tree, so an offering made to Kṛṣṇa, or any action done for Kṛṣṇa, is to be considered the highest welfare work for everyone, because the benefit of such an offering is distributed throughout the creation. Love for Kṛṣṇa becomes distributed to all living entities.

While Lord Kṛṣṇa was speaking to Sudāmā Vipra, He ate one morsel of chipped rice from his bundle, and when He attempted to eat a second morsel, Rukmiṇīdevī, who is the goddess of fortune herself, checked the Lord by catching hold of His hand. After touching the hand of Kṛṣṇa, Rukmiṇī said, "My dear Lord, this one morsel of chipped rice is sufficient to cause him who offered it to become very opulent in this life and to continue his opulence in the next life. My Lord, You are so kind to Your devotee that even this one morsel of chipped rice pleases You very greatly, and Your pleasure assures the devotee opulence both in this life and in the next." This indicates that when food is offered to Lord Kṛṣṇa with love and devotion and He is pleased and accepts it from the devotee, Rukmiṇī-devī, the goddess of fortune, becomes so greatly obliged to the devotee

that she has to personally go to the devotee's home to turn it into the most opulent home in the world. If one feeds Nārāyaṇa sumptuously, the goddess of fortune, Lakṣmī, automatically becomes a guest in one's house, which means that one's home becomes opulent. The learned *brāhmaṇa* Sudāmā passed that night at the house of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and while he was there he felt as if he were living in the Vaikuṇṭha planet. Actually he was living in Vaikuṇṭha, because wherever Lord Kṛṣṇa, the original Nārāyaṇa, and Rukmiṇīdevī, the goddess of fortune, live is not different from the spiritual planet, Vaikuṇṭhaloka.

The learned *brāhmaṇa* Sudāmā did not appear to have received anything substantial from Lord Kṛṣṇa while he was at His place, and yet he did not ask anything from the Lord. The next morning he started for his home, thinking always about his reception by Kṛṣṇa, and thus he became merged in transcendental bliss. All the way home he was simply remembering the dealings of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and he was feeling very happy to have seen the Lord.

The *brāhmaṇa* began to think as follows: "It is most pleasurable to see Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is most devoted to the *brāhmaṇas.* How great a lover He is of the brahminical culture! He is the Supreme *Brahman* Himself, yet He reciprocates with the *brāhmaṇas.* He also respects the *brāhmaṇas* so much that He embraced to His chest a poor *brāhmaṇa* like me, although He never embraces anyone to His chest except the goddess of fortune. How can there be any comparison between me, a poor, sinful *brāhmaṇa,* and the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is the only shelter of the goddess of fortune? And yet, considering me as a *brāhmaṇa,* He embraced me with heartfelt pleasure in His two transcendental arms. Lord Kṛṣṇa was so kind to me that He allowed me to sit down on the same bedstead where the goddess of fortune lies down. He considered me to be His real brother. How can I appreciate my obligation to Him? When I was tired, Śrīmatī Rukmiṇīdevī, the goddess of fortune, began to fan me, holding the *cāmara* whisk in her own hand. She never considered her exalted position as the first queen of Lord Kṛṣṇa. I was rendered service by the Supreme Personality of Godhead because of His high regard for the *brāhmaṇas,* and by massaging my legs and feeding me with His own hand, He practically worshiped me! Aspiring for elevation to the heavenly planets, or liberation or all kinds of material opulences, or perfection in the mystic *yoga* powers, everyone throughout the universe worships the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Yet the Lord was so kind to me that He did not give me even a farthing, knowing very well that I am a poverty-stricken man who, if I got some money, might become puffed up and mad after material opulence and so forget Him."

The statement of the *brāhmaṇa* Sudāmā is correct. An ordinary man who is very poor and prays to the Lord for benediction in material opulence, and who somehow or other becomes richer in material opulence, immediately forgets his obligation to the Lord. Therefore, the Lord does not offer opulences to His devotee unless the devotee is thoroughly destitute. Rather, if a neophyte devotee serves the Lord very sincerely and at the same time wants material opulence, the Lord keeps him from obtaining it.

Thinking in this way, the learned *brāhmaṇa* gradually reached his own home. But on reaching there he saw that everything was wonderfully changed. He saw that in place of his cottage there were big palaces made of valuable stones and jewels, glittering like the sun, moon and rays of fire. Not only were there big palaces, but at intervals there were beautifully decorated parks, in which many beautiful men and women were strolling. In those parks there were nice lakes full of lotus flowers and beautiful lilies, and there were flocks of multicolored birds. Seeing the wonderful conversion of his native place, the *brāhmaṇa* began to think to himself, "How am I seeing all these changes? Does this place belong to me, or to someone else? If it is the same place where I used to live, then how has it so wonderfully changed?"

While the learned *brāhmaṇa* was considering this, a group of beautiful men and women with features resembling those of the demigods, accompanied by musical chanters, approached to welcome him. All were singing auspicious songs. The wife of the *brāhmaṇa* became very glad on hearing the tidings of her husband's arrival, and with great haste she also came out of the palace. The *brāhmaṇa's* wife appeared so beautiful that it seemed as if the goddess of fortune herself had come to receive him. As soon as she saw her husband present before her, tears of joy began to fall from her eyes, and her voice became so choked up that she could not even address her husband. She simply closed her eyes in ecstasy. But with great love and affection she bowed down before her husband, and within herself she thought of embracing him. She was fully decorated with a gold necklace and ornaments, and while standing among the maidservants she appeared like the wife of a demigod just alighting from an airplane. The *brāhmaṇa* was surprised to see his wife so beautiful, and in great affection and without saying a word he entered the palace with his wife.

When the *brāhmaṇa* entered his personal apartment in the palace, he saw that it was not an apartment, but the residence of the King of heaven. The palace was surrounded by many columns of jewels. The couches and the bedsteads were made of ivory, bedecked with gold and jewels, and the

bedding was as white as the foam of milk and as soft as a lotus flower. There were many whisks hanging from golden rods, and many golden thrones with sitting cushions as soft as the lotus flower. In various places there were velvet and silken canopies with laces of pearls hanging all around. The structure of the building was standing on first-class transparent marble, with engravings made of emerald stones. All the women in the palace were carrying lamps made of valuable jewels. The flames and the jewels combined to produce a wonderfully brilliant light. When the *brāhmaṇa* saw his position suddenly changed to one of opulence, and when he could not determine the cause for such a sudden change, he began to consider very gravely how it had happened.

He thus began to think, "From the beginning of my life I have been extremely poverty-stricken, so what could be the cause of such great and sudden opulence? I do not find any cause other than the all-merciful glance of my friend Lord Kṛṣṇa, the chief of the Yadu dynasty. Certainly these are gifts of Lord Kṛṣṇa's causeless mercy. The Lord is self-sufficient, the husband of the goddess of fortune, and thus He is always full with six opulences. He can understand the mind of His devotee, and He sumptuously fulfills the devotee's desires. All these are acts of my friend, Lord Kṛṣṇa. My beautiful dark friend Kṛṣṇa is far more liberal than the cloud which can fill up the great ocean with water. Without disturbing the cultivator with rain during the day, the cloud brings liberal rain at night just to satisfy him. And yet when the cultivator wakes up in the morning, he considers that it has not rained enough. Similarly, the Lord fulfills the desire of everyone according to his position, and yet one who is not in Kṛṣṇa consciousness considers all the gifts of the Lord to be less than his desire. On the other hand, when the Lord receives a little thing in love and affection from His devotee, He considers it a great and valuable gift. The vivid example is myself. I simply offered Him a morsel of chipped rice, and in exchange He has given me opulences greater than the opulence of the King of heaven."

What the devotee actually offers to the Lord is not needed by the Lord. He is self-sufficient. If the devotee offers something to the Lord, it acts for his own interest because whatever a devotee offers to the Lord comes back in a quantity a million times greater than what was offered. One does not become a loser by giving to the Lord, but he becomes a gainer by millions of times.

The *brāhmaṇa*, feeling great obligation to Kṛṣṇa, thought, "I pray to have the friendship of Lord Kṛṣṇa and to engage in His service, and to surrender fully unto Him in love and affection, life after life. I do not

want any opulence. I only desire not to forget His service. I simply wish to be associated with His pure devotees. May my mind and activities be always engaged in His service. The unborn Supreme Personality of Godhead Kṛṣṇa knows that many great personalities have fallen from their positions because of extravagant opulence. Therefore, even when His devotee asks for some opulence from Him, the Lord sometimes does not give it. He is very cautious about His devotees. Because a devotee in an immature position of devotional service may, if offered great opulence, fall from his position due to being in the material world, the Lord does not offer opulence to him. This is another manifestation of the causeless mercy of the Lord upon His devotee. His first interest is that the devotee may not fall. He is exactly like a well-wishing father who does not give much wealth into the hand of his immature son, but who, when the son is grown up and knows how to spend money, gives him the whole treasury house."

The learned *brāhmaṇa* thus concluded that whatever opulences he had received from the Lord should not be used for his extravagant sense gratification, but for the service of the Lord. The *brāhmaṇa* accepted his newly-acquired opulence, but he did so in a spirit of renunciation, unattached to sense gratification, and thus he lived very peacefully with his wife, enjoying all the facilities of opulence as *prasādam* of the Lord. He enjoyed varieties of foodstuff by offering it to the Lord and then taking it as *prasādam.* Similarly, if by the grace of the Lord we get such opulences as material wealth, fame, power, education and beauty, it is our duty to consider that they are all gifts of the Lord and must be used for His service, not for our sense enjoyment. The learned *brāhmaṇa* remained in that position, and instead of deteriorating due to great opulence, his love and affection for Lord Kṛṣṇa increased day after day. Material opulence can be the cause of degradation and also the cause of elevation, according to the purposes for which it is used. If opulence is used for sense gratification, it is the cause of degradation, and if it is used for the service of the Lord, it is the cause of elevation.

It is evident from Lord Kṛṣṇa's dealings with Sudāmā Vipra that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is very, very pleased with a person who is possessed of brahminical qualities. A qualified *brāhmaṇa* like Sudāmā Vipra is naturally a devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Therefore it is said, *brāhmaṇo vaiṣṇavaḥ:* a *brāhmaṇa* is a *Vaiṣṇava.* Or sometimes it is said, *brāhmanaḥ paṇḍitaḥ. Paṇḍita* means a highly learned person. A *brāhmaṇa* cannot be foolish or uneducated. Therefore there are two divisions of *brāhmaṇas,* namely *Vaiṣṇavas* and *paṇḍitas.* Those who are simply learned are *paṇḍits,* but not yet devotees of the Lord, or *Vaiṣṇavas.* Lord Kṛṣṇa is not

especially pleased with them. Simply the qualification of being a learned *brāhmaṇa* is not sufficient to attract the Supreme Personality of Godhead. A *brāhmaṇa* must not only be well qualified according to the requirements stated in scriptures such as *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* but at the same time he must be a devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa. The vivid example is Sudāmā Vipra. He was a qualified *brāhmaṇa,* unattached to all sorts of material sense enjoyment, and at the same time a great devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Lord Kṛṣṇa, the enjoyer of all sacrifices and penances, is very fond of a *brāhmaṇa* like Sudāmā Vipra, and we have seen by the actual behavior of Lord Kṛṣṇa how much He adores such a *brāhmaṇa.* Therefore, the ideal stage of human perfection is to become a *brāhmaṇa-vaiṣṇava* like Sudāmā Vipra.

Sudāmā Vipra realized that although Lord Kṛṣṇa is unconquerable, He nevertheless agrees to be conquered by His devotees. He realized how kind Lord Kṛṣṇa was to him, and he was always in trance, constantly thinking of Kṛṣṇa. By such constant association with Lord Kṛṣṇa, whatever darkness of material contamination was remaining within his heart was completely cleared away, and very shortly he was transferred to the spiritual kingdom, which is the goal of all saintly persons in the perfectional stage of life. Śukadeva Gosvāmī has stated that all persons who hear this history of Sudāmā Vipra and Lord Kṛṣṇa will know how affectionate Lord Kṛṣṇa is to the *brāhmaṇa* devotees like Sudāmā. Therefore anyone who hears this history gradually becomes as qualified as Sudāmā Vipra, and he is thus transferred to the spiritual kingdom of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Thus ends the Bhaktivedanta purport of the Second Volume, Twenty-sixth Chapter, of Kṛṣṇa, *"The Brāhmaṇa Sudāmā Benedicted by Lord Kṛṣṇa."*



27 / Lord Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma Meet the Inhabitants of Vṛndāvana

Once upon a time while Lord Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were living peacefully in Their great city of Dvārakā, there was the rare occasion of a full solar eclipse, such as takes place at the end of every *kalpa,* or day of Brahmā. At the end of every *kalpa* the sun is covered by a great cloud, and incessant rain covers the lower planetary systems up to Svargaloka. By astronomical calculation, people were informed about this great eclipse prior to its taking place, and therefore everyone, both men and women, decided to assemble at the holy place in Kurukṣetra known as Samanta-pañcaka.

The Samanta-pañcaka pilgrimage site is celebrated because Lord Paraśurāma performed great sacrifices there after having killed all the *kṣatriyas* in the world twenty-one times. Lord Paraśurāma killed all the *kṣatriyas,* and their accumulated blood flowed like a stream. Lord Paraśurāma dug five big lakes at Samanta-pañcaka, and filled them with this blood. Lord Paraśurāma is *Viṣṇu-tattva.* As stated in the *Īśopaniṣad, Viṣṇu-tattva* cannot be contaminated by any sinful activity. Yet although Lord Paraśurāma is fully powerful and uncontaminated, in order to exhibit ideal character, He performed great sacrifices at Samanta-pañcaka to atone for His so-called sinful killing of the *kṣatriyas.* By His example, Lord Paraśurāma established that the killing art, although sometimes necessary, is not good. Lord Paraśurāma considered Himself culpable for the sinful killing of the *kṣatriyas;* therefore, how much more are we culpable for such abominable unsanctioned acts. Thus, killing of living entities is prohibited from time immemorial all over the world.

Taking advantage of the occasion of the solar eclipse, all important persons visited the holy place of pilgrimage. Some of the important personalities are mentioned as follows. Among the elderly persons there were Akrūra, Vasudeva and Ugrasena; among the younger generation there

were Gada, Pradyumna, Sāmba, and many other members of the Yadu dynasty who had come there with a view to atone for sinful activities accrued in the course of discharging their respective duties. Because almost all the members of the Yadu dynasty went to Kurukṣetra, some important personalities, like Aniruddha, the son of Pradyumna, and Kṛtavarmā, the commander-in-chief of the Yadu dynasty, along with Sucandra, Śuka and Sāraṇa remained in Dvārakā to protect the city.

All the members of the Yadu dynasty were naturally very beautiful, and yet on this occasion, when they appeared duly decorated with gold necklaces and flower garlands, dressed in valuable clothing and properly armed with their respective weapons, their natural beauty and personalities were a hundred times enhanced. The members of the Yadu dynasty came to Kurukṣetra in their gorgeously decorated chariots resembling the airplanes of the demigods, pulled by big horses that moved like the waves of the ocean, and some of them rode on sturdy, stalwart elephants that moved like the clouds in the sky. Their wives were carried on beautiful palanquins by beautiful men whose features resembled those of the Vidyādharas. The entire assembly looked as beautiful as an assembly of the demigods of heaven.

After arriving in Kurukṣetra, the members of the Yadu dynasty took their baths ceremoniously, with self-control, as enjoined in the *śāstras,* and they observed fasting for the whole period of the eclipse in order to nullify the reactions of their sinful activities. Since it is a Vedic custom to give in charity as much as possible during the hours of the eclipse, the members of the Yadu dynasty distributed many hundreds of cows in charity to the *brāhmaṇas.* All those cows were fully decorated with nice dress and ornaments. The special feature of these cows was that they had golden ankle bells and flower garlands on their necks.

All the members of the Yadu dynasty again took their baths in the lakes created by Lord Paraśurāma. After this they sumptuously fed the *brāhmaṇas* with first-class cooked food, all prepared in butter. According to the Vedic system, there are two classes of food. One is called raw food, and the other is called cooked food. Raw food does not include raw vegetables and raw grains, but food boiled in water; whereas cooked food is made in ghee. *Capatis, dahl,* rice and ordinary vegetables are called raw foods, as are fruits and salads. But *purīs, kacuri, saṅgosas,* sweet balls, etc., are called cooked foods. All the *brāhmaṇas* invited on that occasion by the members of the Yadu dynasty were fed sumptuously with cooked food.

The ceremonial functions performed by the members of the Yadu dynasty externally resembled the ritualistic performances performed by

the *karmīs.* When a *karmī* performs some ritualistic ceremony, his ambition is sense gratification—good position, good wife, good house, good children or good wealth; but the ambition of the members of the Yadu dynasty was different. Their ambition was to offer perpetual faith and devotion to Kṛṣṇa. All the members of the Yadu dynasty were great devotees. As such, after many births of accumulated pious activities, they were given the chance to associate with Lord Kṛṣṇa. In going to take their baths in the place of pilgrimage at Kurukṣetra or observing the regulative principles during the solar eclipse or feeding the *brāhmaṇas*—in all their activities—they simply thought of devotion to Kṛṣṇa. Their ideal worshipable Lord was Kṛṣṇa, and no one else.

After feeding the *brāhmaṇas,* it is the custom for the host, with their permission, to accept *prasādam.* Thus, with the permission of the *brāhmaṇas,* all the members of the Yadu dynasty took lunch. Then they selected resting places underneath big, shadowy trees, and when they had taken sufficient rest, they prepared to receive visitors, among whom there were relatives and friends, as well as many subordinate kings and rulers. There were the rulers of the Matsya Province, Uśīnara Province, Kośala Province, Vidarbha Province, Kuru Province, Sṛñjaya Province, Kāmboja Province, Kekaya Province and many other countries and provinces. Some of the rulers belonged to opposing parties, and some were friends. But above all, the visitors from Vṛndāvana were most prominent. The residents of Vṛndāvana, headed by Nanda Mahārāja, had been living in great anxiety because of separation from Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. Taking advantage of the solar eclipse, they all came to see their life and soul, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma.

The inhabitants of Vṛndāvana were well-wishers and intimate friends of the Yadu dynasty. This meeting of the two parties after long separation was a very touching incident. Both the Yadus and the residents of Vṛndāvana felt such great pleasure in meeting and talking together that it was a unique scene. Meeting after long separation, they were all jubilant; their hearts were throbbing, and their faces appeared like freshly bloomed lotus flowers. There were drops of tears falling from their eyes, the hair on their bodies stood on end, and because of their extreme ecstasy, they were temporarily speechless. In other words, they began to dive in the ocean of happiness.

While the men were meeting in that way, the women were also meeting one another in the same manner. They were embracing each other in great friendship, smiling very mildly, and looking at one another with much affection. When they were embracing each other in their arms, the saffron and *kuṅkuma* spread on their breasts was exchanged from one person to

another, and they all felt heavenly ecstasy. Due to such heart-to-heart embracing, torrents of tears glided down their cheeks. The juniors were offering obeisances to the elders, and the elders were offering their blessings to the juniors. They were thus welcoming one another and asking after each other's welfare. Ultimately, however, all their talk was only of Kṛṣṇa. All the neighbors and relatives were connected with Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes in this world, and as such Kṛṣṇa was the center of all their activities. Whatever activities they performed—social, political, religious, or conventional—were transcendental.

The real elevation of human life rests on knowledge and renunciation. As stated in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* in the First Canto, devotional service rendered to Kṛṣṇa automatically produces perfect knowledge and renunciation. The family members of the Yadu dynasty and the cowherd men of Vṛndāvana had their minds fixed on Kṛṣṇa. That is the symptom of all knowledge, and because their minds were always engaged in Kṛṣṇa, they were automatically freed from all material activities. This stage of life is called *yukta-vairāgya* as enunciated by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. Knowledge and renunciation, therefore, do not mean dry speculation and renunciation of activities. Rather, one must start speaking and acting only in relationship with Kṛṣṇa.

In this meeting at Kurukṣetra, Kuntīdevī and Vasudeva, who were sister and brother, met after a long period of separation, along with their respective sons and daughters-in-law, wives, children and other family members. By talking among themselves, they soon forgot all their past miseries. Kuntīdevī especially addressed her brother Vasudeva as follows: "My dear brother, I am very unfortunate, because not one of my desires has ever been fulfilled; otherwise how could it happen that although I have such a saintly brother as you, perfect in all respects, you did not inquire from me as to how I was passing my days in a distressed condition of life." It appears that Kuntīdevī was remembering the miserable days when she had been banished along with her sons through the mischevious plans of Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Duryodhana. She continued; "My dear brother, I can understand that when providence goes against someone, even one's nearest relatives also forget him. In such a condition, even one's father, one's mother or one's own children will forget him. Therefore, my dear brother, I do not accuse you."

Vasudeva replied to his sister: "My dear sister, do not be sorry, and do not blame me in that way. We should always remember that we all are only toys in the hands of providence. Everyone is under the control of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. It is under His control only that all kinds

of fruitive actions and the resultant reactions take place. My dear sister, you know that we were very much harrassed by King Kaṁsa, and by his persecutions we were scattered here and there. We were always full of anxieties. Only in the last few days have we returned to our own places, by the grace of God."

After this conversation, Vasudeva and Ugrasena received the kings who came to see them, and they sufficiently welcomed them all. Seeing Lord Kṛṣṇa present on the spot, all the visitors felt transcendental pleasure and became very peaceful. Some of the prominent visitors were as follows: Bhīṣmadeva, Droṇācārya, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Duryodhana, and Gāndhārī along with her sons; King Yudhiṣṭhira along with his wife, and the Pāṇḍavas along with Kuntī; Sṛñjaya, Vidura, Kṛpācārya, Kuntibhoja, Virāṭa, King Nagnajit, Purujit, Drupada, Śalya, Dhṛṣṭaketu, the King of Kāśī, Damaghoṣa, Viśālākṣa, the King of Mithilā, the King of Madras (formerly known as Madra), the King of Kekaya, Yudhāmanyu, Suśarmā, Bāhlīka along with his sons, and many other rulers who were subordinate to King Yudhiṣṭhira.

When they saw Lord Kṛṣṇa with His thousands of queens, they became fully satisfied at the sight of such beauty and transcendental opulence. All who were there personally visited Lord Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa, and being properly welcomed by the Lord they began to glorify the members of the Yadu dynasty, especially Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. Because he was the King of the Bhojas, Ugrasena was considered the chief Yadu, and therefore the visitors specifically addressed him: "Your majesty Ugrasena, King of the Bhojas, factually the Yadus are the only persons within this world who are perfect in all respects. All glories unto you! All glories unto you! The specific condition of your perfection is that you are always seeing Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is sought after by many mystic *yogīs* undergoing severe austerities and penances for great numbers of years. All of you are in direct touch with Lord Kṛṣṇa at every moment.

"All the Vedic hymns are glorifying the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa. The Ganges water is considered sanctified because of its being the water used to wash the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa. The Vedic literatures are nothing but the injunctions of Lord Kṛṣṇa. The purpose of the study of all the *Vedas* is to know Kṛṣṇa; therefore, the words of Kṛṣṇa and the message of His pastimes are always purifying. By the influence of time and circumstances, all the opulences of this world had become almost completely wiped out, but since Kṛṣṇa has appeared on this planet, all auspicious features have again appeared due to the touch of His lotus feet. Because of His presence, all our ambitions and desires are gradually being fulfilled. Your majesty, King of the Bhojas, you are related with the Yadu

dynasty by matrimonial relationship, and by blood relationship also. As a result, you are constantly in touch with Lord Kṛṣṇa, and you have no difficulty in seeing Him at any time. Lord Kṛṣṇa moves with you, talks with you, sits with you, rests with you, and dines with you. The Yadus appear to be always engaged in worldly affairs which are considered to lead to the royal road to hell, but due to the presence of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the original Personality of Godhead in the Viṣṇu catagory, who is omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent, all of you are factually relieved from all material contamination, and are situated in the transcendental position of liberation and Brahman existence."

When they had heard that Kṛṣṇa would be present in Kurukṣetra because of the solar eclipse, the residents of Vṛndāvana, headed by Mahārāja Nanda, had also decided to go there, and therefore all the members of the Yadu dynasty were attending. King Nanda, accompanied by his cowherd men, had loaded all their necessary paraphernalia on bullock carts, and all of the Vṛndāvana residents had come to Kurukṣetra to see their beloved sons Lord Balarāma and Lord Kṛṣṇa. When the cowherd men of Vṛndāvana arrived in Kurukṣetra, all the members of the Yadu dynasty became most pleased. As soon as they saw the residents of Vṛndāvana, they stood up to welcome them, and it appeared that they had again regained their life. Both had been very eager to meet, and when they actually came forward and met, they embraced one another to their heart's satisfaction and remained in embrace for a considerable time.

As soon as Vasudeva saw Nanda Mahārāja, he jumped and ran over to him and embraced him very affectionately. Vasudeva began to narrate his past history—how he had been imprisoned by King Kaṁsa, how his babies had been killed, and how immediately after Kṛṣṇa's birth he had carried Him to the place of Nanda Mahārāja, and how Kṛṣṇa and Balarama had been raised by Nanda Mahārāja and his queen, Yaśodā, as their own children. Similarly, Lord Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa also embraced King Nánda and mother Yaśodā and then offered Their respect unto their lotus feet by bowing down. Because of Their filial affection for Nanda and Yaśodā, both Lord Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma became choked up, and for a few seconds They could not speak. The most fortunate King Nanda and mother Yaśodā placed their sons on their laps and began to embrace Them to their full satisfaction. Because of separation from Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, both King Nanda and Yaśodā had been merged in great distress for a very long time. Now, after meeting Them and embracing Them, all their sufferings were mitigated.

After this, Kṛṣṇa's mother, Devakī, and Balarāma's mother, Rohiṇī,

both embraced mother Yaśodā. They said, "Dear Queen Yaśodādevī, both you and Nanda Mahārāja have been great friends to us, and when we remember you we are immediately overwhelmed by the thought of your friendly activities. We are so indebted to you that even if we were to return your benediction by giving you the opulence of the King of heaven, it would not be enough to repay you for your friendly behavior. We shall never forget your kindly behavior toward us. When both Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were born, before they even saw Their real father and mother, They were entrusted to your care, and you raised Them as your own children, fostering Them as birds take care of their offspring in the nest. You have nicely fed, nourished and loved Them and have performed many auspicious religious ceremonies for Their benefit.

"Actually They are not our sons; They belong to you. Nanda Mahārāja and yourself are the real father and mother of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. As long as They were under your care They had not even a pinch of difficulty. Under your protection, They were completely out of the way of all kinds of fear. This most affectionate care which you have taken for Them is completely befitting your elevated position. The most noble personalities do not discriminate between their own sons and the sons of others, and there cannot be any personalities more noble than Nanda Mahārāja and yourself."

As far as the *gopīs* of Vṛndāvana were concerned, from the very beginning of their lives, they did not know anything beyond Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were their life and soul. The *gopīs* were so attached to Kṛṣṇa that they could not even tolerate not seeing Him momentarily when their eyelids blinked and impeded their vision. They condemned Brahmā, the creator of the body, because he foolishly made eyelids which blinked and checked their seeing Kṛṣṇa. Because they had been separated from Kṛṣṇa for so many years, the *gopīs,* having come along with Nanda Mahārāja and mother Yaśodā, felt intense ecstasy in seeing Kṛṣṇa. No one can even imagine how anxious the *gopīs* were to see Kṛṣṇa again. As soon as Kṛṣṇa became visible to them, they took Him inside their hearts through their eyes and embraced Him to their full satisfaction. Even though they were embracing Kṛṣṇa only mentally, they became so ecstatic and overwhelmed with joy that for the time being they completely forgot themselves. The ecstatic trance which they achieved simply by mentally embracing Kṛṣṇa is impossible to achieve even for great *yogīs* constantly engaged in meditation on the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Kṛṣṇa could understand that the *gopīs* were rapt in ecstasy by embracing Him in their minds, and therefore, since He is present in everyone's heart, He also reciprocated the embracing from within.

Kṛṣṇa was sitting with mother Yaśodā and His other mothers, Devakī and Rohiṇī, but when the mothers engaged in talking, He took the opportunity and went to a secluded place to meet the *gopīs*. As soon as He approached the *gopīs*, the Lord began to smile, and after embracing them and inquiring about their welfare, He began to encourage them, saying, "My dear friends, you know that both Lord Balarāma and Myself left Vṛndāvana just to please Our relatives and family members. Thus We were long engaged in fighting with Our enemies and were obliged to forget you, who were so much attached to Me in love and affection. I can understand that by this action I have been ungrateful to you, but still I know you are faithful to Me. May I inquire if you have been thinking of Us although We had to leave you behind? My dear *gopīs*, do you now dislike remembering Me, considering Me to have been ungrateful to you? Do you take My misbehavior with you very seriously?

"After all, you should know it was not My intention to leave you; our separation was ordained by providence, who after all is the supreme controller and does as he desires. He causes the intermingling of different persons, and again disperses them as he desires. Sometimes we see that due to the presence of clouds and strong wind, atomic particles of dust and broken pieces of cotton are intermingled together, and after the strong wind subsides, all the particles of dust and cotton are again separated, scattered in different places. Similarly, the Supreme Lord is the creator of everything. The objects which we see are different manifestations of His energy. By His supreme will we are sometimes united and sometimes separated. We can therefore conclude that ultimately we are absolutely dependent on His will.

"Fortunately, you have developed loving affection for Me, which is the only way to achieve the transcendental position of association with Me. Any living entity who develops such unalloyed devotional affection for Me certainly at the end goes back to home, back to Godhead. In other words, unalloyed devotional service and affection for Me are the cause of supreme liberation.

"My dear *gopī* friends, you may know from Me that it is My energies only which are acting everywhere. Take, for example, an earthen pot. It is nothing but a combination of earth, water, air, fire and sky. It is always of the same physical composites, whether in its beginning, during its existence or after its annihilation. When it is created, the earthen pot is made of earth, water, fire, air and sky; while it remains, it is the same in composition; and when it is broken and annihilated, its different ingredients are conserved in different parts of the material energy. Similarly, at the creation of this cosmic manifestation, during its maintenance, and after

its dissolution, everything is but a different manifestation of My energy. And because the energy is not separate from Me, it is to be concluded that I am existing in everything.

"In the same way, the body of a living being is nothing but a composition of the five elements, and the living entity embodied in the material condition is also part and parcel of Me. The living entity is imprisoned in the material condition on account of his false conception of himself as the supreme enjoyer. This false ego of the living entity is the cause of his imprisonment in material existence. As the Supreme Absolute Truth, I am transcendental to the living entity, as well as to his material embodiment. The two energies, material and spiritual, are both acting under My supreme control. My dear *gopīs,* I request that instead of being so afflicted, you try to accept everything with a philosophical attitude. Then you will understand that you are always with Me and that there is no cause of lamentation in our being separated from one another."

This important instruction of Lord Kṛṣṇa's to the *gopīs* can be utilized by all devotees engaged in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The whole philosophy is considered on the basis of inconceivable, simultaneous oneness and difference. In *Bhagavad-gītā* the Lord says that He is present everywhere in His impersonal feature. Everything is existing in Him, but still He is not personally present everywhere. The cosmic manifestation is nothing but a display of Kṛṣṇa's energy, and because the energy is not different from the energetic, nothing is different from Kṛṣṇa. When this absolute consciousness, Kṛṣṇa consciousness, is absent, we are separated from Kṛṣṇa; but fortunately, if this Kṛṣṇa consciousness is present, then we are not separated from Kṛṣṇa. The process of devotional service is the revival of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and if the devotee is fortunate enough to understand that the material energy is not separated from Kṛṣṇa, then he can utilize the material energy and its products in the service of the Lord. But in the absence of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the forgetful living entity, although part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa, falsely puts himself in the position of enjoyer of the material world and, being thus implicated in material entanglement, is forced by the material energy to continue his material existence. This is also confirmed in the *Bhagavad-gītā.* Although a living entity is forced to act by the material energy, he falsely thinks that he is the all-in-all and the supreme enjoyer.

If the devotee knows perfectly that the *arcā-vigraha,* or Deity form of Lord Kṛṣṇa in the temple, is exactly the same *sac-cid-ānanda-vigraha* as Kṛṣṇa Himself, then his service to the temple Deity becomes direct service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Similarly, the temple itself, the

temple paraphernalia and the food offered to the Deity are also not separate from Kṛṣṇa. One has to follow the rules and regulations prescribed by the *ācāryas,* and thus, under superior guidance, Kṛṣṇa-realization is fully possible, even in this material existence.

The *gopīs,* having been instructed by Kṛṣṇa in this philosophy of simultaneous oneness and difference, remained always in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and thus became liberated from all material contamination. The consciousness of the living entity who falsely presents himself as the enjoyer of the material world is called *jīva-kośa,* which means imprisonment by the false ego. Not only the *gopīs* but anyone who follows these instructions of Kṛṣṇa becomes immediately freed from the *jīva-kośa* imprisonment. A person in full Kṛṣṇa consciousness is always liberated from false egoism; he utilizes everything for Kṛṣṇa's service and is not at any time separated from Kṛṣṇa.

The *gopīs* therefore prayed to Kṛṣṇa, "Dear Kṛṣṇa, from Your navel emanated the original lotus flower which is the birthsite of Brahmā, the creator. No one can estimate Your glories or Your opulence, which therefore remain always a mystery even to the highest thoughtful men, the masters of all yogic power. The conditioned soul fallen in the dark well of this material existence can very easily, however, take shelter of the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Thus his deliverance is guaranteed." The *gopīs* continued: "Dear Kṛṣṇa, we are always busy in our family affairs. We therefore request that You remain within our hearts as the rising sun, and that will be Your greatest benediction."

The *gopīs* are always liberated souls, because they are fully in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. They only pretended to be entangled in household affairs in Vṛndāvana. In spite of their long separation, the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana, the *gopīs,* were not interested in the idea of going with Kṛṣṇa to His capital city, Dvārakā. They wanted to remain busy in Vṛndāvana and thus feel the presence of Kṛṣṇa in every step of their lives. They immediately invited Kṛṣṇa to come back to Vṛndāvana. This transcendental emotional existence of the *gopīs* is the basic principle of Lord Caitanya's teaching. The *Ratha-yātrā* Festival observed by Lord Caitanya is the emotional process of taking Kṛṣṇa back to Vṛndāvana. Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī refused to go with Kṛṣṇa to Dvārakā to enjoy His company in the atmosphere of royal opulence, but wanted to enjoy His company in the original Vṛndāvana atmosphere. Lord Kṛṣṇa, being profoundly attached to the *gopīs,* never goes away from Vṛndāvana, and the *gopīs* and other residents of Vṛndāvana remain fully satisfied in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Thus ends the Bhaktivedanta purport of the Second Volume, twenty-seventh Chapter, of Kṛṣṇa, *"Lord Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma Meet the Inhabitants of Vṛndāvana."*



28 / Draupadī Meets the Queens of Kṛṣṇa

There were many visitors who came to see Kṛṣṇa, and among them were the Pāṇḍavas, headed by King Yudhiṣṭhira. After talking with the *gopīs* and bestowing upon them the greatest benediction, Lord Kṛṣṇa came to welcome King Yudhiṣṭhira and other relatives who had come to see Him. He first of all inquired from them whether their situation was auspicious. Actually, there is no question of ill fortune for anyone who sees the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa, yet when Lord Kṛṣṇa, as a matter of etiquette, inquired from King Yudhiṣṭhira about his welfare, the King became very happy by such a reception and began to address the Lord thus: "My dear Lord Kṛṣṇa, great personalities and devotees in full Kṛṣṇa consciousness always think of Your lotus feet and remain fully satisfied by drinking the nectar of transcendental bliss. The nectar which they constantly drink sometimes comes out of their mouths and is sprinkled on others as the narration of Your transcendental activities. This nectar coming from the mouth of a devotee is so powerful that if one is fortunate enough to have the opportunity to drink it, he immediately becomes freed from the continuous journey of birth and death. Our material existence is caused by our forgetfulness of Your personality, but fortunately, the darkness of forgetfulness is immediately dissipated if one is privileged to hear about Your glories. Therefore, my dear Lord, where is the possibility of ill fortune for one who is constantly engaged in hearing Your glorious activities?

"Since we are fully surrendered unto You and have no other shelter than Your lotus feet, we are always confident of our good fortune. My dear Lord, You are the ocean of unlimited knowledge and transcendental bliss. The result of the action of mental concoction is to exist in the three temporary phases of material life—wakefulness, sleep and deep sleep. But these conditions cannot exist in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. All such reactions

are invalidated by practice of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. You are the ultimate destination of all liberated persons. Out of Your independent will only, You have descended on this earth by the use of Your own internal potency, *yogamāyā,* and in order to reestablish the Vedic principles of life, You have appeared just like an ordinary human being. Since You are the Supreme Person, there cannot, therefore, be any ill luck for one who has fully surrendered unto You."

When Lord Kṛṣṇa was busy meeting various kinds of visitors and while they were engaged in offering prayers to the Lord, the female members of the Kuru dynasty and the Yadu dynasty took the opportunity of meeting with one another and engaging in talk of Lord Kṛṣṇa's transcendental pastimes. The first inquiry was made by Draupadī to the wives of Lord Kṛṣṇa. She addressed them: "My dear Rukmiṇī, Bhadrā, Jāmbavatī, Satyā, Satyabhāmā, Kālindī, Śaibyā, Lakṣmaṇā, Rohiṇī and all other wives of Lord Kṛṣṇa, will you please let us know how Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, accepted you as His wives and married you in pursuance of the marriage ceremonies of ordinary human beings?

To this question, the chief of the queens, Rukmiṇīdevī, replied, "My dear Draupadī, it was practically a settled fact that princes like Jarāsandha and others wanted me to marry King Śiśupāla, and, as is usual, all the princes present during the marriage ceremony were prepared with their armor and weapons to fight with any rival who dared to stop the marriage. But the Supreme Personality of Godhead kidnapped me the way a lion takes away a lamb from the flock. This was not, however, a very wondrous act for Lord Kṛṣṇa, because anyone who claims to be a very great hero or king within this world is subordinate to the lotus feet of the Lord. All the kings touch their helmets to the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa. My dear Draupadī, it is my eternal desire that life after life I may be engaged in the service of Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is the reservoir of all pleasure and beauty. This is my only desire and ambition in life."

After this, Satyabhāmā began to speak. She said, "My dear Draupadī, my father was very much afflicted on the death of his brother, Prasena, and he falsely accused Lord Kṛṣṇa of killing his brother and stealing the Syamantaka jewel, which had actually been taken by Jāmbavān. Lord Kṛṣṇa, in order to establish His pure character, fought with Jāmbavān and rescued the Syamantaka jewel, which was later delivered to my father. My father was very much ashamed and sorry for accusing Lord Kṛṣṇa of his brother's death. After getting back the Syamantaka jewel, he thought it wise to rectify his mistake, so although he had promised others my hand in marriage, he submitted the jewel and myself at the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa,

and thus I was accepted as His maidservant and wife."

After this, Jāmbavatī replied to Draupadī's question. She said, "My dear Draupadī, when Lord Kṛṣṇa attacked my father Jāmbavān, the King of the *ṛkṣas,* my father did not know that Lord Kṛṣṇa was his former master, Lord Rāmacandra, the husband of Sītā. Not knowing the identity of Lord Kṛṣṇa, my father remained continually engaged in fighting with Him for twenty-seven days. After this period, when he became very tired and fatigued, he could understand that since no one but Lord Rāmacandra could defeat him, his opponent, Lord Kṛṣṇa, must be the same Lord Rāmacandra. He thus came to his senses and not only immediately returned the Syamantaka jewel, but in order to satisfy the Lord, he presented me to Him to become His wife. In this way I was married to the Lord, and thus my desire to remain life after life as a servitor of Kṛṣṇa was fulfilled."

After this, Kālindī said, "My dear Draupadī, I was engaged in great austerities and penances in order to get Lord Kṛṣṇa as my husband. When Lord Kṛṣṇa became aware of this fact, He very kindly came to me along with His friend Arjuna and accepted me as His wife. Lord Kṛṣṇa then took me away from the bank of Yamunā, and since then I have been engaged in the house of Lord Kṛṣṇa as a sweeper. And the Lord is treating me as His wife."

After this, Mitravindā said, "My dear Draupadī, there was a great assembly of princes at my *svayaṁvara* ceremony. Lord Kṛṣṇa was also present in that meeting, and He accepted me as His maidservant by defeating all the princes present there. He immediately took me away to Dvārakā, exactly as a lion takes a deer from a pack of dogs. When I was thus taken away by Lord Kṛṣṇa, my brothers wanted to fight with Him, and later on they were defeated. Thus my desire to become the maidservant of Kṛṣṇa life after life was fulfilled."

After this, Satyā addressed Draupadī in this way: "My dear Draupadī, my father arranged for an assembly for my *svayaṁvara* [the personal selection of a husband], and in order to test the strength and heroism of the prospective bridegrooms, my father stipulated that they each fight with his seven ferocious bulls, which had long, serpentine horns. Many heroic prospective bridegrooms tried to defeat the bulls, but unfortunately they were all severely struck, and they returned to their homes as defeated invalids. When Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa came and fought with the bulls, they were just like playthings for Him. He captured the bulls and roped each one of them by their nostrils. Thus they came under His control, just like a goat's small kids come very easily under the control of children.

My father became very pleased and married me with Lord Kṛṣṇa in great pomp, giving as my dowry many divisions of soldiers, horses, chariots and elephants, along with hundreds of maidservants. Thus Lord Kṛṣṇa brought me to His capital city, Dvārakā. On the way back, He was also assaulted by many princes, but Lord Kṛṣṇa defeated all of them, and thus I have the privilege of serving His lotus feet as a maidservant."

After this, Bhadrā began to speak. She said, "My dear Draupadī, Lord Kṛṣṇa is the son of my maternal uncle. Fortunately, I became attracted to His lotus feet. When my father understood these feelings of mine, he personally arranged for my marriage, inviting Lord Kṛṣṇa to marry me and giving Him in dowry one *akṣauhiṇī,* or division of armed forces, along with many maidservants and other royal paraphernalia. I do not know whether I shall be able to have the shelter of Lord Kṛṣṇa life after life, but still I pray to the Lord that wherever I may take my birth I may not forget my relationship with His lotus feet."

Then Lakṣmaṇā said, "My dear Queen, many times I have heard the great sage Nārada glorifying the pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa. I became attracted to the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa when I heard Nārada say that the goddess of fortune, Lakṣmī, was also attracted to His lotus feet. Since then I have always been thinking of Him, and thus my attraction for Him has increased. My dear Queen, my father was very affectionate toward me. When he understood that I was attracted to Kṛṣṇa, he devised a plan. His plan was like that devised by your father; during the *svayaṁvara,* the prospective bridegrooms had to pierce the eyes of a fish with their arrows. The difference between the competition in your *svayaṁvara* and mine was that in your case the fish was hanging openly on the ceiling, in clear view, but in my case the fish was covered with a cloth and could only be seen by the reflection of the cloth in a pot of water. That was the special feature of my *svayaṁvara.*

"The news of this device was spread all over the world, and when the princes heard of it, they arrived at my father's capital city from all directions, fully equipped with armor and guided by their military instructors. Each one of them desired to win me as his wife, and one after another they raised the bow and arrow which was left there for piercing the fish. Many could not even join the bowstring to the two ends of the bow, and without attempting to pierce the fish, they simply left the bow as it was and went away. Some with great difficulty drew the string from one end to the other, and being unable to tie the other end, they were suddenly knocked down by the spring-like bow. My dear Queen, you will be surprised to know that at my *svayaṁwara* meeting there were many

famous kings and heroes present. Heroes like Jarāsandha, Ambaṣṭha, Śiśupāla, Bhīmasena, Duryodhana and Karṇa were, of course, able to string the bow, but they could not pierce the fish, because it was covered, and they could not trace it out from the reflection. The celebrated hero of the Pāṇḍavas, Arjuna, was able to see the reflection of the fish on the water, but although with great caution he traced out the location of the fish and shot an arrow, he did not pierce the fish in the right spot. His arrow at least touched the fish, and so he proved himself better than all other princes.

"All the princes who had tried to pierce the target were disappointed, being baffled in their attempts, and some candidates had even left the place without making an attempt, but when at last Lord Kṛṣṇa took up the bow, He was able to tie the bowstring very easily, just as a child plays with a toy. He placed the arrow, and looking only once at the reflection of the fish in the water, He shot the arrow, and the pierced fish immediately fell down. This victory of Lord Kṛṣṇa was accomplished at noon, during the moment called *abhijit,* which is astronomically calculated as auspicious. At that time the vibration of *'Jaya! Jaya!'* was heard all over the world, and from the sky came sounds of drums beat by the denizens of heaven. Great demigods were overwhelmed with joy and began to shower flowers on the earth.

"At that time, I entered the arena of competition, and the ankle bells on my legs were sounding very melodiously as I walked. I was nicely dressed with new silken garments, flowers were decorating my hair, and because of Lord Kṛṣṇa's victory, I was in ecstatic joy and smiling very pleasingly. I was carrying in my hands a golden necklace bedecked with jewels, which was glittered at intervals. My curling hair encircled my face, which was shining with a bright luster due to the reflection of my various rings. My eyes blinking, I first of all observed all the princes present, and when I reached my Lord I very slowly placed the golden necklace on His neck. As I have already informed you, from the very beginning my mind had been attracted by Lord Kṛṣṇa, and thus I considered the garlanding of the Lord to be my great victory. As soon as I placed my garland on the neck of the Lord, there sounded immediately the combined vibration of *mṛdaṅgas, paṭahas,* conchshells, drums, kettledrums and other instruments, causing a tumultuous sound, and while the music played, expert male and female dancers began to dance, and singers began to sing sweetly.

"My dear Draupadī, when I accepted Lord Kṛṣṇa as my worshipable husband, and He also accepted me as His maidservant, there was a tumultuous roaring among the disappointed princes. All of them became

very agitated because of their lusty desires, but without caring for them, my husband, in His form as the four-handed Nārāyaṇa, immediately took me on His chariot, which was drawn by four excellent horses. Expecting opposition from the princes, He armored Himself and took up His bow named Śārṅga, but our celebrated driver, Dāruka, drove the beautiful chariot without a moment's delay toward the city of Dvārakā. Thus, in the presence of all the princes, I was carried away very quickly, exactly as a deer is carried away from the flock by a lion. Some of the princes, however, wanted to check our progress, and thus, equipped with proper weapons, they opposed us, just as dogs try to oppose the progressive march of a lion. At that time, due to the arrows released by the Śārṅga bow of Lord Kṛṣṇa, some of the princes were cut on their left hands, some of them lost their legs, and some lost their heads and their lives, and others fled from the battlefield.

"The Supreme Personality of Godhead then entered the most celebrated city of the universe, Dvārakā, and as He entered the city, He appeared like the shining sun. The whole city of Dvārakā was profusely decorated on that occasion. There were so many flags and festoons and gates all over Dvārakā that the sunshine could not even enter the city. I have already told you that my father was very much affectionate to me, so when he saw that my desire was fulfilled by getting Lord Kṛṣṇa as my husband, in great happiness he began to distribute to friends and relatives various kinds of gifts, such as valuable dresses, ornaments, bedsteads and sitting carpets. Lord Kṛṣṇa is always self-sufficient, yet my father, out of his own accord, offered my husband a dowry consisting of riches, soldiers, elephants, chariots, horses and many rare and valuable weapons. He presented all these to the Lord with great enthusiasm. My dear Queen, at that time I could guess that in my previous life I must have performed some wonderfully pious activity, and as a result I can in this life be one of the maidservants in the house of the Supreme Personality of Godhead."

When all the principal queens of Lord Kṛṣṇa had finished their statements, Rohiṇī, as the representative of the other sixteen thousand queens, began to narrate the incident of their becoming wives of Kṛṣṇa.

"My dear Queen, when Bhaumāsura was conquering all the world, he collected wherever possible all the beautiful daughters of the kings and kept us arrested within his palace. When news of our imprisonment reached Lord Kṛṣṇa, He fought with Bhaumāsura and released us. Lord Kṛṣṇa killed Bhaumāsura and all his soldiers, and although He had no need to accept even one wife, He nevertheless, by our request, married all sixteen thousand of us. My dear Queen, our only qualification was that we were

always thinking of the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa, which is the way to release oneself from the bondage of repeated birth and death. My dear Queen Draupadī, please take it from us that we are not after any opulence such as kingdom, empire, or a position of heavenly enjoyment. We do not want to enjoy such material opulences, nor do we desire to achieve the yogic perfections, nor the exhalted post of Lord Brahmā. Nor do we want any of the different kinds of liberation—*sālokya, sārṣṭi, sāmīpya* or *sāyujya.* We are not at all attracted by any of these opulences. Our only ambition is to bear on our heads life after life the dust particles attached to the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa. The goddess of fortune also desired to keep that dust on her breast along with the fragrant saffron. We simply desire this dust, which accumulates underneath the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa as He travels on the land of Vṛndāvana as a cowherd boy. The *gopīs* especially, and also the cowherd men and the aborigine tribeswomen, always desire to become the grass and straw on the street of Vṛndāvana, to be trampled on by the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa. My dear Queen, we wish to remain as such life after life, without any other desire."

Thus ends the Bhaktivedanta purport of the Second Volume, Twenty-eighth Chapter, of Kṛṣṇa, *"Draupadī Meets the Queens of Kṛṣṇa."*



29 / Sacrificial Ceremonies Performed by Vasudeva

Among the women present at Kurukṣetra during the solar eclipse were Kuntī, Gāndhārī, Draupadī, Subhadrā and the queens of many other kings, as well as the *gopīs* from Vṛndāvana. When the different queens of Lord Kṛṣṇa were submitting their statements as to how they were married and accepted by Lord Kṛṣṇa as His wives, all the female members of the Kuru dynasty were struck with wonder. They were filled with admiration at how all the queens of Kṛṣṇa were attached to Him with love and affection. When they heard about the queens' intensity of love and affection for Kṛṣṇa, they could not check their eyes from filling up with tears.

While the women were engaged in conversations among themselves and the men were similarly engaged in conversation, there arrived almost all the important sages and ascetics from all directions, who had come for the purpose of seeing Lord Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. Chief among the sages were Kṛṣṇa-dvaipāyana Vyāsa, the great sage Nārada, Cyavana, Devala, Asita, Viśvāmitra, Śatānanda, Bharadvāja, Gautama, and Lord Paraśurāma along with his disciples; Vasiṣṭha, Gālava, Bhṛgu, Pulastya, Kaśyapa, Atri, Mārkaṇḍeya, Bṛhaspati, Dvita, Trita, Ekata; the four Kumāra sons of Brahmā, Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanātana and Sanatkumāra; Aṅgira and Agastya, Yājñavalkya and Vāmadeva.

As soon as the sages and ascetics arrived, all the kings, including Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira and the Pāṇḍavas and Lord Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, immediately got up from their seats and offered their respects by bowing down to the universally respected sages. After this, the sages were properly welcomed by being offered seats and water for washing their feet. Palatable fruits, garlands of flowers, incense, and sandalwood pulp were presented, and all the kings, led by Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, worshiped the sages according to the Vedic rules and regulations. When all the sages were comfortably seated, Lord Kṛṣṇa, who descended for the protection of religion, began

to address them on behalf of all the kings. When Kṛṣṇa began to speak, all became silent, being eager to hear and understand His welcoming words to the sages.

Lord Kṛṣṇa spoke thus: "All glories to the assembled sages and ascetics! Today we are all feeling that our lives have become successful. Today we have achieved the desired goal of life, because we are now seeing face to face all the exalted liberated sages and ascetics whom even the great demigods in the heavens desire to see. Persons who are neophytes in devotional service and who simply offer their respectful obeisances to the Deity in the temple but cannot realize that the Lord is situated in everyone's heart, and those who simply worship different demigods for fulfillment of their own lusty desires, are unable to understand the importance of these sages. They cannot take advantage of receiving these sages by seeing them with their eyes, by touching their lotus feet, by inquiring about their welfare or by diligently worshiping them."

Neophyte devotees or religionists cannot understand the importance of great *mahātmās.* They go to the temple as a matter of formality and pay their respectful obeisances unto the Deity. When one is promoted to the next platform of trance consciousness, one can understand the importance of *mahātmās* and devotees, and in that stage the devotee tries to please them. Therefore, Lord Kṛṣṇa said that the neophyte cannot understand the importance of great sages, devotees or ascetics.

Kṛṣṇa continued, "One cannot purify himself by traveling to holy places of pilgrimage and taking bath there or by seeing the Deities in the temples. But if one happens to meet a great devotee, a *mahātmā* who is representative of the Personality of Godhead, one becomes immediately purified. In order to become purified, there is the injunction to worship the fire, the sun, the moon, the earth, the water, the air, the sky and the mind. By worshiping all the elements and their predominating deities, one can become free from the influence of envy, but all the sins of an envious person can be nullified immediately simply by serving a great soul. My dear revered sages and respectable kings, you can take it from Me that a person who accepts this material body made of three elements—mucus, bile and air—as his own self, who considers his family and relatives as his own, and who accepts material things as worshipable, or who visits holy places of pilgrimage just to take a bath there, but never associates with great personalities, sages and *mahātmās*—such a person, even in the form of a human being, is nothing but an animal, like an ass."

When the supreme authority, Lord Kṛṣṇa, was thus speaking with great gravity, all the sages and ascetics remained in dead silence. They became

amazed upon hearing Him speaking the absolute philosophy of life in such a concise way. Unless one is very much advanced in knowledge, one thinks his body to be his self, his family members to be his kith and kin, and the land of his birth to be worshipable. From this concept of life, the modern ideology of nationalism has sprung up. Lord Kṛṣṇa condemned such ideas, and He also condemned persons who take the trouble to go to holy places of pilgrimage just to take a bath and come back without taking the opportunity to associate with the great devotees and *mahātmās* living there. Such persons are compared to the most foolish animal, the ass. All those who heard considered the speech of Lord Kṛṣṇa for some time, and they concluded that Lord Kṛṣṇa was actually the Supreme Personality of Godhead, playing the role of an ordinary human being who is forced to take a certain type of body as a result of the reactions of his past deeds. He was assuming this pastime as an ordinary human simply to teach the people in general how they should live for perfection of the human mission.

Having concluded that Kṛṣṇa was the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the sages began to address Him thus: "Dear Lord, we, the leaders of human society, are supposed to possess the proper philosophy of life, and yet we are becoming bewildered by the spell of Your external energy. We are surprised to see Your behavior, which is just like that of an ordinary human being and which conceals Your real identity as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and we therefore consider Your pastimes to be all-wonderful.

"Our dear Lord, by Your own energy You are creating, maintaining and annhilating the whole cosmic manifestation of different names and forms, in the same way as the earth creates many forms of stone, trees and other varieties of names and forms and yet remains the same. Although You are creating varieties of manifestation through Your energy, You are unaffected by all those actions. Our dear Lord, we remain simply stunned by seeing Your wonderful actions. Although You are transcendental to this entire material creation and are the Supreme Lord and the Supersoul of all living entities, You nevertheless appear on this earth by Your internal potency to protect Your devotees and destroy the miscreants. By such appearance You reestablish the principles of eternal religion, which the human society forgets by long association with the material energy. Our dear Lord, You are the creator of the social orders and spiritual statuses of the human society according to quality and work, and when these orders are misguided by unscrupulous persons, You appear and set them right.

"Dear Lord, the Vedic knowledge is the representation of Your pure heart. Austerities, study of the *Vedas,* and meditative trances lead to

different realizations of Your Self in Your manifested and nonmanifested aspects. The entire phenomenal world is a manifestation of Your impersonal energy, but You Yourself, as the original Personality of Godhead, are nonmanifested there. You are the Supreme Soul, the Supreme Brahman. Persons who are situated in brahminical culture, therefore, can understand the truth about Your transcendental form. Thus You always hold the *brāhmaṇas* in respect, and thus You are considered to be the topmost of all followers of brahminical culture. You are therefore known as *brahmaṇya-deva.* Our dear Lord, You are the last word in good fortune and the last resort of all saintly persons; therefore we all consider that we have achieved the perfection of our life, education, austerity and acquisition of transcendental knowledge by meeting You. Factually, You are the ultimate goal of all transcendental achievements.

"Our dear Lord, there is no end to Your unlimited knowledge. Your form is transcendental, eternally existing in full bliss and knowledge. You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the Supreme Brahman, the Supreme Soul. Being covered by the spell of Your internal potency, *yogamāyā,* You are now temporarily concealing Your unlimited potencies, but still we can understand Your exalted position, and therefore all of us offer You our respectful obeisances. Dear Lord, You are enjoying Your pastimes in the role of a human being, concealing Your real character of transcendental opulence; therefore, all the kings who are present here, even the members of the Yadu dynasty who are constantly mingling with You, eating with You, and sitting with You, cannot understand that You are the original cause of all causes, the soul of everyone, the original cause of all creation.

"When a person dreams at night, hallucinatory figures created by the dream are accepted as real, and the imaginary dream body is accepted as one's real body. For the time being one forgets that besides the body created in hallucination, there is another, real body in his awakened state. Similarly, in the awakened state also, the bewildered conditioned soul considers sense enjoyment to be real happiness.

"By the process of enjoyment of the senses of the material body, the spirit soul is covered, and his consciousness becomes materially contaminated. It is due to material consciousness that one cannot understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa. All great mystic *yogīs* endeavor to revive their Kṛṣṇa consciousness by mature practice of the *yoga* system and thus understand Your lotus feet and meditate upon Your transcendental form. In this way the accumulated result of sinful activities is counteracted. It is said that the water of the Ganges can vanquish volumes of a person's sinful actions, but the Ganges water is glorious only due to

Your lotus feet. The Ganges water is flowing as perspiration from the lotus feet of Your Lordship. And we are all so fortunate that today we have been able to directly see Your lotus feet. Dear Lord, we are all surrendered souls, devotees of Your Lordship; therefore, please be kind and bestow Your causeless mercy upon us. We know well that persons who have become liberated by constant engagement in Your devotional service are no longer contaminated by the material modes of nature; thus they have become eligible to be promoted to the kingdom of God in the spiritual world."

After first offering prayers to Lord Kṛṣṇa, the assembled sages wanted to take permission from King Dhṛtarāṣṭra and King Yudhiṣṭhira and then depart for their respective *āśramas.* At that time, however, Vasudeva, the father of Lord Kṛṣṇa and the most celebrated of all pious men, approached the sages and with great humility offered his respects by falling down at their feet. Vasudeva said, "My dear great sages, you are more respected than the demigods. I therefore offer my respectful obeisances unto you. I wish that you will accept my one request, if you so desire. I shall consider it a great blessing if you kindly explain the supreme fruitive activity by which one can counteract the reactions of all other activities."

The great sage Nārada was the leader of all the sages present there. Therefore he began to speak. "My dear sages," he said, "it is not very difficult to understand that because of his great goodness and simplicity, Vasudeva, who has become the father of the Personality of Godhead by accepting Kṛṣṇa as his son, is inclined to ask us about his welfare. It is said that familiarity breeds contempt. As such, Vasudeva, having Kṛṣṇa as his son, does not regard Kṛṣṇa with awe and veneration. Sometimes it is seen that persons who are living on the bank of the Ganges do not consider the Ganges to be very important, and they go far away in order to take their baths at a place of pilgrimage. Being that Lord Kṛṣṇa, whose knowledge is never second in any circumstances, is personally present, there is no need of Vasudeva's asking us for instruction.

"Lord Kṛṣṇa is not affected by the process of creation, maintenance and annihilation; His knowledge is never influenced by any agency beyond Himself. He is not agitated by the interaction of the material qualities, which changes things in the modes of time. His transcendental form is full of knowledge which never becomes agitated by ignorance, pride, attachment, envy or sense enjoyment. His knowledge is never subjected to the laws of *karma* regarding pious or impious activities; nor is it influenced by the three modes of material energy. No one is greater than or equal to Him, because He is the supreme authority, the Personality of Godhead.

"The ordinary conditioned human being may think the conditioned soul, who is covered by his materialistic senses, mind and intelligence, to be equal to Kṛṣṇa, but Lord Kṛṣṇa is just like the sun, which, although it sometimes may appear to be so, is never covered by the cloud, snow or fog or by other planets. When the eyes of less intelligent men are covered by such influences, they think the sun to be invisible. Similarly, persons influenced by the senses and addicted to material enjoyment cannot have a clear vision of the Supreme Personality of Godhead."

The sages present then began to address Vasudeva in the presence of Lord Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma and many other kings, and, as requested by him, they gave their instructions: "To counteract the reaction of *karma,* or desires impelling one to fruitive activities, one must execute the prescribed sacrifices which are meant for worshiping Lord Viṣṇu with faith and devotion. Lord Viṣṇu is the beneficiary of the results of all sacrificial performances. Great personalities and sages who are sufficiently experienced to possess vision of the three phases of the time element, namely past, present and future, and those who are able to see everything clearly through the eyes of revealed scriptures, have unanimously recommended that to purify the dust of material contamination accumulated in the heart and to clear the path of liberation and thereby achieve transcendental bliss, one must please Lord Viṣṇu. For everyone in the different social orders *(brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya* and *vaiśya)* who are living as householders, this worship of the Supreme Personality of Godhead Lord Viṣṇu, who is known as Puruṣottama, the original person, is recommended as the only auspicious path.

"All conditioned souls within this material world have deep-rooted desires to lord it over the resources of material nature. Everyone wants to accumulate riches, everyone wants to enjoy life to the greatest extent, everyone wants a wife, home and children, and everyone wants to become happy in this world and be elevated to the heavenly planets in the next life. But these desires are the causes of one's material bondage. Therefore, to get liberation from this bondage, one has to sacrifice his honestly earned riches for the satisfaction of Lord Viṣṇu.

"The only process to counteract all sorts of material desire is to engage oneself in the devotional service of Lord Viṣṇu. In this way a self-controlled person, even while remaining in householder life, should give up the three kinds of material desires, namely desire for the acquisition of material opulences, the enjoyment of wife and children, and elevation to higher planets. Eventually he may give up householder life and accept the renounced order of life, engaging himself completely in the devotional

service of the Lord. Everyone, even if born in a higher status of life as *brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya,* or *vaiśya,* is certainly indebted to the demigods, to the sages, to the forefathers, to living entities and so on, and in order to liquidate all these debts, one has to perform sacrifices, study the Vedic literature, and generate children in religious householder life. If somehow one accepts the renounced order of life without fulfilling this debt, certainly he falls down from his position. Today you have already liquidated your debts to your forefathers and the sages. Now, by performing sacrifices, you can free yourself from indebtedness to the demigods and thus take complete shelter of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. My dear Vasudeva, certainly you have already performed many pious activities in your previous lives. Otherwise, how could you be the father of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, the Supreme Personality of Godhead?"

Saintly Vasudeva, after hearing all the sages, offered his respectful obeisances unto their lotus feet. In this way he pleased the sages, and then he elected for them to perform the *yajñas.* When the sages were elected as priests of the sacrifices, they also in their turn induced Vasudeva to collect the required paraphernalia for executing the *yajñas* in that place of pilgrimage. Thus Vasudeva was persuaded to start to perform the *yajñas,* and all the members of the Yadu dynasty took their baths, dressed themselves very nicely, and decorated themselves beautifully and garlanded themselves with lotus flowers. Vasudeva's wives, dressed with nice garments and ornaments and golden necklaces, approached the arena of sacrifice carrying in their hands the required articles to offer in the sacrifice.

When everything was complete, there was heard the vibration of *mṛdaṅgas,* conchshells, kettledrums and other musical instruments. Professional dancers, both male and female, began to dance. The *sūtas* and *māgadhas,* who were professional singers, began to offer prayers by singing. The Gandharvas and their wives, whose voices were very sweet, began to sing many auspicious songs. Vasudeva anointed his eyes with collyrium, smeared butter over his body, and then, along with his eighteen wives, headed by Devakī, sat before the priests to be purified by the *abhiṣeka* ceremony. All such ceremonies were observed strictly according to the principles of scriptures, as was done formerly in the case of the moon with the stars. Vasudeva, because he was being initiated for the sacrifice, was dressed in deerskin, but all his wives were dressed with very nice saris, bangles, necklaces, ankle bells, earrings and many other ornaments. Vasudeva looked very beautiful surrounded by his wives, exactly like the King of heaven when he performs such sacrifices.

At that time, when Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Balarāma, along with Their

wives, children and relatives, sat down in that great sacrificial arena, it appeared that the Supreme Personality of Godhead was present along with all His part and parcel living entities and multi-energies. We have heard from the *śāstras* that Lord Kṛṣṇa has multi-energies and parts and parcels, but now in that sacrificial arena all could actually experience how the Supreme Personality of Godhead eternally exists along with His different energies. At that time, Lord Kṛṣṇa appeared as Lord Nārāyaṇa, and Lord Balarāma appeared as Saṅkarṣaṇa, the reservoir of all living entities.

Vasudeva satisfied Lord Viṣṇu by performing different kinds of sacrifices, such as *jyotiṣṭoma, darśa* and *pūrṇamāsa.* Some of these *yajñas* are called *prākṛta,* and some of them are known as *sauryasatra* or *vaikṛta.* Thereafter, the other sacrifices, known as *agnihotra,* were also performed, and the prescribed articles were offered in the proper way. In this way Lord Viṣṇu became pleased. The ultimate purpose of offering oblations in sacrifice is to please Lord Viṣṇu. But in this age of Kali it is very difficult to collect the different articles required for offering sacrifices. People have neither the means to collect the required paraphernalia nor the necessary knowledge or tendency to offer such sacrifices. Therefore, in this age of Kali, when people are mostly unfortunate, full of anxieties and disturbed by various kinds of calamities, the only sacrifice recommended is the performance of *saṅkīrtana-yajña.* Worshiping Lord Caitanya by this *saṅkīrtana-yajña* is the only recommended process in this age.

After the performance of the different sacrifices, Vasudeva offered ample riches, clothing, ornaments, cows, land and maidservants to the priests. Thereafter, all the wives of Vasudeva took their *avabhṛtha* baths and performed the part of the sacrificial duties known as *patnīsaṁyāja.* After finishing the offering with all the required paraphernalia, they all took their baths together in the lakes constructed by Paraśurāma, which are known as the Rāma-hrada. After Vasudeva and his wives took their baths, all the garments and ornaments which they wore were distributed to the subordinate persons who were engaged in singing, dancing and similar activities. We may note that the performance of sacrifice necessitates the profuse distribution of riches. Charity is offered to the priests and the *brāhmaṇas* in the beginning, and used garments and ornaments are offered in charity to the subordinate assistants after the performance of the sacrifice.

After offering the used articles to the singers and reciters, Vasudeva and his wives, dressed with new ornaments and dresses, fed everyone very sumptuously, beginning from the *brāhmaṇas* down to the dogs. After this, all the friends, family members, wives and children of Vasudeva, along

with all the kings and members of the Vidarbha, Kośala, Kuru, Kāśī, Kekaya and Sṛñjaya dynasties, assembled together. The priests, the demigods, the people in general, the forefathers, the ghosts and the *Cāraṇas* were all sufficiently remunerated by being offered ample gifts and respectful honor. Then all the persons assembled there took permission from Lord Kṛṣṇa, the husband of the goddess of fortune, and while glorifying the perfection of the sacrifice made by Vasudeva, they departed to their respective homes.

At that time, when King Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Vidura, Yudhiṣṭhira, Bhīma, Arjuna, Bhīṣmadeva, Droṇācārya, Kuntī, Nakula, Sahadeva, Nārada, Lord Vyāsadeva and many other relatives and kinsmen were about to part, they felt separation and therefore embraced each and every member of the Yadu dynasty with great feeling. Many others who were assembled in that sacrificial arena also departed. After this, Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Balarāma, along with King Ugrasena, satisfied the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana, headed by Mahārāja Nanda and the cowherd men, by profusely offering all kinds of gifts in order to worship them and please them. Out of their great feelings of friendship, the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana remained there for a considerable time along with the members of the Yadu dynasty.

After performing this sacrifice, Vasudeva felt so satisfied that there was no limit to his happiness. All the members of his family were with him, and in their presence he caught hold of the hands of Nanda Mahārāja and addressed him thus: "My dear brother, the Supreme Personality of Godhead has created a great tie of bondage which is known as the bondage of love and affection. I think it is a very difficult job for even the great sages and saintly persons to cut such a tie of love. My dear brother, you have exhibited feelings of love for me, which I was not able to return. I think, therefore, that I am ungrateful. You have behaved exactly as is characteristic of saintly persons, but I shall never be able to repay you. I have no means to repay you for your friendly dealings. Nevertheless I am confident that our tie of love will never break. Our relationship of friendship must ever continue, in spite of my inability to repay you. I hope you will excuse me for this inability.

"My dear brother, in the beginning, due to my being imprisoned, I could never serve you as a friend, and although at the present moment I am very opulent, because of my material prosperity I have become blind. I therefore cannot satisfy you properly even at this time. My dear brother, you are so nice and gentle that you offer all respect to others, but you don't care for any respect for yourself. A person seeking for auspicious progress in life must not possess too much material opulence with which

to become blind and puffed up, but he should take care of his friends and relatives."

When Vasudeva was speaking to Nanda Mahārāja in this way, he was influenced by a great feeling for the friendship of Nanda Mahārāja and the beneficial activities executed by King Nanda on his behalf. As such, his eyes filled with tears, and he began to cry. Desiring to please his friend Vasudeva and being affectionately bound with love for Lord Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, Nanda Mahārāja passed three months in their association. At the end of this time, all the members of Yadu dynasty tried to please the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana to their hearts' content. The members of the Yadu dynasty tried to satisfy Nanda Mahārāja and his associates by offering them clothing, ornaments, and many other valuable articles, and they all became fully satisfied. Vasudeva, Ugrasena, Lord Kṛṣṇa, Lord Balarāma, Uddhava and all other members of the Yadu dynasty presented their individual gifts to Nanda Mahārāja and his associates. After Nanda Mahārāja received these farewell presentations, he, along with his associates, started for Vrajabhūmi, Vṛndāvana. The minds of the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana remained, however, with Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, and therefore all of them started for Vṛndāvana without their minds.

When the members of the Vṛṣṇi family saw all their friends and visitors departing, they observed that the rainy season was approaching, and thus they decided to return to Dvārakā. They were fully satisfied, for they regarded Kṛṣṇa as everything. When they returned to Dvārakā, they began with great satisfaction to describe the sacrifice performed by Vasudeva, their meeting with various friends and well-wishers, and various other incidences which occurred during their travels in the places of pilgrimage.

Thus ends the Bhaktivedanta purport of the Second Volume, Twenty-Ninth Chapter, of Kṛṣṇa, *"Sacrificial Ceremonies Performed by Vasudeva."*



30 / Spiritual Instruction for Vasudeva and Return of the Six Dead Sons of Devakī by Lord Kṛṣṇa

It is a Vedic custom that the junior members of the family should offer respects to the elderly persons every morning. The children or the disciples especially should offer their respects to the parents or the spiritual master in the morning. In pursuance of this Vedic principle, Lord Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma used to offer Their obeisances to Their father, Vasudeva, along with his wives. One day, after having returned from the sacrificial performances at Kurukṣetra, when Lord Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma went to offer Their respect to Vasudeva, Vasudeva took the opportunity of appreciating the exalted position of his two sons. Vasudeva had the opportunity to understand the position of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma from the great sages who had assembled in the arena of the sacrifice. He not only heard from the sages, but on many occasions he actually experienced that Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were not ordinary human beings, but were very extraordinary. Thus he believed the words of the sages that his sons Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

With firm faith in his sons, he addressed them thus: "My dear Kṛṣṇa, You are the *sac-cid-ānanda-vigraha* Supreme Personality of Godhead, and my dear Balarāma, You are Saṅkarṣaṇa, the master of all mystic powers. I have now understood that You are eternal. Both of You are transcendental to this material manifestation and to its cause, the Supreme Person Mahā-Viṣṇu. You are the original controller of all. You are the rest of this cosmic manifestation. You are its creator, and You are also its creative ingredients. You are the master of this cosmic manifestation, and actually this manifestation is created for Your pastimes only.

"The different material phases from the beginning to the end of the cosmos manifest under different time formulas are also Yourself, because You are both the cause and effect of this manifestation. The two features of this material world, the predominator and the predominated, are also

You, and You are the supreme transcendental controller who stands above them. Therefore, You are beyond the perception of our senses. You are the supreme soul, unborn and unchanging. You are not affected by the six kinds of transformations which occur in the material body. The wonderful varieties of this material world are also created by You, and You have entered as the Supersoul into each living entity and even into the atom. You are the maintainer of everything.

"The vital force which is acting as the life principle in everything and the creative force derived from it are not acting independently, but are dependent upon You, the Supreme Person behind these forces. Without Your will, they cannot work. Material energy has no cognizance. It cannot act independently without being agitated by You. Because the material nature is dependent upon You, the living entities can only attempt to act, But without Your sanction and will they cannot perform anything or achieve the result they desire.

"The original energy is only an emanation from You. My dear Lord, the shining of the moon, the heat of the fire, the rays of the sun, the glittering of the stars, and the electric lightning which is manifested as very powerful, as well as the gravity of the mountains, the energy of the earth and the quality of its flavor—all are different manifestations of You. The pure taste of water and the vital force which maintains all life are also features of Your Lordship. The water and its taste are also Yourself.

"My dear Lord, although the forces of the senses, the mental power of thinking, willing and feeling, and the strength, movement and growth of the body appear to be performed by different movements of the airs within the body, they are all ultimately manifestations of Your energy. The vast expanse of outer space rests in Yourself. The vibration of the sky, its thunder, the supreme sound *omkāra* and the arrangement of different words to distinguish one thing from the other are symbolic representations of Yourself. Everything is Yourself. The senses, the controllers of the senses, the demigods, and the acquisition of knowledge which is the purpose of the senses, as well as the subject matter of knowledge—all are Yourself. The resolution of intelligence and the sharp memory of the living entity are also Yourself. You are the egotistic principle in ignorance which is the cause of this material world, the egotistic principle of passion which is the cause of the senses, and the egotistic principle of goodness which is the origin or the different controlling deities of this material world. The illusory energy, or *māyā,* which is the cause of the conditioned soul's perpetual transmigration from one form to another, is Yourself.

"My dear Supreme Personality of Godhead, You are the original cause

of all causes, exactly as the earth is the original cause of different kinds of trees, plants and similar varieties of manifestation. As the earth is represented in everything, so You are present throughout this material manifestation as Supersoul. You are the supreme cause of all causes, the eternal principle. Everything is, in fact, a manifestation of Your one energy. The three qualities of material nature—*sattva, rajas* and *tamas*—and the result of their interaction, are linked up with You by Your agency of *yogamāyā.* They are supposed to be independent, but actually the total material energy is resting upon You, the Supersoul. Since You are the supreme cause of everything, the interactions of material manifestation—birth, existence, growth, transformation, deterioration and annihilation—are all absent in Yourself. Your supreme energy, *yogamāyā,* is acting in variegated manifestations, but because *yogamāyā* is Your energy, You are therefore present in everything."

In the *Bhagavad-gītā,* this fact is very nicely explained in the Ninth Chapter, wherein the Lord says, "In My impersonal form I am spread all over the material energy; everything is resting in Me, but I am not there." This very statement is also given by Vasudeva. To say He is not present everywhere means that He is aloof from everything, although His energy is acting everywhere. This can be understood by a crude example: In a big establishment, the energy, or the organization of the supreme boss, is working in every nook and corner of the business, but that does not mean that the original proprietor is present there, although in every department and every atmosphere the presence of the proprietor is felt by the worker. The physical presence of the proprietor in every department is formality only. Actually his energy is working everywhere. Similarly, the omnipresence of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is felt in the action of His energies. Therefore the philosophy of inconceivable simultaneous oneness with and difference from the Supreme Lord is confirmed everywhere. The Lord is one, but His energies are diverse.

Vasudeva said, "This material world is like a great flowing river, and its waves are the three material modes of nature—goodness, passion and ignorance. This material body, as well as the senses, the faculties of thinking, feeling and willing and the stages of distress, happiness, attachment and lust—all are different products of these three qualities of nature. The foolish person who cannot realize Your transcendental identity above all this material reaction continues to remain in the entanglement of fruitive activity and is subjected to the continuous process of birth and death without a chance of being freed.

This is also confirmed in a different way by the Lord in the Fourth

Chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā*. There it is said that anyone who knows the appearance and activities of the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa becomes freed from the clutches of material nature and goes back home, back to Godhead. Therefore Kṛṣṇa's transcendental name, form, activities and qualities are not products of this material nature.

"My dear Lord," Vasudeva continued, "despite all these defects of the conditioned soul, if someone somehow or other comes in contact with devotional service, he achieves this civilized human form of body with developed consciousness and thereby becomes capable of executing further progress in devotional service. And yet, illusioned by the external energy, people generally do not utilize this advantage of the human form of life. Thus they miss the chance of eternal freedom and unnecessarily spoil the progress they have made after thousands of births.

"In the bodily concept of life, one is attached to the offspring of the body, due to false egotism, and everyone in conditioned life is entrapped by false relationships and false affection. The whole world is moving under this false impression of material bondage. I know that neither of You are my sons; You are the original chief and progenitor, the Personalities of Godhead, known as Pradhāna and Puruṣa. But You have appeared on the surface of this globe in order to minimize the burden of the world by killing the *kṣatriya* kings who are unnecessarily increasing their military strength. You have already informed me about this in the past. My dear Lord, You are the shelter of the surrendered soul, the supreme well-wisher of the meek and humble. I am therefore taking shelter of Your lotus feet, which alone can give one liberation from the entanglement of material existence.

"For a long time I have simply considered this body to be myself, and although You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead, I consider You to be my son. My dear Lord, at the very moment when You first appeared in Kaṁsa's prison house, I was informed that You were the Supreme Personality of Godhead and that You had descended for the protection of the principles of religion as well as the destruction of the unfaithful. Although unborn, You descend in every millennium to execute Your mission. My dear Lord, as in the sky there are many forms appearing and disappearing, so You also appear and disappear in many eternal forms. Who, therefore, can understand Your pastimes or the mystery of Your appearance and disappearance? Our only business should be to glorify Your supreme greatness."

When Vasudeva was addressing his divine sons in that way, Lord Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were smiling. Because They are very affectionate to Their

devotees, They accepted all the appreciation of Vasudeva with a kindly smiling attitude. Kṛṣṇa then began to confirm all Vasudeva's statements as follows: "My dear father, whatever you may say, We are, after all, your sons. What you have said about us is certainly a highly philosophical understanding of spiritual knowledge. I accept it in total without exception."

Vasudeva was in the complete perfection of life in considering Lord Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma to be his sons, but because the sages assembled in the place of pilgrimage at Kurukṣetra had spoken about the Lord as the supreme cause of everything, Vasudeva simply repeated it out of his love for Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. Lord Kṛṣṇa did not wish to detract from His relationship with Vasudeva as father and son; therefore in the very beginning of His reply He accepted the fact that He is the eternal son of Vasudeva and that Vasudeva is the eternal father of Kṛṣṇa. After this, Lord Kṛṣṇa informed His father of the spiritual identity of all living entities. He continued, "My dear father, everyone, including Myself and My brother Balarāma, as well as all the inhabitants of the city of Dvārakā and the whole cosmic manifestation, is exactly as you have already explained, but all of us are also qualitatively one."

Lord Kṛṣṇa intended for Vasudeva to see everything in the vision of a *mahābhāgavata,* a first-class devotee. A first-class devotee sees that all living entities are part and parcel of the Supreme Lord and that the Supreme Lord is situated in everyone's heart. In fact, every living entity has spiritual identity, but in contact with material existence he becomes influenced by the material modes of nature. He becomes covered by the concept of bodily life, forgetting that his spirit soul is of the same quality as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. One mistakenly considers one individual to be different from another simply because of their material bodily coverings. Because of differences between bodies, the spirit soul appears before us differently.

Lord Kṛṣṇa then gave a nice example in terms of the five material elements. The total material elements, namely, the sky, the air, the fire, the water and the earth, are present in everything in the material world, whether in an earthen pot or in a mountain or in the trees or in an earring. These five elements are present in everything, in different proportions and quantities. A mountain is a gigantic form of the combination of these five elements, and a small earthen pot is of the same elements, but in a smaller quantity. Therefore all material items, although in different shapes or different quantities, are of the same ingredients. Similarly, the living entities—beginning from Lord Kṛṣṇa and including the *Viṣṇu-tattva* and

millions of Viṣṇu forms, and then the living entities in different forms, beginning from Lord Brahmā down to the small ant—are all of the same quality in spirit. Some are great in quantity, and some are small, but qualitatively they are of the same nature. It is therefore confirmed in the *Upaniṣads* that Kṛṣṇa, or the Supreme Lord, is the chief among all living entities, and He maintains them and supplies them with all necessities of life. Anyone who knows this philosophy is in perfect knowledge. The Vedic version *tat tvam asi,* "Thou art the same," does not mean that everyone is God, but everyone is qualitatively of the same nature as that of God.

After hearing Kṛṣṇa speak the entire philosophy of spiritual life in an abbreviated summation, Vasudeva was exceedingly pleased with his son. Being thus elated, he could not speak, but remained silent. In the meantime, Devakī, the mother of Lord Kṛṣṇa, sat by the side of her husband. Previously she had heard that both Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were so kind upon Their teacher that They had brought back the teacher's dead sons from the clutches of the superintendent of death, Yamarāja. Since she had heard this incident, she had been also thinking of her own sons who were killed by Kaṁsa, and while remembering them she became overwhelmed with grief.

In compassion for her dead sons, Devakī began to appeal to Lord Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma thus: "My dear Balarāma, Your very name suggests that You give all pleasure and all strength to everyone. Your unlimited potency is beyond the reach of our minds and words, and my dear Kṛṣṇa, You are the master of all mystic *yogīs.* I also know that You are the master of the Prajāpatis like Brahmā and his assistants, and You are the original Personality of Godhead, Nārāyaṇa. I also know for certain that You have descended to annihilate all kinds of miscreants who have been misled in the course of time. They have lost control of their minds and senses, fallen from the quality of goodness, and have deliberately neglected the direction of the revealed scriptures by living a life of extravagancy and impudency. You have descended on the earth to minimize the burden of the world by killing such miscreant rulers. My dear Kṛṣṇa, I know that Mahā-Viṣṇu, who is lying in the causal ocean of the cosmic manifestation and who is the source of this whole creation, is simply an expansion of Your plenary portion. Creation, maintenance and annihilation of this cosmic manifestation are being effected only by Your plenary portion. I am, therefore, taking shelter of You without any reservation. I have heard that when You wanted to reward Your teacher, Sāndīpani Muni, and he asked You to bring back his dead son, You and Balarāma immediately

brought him from the custody of Yamarāja, although he had been dead for a very long time. By this act I understand You to be the supreme master of all mystic *yogīs*. I am, therefore, asking You to fulfill my desire in the same way. In other words, I am asking You to bring back all my sons who were killed by Kaṁsa; upon Your bringing them back, my heart will be content, and it will be a great pleasure for me just to see them once."

After hearing Their mother speak in this way, Lord Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa immediately called for the assistance of *yogamāyā* and started for the lower planetary system known as Sutala. Formerly, in His incarnation of Vāmana, the Supreme Personality of Godhead was satisfied by the king of the demons, Bali Mahārāja, who donated to Him everything he had. Bali Mahārāja was then given the whole of Sutala for his residence and kingdom. Now when this great devotee, Bali Mahārāja, saw that Lord Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa had come to his planet, he immediately merged in the ocean of happiness. As soon as he saw Lord Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma in his presence, he and all his family members stood up from their seats and bowed down at the lotus feet of the Lord. Bali Mahārāja offered Lord Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma the best seat he had in his possession, and when both Lords were seated comfortably, he began to wash Their lotus feet. He then sprinkled the water on his head and on the heads of his family members. The water used to wash the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma can purify even the greatest demigods, such as Lord Brahmā.

After this, Bali Mahārāja brought valuable garments, ornaments, sandalwood pulp, betel nuts, lamps and various nectarean foodstuffs, and along with his family members he worshiped the Lord according to the regulative principles and offered his riches and body unto the lotus feet of the Lord. King Bali was feeling such transcendental pleasure that he repeatedly grabbed the lotus feet of the Lord and kept them on his chest; and sometimes he put them on the top of the head, and in this way he was feeling transcendental bliss. Tears of love and affection began to flow down from his eyes, and all his hairs stood on end. He began to offer prayers to the Lords in a voice which choked up intermittently.

"My Lord Balarāma, You are the original Anantadeva. You are so great that Anantadeva Śeṣa and other transcendental forms have originally emanated from You and Lord Kṛṣṇa. You are the original Personality of Godhead, and Your eternal form is all-blissful and full of complete knowledge. You are the creator of the whole world. You are the original initiator and propounder of the systems of *jñāna-yoga* and *bhakti-yoga*. You are the Supreme Brahman, the original Personality of Godhead, I therefore with all respect offer my obeisances unto both of You. My

dear Lords, it is very difficult for the living entities to get to see You, yet when You are merciful upon Your devotees it becomes easy for them to see You. As such, only out of Your causeless mercy have You agreed to come here and be visible to us, who are generally influenced by the qualities of ignorance and passion.

"My dear Lord, we belong to the *daitya* or demon category. The demons or demonic persons—the Gandharvas, the Siddhas, the Vidyādharas, the Cāraṇas, the Yakṣas, the Rākṣasas, the Piśācas, the ghosts and the hobgoblins—are incapable, by nature, of worshiping You or becoming Your devotees. Instead of becoming Your devotees, they simply become impediments on the path of devotion. But, opposed to them, You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead, representing all the *Vedas* and situated in the mode of uncontaminated goodness. Your position is always transcendental. For this reason, some of us, although born of the modes of passion and ignorance, have taken shelter of Your lotus feet and become devotees. Some of us are actually pure devotees, and some of us have taken shelter of Your lotus feet, desiring to gain something from devotion.

"By Your causeless mercy only we demons are in direct contact with Your personality. This contact is not possible even for the great demigods. No one knows how You act through Your *yogamāyā* potency. Even demigods cannot calculate the expanse of the activities of Your internal potency, so how is it possible for us to know it? I therefore place my humble prayers before You: please be kind to me, who am fully surrendered unto You, and favor me with Your causeless mercy so that I may simply remember Your lotus feet birth after birth. My only ambition is that I may live alone just like the *paramahaṁsas* who, traveling alone here and there in great peace of mind, depend simply upon Your lotus feet. I also desire that if I have to associate with anyone, they may be only Your pure devotees and no one else, because Your pure devotees are always well-wishers of all living entities.

"My dear Lord, You are the supreme master and director of the whole world. Please, therefore, engage me in Your service and let me thus become freed from all material contaminations. You can purify me in that way because if someone engages himself in the loving service of Your Lordship, he immediately becomes free from all kinds of regulative principles enjoined in the *Vedas.*"

The word *paramahaṁsa* mentioned here means the supreme swan. It is said that the swan can draw milk out from a reservoir of water; it can take only the milk portion and reject the watery portion. Similarly, a person who can draw out the spiritual portion from this material world and who

can live alone, depending only on the Supreme Spirit, not on the material world, is called *paramahaṁsa.* When one achieves the *paramahaṁsa* platform, he is no longer under the regulative principles of the Vedic injunctions. A *paramahaṁsa* accepts only the association of pure devotees and rejects others who are too materially addicted. In other words, those who are materially addicted cannot understand the value of the *paramahaṁsa,* but those who are fortunately advanced in spiritual sense take shelter of the *paramahaṁsa* and thus successfully complete the mission of human life.

After Lord Kṛṣṇa heard the prayers of Bali Mahārāja, He spoke as follows: "My dear King of the demons, in the millennium of the Svāyambhuva Manu, the Prajāpati known as Marīci begot six sons, all demigods, in the womb of his wife, Ūrṇā. Once upon a time, Lord Brahmā became captivated by the beauty of his daughter and was following her, impelled by sex desire. At that time, these six demigods looked at the action of Lord Brahmā with abhorrence. This criticism of Brahmā's action by the demigods constituted a great offense on their part, and for this reason they were condemned to take birth as the sons of the demon Hiraṇyakaśipu. These sons of Hiraṇyakaśipu were thereafter put in the womb of mother Devakī, and as soon as they took their birth, Kaṁsa killed them one after another. My dear King of the demons, again, mother Devakī is very anxious to see these six dead sons again, and she is very much aggrieved on account of their early death at the hand of Kaṁsa. I know that all of them are living with you. I have decided to take them with Me in order to pacify My mother Devakī. After seeing My mother, all these six conditioned souls will be liberated, and thus in great pleasure they will be transferred to their original planet. The names of these six conditioned souls are as follows: Smara, Udgītha, Pariṣvaṅga, Pataṅga, Kṣudrabhṛt and Ghṛṇī. They will be again reinstated in their former position as demigods."

After thus informing the King of the demons, Kṛṣṇa stopped speaking, and Bali Mahārāja understood the Lord's purpose. He worshiped Him sufficiently, and thereafter Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Balarāma took away the six conditioned souls and returned to the city of Dvārakā, where He presented them as little babies before His mother, Devakī. Mother Devakī became overwhelmed with joy and was so ecstatic in motherly feeling that immediately milk began to flow from her breasts, and she fed the babies with great satisfaction. She began to take them on her lap again and again, smelling their heads and thinking, "He has gotten my lost children back!" For the time being she became overpowered by the energy of Viṣṇu, and in great motherly affection she began to enjoy the company of her lost children.

The milk from the breast of Devakī was transcendental nectar because

the same milk had been sucked by Lord Kṛṣṇa. As such, the babies who sucked the breast of Devakījī, which had touched the body of Lord Kṛṣṇa, immediately became self-realized persons. The babies therefore began to offer their obeisances unto Lord Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma, their father Vasudeva, and mother Devakī. After this, they were immediately transferred to their respective heavenly planets.

After they departed, Devakī became stunned with wonder that her dead children had come back and had again been transferred to their respective planets. She could adjust the events only by thinking of Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, in which, because Lord Kṛṣṇa's potencies are all inconceivable, anything wonderful can be performed. Without accepting the inconceivable, unlimited potencies of the Lord, one cannot understand that Lord Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Soul. By His unlimited potencies, He performs unlimited pastimes also, and no one can describe them in full nor can anyone know them all. Sūta Gosvāmī, speaking *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* before the sages of Naimiṣāraṇya, headed by Śaunaka Ṛṣi, gave his verdict in this connection as follows.

"Great sages, please understand that the transcendental pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa are all eternal. They are not ordinary narrations of historical incidences. Such narrations are identical with the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself. Anyone, therefore, who hears such narrations of the Lord's pastimes becomes immediately freed from the contamination of material existence. And those who are pure devotees enjoy these narrations as nectar entering into their ears." Such narrations were described by Śukadeva Gosvāmī, the exalted son of Vyāsadeva, and anyone who hears them, as well as anyone who describes them for the hearing of others, becomes Kṛṣṇa conscious. And it is only the Kṛṣṇa conscious persons who become eligible for going back home, back to Godhead.

Thus ends the Bhaktivedanta purport of the Second Volume, Thirtieth Chapter, of Kṛṣṇa, *"Spiritual Instruction for Vasudeva and Return of the Six Dead Sons of Devakī by Lord Kṛṣṇa."*



31 / The Kidnapping of Subhadrā and Lord Kṛṣṇa's Visiting Śrutadeva and Bahulāśva

After hearing this incident, King Parīkṣit became more inquisitive to hear about Kṛṣṇa and His pastimes, and thus he inquired from Śukadeva Gosvāmī how his grandmother Subhadrā was kidnapped by his grandfather Arjuna at the instigation of Lord Kṛṣṇa. King Parīkṣit was very much eager to learn about his grandfather's kidnapping and marriage of his grandmother.

Thus Śukadeva Gosvāmī began to narrate the story as follows: "Once upon a time, your grandfather Arjuna, the great hero, was visiting several holy places of pilgrimage, and while he was thus traveling all over he happened to come to the Prabhāsakṣetra. In the Prabhāsakṣetra he heard the news that Lord Balarāma was negotiating the marriage of Subhadrā, the daughter of Arjuna's maternal uncle, Vasudeva. Although her father, Vasudeva, and her brother, Kṛṣṇa, were not in agreement with Him, Balarāma was in favor of marrying Subhadrā to Duryodhana. Arjuna, however, desired to gain the hand of Subhadrā."

As he thought of Subhadrā and her beauty, Arjuna became more and more captivated with the idea of marrying her, and with a plan in mind he dressed himself like a Vaiṣṇava *sannyāsī,* carrying a *tridaṇḍa* in his hand. The Māyāvādī *sannyāsīs* take one *daṇḍa,* or one rod, whereas the Vaiṣṇava *sannyāsīs* take three *daṇḍa,* or three rods. The three rods, or *tridaṇḍa,* indicate that a Vaiṣṇava *sannyāsī* vows to render service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead by his body, mind and words. The system of *tridaṇḍa-sannyāsa* has been in existence for a long time, and the Vaiṣṇava *sannyāsīs* are called *tridaṇḍīs,* or sometimes *tridaṇḍi-svāmīs* or *tridaṇḍi-gosvāmīs.*

Sannyāsīs are generally meant to travel all over the country for preaching work, but during the four months of the rainy season in India, from September through December, they do not travel, but take shelter in one

place and remain there without moving. This non-movement of the *sannyāsī* is called *Cāturmāsya-vrata.* When a *sannyāsī* stays in a place for four months, the local inhabitants of that place take advantage of his presence to become spiritually advanced. Arjuna, in the dress of a *tridaṇḍi-sannyāsī,* remained in the city of Dvārakā for four months, devising a plan whereby he could get Subhadrā as his wife. The inhabitants of Dvārakā as well as Lord Balarāma could not recognize the *sannyāsī* to be Arjuna; therefore all of them offered their respect and obeisances to the *sannyāsī* without knowing the actual situation.

One day Lord Balarāma invited this particular *sannyāsī* to lunch at His home. Balarāmajī very respectfully offered him all kinds of palatable dishes, and the so-called *sannyāsī* was eating sumptuously. While eating at the home of Balarāmajī, Arjuna was simply looking over beautiful Subhadrā, who was very enchanting even to the great heroes and kings. Out of love for her, Arjuna's eyes brightened, and he began to see her with glittering eyes. Arjuna decided that somehow or other he would achieve Subhadrā as his wife, and his mind became agitated on account of this strong desire.

Arjuna, the grandfather of Mahārāja Parīkṣit, was himself extraordinarily beautiful, and his bodily structure was very much attractive to Subhadrā. Subhadrā also decided within her mind that she would accept only Arjuna as her husband. As a simple girl, she was smiling with great pleasure, looking at Arjuna. Thus Arjuna also became more and more attracted by her. In this way, Subhadrā dedicated herself to Arjuna, and he resolved to marry her by any means. He then became absorbed twenty-four hours a day in the thought of how he could get Subhadrā as his wife. He was afflicted with the thought of getting Subhadrā, and had not a moment's peace of mind.

Once upon a time, Subhadrā, seated on a chariot, came out of the palace fort to see the gods in the temple. Arjuna took this opportunity, and with the permission of Vasudeva and Devakī, he kidnapped her. After getting on Subhadrā's chariot, he prepared himself for a fight. Taking up his bow and holding off with his arrows the soldiers ordered to check him, Arjuna took Subhadrā away. While Subhadrā was being thus kidnapped by Arjuna, her relatives and family members began to cry, but still he took her, just as a lion takes his share and departs. When it was disclosed to Lord Balarāma that the so-called *sannyāsī* was Arjuna and that he had planned such a device simply to take away Subhadrā and that he had actually taken her, He became very angry. Just as the waves of the ocean become agitated on a full moon day, Lord Balarāma became greatly disturbed.

Lord Kṛṣṇa was in favor of Arjuna; therefore, along with other members of the family, He tried to pacify Balarāma by falling at His feet and begging Him to pardon Arjuna. Lord Balarāma was then convinced that Subhadrā was attached to Arjuna, and He became pleased to know that she wanted Arjuna as her husband. The matter was settled, and in order to please the newly married couple, Lord Balarāma arranged to send a dowry, consisting of an abundance of riches, elephants, chariots, horses, servants and maidservants.

Mahārāja Parīkṣit was very anxious to hear more about Kṛṣṇa, and so, after finishing the narration of Arjuna's kidnapping Subhadrā, Śukadeva Gosvāmī began to narrate another story, as follows.

There was a householder *brāhmaṇa* in the city of Mithilā, the capital of the kingdom of Videha. This *brāhmaṇa,* whose name was Śrutadeva, was a great devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Due to his being fully Kṛṣṇa conscious and always engaged in the service of the Lord, he was completely peaceful in mind and detached from all material attraction. He was very learned and had no other desire than to be fully situated in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Although in the order of householder life, he never took great pains to earn anything for his livelihood; he was satisfied with whatever he could achieve without much endeavor, and somehow or other he lived in that way. Every day he would get necessities for life in just the quantity required, and not more. That was his destiny. The *brāhmaṇa* had no desire to get more than what he needed, and thus he was peacefully executing the regulative principles of a *brāhmaṇa's* life, as enjoined in the revealed scriptures.

Fortunately, the King of Mithilā was as good a devotee as the *brāhmaṇa.* The name of this famous King was Bahulāśva. He was very well established in his reputation as a good king, and he was not at all ambitious to extend his kingdom for the sake of sense gratification. As such, both the *brāhmaṇa* and King Bahulāśva remained pure devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa in Mithilā.

Since Lord Kṛṣṇa was very merciful upon these two devotees, King Bahulāśva and the *brāhmaṇa,* Śrutadeva, He one day asked His driver, Dāruka, to take His chariot into the capital city of Mithilā. Lord Kṛṣṇa was accompanied by the great sages Nārada, Vāmadeva, Atri, Vyāsadeva, Paraśurāma, Asita, Aruṇi, Bṛhaspati, Kaṇva, Maitreya, Cyavana and others. Lord Kṛṣṇa and the sages were passing through many villages and towns, and everywhere the citizens would receive them with great respect and offer them articles in worship. When the citizens came to see the Lord and all of them assembled together in one place, it seemed that the sun was present along with his various satellite planets. In that journey, Lord Kṛṣṇa and the sages passed through the kingdoms of Ānarta, Dhanva,

Kurujāṅgala, Kaṅka, Matsya, Pāñcāla, Kunti, Madhu, Kekaya, Kośala and Arṇa, and thus all the citizens of these places, both men and women, could see Lord Kṛṣṇa eye to eye. In this way they enjoyed celestial happiness, with open hearts full of love and affection for the Lord, and when they saw the face of the Lord, it seemed to them that they were drinking nectar through their eyes. When they saw Kṛṣṇa, all the ignorant misconceptions of their lives dissipated. When the Lord passed through the various countries and the people came to visit Him, simply by glancing over them the Lord would bestow all good fortune upon them and liberate them from all kinds of ignorance. In some places, the demigods also would join with the human beings, and their glorification of the Lord would cleanse all directions of all inauspicious things. In this way, Lord Kṛṣṇa slowly and gradually reached the kingdom of Videha.

When the news of the Lord's arrival was received by the citizens, they all felt unlimited happiness and came to welcome Him, taking gifts in their hands to offer. As soon as they saw Lord Kṛṣṇa, their hearts immediately blossomed in transcendental bliss, just as a lotus flower blooms on the rising of the sun. Previously they had simply heard the names of the great sages, but had never seen them. Now, by the mercy of Lord Kṛṣṇa, they had the opportunity of seeing both the great sages and the Lord Himself.

King Bahulāśva, as well as the *brāhmaṇa,* Śrutadeva, knowing well that the Lord had come there just to grace them with favor, immediately fell at the Lord's lotus feet and offered their respects. With folded hands, the King and the *brāhmaṇa* each simultaneously invited Lord Kṛṣṇa and all the sages to his home. In order to please both of them, Lord Kṛṣṇa expanded Himself into two and went to the houses of each one of them; yet neither the King nor the *brāhmaṇa* could understand that the Lord had gone to the house of the other. Both thought that the Lord had gone only to his own house. That He and His companions were present in both houses, although both the *brāhmaṇa* and the King thought He was present in his house only, is another opulence of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This opulence is described in the revealed scriptures as *vaibhava-prakāśa.* Similarly, when Lord Kṛṣṇa married sixteen thousand wives, He also expanded Himself into sixteen thousand forms, each one of them as powerful as He Himself. Similarly, in Vṛndāvana, when Brahmā stole away Kṛṣṇa's cows, calves and cowherd boys, Kṛṣṇa expanded Himself into many new cows, calves and cowherd boys.

Bahulāśva, the King of Videha, was very intelligent and was a perfect gentleman. He was astonished that so many great sages, along with the

Supreme Personality of Godhead, were personally present in his home. He knew perfectly well that the conditioned soul, especially when engaged in worldly affairs, cannot be a hundred percent pure, whereas the Supreme Personality of Godhead and His pure devotees are always transcendental to worldly contamination. Therefore, when he found that the Supreme Personality of Godhead Kṛṣṇa and all the great sages were at his home, he was astonished, and he began to thank Lord Kṛṣṇa for His causeless mercy.

Feeling very much obliged and wanting to receive his guests to the best of his capacity, he called for nice chairs and cushions, and Lord Kṛṣṇa, along with all the sages, sat down very comfortably. At that time, King Bahulāśva's mind was very restless, not because of any problems, but because of great ecstasy of love and devotion. His heart was filled with love and affection for the Lord and His associates, and his eyes were filled with tears of ecstasy. He arranged to wash the feet of his divine guests, and after washing them he and his family members sprinkled the water on their own heads. After this, he offered to the guests nice flower garlands, sandalwood pulp, incense, new garments, ornaments, lamps, cows and bulls. In a manner just befitting his royal position, he worshiped each one of them in this way. When all had been fed sumptuously and were sitting very comfortably, Bahulāśva came before Lord Kṛṣṇa and caught His lotus feet. He placed them on his lap and, while massaging the feet with his hands, began to speak about the glories of the Lord in a sweet voice.

"My dear Lord, You are the Supersoul of all living entities and as witness within the heart are cognizent of everyone's activities. As such, being duty-bound, we always think of Your lotus feet so that we can remain in a secure position without deviating from Your eternal service. As a result of our continuous remembrance of Your lotus feet, You have kindly visited my place personally to favor me with Your causeless mercy. We have heard, my dear Lord, that by Your various statements You confirm Your pure devotees to be more dear to You than Lord Balarāma or Your constant servitor the goddess of fortune. Your devotees are dearer to You than Your first son, Lord Brahmā, and I am sure that You have so kindly visited my place in order to prove Your divine statement. I cannot imagine how people can be godless and demoniac even after knowing of Your causeless mercy and affection for Your devotees who are constantly engaged in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. How can they forget Your lotus feet?

"My dear Lord, it is known to us that You are so kind and liberal that when a person leaves everything just to engage in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, You sometimes give Yourself in exchange for that unalloyed service. You have appeared in the Yadu dynasty to fulfill Your mission of reclaiming

all conditioned souls rotting in the sinful activities of material existence, and this appearance is already famous all over the world. My dear Lord, You are the ocean of unlimited mercy, love and affection. Your transcendental form is full of bliss, knowledge and eternity. You can attract everyone's heart by Your beautiful form as Śyāmasundara, Kṛṣṇa. Your knowledge is unlimited, and to teach all people how to execute devotional service You have sent Your incarnation Nara-Nārāyaṇa, who is engaged in severe austerities and penances at Badarīnārāyaṇa. Kindly, therefore, accept my humble obeisances at Your lotus feet. My dear Lord, I beg to request You and Your companions, the great sages and *brāhmaṇas,* to remain at my place so that this family of the famous King Nimi may be sanctified by the dust of Your lotus feet at least for a few days." Lord Kṛṣṇa could not refuse the request of His devotee, and thus He remained there for a few days along with the sages in order to sanctify the city of Mithilā and all its citizens.

Meanwhile, the *brāhmaṇa,* simultaneously receiving Lord Kṛṣṇa and His associates at his home, became transcendentally overwhelmed with joy. After offering his guests nice sitting places, the *brāhmaṇa* began to dance, throwing his wrap around his body. Śrutadeva, being not at all rich, offered only mattresses, wooden planks, straw carpets, etc., to his distinguished guests, Lord Kṛṣṇa and the sages, but he welcomed them to his best capacity. He began to speak very highly of the Lord and the sages, and he and his wife washed the feet of each one of them. After this, he took the water and sprinkled it over all the members of his family, and although it appeared that the *brāhmaṇa* was very poor, he was at that time most fortunate. While Śrutadeva was welcoming Lord Kṛṣṇa and His associates, he simply forgot himself in transcendental joy. After welcoming the Lord and His companions, according to his capacity he brought fruits, incense, scented water, scented clay, *tulasī* leaves, *kuśa* straw and lotus flowers. They were not very costly items and could be secured very easily, but because they were offered with devotional love, Lord Kṛṣṇa and His associates accepted them very gladly. The *brāhmaṇa's* wife cooked very simple foods like rice and dahl, and Lord Kṛṣṇa and His followers were very pleased to accept them because they were offered in devotional love. When Lord Kṛṣṇa and His associates were fed in this way, the *brāhmaṇa* Śrutadeva was thinking thus: "I am fallen into the deep, dark well of householder life and am the most unfortunate person. How has it become possible that Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and His associates, the great sages, whose very presence makes a place as sanctified as a pilgrimage site, have agreed to come to my place?" While

the *brāhmaṇa* was thinking in this way, the guests finished their lunch and sat back very comfortably. At that time, the *brāhmaṇa,* Śrutadeva, and his wife, children and other relatives, appeared there to render service to the distinguished guests. While touching the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the *brāhmaṇa* began to speak.

"My dear Lord," he said, "You are the Supreme Person, Puruṣottama, situated transcendentally to the manifested and unmanifested material creation. The activities of this material world and of the conditioned souls have nothing to do with Your position. We can appreciate that it is not that only today You have given me Your audience. You are associating with all the living entities as Paramātmā since the beginning of creation."

This statement of the *brāhmaṇa* is very instructive. It is a fact that the Supreme Lord Personality of Godhead in His Paramātmā feature entered the creation of this material world as Mahā-Viṣṇu, Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu and Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, and in a very friendly attitude the Lord is sitting along with the conditioned soul in the body. Therefore, every living entity has the Lord with him from the very beginning, but due to his mistaken consciousness of life, the living entity cannot understand this. When his consciousness is, however, changed into Kṛṣṇa consciousness, he can immediately understand how Kṛṣṇa is trying to assist the conditioned souls to get out of the material entanglement.

Śrutadeva continued, "My dear Lord, You have entered this material world as if in a sleeping condition. A conditioned soul, while sleeping, creates false or temporary worlds; he becomes busy in many illusory activities—sometimes becoming a king, sometimes being murdered or sometimes going to an unknown city—and all these are simply temporary affairs. Similarly, Your Lordship, apparently also in a sleeping condition, enters this material world to create a temporary manifestation, not for Your personal necessities, but for the conditioned soul who wants to imitate Your Lordship as enjoyer. The conditioned soul's enjoyment in the material world is temporary and illusory. And yet the conditioned soul is by himself unable to create such a temporary situation for his illusory enjoyment. In order to fulfill his desires, although they are temporary and illusory, You enter in this temporary manifestation to help him. Thus, from the beginning of the conditioned soul's entering into the material world, You are his constant companion. When, therefore, the conditioned soul comes in contact with a pure devotee and takes to devotional service, beginning from the process of hearing Your transcendental pastimes, glorifying Your transcendental activities, worshiping Your eternal form in the temple, offering prayers to You and engaging in discussion to

understand Your transcendental position, he then gradually becomes freed from the contamination of material existence. His heart becomes cleansed of all material dust, and thus gradually You become visible in the heart of the devotee. Although You are constantly with the conditioned soul, only when he becomes purified by devotional service do You become revealed to him. Others, who are bewildered by fruitive activities, either by Vedic injunction or customary dealings, and who do not take to devotional service, become captivated by the external happiness of the bodily concept of life. You are not revealed to such persons. Rather, You remain far, far away from them. But for one who, being engaged in Your devotional service, has purified his heart by constant chanting of Your holy name, You become very easily understood as his eternal constant companion.

"It is said that Your Lordship, sitting in the heart of a devotee, gives him direction by which he can very quickly come back to home, back to You. This direct dictation by You reveals Your existence within the heart of the devotee. Only a devotee can immediately appreciate Your existence within his heart, whereas for a person who has only a bodily concept of life and is engaged in sense gratification You always remain covered by the curtain of *yogamāyā*. Such a person cannot realize that You are very near, sitting within his heart. For a nondevotee, You are appreciated only as ultimate death. The difference is like the difference between a cat's carrying its kittens in its mouth and a cat's carrying a rat in its mouth. In the mouth of the cat, the rat feels its death, whereas the kittens in the mouth of the cat feel motherly affection. Similarly, You are present to everyone, but the nondevotee feels You as ultimate cruel death, whereas for a devotee You are the supreme instructor and philosopher. The atheist, therefore, understands the presence of God as death, but the devotee understands the presence of God always within his heart, takes dictation from You, and lives transcendentally, not being affected by the contamination of the material world.

"You are the supreme controller and superintendent of the material nature's activities. The atheistic class of men simply observe the activities of material nature, but cannot find You as the original background. A devotee, however, can immediately see Your hand in every movement of material nature. The curtain of *yogamāyā* cannot cover the eyes of the devotee of Your Lordship, but it can cover the eyes of the nondevotee. The nondevotee is unable to see You eye to eye, just as a person whose eyes are interrupted by the covering of a cloud cannot see the sun, although persons who are flying above the cloud can see the sunshine brilliantly, as

it is. My dear Lord, I offer my respectful obeisances unto You. My dear self-effulgent Lord, I am Your eternal servitor. Therefore, kindly order me —what can I do for You? The conditioned soul feels the pangs of material contamination as threefold miseries as long as You are not visible to him. And as soon as You are visible by development of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, all miseries of material existence simultaneously become vanquished."

The Supreme Personality of Godhead Kṛṣṇa is naturally very much affectionately inclined to His devotees. When He heard Śrutadeva's prayers of pure devotion, He was very much pleased and immediately caught his hands and began to address Him thus: "My dear Śrutadeva, all these great sages and saintly persons have been very kind to you by personally coming here to see you. You should consider this opportunity to be a great fortune for you. They are so kind that they are traveling with Me, and wherever they go they immediately make the whole atmosphere as pure as transcendence simply by the touch of the dust of their feet. People are accustomed to go to the temples of God. They also visit holy places of pilgrimage, and after prolonged association with such activities, for many days by touch and by worship, gradually they become purified. But the influence of great sages and saintly persons is so great that by seeing them one immediately becomes completely purified.

"Moreover, the very purifying potency of pilgrimages or worship of different demigods is also achieved by the grace of saintly persons. A pilgrimage site becomes a holy place because of the presence of the saintly persons there. My dear Śrutadeva, when a person is born as a *brāhmaṇa,* he immediately becomes the best of all human beings. And if such a brāhmaṇa, remaining self-satisfied, practices austerities, studies the *Vedas* and engages in My devotional service, as is the duty of the *brāhmaṇa* —or in other words, if a *brāhmaṇa* becomes a Vaiṣṇava—how wonderful is his greatness! My feature of four-handed Nārāyaṇa is not so pleasing or dear to Me as is a *brāhmaṇa* Vaiṣṇava. *Brāhmaṇa* means 'one well conversant with Vedic knowledge'; a *brāhmaṇa* is the insignia of perfect knowledge, and I am the full-fledged manifestation of all gods. The less intelligent class of men do not understand Me as the highest knowledge, nor do they understand the influence of the *brāhmaṇa* Vaiṣṇava. They are influenced by the three modes of material nature and thus dare to criticize Me and My pure devotees. A *brāhmaṇa* Vaiṣṇava, or a devotee already on the brahminical platform, can realize Me within his heart, and therefore he definitely concludes that the whole cosmic manifestation and its different features are effects of different energies of the Lord. Thus he has a clear conception of the whole material nature and the total material

energy, and in every action such a devotee sees Me only, and nothing else.

"My dear Śrutadeva, you may therefore accept all these great saintly persons, *brāhmaṇas* and sages as My bona fide representatives. By worshiping them faithfully, you will be worshiping Me more diligently. I consider worship of My devotees to be better than direct worship of Me. If someone attempts to worship Me directly without worshiping My devotees, I do not accept such worship, even though it may be presented with great opulence."

In this way both the *brāhmaṇa,* Śrutadeva, and the King of Mithilā, under the direction of the Lord, worshiped both Kṛṣṇa and His followers, the great sages and saintly *brāhmaṇas,* on an equal level of spiritual importance. Both *brāhmaṇa* and King ultimately achieved the supreme goal of being transferred to the spiritual world. The devotee does not know anyone except Lord Kṛṣṇa, and Kṛṣṇa is most affectionate to His devotee. Lord Kṛṣṇa remained in Mithilā both at the house of the *brāhmaṇa* Śrutadeva and at the palace of King Bahulāśva. And after favoring them lavishly by His transcendental instructions, He went back to His capital city, Dvārakā.

The instruction we receive from this incident is that King Bahulāśva and Śrutadeva the *brāhmaṇa* were accepted by the Lord on the same level because both were pure devotees. This is the real qualification for being recognized by the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Because it has become the fashion of this age to become falsely proud of having taken birth in the family of a *kṣatriya* or of a *brāhmaṇa,* we see persons without any qualification other than birth claiming to be *brāhmaṇa* or *kṣatriya* or *vaiśya.* But as it is stated in the scriptures, *kalau śūdra-sambhava:* "In this age of Kali, everyone is a *śūdra.*" This is because there is no performance of the purificatory processes known as *saṁskāras,* which begin from the time of the mother's pregnancy and continue up to the point of the individual's death. No one can be classified as a member of a particular caste, especially of a higher caste—*brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya* or *vaiśya*—simply by birthright. If one is not purified by the process of the seed-giving ceremony, or *Garbhādhāna-saṁskāra,* he is immediately classified amongst the *śūdras,* because only the *śūdras* do not undergo this purificatory process. Sex life without the purificatory process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is merely the seed-giving process of the *śūdras* or the animals. But Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the highest perfection, by which everyone can come to the platform of a Vaiṣṇava. This includes having all the qualifications of a *brāhmaṇa.* The Vaiṣṇavas are trained to become freed from the four kinds of sinful activities—illicit sex, indulgence in intoxicants, gambling, and eating animal foodstuffs. No one

can be on the brahminical platform without having these preliminary qualifications, and without becoming a qualified *brāhmaṇa,* one cannot become a pure devotee.

Thus ends the Bhaktivedanta purport of the Second Volume, Thirty-First Chapter, of Kṛṣṇa, *"The Kidnapping of Subhadrā and Lord Kṛṣṇa's Visiting Śrutadeva and Bahulāśva."*



32 / Prayers by the Personified Vedas

King Parīkṣit inquired from Śukadeva Gosvāmī about a very important topic in understanding transcendental subject matter. His question was, "Since Vedic knowledge generally deals with the subject matter of the three qualities of the material world, how then can it approach the subject matter of transcendence, which is beyond the approach of the three material modes? Since the mind is material and the vibration of words is a material sound, how can the Vedic knowledge, expressing by material sound the thoughts of the mind, approach transcendence? Description of a subject matter necessitates describing its source of emanation, its qualities and its activities. Such description can be possible only by thinking with the material mind and by vibrating material words. Although Brahman, or the Absolute Truth, has no material qualities, our power of speaking does not go beyond the material qualities. How then can Brahman, the Absolute Truth, be described by your words? I do not see how it is possible to understand transcendence from such expressions of material sound."

The purpose of King Parīkṣit's inquiring was to ascertain from Śukadeva Gosvāmī whether the *Vedas* ultimately describe the Absolute Truth as impersonal or as personal. Understanding of the Absolute Truth progresses in three features—impersonal Brahman, Paramātmā localized in everyone's heart and, at last, the Supreme Personality of Godhead Kṛṣṇa.

The *Vedas* deal with three departments of activities. One is called *karma-kāṇḍa,* or activities under Vedic injunction which gradually purify one to understand his real position; the next is *jñāna-kāṇḍa,* the process of understanding the Absolute Truth by speculative methods; and the third is *upāsanā-kāṇḍa,* or worship of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and sometimes of the demigods also. The worship of the demigods recommended in the *Vedas* is ordered with the understanding of the demigods'

relationship to the Personality of Godhead. The Supreme Personality of Godhead has many parts and parcels; some are called *svāṁśas,* or His personal expansions, and some are called *vibhinnāṁśas,* the living entities. All such expansions, both *svāṁśas* and *vibhinnāṁśas,* are emanations from the original Personality of Godhead. *Svāṁśa* expansions are called *Viṣṇu-tattva,* whereas the *vibhinnāṁśa* expansions are called *jīva-tattva.* The different demigods are *jīva-tattva.* The conditioned souls are generally put into the activities of the material world for sense gratification; therefore, as stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā,* to regulate those who are very much addicted to different kinds of sense gratification the worship of demigods is sometimes recommended. For example, for persons who are very much addicted to meat-eating, the Vedic injunction recommends that after worshiping the form of the goddess Kālī and sacrificing a goat (not any other animal) under *karma-kāṇḍa* regulation, the worshipers may be allowed to eat meat. The idea is not to encourage one to eat meat, but to allow one who is persistent to eat meat under certain restricted conditions. Therefore, worship of the demigods is not worship of the Absolute Truth, but by worshiping the demigods one gradually comes to accept the Supreme Personality of Godhead in an indirect way. This indirect acceptance is described in the *Bhagavad-gītā* as *avidhi. Avidhi* means not bona fide. Since demigod worship is not bona fide, the impersonalists stress concentration on the impersonal feature of the Absolute Truth. King Parīkṣit's question was, which is the ultimate target of Vedic knowledge—this concentration on the impersonal feature of the Absolute Truth or concentration on the personal feature? After all, both the impersonal and personal features of the Supreme Lord are beyond our material conception. The impersonal feature of the Absolute, the Brahman effulgence, is but the rays of the personal body of Kṛṣṇa. These rays of the personal body of Kṛṣṇa are cast all over the creation of the Lord, and the portion of the effulgence which is covered by the material cloud is called the created cosmos of the three material qualities—*sattva, rajas* and *tamas.* How can persons who are within this clouded portion called the material world conceive of the Absolute Truth by the speculative method?

In answering King Parīkṣit's question, Śukadeva Gosvāmī replied that the Supreme Personality of Godhead has created the mind, senses and living force for the purpose of sense gratification in transmigration from one kind of body to another, as well as for the purpose of allowing liberation from the material conditions. In other words, the senses, mind and living force can be utilized for sense gratification and transmigration from one body to another or for the matter of liberation. The Vedic

injunctions are there just to give the conditioned souls the chance for sense gratification under regulative principles, and thereby also give them the chance for promotion to the higher conditions of life; ultimately, if the consciousness is purified, one comes to his original position and goes back home, back to Godhead.

The living force is intelligent. One therefore has to utilize his intelligence over the mind and the senses. When the mind and senses are purified by the proper use of intelligence, then the conditioned soul is liberated; otherwise, if the intelligence is not properly utilized in controlling the senses and mind, the conditioned soul continues to transmigrate from one kind of body to another simply for sense gratification. Another point clearly stated in the answer of Śukadeva Gosvāmī is that the Lord created the mind, senses and intelligence of the individual living force. It is not stated that the living entities themselves were ever created. Just as the shining particles of the sun's rays are always existing along with the sun, the living entities exist eternally as parts and parcels of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The conditioned souls, although eternally existing as part of the Supreme Lord, are sometimes put within the cloud of the material concept of life, in the darkness of ignorance. The whole Vedic process is to alleviate that darkened condition. Ultimately, when the senses and mind of the conditioned being become fully purified, he then comes to the original position, called Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and that is liberation.

In the *Vedānta-sūtra,* the first *sūtra,* or code, questions about the Absolute Truth. *Athāto brahma-jijñāsā:* What is the nature of the Absolute Truth? The next *sūtra* answers that the nature of the Absolute Truth is that He is the origin of everything. Whatever we experience, even in this material condition of life, is but an emanation from Him. The Absolute Truth created the mind and senses and intelligence. This means that the Absolute Truth is not without mind, intelligence and senses. In other words, He is not impersonal. The very word "created" means that He has transcendental intelligence. For example, when the father begets a child, the child has senses because the father also has senses. The child is born with hands and legs because the father also has hands and legs. Sometimes it is said, therefore, that man is made after the image of God. The Absolute Truth is therefore the Supreme Personality, with transcendental mind, senses and intelligence. When one's mind, intelligence and senses are purified of material contamination, one can understand the original feature of the Absolute Truth as a person.

The Vedic process is to gradually promote the conditioned soul from the mode of ignorance to the mode of passion and from the mode of

passion to the mode of goodness. In the mode of goodness there is sufficient light for understanding things as they are. For example, from earth a tree grows, and from the wood of the tree, fire is ignited. In that igniting process we first of all find the smoke, and the next stage is heat, and then fire. When there is actually fire, we can utilize it for various purposes; therefore, fire is the ultimate goal. Similarly, in the gross material stage of life the quality of ignorance is very much prominent. Dissipation of this ignorance takes place in the gradual progress of civilization from the barbarian stage to civilized life, and when one comes to the form of civilized life, he is said to be in the mode of passion. In the barbarian stage, or in the mode of ignorance, the senses are gratified in a very crude way, whereas in the mode of passion or in the civilized stage of life, the senses are gratified in a polished manner. But when one is promoted to the mode of goodness, one can understand that the senses and the mind are only engaged in material activities due to being covered by perverted consciousness. When this perverted consciousness is gradually transformed into Kṛṣṇa consciousness, then the path of liberation is opened. So it is not that one is unable to approach the Absolute Truth by the senses and the mind. The conclusion is, rather, that the senses, mind and intelligence in the gross stage of contamination cannot appreciate the nature of the Absolute Truth, but, when purified, the senses, mind and intelligence can understand what the Absolute Truth is. This purifying process is called devotional service, or Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* it is clearly stated that the purpose of Vedic knowledge is to understand Kṛṣṇa, and Kṛṣṇa is understood by devotional service, beginning with the process of surrender. As stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā,* one has to think of Kṛṣṇa always. One has to render loving service to Kṛṣṇa always, and one has to always worship and bow down before Kṛṣṇa. By this process only can one enter into the kingdom of God without any doubt.

When one is enlightened in the mode of goodness by the process of devotional service, he is freed from the modes of ignorance and passion. The word *ātmane* indicates the stage of brahminical qualification in which one is allowed to study the Vedic literatures known as the *Upaniṣads.* The *Upaniṣads* describe in different ways the transcendental qualities of the Supreme Lord. The Absolute Truth, the Supreme Lord, is called *nirguṇa.* That does not mean that He has no qualities. It is only because He has qualities that the conditioned living entities can have qualities. The purpose of studying the *Upaniṣads* is to understand the transcendental quality of the Absolute Truth, as opposed to the material qualities of ignorance,

passion and goodness. That is the way of Vedic understanding. Great sages like the four Kumāras, headed by Sanaka, followed these principles of Vedic knowledge and came gradually from impersonal understanding to the platform of personal worship of the Supreme Lord. It is therefore recommended that we must follow the great personalities. Śukadeva Gosvāmī is also one of the great personalities, and his answer to the inquiry of Mahārāja Parikṣit is authorized. One who follows in the footsteps of such great personalities surely walks very easily on the path of liberation and ultimately goes back to home, back to Godhead. That is the way of perfecting this human form of life.

Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued to speak to Parīkṣit Mahārāja. "My dear King," he said, "I will narrate in this regard a nice story. This story is important because it is in connection with Nārāyaṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This narration is a conversation between Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi and the great sage Nārada. Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi still resides in Badarīkāśrama in the Himalayan hills and is accepted as an incarnation of Nārāyaṇa. Once when Nārada, the great devotee and ascetic amongst the demigods, was traveling in different planets, he desired to personally meet the ascetic Nārāyaṇa in Badarīkāśrama and offer him his respects. This great sage incarnation of Godhead, Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi, has been undergoing great penances and austerities from the very beginning of the creation in order to teach the inhabitants of Bhāratavarṣa how to attain the highest perfectional stage of going back to Godhead. His austerities and penances are exemplary practices for the human being."

Badarīkāśrama is situated in the northernmost part of the Himalayan Mountains and is always covered with snow. Religious Indians still go to visit this place during the summer season, when the snowfall is not very severe. Once, the incarnation of God Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi was sitting amongst many devotees in the village known as Kalāpagrāma. Of course, these were not ordinary sages who were sitting with him, and the great sage Nārada also appeared there. After offering his respects to Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi, Nārada asked him exactly the same question asked by King Parīkṣit of Śukadeva Gosvāmī. When Nārada asked his question of Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi, the Ṛṣi also answered by following in the footsteps of his predecessors. He narrated a story of how the same question had been discussed on the planet known as Janaloka. Janaloka is above the Svargaloka planets, such as the moon, Venus, etc. In this planet, great sages and saintly persons live, and they were also discussing the same point regarding the understanding of Brahman and His real identity.

The great sage Nārāyaṇa began to speak. "My dear Nārada," he said, "I

will tell you a story which took place long, long ago. There was a great meeting of the denizens of the heavenly planets, and almost all the important *brahmacārīs,* such as the four Kumāras—Sanat, Sanandana, Sanaka and Sanātana Kumāra—attended. Their discussion was on the subject matter of understanding the Absolute Truth, Brahman. You were not present at that meeting because you went to see My expansion Aniruddha, who lives on the island of Śvetadvīpa. In this meeting, all the great sages and *brahmacārīs* very elaborately discussed the point about which you have asked me, and it was very interesting. The discussion was so delicate that even the *Vedas* were unable to answer the intricate questions raised.

Nārāyana Ṛṣi told Nāradajī that the same question which Nāradajī had raised had been discussed in that meeting in Janaloka. This is the way of understanding through the *paramparā,* or disciplic succession. Mahārāja Parikṣit was sent to Śukadeva Gosvāmī; Śukadeva Gosvāmī referred the matter to Nārada, who had in the same way questioned Nārāyana Ṛṣi, who had put the matter to still higher authorities in the planet of Janaloka, where it was discussed among the great Kumāras—Sanat, Sanātana, Sanaka Kumāra and Sanandana. These four *brahmacārīs* are recognized scholars in the *Vedas* and *śāstras.* Their unlimited volumes of knowledge, backed by austerities and penances, are exhibited by their sublime, ideal character. They are very amiable and gentle in behavior, and for them there is no distinction between friends, well-wishers and enemies. Being transcendentally situated, such personalities as the Kumāras are above all material considerations and are always neutral in respect to material dualities. In the discussions held among the four brothers, one of them, namely Sanandana, was selected to speak, and the other brothers became the audience to hear him.

Sanandana said, "After the dissolution of the whole cosmic manifestation, the entire energy and the whole creation in its nucleus form enters into the body of Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu. The Lord at that time remains asleep for a long, long time, and where there is again necessity of creation, the *Vedas* personified assemble around the Lord and begin to glorify Him, describing His wonderful transcendental pastimes. It is exactly like a king: when he is asleep in the morning, the appointed reciters come around his bedroom and begin to sing of his chivalrous activities, and while hearing of his glorious activities, the king gradually awakens.

"The Vedic reciters or the personified *Vedas* sing thus: 'O unconquerable, You are the Supreme Personality. No one is equal to You or greater than You. No one can be more glorious in His activities. All glories unto

You! All glories unto You! By Your own transcendental nature You fully possess all six opulences. As such, You are able to deliver all conditioned souls from the clutches of *māyā.* O Lord, we fervently pray that You kindly do so. All the living entities, being Your parts and parcels, are naturally joyful, eternal and full of knowledge, but due to their own faults they try to imitate You by trying to become the supreme enjoyer; thus they disobey Your supremacy and become offenders. And because of their offenses, Your material energy has taken charge of them; thus, their transcendental qualities of joyfulness, bliss and wisdom have been covered by the clouds of the three material qualities. This cosmic manifestation, made of the three material qualities, is just like a prison house for the conditioned souls. The conditioned souls are struggling very hard to escape from the material bondage, and according to their different conditions of life they have been given different types of engagement. But all engagements are based on Your knowledge. Pious activities can be executed only when inspired by Your mercy. Therefore, without taking shelter at Your lotus feet one cannot surpass the influence of material energy. Actually, we, as personified Vedic knowledge, are always engaged in Your service to help the conditioned soul understand You.'"

This prayer of the *Vedas* personified illustrates that the *Vedas* are meant for helping the conditioned souls to understand Kṛṣṇa. All the *śrutis* or personified *Vedas* offered glories to the Lord again and again, singing, *"Jaya! Jaya!"* This indicates that the Lord is praised for His glories. Of all His glories the most important is His causeless mercy upon the conditioned souls in reclaiming them from the clutches of *māyā.*

There are unlimited numbers of living entities in different varieties of bodies, some moving and some standing in one place, and the conditioned life of these living entities is due only to their forgetfulness of their eternal relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead. When the living entity wants to lord it over the material energy by imitating the position of Kṛṣṇa, he is immediately captured by the material energy and, according to his desire, is offered a variety of 8,400,000 different kinds of bodies. Although undergoing the threefold miseries of material existence, the illusioned living entity falsely thinks himself the master of all he surveys. Under the spell of the material energy, which represents the threefold material qualities, the living entity is so entangled that it is not at all possible for him to become free unless he is graced by the Supreme Lord. The living entity cannot conquer the influence of the material modes of nature by his own endeavor, but because material nature is working under the control of the Supreme Lord, the Lord is beyond its jurisdiction.

Except for Him, all living entities, beginning from Brahmā down to an ant, are conquered by the contact of material nature.

Because He possesses in full the six opulences of wealth, strength, fame, beauty, knowledge and renunciation, the Lord alone is beyond the spell of material nature. Unless the living entity is situated in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, he cannot approach the Supreme Personality of Godhead, yet the Lord, by His omnipotency, can dictate from within as the Supersoul. In the *Bhagavad-gītā,* the Lord advises, "Whatever you do, do for Me; whatever you eat, first of all offer to Me; whatever charity you want to give, first give to Me; and whatever austerities and penances you want to perform, perform for Me." In this way the *karmīs* are directed to gradually develop Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Similarly, Kṛṣṇa directs the philosophers to approach Him gradually by discriminating between Brahman and *māyā.* At last when one is mature in knowledge, he surrenders unto Kṛṣṇa. As Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad-gītā*, "After many, many births, the wise philosopher surrenders unto Me." The *yogīs* are also directed to concentrate their meditation upon Kṛṣṇa within the heart, and by such continued process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness the *yogī* can become free from the clutches of material energy. But, as is stated in *Bhagavad-gītā,* because the devotees are engaged in devotional service with love and affection from the very beginning, the Lord directs them so that they can approach Him without difficulty or deviation. Only by the grace of the Lord can the living entity understand the exact position of Brahman, Paramātmā and Bhagavān.

The statements of the personified *Vedas* give clear evidence that the Vedic literature is presented only for understanding Kṛṣṇa. It is confirmed in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that through all the *Vedas* it is Kṛṣṇa alone who has to be understood. Kṛṣṇa is always enjoying, either in the material world or in the spiritual world; because He is the supreme enjoyer, for Him there is no distinction between the material world and spiritual worlds. The material world is an impediment for the ordinary living entities because they are under its control, but Kṛṣṇa, being the controller of the material world, has nothing to do with the impediments it offers. Therefore, in different parts of the *Upaniṣads,* the *Vedas* declare: "Brahman is eternal, full of all knowledge and all bliss, but the one Supreme Personality of Godhead is existing in the heart of every living entity." Because of His all-pervasiveness, He is able to enter not only into the hearts of the living entities, but even into the atoms also. As the Supersoul, He is the controller of all activities of the living entities. He is living within all of them and witnessing their actions, allowing them to act according to their desires, and also giving them the results of their different activities. He is the living force of all

things, but still He is transcendental to the material qualities. He is omnipotent; He is expert in manufacturing everything, and on account of His superior, natural knowledge, He can bring everyone under His control. As such, He is everyone's master. He is sometimes manifest on the surface of the globe, but He is simultaneously within all matter. Desiring to expand Himself in multi-forms, He glanced over the material energy, and thus innumerable living entities became manifest. Everything is created by His superior energy, and everything in His creation appears to be perfectly done without deficiency.

Those who aspire for liberation from this material world must therefore worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the ultimate cause of all causes. He is just like the total mass of earth, from which varieties of earthly pots are manufactured: the pots are made of earthly clay, they rest on the earth, and after being destroyed, their elements ultimately merge back into earth. Although the Personality of Godhead is the original cause of all varieties of manifestation, the impersonalists especially stress the Vedic statement, *sarvaṁ khalv idam brahma:* "Everything is Brahman." The impersonalists do not take into account the varieties of manifestation emanating from the supreme cause of Brahman. They simply take into consideration that everything emanates from Brahman and after destruction merges into Brahman and that the intermediate stage of manifestation is also Brahman. Although the Māyāvādīs believe that prior to its manifestation the cosmos was in Brahman, after creation it remains in Brahman and after destruction it merges into Brahman, they do not know what Brahman is. This fact is clearly described in the *Brahma-saṁhitā:* The living entities, space, time, and the material elements like fire, earth, sky, water and mind, constitute the total cosmic manifestation, known as *bhūr bhuvaḥ svaḥ,* which is manifested by Govinda. It flourishes on the strength of Govinda and after annihilation enters into and is conserved in Govinda. Lord Brahmā therefore says, "I worship Lord Govinda, the original personality, the cause of all causes."

The word Brahman indicates the greatest of all and the maintainer of everything. The impersonalists are attracted by the greatness of the sky, but because of their poor fund of knowledge they are not attracted by the greatness of Kṛṣṇa. In our practical life, however, we are attracted by the greatness of a person and not by the greatness of a big mountain. Actually the term *Brahman* can be applied to Kṛṣṇa only; therefore in the *Bhagavad-gītā* Arjuna admitted that Lord Kṛṣṇa is the *Parambrahman,* or the supreme rest of everything.

Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Brahman because of His unlimited knowledge,

unlimited potencies, unlimited strength, unlimited influence, unlimited beauty and unlimited renunciation. Therefore the word *Brahman* can be applied to Kṛṣṇa only. Arjuna affirms that because the impersonal Brahman is the effulgence emanating as rays of Kṛṣṇa's transcendental body, Kṛṣṇa is the Parambrahman. Everything is resting on Brahman, but Brahman itself is resting on Kṛṣṇa. Therefore Kṛṣṇa is the ultimate Brahman or Parambrahman. The material elements are accepted as inferior energies of Kṛṣṇa because by their interaction the cosmic manifestation takes place, rests on Kṛṣṇa, and after dissolution again enters into the body of Kṛṣṇa as His subtle energy. Kṛṣṇa is therefore the cause of both manifestation and dissolution.

Sarvaṁ khalv idaṁ brahma means everything is Kṛṣṇa, and that is the vision of the *mahābhāgavatas.* They see everything in relation to Kṛṣṇa. The impersonalists argue that Kṛṣṇa has transformed Himself into many and that therefore everything is Kṛṣṇa and worship of everything is worship of Him. This false argument is answered by Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhagavad-gītā:* although everything is a transformation of the energy of Kṛṣṇa, He is not present everywhere. He is simultaneously present and not present. By His energy He is present everywhere, but as the energetic He is not present everywhere. This simultaneous presence and non-presence is inconceivable to our present senses. But a clear explanation is given in the beginning of the *Īśopaniṣad,* in which it is stated that the Supreme Lord is so complete that although unlimited energies and their transformations are emanating from Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa's personality is not in the least bit transformed. Therefore, since Kṛṣṇa is the cause of all causes, intelligent persons should take shelter of His lotus feet.

Kṛṣṇa advises everyone just to surrender unto Him alone, and that is the way of Vedic instruction. Since Kṛṣṇa is the cause of all causes, He is worshiped by all kinds of sages and saints by observance of the regulative principles. When there is a necessity for meditation, great personalities meditate on the transcendental form of Kṛṣṇa within the heart. In this way the minds of great personalities are always engaged in Kṛṣṇa. With minds engaged in Kṛṣṇa, naturally the captivated devotees simply talk of Kṛṣṇa.

Talking of Kṛṣṇa or singing of Kṛṣṇa is called *kīrtana.* Lord Caitanya also recommends *kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ,* which means always thinking and talking of Kṛṣṇa and nothing else. That is called Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is so sublime that anyone who takes to this process is elevated to the highest perfection of life—far, far beyond the concept of liberation. In the *Bhagavad-gītā,* therefore, Kṛṣṇa advises everyone to

always think of Him, render devotional service to Him, worship Him and offer obeisances to Him. In this way a devotee becomes fully Kṛṣṇa-ized and, being always situated in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, ultimately goes back to Kṛṣṇa.

Although the *Vedas* have recommended worship of different demigods as different parts and parcels of Kṛṣṇa, it is to be understood that such instructions are meant for the less intelligent class of men, who are still attracted by material sense enjoyment. But the person who actually wants perfect fulfillment of the mission of human life should simply worship Lord Kṛṣṇa, and that will simplify the matter and completely guarantee the success of his human life. Although the sky, the water and the land are all part and parcel of the material world, when one stands on the solid land his position is more secure than when he stands in the sky or the water. An intelligent person, therefore, does not stand under the protection of different demigods, although they are part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa. Rather, he stands on the solid ground of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. That makes his position sound and secure.

Impersonalists sometimes give the example that if one stands on a stone or a piece of wood, one certainly stands on the surface of the land, because the stone and wood are both resting on the surface of the earth. But it may be replied that if one stands directly on the surface of the earth, he is more secure than on the wood or stone which are resting on the earth. In other words, taking shelter of Paramātmā or taking shelter of impersonal Brahman is not as secure a course as taking direct shelter of Kṛṣṇa in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The position of the *jñānis* and *yogīs* is therefore not as secure as the position of the devotees of Kṛṣṇa. Lord Kṛṣṇa has therefore advised in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that only a person who has lost his senses takes to the worship of demigods. And regarding persons who are attached to the impersonal Brahman, the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* says, "My dear Lord, those who are thinking of themselves as liberated by mental speculation are not yet purified of the contamination of material nature because of their inability to find the shelter of Your lotus feet. Although they rise to the transcendental situation of existence in impersonal Brahman, they certainly fall from that exalted position because they have neglected to desire Your lotus feet." Lord Kṛṣṇa therefore advises that the worshipers of the demigods are not very intelligent persons because they derive only temporary, exhaustible results. Their endeavors are those of less intelligent men. But the Lord assures that His devotee has no fear of falling.

The personified *Vedas* continued to pray: "Dear Lord, considering all points of view, if one has to worship someone superior to him, then just

out of good behavior one should stick to the worship of Your lotus feet because You are the ultimate controller of creation, maintenance and dissolution. You are the controller of the three worlds, Bhūr, Bhuvar and Svar, You are the controller of the fourteen upper and lower worlds, and You are the controller of the three material qualities. Demigods and persons advanced in spiritual knowledge are always engaged in hearing and chanting about Your transcendental pastimes because this has the specific potency of nullifying the accumulated results of sinful life. Intelligent persons factually take a dip in the ocean of Your nectarean activities and very patiently hear of them. Thus they immediately become freed from the contamination of the material qualities; they do not have to undergo severe penances and austerities for advancement of spiritual life. This chanting and hearing of Your transcendental pastimes is the easiest process for self-realization. Simply by submissive aural reception of the transcendental message, one's heart becomes cleansed of all dirty things. Thus Kṛṣṇa consciousness becomes fixed in the heart of a devotee.

"The great authority Bhīṣmadeva has also given the opinion that this process of chanting and hearing about the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the essence of all Vedic ritualistic performances. Dear Lord, the devotee who wants to elevate himself simply by this process of devotional activities, especially by hearing and chanting, very soon comes out of the clutches of the dualities of material existence. By this simple process of penance and austerity the Supersoul within the devotee's heart becomes very pleased and gives the devotee directions so that he may go back to home, back to Godhead. It is stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that one who engages all his activities and senses in the devotional service of the Lord becomes completely pacified because the Supersoul is satisfied with him; thus the devotee becomes transcendental to all kinds of dualities, such as heat and cold, honor and dishonor. Being freed from all dualities, he feels transcendental bliss, and he no longer suffers cares and anxieties due to material existence. *Bhagavad-gītā* confirms that the devotee who is always absorbed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness has no anxieties for his maintenance or protection. Being constantly absorbed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, he ultimately achieves the highest perfection. While in the material existence, he lives very peacefully and blissfully without any cares and anxieties, and after quitting this body he goes back to home, back to Godhead. The Lord confirms in the *Bhagavad-gītā,* 'My supreme abode is a transcendental place where going no one returns to this material world. Anyone who attains the supreme perfection, being engaged in My personal devotional service in the eternal abode, reaches the highest perfection of human life and doesn't

have to come back again to the miserable material world.'

"My dear Lord, it is imperative that the living entities be engaged in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, always rendering devotional service by prescribed methods such as hearing and chanting and executing Your orders. If a person is not engaged in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and devotional service, it is useless for him to exhibit the symptoms of life. Generally it is accepted that if a person is breathing he is alive. But a person without Kṛṣṇa consciousness may be compared to a bellows in a blacksmith's shop. The big bellows is a bag of skin which exhales and inhales air, and a human being who is simply living within the bag of skin and bones without taking to Kṛṣṇa consciousness and loving devotional service is no better than the bellows. Similarly, a nondevotee's long duration of life is compared to the long existence of a tree, his voracious eating capacity is compared to the eating of dogs and hogs, and his enjoyment in sex life is compared to that of hogs and goats.

"The cosmic manifestation has been possible because of the entrance of the Supreme Personality of Godhead as Mahā-Viṣṇu within this material world. The total material energy becomes agitated by the glance of Mahā-Viṣṇu, and only then does the interaction of the three material qualities begin. Therefore it should be concluded that whatever material facilities we are trying to enjoy are available only due to the mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

"Within the body there are five different departments of existence, known as *annamaya, prāṇamaya, manomaya, vijñānamaya,* and at last *ānandamaya.* In the beginning of life, every living entity is food conscious. A child or an animal is satisfied only by getting nice food. This stage of consciousness, in which the goal is to eat sumptuously, is called *annamaya. Anna* means food. After this one lives in the consciousness of being alive. If one can continue his life without being attacked or destroyed, one thinks himself happy. This stage is called *prāṇamaya,* or consciousness of one's existence. After this stage, when one is situated on the mental platform, that consciousness is called *manomaya.* The material civilization is primarily situated in these three stages, *annamaya, prāṇamaya* and *manomaya.* The first concern of civilized persons is economic development, the next concern is defense against being annihilated, and the next consciousness is mental speculation, the philosophical approach to the values of life.

"If by the evolutionary process of philosophical life one happens to reach to the platform of intellectual life and understands that he is not this material body, but is a spirit soul, then by evolution of spiritual life he

comes to the understanding of the Supreme Lord or the Supreme Soul. When one develops his relationship with Him and executes devotional service, that stage of life is called Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the *ānandamaya* stage. *Ānandamaya* is the blissful life of knowledge and eternity. As it is said in the *Vedānta-sūtra, ānandamayo 'bhyāsāt.* The Supreme Brahman and the subordinate Brahman, or the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the living entities, are both joyful by nature. As long as the living entities are situated in the lower four stages of life, *annamaya, prāṇamaya, manomaya* and *vijñānamaya,* they are considered to be in the material condition of life, but as soon as one reaches the stage of *ānandamaya* he becomes a liberated soul. This *ānandamaya* stage is explained in the *Bhagavad-gītā* as the *brahma-bhūta* stage. There it is said that in the *brahma-bhūta* stage of life there is no anxiety and no hankering. This stage begins when one becomes equally disposed toward all living entities, and it then expands to the stage of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in which one always hankers to render service unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This hankering for advancement in devotional service is not the same as hankering for sense gratification in material existence. In other words, hankering remains in spiritual life, but it becomes purified. When our senses are purified, they become freed from all material stages, namely *annamaya, prāṇamaya, manomaya* and *vijñānamaya,* and they become situated in the highest stage—*ānandamaya,* or blissful life in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The Māyāvādī philosophers consider *ānandamaya* to be the state of being merged in the Supreme. To them, *ānandamaya* means that the Supersoul and the individual soul become one. But the real fact is that oneness does not mean merging into the Supreme and losing one's own individual existence. Merging in the spiritual existence is the living entity's realization of qualitative oneness with the Supreme Lord in His eternity and knowledge aspects. But the actual *ānandamaya* (blissful) stage is obtained when one is engaged in devotional service. That is confirmed in the *Bhagavad-gītā. Mad-bhaktiṁ labhate parām:* the *brahma-bhūta ānandamaya* stage is complete only when there is the exchange of love between the Supreme and the subordinate living entities. Unless one comes to this *ānandamaya* stage of life, his breathing is like the breathing of a bellows in a blacksmith's shop, his duration of life is like that of a tree, and he is no better than the lower animals like the camels, hogs and dogs.

Undoubtedly the eternal living entity cannot be annihilated at any point. But the lower species of life exist in a miserable condition, whereas one who is engaged in devotional service of the Supreme Lord is situated in the pleasurable or *ānandamaya* status of life. The different stages

described above are all in relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Although in all circumstances there exist both the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the living entities, the difference is that the Supreme Personality of Godhead always exists in the *ānandamaya* stage, whereas the subordinate living entities, because of their minute position as fragmental portions of the Supreme Lord, are prone to fall to the other stages of life. Although in all the stages both the Supreme Lord and the living entities exist, the Supreme Personality of Godhead is always transcendental to our concept of life, whether we are in bondage or in liberation. The whole cosmic manifestation becomes possible by the grace of the Supreme Lord, it exists by the grace of the Supreme Lord, and when it is annihilated, it merges into the existence of the Supreme Lord. As such, the Supreme Lord is the supreme existence, the cause of all causes. Therefore the conclusion is that without development of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, one's life is simply a waste of time.

Those who are very materialistic and cannot understand the situation of the spiritual world cannot understand the abode of Kṛṣṇa. For such persons, great sages have recommended the yogic process whereby one gradually rises from meditation on the adbomen, which is called *mūlādhāra* or *maṇipūraka* meditation. *Mūlādhāra* and *maṇipūraka* are technical terms which refer to the intestines within the abdomen. Grossly materialistic persons think that economic development is of foremost importance because they are under the impression that a living entity exists only by eating. Such grossly materialistic persons forget that although we may eat as much as we like, if the food is not digested it produces the troubles of indigestion and acidity. Therefore, in itself, eating is not the cause of the vital energy of life. For digestion of eatables we have to take shelter of another, superior energy, which is mentioned in the *Bhagavad-gītā* as *vaiśvānara.* Lord Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that He helps the digestion in the form of *vaiśvānara.* The Supreme Personality of Godhead is all-pervasive; therefore, His presence as *vaiśvānara* is not extraordinary.

Kṛṣṇa is actually present everywhere. The Vaiṣṇava, therefore, marks his body with temples of Viṣṇu: he first marks a *tilaka* temple on the abdomen, then on the chest, then between the collarbones, then on the forehead, and gradually he marks the top of the head, the *brahma-randhra.* The thirteen temples of *tilaka* marked on the body of a Vaiṣṇava are known as follows: On the forehead is the temple of Lord Keśava, on the belly is the temple of Lord Nārāyaṇa, on the chest is the temple of Lord Mādhava, and on the throat, between the two collarbones, is the temple of Lord Govinda. On the right side of the waist is the temple of Lord Viṣṇu, on

the right arm is the temple of Lord Madhusūdana, and on the right side of the collarbone is the temple of Lord Trivikrama. Similarly, on the left side of the waist is the temple of Lord Vāmanadeva, on the left arm is the temple of Śrīdhara, on the left side of the collarbone is the temple of Hṛṣīkeśa, on the upper back the temple is called Padmanābha, and on the lower back the temple is called Dāmodara. On the top of the head the temple is called Vāsudeva. This is the process of meditation on the Lord's situation in the different parts of the body, but for those who are not Vaiṣṇavas, great sages recommend meditation on the bodily concept of life—meditation on the intestines, on the heart, on the throat, on the eyebrows, on the forehead and then on the top of the head. Some of the sages in the disciplic succession from the great saint Aruṇa meditate on the heart because the Supersoul is also staying within the heart along with the living entity. This is confirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā,* Fifteenth Chapter, wherein the Lord states, "I am situated in everyone's heart."

For the Vaiṣṇava, the protection of the body for the service of the Lord is a part of devotional service, but those who are gross materialists accept the body as the self. They worship the body by the yogic process of meditation on the different bodily parts, such as *maṇipūraka, dahara* and *hṛdaya,* gradually rising to the *brahma-randhra* on the top of the head. The first-class *yogī* who has attained perfection in the practice of the *yoga* system ultimately passes through the *brahma-randhra* to any one of the planets in either the material or spiritual worlds. How a *yogī* can transfer himself to another planet is very vividly described in the Second Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.*

In this regard, Śukadeva Gosvāmī has recommended that the beginners worship the *virāṭa puruṣa,* the gigantic universal form of the Lord. One who cannot believe that the Lord can be worshiped with equal success in the Deity or *arcā* form, or who cannot concentrate on this form, is advised to worship the universal form of the Lord. The lower part of the universe is considered the feet and legs of the Lord's universal form, the middle part of the universe is considered the navel or abdomen of the Lord, the upper planetary systems such as Janaloka and Maharloka are the heart of the Lord, and the topmost planetary system, Brahmaloka, is considered the top of the Lord's head. There are different processes recommended by great sages, according to the position of the worshiper, but the ultimate aim of all meditational and yogic processes is to go back home, back to Godhead. As stated in *Bhagavad-gītā,* anyone who reaches the highest planet, the abode of Kṛṣṇa, or even the Vaikuṇṭha planets, never has to come down again to this miserable material condition of life.

The Vedic recommendation, therefore, is that one make the lotus feet

of Viṣṇu the target of all one's efforts. *Tad viṣṇoḥ paramaṁ padaṁ,* Viṣṇuloka or the Viṣṇu planets, are situated above all the material planets. These Vaikuṇṭha planets are known as *sanātana-dhāma,* and they are eternal. They are never annihilated, not even by the annihilation of this material world. The conclusion is that if a human being does not fulfill the mission of his life by worshiping the Supreme Lord and does not go back to Godhead, then it is to be understood that he has been frustrated in fulfilling the main purpoes of human life.

The next prayer of the personified *Vedas* to the Lord concerns His entering into different species of life. It is stated in *Bhagavad-gītā,* Fourteenth Chapter, that in every species and form of life the spiritual part and parcel of the Supreme Lord is present. The Lord Himself claims in the *Gītā* that He is the seed-giving father of all forms and species, and therefore they must all be considered sons of the Lord. The entrance of the Supreme Lord into everyone's heart as Paramātmā sometimes bewilders the impersonalists, who think in terms of the equality of the living entities with the Supreme Lord. They think that because the Supreme Lord enters into different bodies along with the individual soul, there is no distinction between the Lord and the individual entities. Their challenge is, "Why should individual souls worship the Paramātmā or Supersoul?" According to them, both the Supersoul and the individual soul are on the same level; they are one, without any difference between them. There is a difference, however, between the Supersoul and in the individual soul, and this is explained in *Bhagavad-gītā,* Fifteenth Chapter, wherein the Lord says that although He is situated with the living entity in the same body, He is superior. He is dictating to or giving intelligence to the individual soul from within. It is clearly stated in the *Gītā* that the Lord gives intelligence to the individual soul and that both memory and forgetfulness are due to the influence of the Supersoul. No one can act independently of the sanction of the Supersoul. Therefore, the individual soul acts according to his past *karma,* reminded by the Lord. The nature of the individual soul is forgetfulness, but the presence of the Lord within the heart reminds him of what he wanted to do in his past life. The intelligence of the individual soul is exhibited like fire in wood. Although fire is always fire, it is exhibited in a size proportionate to the size of the wood. Similarly, although the individual soul is qualitatively one with the Supreme Lord, he exhibits himself according to the limitations of his present body.

The Supreme Lord or the Supersoul is said to be *eka-rasa. Eka* means one, and *rasa* means mellow. The transcendental position of the Supreme Lord is that of eternity, bliss and full knowledge. His position of *eka-rasa*

does not change in the slightest when He becomes a witness and advisor to the individual soul in each individual body.

The individual soul, beginning from Lord Brahmā down to the ant, exhibits his spiritual potency according to his present body. The demigods are in the same category with the individual souls in the bodies of the human beings or in the bodies of lower animals. Intelligent persons, therefore, do not worship different demigods, who are simply infinitesimal representatives of Kṛṣṇa manifesting in conditioned bodies. The individual soul can exhibit his power and potencies only in proportion to the shape and constitution of the body. The Supreme Personality of Godhead, however, can exhibit His full potencies in any shape or form without any change. The Māyāvādī philosophers' thesis that God and the individual soul are one and the same cannot be accepted because the individual soul has to develop his power and potencies according to the development of different types of bodies. The individual soul in the body of a baby cannot show the full power and potency of a grown man, but the Supreme Personality of Godhead Kṛṣṇa, even when lying on the lap of His mother as a baby, could exhibit His full potency and power by killing Pūtanā and other demons who tried to attack Him. Therefore the spiritual potency of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is said to be *eka-rasa,* or without change. Therefore the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the only worshipable object, and this is perfectly known to persons who are uncontaminated by the force of material nature. In other words, only the liberated souls can worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Less intelligent Māyāvādīs take to the worship of demigods, thinking that the demigods and the Supreme Personality of Godhead are on the same level.

The personified *Vedas* continued to offer their obeisances. "Dear Lord," they prayed, "after many, many births, those who have actually become wise take to the worship of Your lotus feet in complete knowledge." This is also confirmed in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, wherein the Lord says that after many, many births, a great soul or *mahātmā* surrenders unto the Lord, knowing well that Vāsudeva, Kṛṣṇa, is the cause of all causes. The *Vedas* continued: "As has already been explained, since our mind, intelligence and senses have been given to us by God, when these instruments are actually purified there is no alternative than to engage them all in the devotional service of the Lord. A living entity's entrapment in different species of life is due to the misapplication of his mind, intelligence and senses in material activities. Various kinds of bodies are awarded as the result of a living entity's actions, and they are created by the material nature according to the living entity's desire. Because a living entity

desires and deserves a particular kind of body, it is given to him by the material nature under the order of the Supreme Lord.

In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* Third Canto, it is explained that under the control of superior authority a living entity is put within the semina of a male and injected into the womb of a particular female in order to develop a particular type of body. A living entity utilizes his senses, intelligence, mind, etc., in a specific way of his own choosing and thus develops a particular type of body within which he becomes encaged. In this way the living entity becomes situated in different species of life, either in a demigod, human or animal body, according to different situations and circumstances.

It is explained in the Vedic literatures that the living entities entrapped in different species of life are part and parcel of the Supreme Lord. The Māyāvadi philosophers mistake the living entity for the Paramātmā, who is actually sitting with the living entity as a friend. Because the Paramātmā, the localized aspect of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and the individual living entity are both within the body, a misunderstanding sometimes takes place that there is no difference between the two. But there is a definite difference between the individual soul and the Supersoul, and it is explained in the *Varāha Purāṇa* as follows. The Supreme Lord has two kinds of parts and parcels: the living entity is called *vibhinnāṁśa,* and the Paramātmā or the plenary expansion of the Supreme Lord is called *svāṁśa.* The *svāṁśa* plenary expansion of the Supreme Personality is as powerful as the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself. There is not even the slightest difference between the potency of the Supreme Person and that of His plenary expansion as Paramātmā, but the *vibhinnāṁśa* parts and parcels possess only a minute portion of the potencies of the Lord. The *Nārāyaṇa-Pañcarātra* states that the living entities who are the marginal potency of the Supreme Lord are undoubtedly of the same quality of spiritual existence as the Lord Himself, but they are prone to be tinged with the material qualities. Because he is prone to be subjected to the influence of material qualities, the minute living entity is called *jīva.* Sometimes the Supreme Personality of Godhead is also known as Śiva, the all-auspicious. So the difference between Śiva and *jīva* is that the all-auspicious Personality of Godhead is never affected by the material qualities, whereas the minute portions of the Supreme Personality of Godhead are prone to be affected by the qualities of material nature.

The Supersoul within the body of a particular living entity, although a plenary portion of the Lord, is worshipable by the individual living entity. Great sages have therefore concluded that the process of meditation is

designed so that the individual living entity may concentrate his attention on the lotus feet of the Supersoul form (Viṣṇu). That is the real form of *samādhi.* The living entity cannot become liberated from material entanglement by his own effort. He must therefore take to the devotional service of the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord, or the Supersoul within himself. Śrīdhara Svāmī, the great commentator on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* has composed a nice verse in this regard, the purport of which is as follows: "My dear Lord, I am eternally Your part and parcel, but I have been entrapped by the material potencies, which are also an emanation from You. As the cause of all causes, You have entered my body as the Supersoul, and I have the prerogative to enjoy the supreme blissful life of knowledge along with You. Therefore, my dear Lord, please order me to render You loving service so that I can again be brought to my original position of transcendental bliss."

Great personalities understand that a living entity entangled in this material world cannot become freed by his own efforts. With firm faith and devotion, such great personalities engage themselves in rendering transcendental loving service to the Lord. That is the verdict of the personified *Vedas.*

The personified *Vedas* continued: "Dear Lord, it is very difficult to achieve perfect knowledge of the Absolute Truth. Your Lordship is so kind to the fallen souls that You appear in different incarnations and execute different activities. You appear even as a historical personality of this material world, and Your pastimes are very nicely described in the Vedic literatures. Such pastimes are as attractive as the ocean of transcendental bliss. People in general have a natural inclination to read narrations in which ordinary *jīvas* are glorified, but when they become attracted by the Vedic literatures which delineate Your eternal pastimes, they actually dip into the ocean of transcendental bliss. As a fatigued man feels refreshed by dipping into a reservoir of water, so the conditioned soul who is very much disgusted with material activities becomes refreshed and forgets all the fatigue of material activities simply by dipping into the transcendental ocean of Your pastimes. And eventually he merges in the ocean of transcendental bliss. The most intelligent devotees, therefore, do not take to any means of self-realization except devotional service and constant engagement in the nine different processes of devotional life, especially hearing and chanting. When hearing and chanting about Your transcendental pastimes, Your devotees do not care even for the transcendental bliss derived from liberation or from merging into the existence of the Supreme. Such devotees are not interested even in so-called liberation,

and certainly they have no interest in material activities for elevation to the heavenly planets for sense gratification. Pure devotees seek only the association of *paramahaṁsas,* or great liberated devotees, so that they can continually hear and chant about Your glories. For this purpose the pure devotees are prepared to sacrifice all comforts of life, even giving up the material comforts of family life and so-called society, friendship and love. Those who have tasted the nectar of devotion by relishing the transcendental vibration of chanting Your glories, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare, do not care for any other spiritual bliss or for material comforts, which appear to the pure devotee to be less important than the straw in the street."

The personified *Vedas* continued: "Dear Lord, when a person is able to purify his mind, senses and intelligence by engaging himself in devotional service in full Kṛṣṇa consciousness, his mind becomes his friend. Otherwise, his mind is always his enemy. When the mind is engaged in devotional service of the Lord, it becomes the intimate friend of the living entity because the mind can then think of the Supreme Lord always. Your Lordship is eternally dear to the living entity, so when the mind is engaged in thought of You, one immediately feels the great satisfaction for which he has been hankering life after life. When one's mind is thus fixed on the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, one does not take to any kind of inferior worship or inferior process of self-realization. By attempting to worship a demigod or by taking to any other process of self-realization, the living entity becomes a victim of the cycle of birth and death, and no one can estimate how much the living entity becomes degraded by entering the abominable species of life such as the cats and dogs."

Śrī Narottama dāsa Ṭhākur has sung that persons who do not take to devotional service of the Lord but are attracted to the process of philosophical speculation and fruitive activities drink the poisonous results of such actions. Such persons are forced to take birth in different species of life and are forced to adopt obnoxious practices like meat-eating and intoxication. Materialistic persons generally worship the transient material body and forget the welfare of the spirit soul within the body. Some take shelter of materialistic science to improve bodily comforts, and some take to the worship of demigods in order to be promoted to the heavenly planets. Their goal in life is to make the material body comfortable while forgetting the interest of the spirit soul. Such persons are described in the Vedic literature as suicidal because attachment for the material body and its comforts forces the living entity to wander through the process of birth

and death perpetually and suffer the material pangs as a matter of course. The human form of life is a chance for one to understand his position, and the most intelligent person takes to devotional service just to engage his mind, senses and body in the service of the Lord without deviation.

The personified *Vedas* continued: "Dear Lord, there are many mystic *yogīs* who are very learned and deliberate in achieving the highest perfection of life. They engage themselves in the yogic process of controlling the life-air within the body. Concentrating the mind upon the form of Viṣṇu and controlling the senses very rigidly, they practice the *yoga* system, but even after much laborious austerity, penance, and regulation, they achieve the same destination as persons who are inimical toward You. In other words, both the *yogīs* and great, wise philosophical speculators ultimately attain the impersonal Brahman effulgence, which is also automatically attained by the demons who are regular enemies of the Lord. Demons like Kaṁsa, Śiśupāla and Dantavakra also attain the Brahman effulgence because they constantly meditate upon the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Women such as the *gopīs* were attached to Kṛṣṇa and captivated by His beauty, and their mental concentration on Kṛṣṇa was provoked by lust. They wanted to be embraced by the arms of Kṛṣṇa, which resemble the beautiful round shape of a snake. Similarly, there are the Vedic hymns, and we also simply concentrate our minds on the lotus feet of Your Lordship. Women like the *gopīs* concentrate upon You dictated by lust, and we concentrate upon Your lotus feet to go back home, back to Godhead. Your enemies also concentrate upon You, thinking always how to kill You, and the *yogīs* undertake great penances and austerities just to attain Your impersonal effulgence. All these different persons, although concentrating their minds in different ways, achieve spiritual perfection according to their different perspectives because You are equal to all Your devotees."

Śrīdhara Svāmī has composed a nice verse in this regard: "My dear Lord, to be engaged always in thinking of Your lotus feet is very difficult. It is possible by great devotees who have already achieved love for You and who are engaged in transcendental loving service. My dear Lord, I wish that my mind also may be engaged somehow or other on Your lotus feet, at least for some time."

The attainment of spiritual perfection by different spiritualists is explained in the *Bhagavad-gītā,* wherein the Lord says that He grants the perfection the devotee desires in proportion to the devotee's surrender unto Him. The impersonalists, *yogīs* and the enemies of the Lord enter into the Lord's transcendental effulgence, but the personalists who are

following in the footsteps of the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana or strictly following the path of devotional service are elevated to the personal abode of Kṛṣṇa, Goloka Vṛndāvana, or to the Vaikuṇṭha planets. Both the impersonalists and the personalists enter into the spiritual realm or the spiritual sky, but the impersonalists are given their place in the impersonal Brahman effulgence, whereas the personalists are given a position in the Vaikuṇṭha planets or in the Vṛndāvana planet, according to their desire to serve the Lord in different mellows.

The personified *Vedas* stated that persons who are born after the creation of this material world cannot understand the existence of the Supreme Personality of Godhead by manipulating their material knowledge. Just as a person born in a particular family cannot understand the position of his great-grandfather who lived before the birth of the recent generation, we are unable to understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Nārāyaṇa or Kṛṣṇa, who exists eternally in the spiritual world. In the Eighth Chapter of the *Bhagavad-gītā* it is clearly said that the Supreme Person, who lives eternally in the spiritual kingdom of God *(sanātana-dhāma),* can be approached only by devotional service.

As for the material creation, Brahmā is the first created person. Before Brahmā there was no living creature within this material world; it was void and dark until Brahmā was born on the lotus flower sprouted from the abdomen of Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu. Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu is an expansion of Kāraṇodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, Kāraṇodakaśāyī Viṣṇu is an expansion of Saṅkarṣaṇa, and Saṅkarṣaṇa is an expansion of Balarāma. Balarāma is an immediate expansion of Lord Kṛṣṇa. After the creation of Brahmā, the two kinds of demigods were born: demigods like the four brothers Sanaka, Sanātana, Sananda and Sanat-kumāra, who are representatives of renunciation of the world, and demigods like Marīci and their descendants who are meant to enjoy this material world. From these two kinds of demigods were gradually manifested all other living entities, including the human beings. Thus any living creature within this material world, including Brahmā, all the demigods and all the *rākṣasas,* are to be considered modern. This means that they were all recently born. Therefore, just as a person recently born in a family cannot understand the situation of his distant forefather, so anyone within this material world cannot understand the position of the Supreme Lord in the spiritual world because the material world has only recently been created. Although they have a long duration of existence, all the manifestations of the material world, namely, the time elements, the living entities, the *Vedas,* and the gross and subtle elements, are all created at some point. Anything manufactured within

this created situation or accepted as a means to understanding the original source of creation is to be considered modern.

Therefore by the process of self-realization or God realization through fruitive activities, philosophical speculation or mystic *yoga,* one cannot actually approach the supreme source of everything. When the creation is completely terminated, when there is no existence of the *Vedas,* no existence of material time, no existence of the gross and subtle material elements, and when all the living entities are in the nonmanifested stage resting within Nārāyaṇa, then all these manufactured processes become null and void and cannot act. Devotional service, however, is eternally going on in the eternal spiritual world. Therefore the only factual process of self-realization or God realization is devotional service, and if one takes to this process he takes to the real process of God realization. Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī has therefore composed a verse in this regard which conveys the idea that the supreme source of everything, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is so great and unlimited that it is not possible for the living entity to understand Him by any material acquisition. Everyone should therefore pray to the Lord to be engaged in His devotional service eternally, so that by the grace of the Lord one can understand the supreme source of creation. The supreme source of creation, the Supreme Lord, reveals Himself only to the devotees. In the Fourth Chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā* the Lord says to Arjuna, "My dear Arjuna, because you are My devotee and because you are My intimate friend I shall therefore reveal to you the process of understanding Me." In other words, the supreme source of creation, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, cannot be understood by our own endeavor. We have to please Him with devotional service, and then He will reveal Himself to us. Then we can understand Him to some extent.

There are different kinds of philosophers who have tried to understand the supreme source by their mental speculation. There are generally six kinds of mental speculators, and they are called *ṣaḍ-darśana.* All these philosophers are impersonalists and are known as Māyāvādīs. Every one of them has tried to establish his own opinion, although they all have later compromised and stated that all opinions lead to the same goal and that every opinion is therefore valid. According to the prayers of the personified *Vedas,* however, none of them are valid because their process of knowledge is created within the temporary material world. They have all missed the real point: the Supreme Personality of Godhead or the Absolute Truth can be understood only by devotional service.

One class of philosophers, known as Mīmāṁsakas, represented by sages such as Jaimini, have concluded that everyone should be engaged in pious

activities or prescribed duties and that such activities will lead one to the highest perfection. But this is contradicted in the Ninth Chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā,* where Lord Kṛṣṇa says that by pious activities one may be elevated to the heavenly planets, but as soon as one's accumulation of pious activities is used up, one has to leave the enjoyment of a higher standard of material prosperity in the heavenly planets and immediately come down again to these lower planets, where the duration of life is very short and where the standard of material happiness is of a lower grade. The exact words used in the *Gītā* are *kṣīṇe puṇye martya-lokaṁ viśanti.* Therefore the conclusion of the Mīmāṁsaka philosophers, that pious activities will lead one to the Absolute Truth, is not valid. Although a pure devotee is by nature inclined to pious activities, no one can attain the favor of the Supreme Personality of Godhead by pious activities alone. Pious activities may purify one of the contamination caused by ignorance and passion, but this is automatically attained by a devotee who is constantly engaged in hearing the transcendental message of Godhead in the form of the *Bhagavad-gītā, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* or similar scriptures. From the *Bhagavad-gītā* we understand that even a person who is not up to the standard of pious activities but who is absolutely engaged in devotional service is to be considered well situated on the path of spiritual perfection. It is also said in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that a person who is engaged in devotional service with love and faith is guided from within by the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The Lord Himself as Paramātmā, or the spiritual master sitting within one's heart, gives the devotee exact direction by which he can gradually go back to Godhead. The conclusion of the Mīmāṁsaka philosophers is not actually the truth which can lead one to real understanding.

Similarly, there are Sāṅkhya philosophers, metaphysicians or material scientists who study this cosmic manifestation by their invented scientific method and who do not recognize the supreme authority of God as the creator of the cosmic manifestation. Rather, they wrongly conclude that the reaction of material elements is the original cause of creation. The *Bhagavad-gītā,* however, does not accept this theory. It is clearly said therein that behind the cosmic activities is the direction of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This fact is corroborated by the Vedic injunction *asad vā idam agra āsīt,* which means that the origin of the creation existed before the cosmic manifestation. Therefore, the material elements cannot be the cause of material creation. Although the material elements are accepted as material causes, the ultimate cause is the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself. The *Bhagavad-gītā* says, therefore, that material nature works under the direction of Kṛṣṇa.

The conclusion of the atheistic Sāṅkhya philosophy is that because the effects of the material worlds are temporary or illusory, the cause is therefore also illusory. The Sāṅkhya philosophers are in favor of voidism, but the actual fact is that the original cause is the Supreme Personality of Godhead and this cosmic manifestation is the temporary manifestation of His material energy. When this temporary manifestation is annihilated, its cause, the eternal existence of the spiritual world, continues as it is, and therefore the spiritual world is called *sanātana-dhāma,* the eternal abode. The conclusion of the Sāṅkhya philosopher is therefore not valid.

Then there are the philosophers headed by Gautama and Kaṇāda. They have very minutely studied the cause and effect of the material elements and have ultimately come to the conclusion that atomic combination is the original cause of creation. Present material scientists also follow in the footsteps of Gautama and Kaṇāda, who propounded this theory of *paramānuvāda.* This theory, however, cannot be supported because the original cause of everything is not inert atoms. This is confirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* as well as in the *Vedas,* wherein it is stated *eko nārāyaṇa āsīt,* only Nārāyaṇa existed before the creation. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Vedānta-sūtra* also say that the original cause is sentient and both indirectly and directly cognizant of everything within this creation. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa says, *ahaṁ sarvasya prabhavaḥ:* "I am the original cause of everything," and *mattaḥ sarvaṁ pravartate:* "From Me everything comes into existence." Therefore, atoms may form the basic combinations of material existence, but these atoms are generated from the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Thus the philosophy of Gautama and Kaṇāda cannot be supported.

Similarly, impersonalists headed by Aṣṭāvakra and later on by Śaṅkarācārya accept the impersonal Brahman effulgence as the cause of everything. According to their theory, the material manifestation is temporary and unreal, whereas the impersonal Brahman effulgence is reality. But this theory cannot be supported either, because the Lord Himself says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that this Brahman effulgence is resting on His personality. It is also confirmed in the *Brahma-saṁhitā* that the Brahman effulgence is the personal bodily rays of Kṛṣṇa. As such, impersonal Brahman cannot be the original cause of the cosmic manifestation. The original cause is the all-perfect sentient Personality of Godhead, Govinda.

The most dangerous theory of the impersonalists is that when God comes as an incarnation He accepts a material body created by the three modes of material nature. This Māyāvādī theory has been condemned by Lord Caitanya as most offensive. He has said that anyone who accepts the transcendental body of the Personality of Godhead to be made of

this material nature commits the greatest offense at the lotus feet of Viṣṇu. Similarly, the *Bhagavad-gītā* also states that only the fools and rascals deride the Personality of Godhead when He descends in a human form. Lord Kṛṣṇa, Lord Rāma and Lord Caitanya actually move within human society as human beings.

The personified *Vedas* condemn the impersonal conception as a gross misrepresentation. In the *Brahma-saṁhitā,* the body of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is described as *ānanda-cin-maya-rasa.* The Supreme Personality of Godhead possesses a spiritual body, not a material body. He can enjoy anything through any part of His body, and therefore He is omnipotent. The limbs of a material body can perform only a particular function, just as hands can hold, but they cannot see or hear. Because the body of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is made of *ānanda-cin-maya-rasa* or *sac-cid-ānanda-vigraha,* He can enjoy anything and do everything with any of His limbs. Acceptance of the spiritual body of the Lord as material is dictated by the tendency to make the Supreme Personality of Godhead equal to the conditioned soul. The conditioned soul has a material body. Therefore, if God also has a material body, then the impersonalistic theory that the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the living entities are one and the same can be very easily propagandized.

Factually, when the Supreme Personality of Godhead comes He exhibits different pastimes, and yet there is no difference between His childish body when He is lying on the lap of His mother Yaśodā and His so-called grown up body fighting with the demons. In His childhood body also, He fought with demons such as Pūtanā, Tṛṇāvarta, Aghāsura, etc., with strength equal to that with which He fought in His youth against demons like Dantavakra, Śiśupāla and others. In material life, as soon as a conditioned soul changes his body, he forgets everything of his past body, but from the *Bhagavad-gītā* we understand that Kṛṣṇa, because He has a *sac-cid-ānanda* body, did not forget instructing the sun-god about the *Bhagavad-gītā* millions of years ago. The Lord is therefore known as Puruṣottama because He is transcendental to both material and spiritual existence. That He is the cause of all causes means that He is the cause of the spiritual world and of the material world as well. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is omnipotent and omniscient. Therefore, because a material body can be neither omnipotent nor omniscient, the Lord's body surely is not material. The Māyāvādī theory that the Personality of Godhead comes within this material world with a material body cannot be supported by any means.

It can be concluded that all the theories of the material philosophers are generated from the temporary illusory existence, like the conclusions

in a dream. Such conclusions certainly cannot lead us to the Absolute Truth. The Absolute Truth can only be realized through devotional service. As the Lord says in the *Bhagavad-gītā, bhaktyā mām abhijānāti,* "Only by devotional service can one understand Me." Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī has composed a nice verse in this regard, which states: "My dear Lord, let others be engaged in false argument and dry speculation, theorizing upon their great philosophical theses. Let them loiter in the darkness of ignorance and illusion, falsely enjoying as if very learned scholars, although they are without knowledge of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. As far as I am concerned, I wish to be liberated simply by chanting the holy names of the all-beautiful Supreme Personality of Godhead—Mādhava, Vāmana, Trinayana, Saṅkarṣaṇa, Śrīpati and Govinda. Simply by chanting His transcendental names, let me become free from the contamination of this material existence."

In this way the personified *Vedas* said, "My dear Lord, when a living entity, by Your grace only, comes to the right conclusion about Your exalted transcendental position, at that time he no longer bothers with the different theories manufactured by the mental speculators or so-called philosophers. This is a reference to the speculative theories of Gautama, Kaṇāda, Patañjali and Kapila (Nirīśvara). There are actually two Kapilas: one Kapila, the son of Kardama Muni, is an incarnation of God, and the other is an atheist of the modern age. The atheistic Kapila is often misrepresented to be the Supreme Personality of Godhead who appeared as the son of Kardama Muni during the time of Svāyambhuva Manu. Lord Kapila, the incarnation of Godhead, appeared long long ago; the modern age is the age of Vaivasvata Manu, whereas He appeared during the time of Svāyambhuva Manu.

According to Māyāvādī philosophy, this manifested world or the material world is *mithyā* or *māyā,* false. Their preaching principle is *brahma-satya jagat-mithyā.* According to them, only the Brahman effulgence is true, and the cosmic manifestation is illusory or false. But according to Vaiṣṇava philosophy, this cosmic manifestation is caused by the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* the Lord says that He enters within this material world by one of His plenary portions, and thus the creation takes place. From the *Vedas* also, we can understand that this *asat* or temporary cosmic manifestation is also an emanation from the Supreme *sat* or fact. From the *Vedānta-sūtra* also it is understood that everything has emanated from the Supreme Brahman. As such the Vaiṣṇavas do not take this cosmic manifestation to be false. The Vaiṣṇava philosopher sees everything in this material world in relationship with the Supreme Lord.

This conception of the material world is very nicely explained by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, who said that renunciation of this material world as illusory or false without knowledge that the material world is also the manifestation of the Supreme Lord is of no practical value. The Vaiṣṇavas, however, are free of attachment to this world because generally the material world is accepted as an object of sense gratification. The Vaiṣṇavas are not in favor of sense gratification; therefore, they are not attached to material activities. The Vaiṣṇava accepts this material world according to the regulative principles of the Vedic injunctions. Since the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the original cause of everything, the Vaiṣṇava sees everything in relationship with Kṛṣṇa, even in this material world. By such advanced knowledge, everything becomes spiritualized. In other words, everything in the material world is already spiritual, but due to our lack of knowledge we see things as material.

The personified *Vedas* presented the example that those who are seeking after gold do not reject gold earrings, gold bangles or anything else made of gold simply because they are shaped differently from the original gold. All living entities are part and parcel of the Supreme Lord and are qualitatively one, but they are now differently shaped in 8,400,000 species of life, just like many different ornaments which have been manufactured from the same source of gold. As one who is interested in gold accepts all the differently shaped gold ornaments, so a Vaiṣṇava, knowing well that all living entities are of the same quality as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, accepts all living entities as eternal servants of God. As a Vaiṣṇava, then, one has ample opportunity to serve the Supreme Personality of Godhead simply by reclaiming these conditioned, misled living entities, training them in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and leading them back to home, back to Godhead. The fact is that the minds of the living entities are now agitated by the three material qualities, and the living entities are therefore transmigrating, as if in dreams, from one body to another. When their consciousness is changed into Kṛṣṇa consciousness, however, they immediately fix Kṛṣṇa within their hearts, and thus their path for liberation becomes clear.

In all the *Vedas* the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the living entities are stated to be of the same quality—*caitanya,* or spiritual. This is also confirmed in the *Padma Purāṇa,* wherein it is said that there are two kinds of spiritual entities; one is called the *jīva,* and the other is called the Supreme Lord. Beginning from Lord Brahmā down to the ant, all living entities are *jīvas,* whereas the Lord is the Supreme four-handed Viṣṇu or Janāradana. The word *ātmā* can be applied only to the Supreme Person-

ality of Godhead, but because the living entities are His parts and parcels, sometimes the word *ātmā* is applied to them also. The living entities are therefore called *jivātmā,* and the Supreme Lord is called *Paramātmā.* Both the *Paramātmā* and *jivātmā* are within this material world, and therefore this material has a purpose other than sense gratification. The conception of a life of sense gratification is illusion, but the conception of service by the *jivātmā* to the *Paramātmā,* even in this material world, is not at all illusory. A Kṛṣṇa conscious person is fully aware of this fact, and thus he does not take this material world to be false, but acts in the reality of transcendental service. The devotee therefore sees everything in this material world as an opportunity to serve the Lord. He does not reject anything as material, but dovetails everything in the service of the Lord. Thus a devotee is always in the transcendental position, and everything that he uses becomes spiritually purified by being used in the service of the Lord.

Śrīdhara Svāmi has composed a nice verse in this regard: "I worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead who is always manifested as reality even within this material world, which is considered by some to be false." The conception of the falsity of this material world is due to lack of knowledge, but a person advanced in Kṛṣṇa consciousness sees the Supreme Personality of Godhead in everything. This is actually realization of the Vedic aphorism, *sarvaṁ khalv idaṁ brahma:* "Everything is Brahman."

The personified *Vedas* continued: "Dear Lord, less intelligent men take to other ways of self-realization, but actually there is no chance to become purified from material contamination or to stop the repeated cycle of birth and death unless one is a thoroughly pure devotee. Our dear Lord, everything is resting on Your different potencies; and everyone is supported by You, as is stated in the *Vedas (eko bahūnāṁ yo vidadhāti kāmān).* Therefore Your Lordship is the supporter and maintainer of all living entities—demigods, human beings and animals. Everyone is supported by You, and You are also situated in everyone's heart. In other words, You are the root of the whole creation. Therefore those who are engaged in Your devotional service without deviation always worship You. Such devotees actually pour water on the root of the universal tree. By devotional service, therefore, one satisfies not only the Personality of Godhead but also all others, because everyone is maintained and supported by Him. Because he understands the all-pervasive feature of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, a devotee is the most practical philanthropist and altruist. Such pure devotees, thoroughly engaged in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, very easily overcome the cycle of birth and death, and they as much as jump over the head of death."

A devotee is never afraid of death or of changing his body; his consciousness is transformed into Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and even if he does not go back to Godhead, even if he transmigrates to another material body, he has nothing to fear. A vivid example is Bharata Mahārāja. Although in his next life he became a deer, in the life after that he became completely free from all material contamination and was elevated to the kingdom of God. The *Bhagavad-gītā* affirms, therefore, that a devotee is never vanquished. A devotee's path to the spiritual kingdom, back home, back to Godhead, is guaranteed. Even though a devotee slips in one birth, the continuation of his Kṛṣṇa consciousness elevates him further and further until he goes back to Godhead. Not only does a pure devotee purify his own personal existence, but whoever becomes his disciple also ultimately becomes purified and able to enter the kingdom of God without difficulty. Not only can a pure devotee easily surpass death, but by his grace his followers also can do so without difficulty. The power of devotional service is so great that a pure devotee can electrify another person by his transcendental instruction on crossing over the ocean of nescience.

The instructions of a pure devotee to his disciple are also very simple. No one feels any difficulty in following in the footsteps of a pure devotee. Anyone who follows in disciplic succession from recognized devotees of the Lord, such as Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva, the Kumāras, Manu, Kapila, King Prahlāda, King Janaka, Śukadeva Gosvāmī, Yamarāja, etc., very easily finds the door of liberation open. On the other hand, those who are not devotees but are engaged in uncertain processes of self-realization, such as *jñāna, yoga* and *karma,* are understood to be still contaminated. Such contaminated persons, although apparently advanced in self-realization, cannot even liberate themselves, not to speak of others who follow them. Such nondevotees are compared to chained animals, for they are not able to go beyond the jurisdiction of the formalities of a certain type of faith. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* they are condemned as *veda-vādah.* They cannot understand that the *Vedas* deal with activities of the material modes of nature—goodness, passion and ignorance.

Lord Kṛṣṇa advised Arjuna that one has to go beyond the jurisdiction of the duties prescribed in the *Vedas* and take to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, devotional service. It is said in the *Bhagavad-gītā, nistraiguṇyo bhavārjuna,* "My dear Arjuna, just try to become transcendental to the Vedic rituals." This transcendental position beyond the Vedic ritualistic performances is devotional service. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* the Lord clearly says that persons who are engaged in His devotional service without adulteration are situated in Brahman. Actual Brahman realization means Kṛṣṇa consciousness and

engagement in devotional service. The devotees are therefore real *brahmacārīs* because their activities are always in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, devotional service.

The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is therefore a supreme call to all kinds of religionists asking them with great authority to join this movement by which one can learn how to love God and thus surpass all formulas and formalities of scriptural injunction. A person who cannot overcome the jurisdiction of stereotyped religious principles is compared to an animal chained up by his master. The purpose of all religion is to understand God and develop one's dormant love of Godhead. If one simply sticks to the religious formulas and formalities and does not become elevated to the position of love of God, he is considered to be a chained animal. In other words, if one is not in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, he is not eligibl for liberation from the contamination of material existence.

Śrila Śrīdhara Svāmī has composed a nice verse which says, "Let others engage in severe austerities, let others fall to the land from the tops of hills and give up their lives, let others travel to many holy places of pilgrimage for salvation, or let them be engaged in deep study of philosophy and Vedic literatures; let the mystic *yogīs* engage in their meditational service, and let the different sects engage in unnecessary arguing as to which is the best. But it is a fact that unless one is Kṛṣṇa conscious, unless one is engaged in devotional service, and unless one has the mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, he cannot cross over this material ocean." An intelligent person, therefore, gives up all stereotyped ideas and joins the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement for factual liberation.

The personified *Vedas* continued their prayers. "Our dear Lord, Your impersonal feature is explained in the *Vedas:* You have no hands, but You can accept all sacrifices which are offered to You; You have no legs, but You can walk more swiftly than anyone. Although You have no eyes, You can see whatever happens in the past, present and future. Although You have no ears, You can hear everything that is said. Although You have no mind, You know everyone and everyone's activities, past, present and future, and yet no one knows who You are. You know everyone, but no one knows You; therefore, You are the oldest and supreme personality."

Similarly, in another part of the *Vedas* it is said, "You have nothing to do. You are so perfect in Your knowledge and potency that everything becomes manifest simply by Your will. There is no one equal to or greater than You, and everyone is acting as Your eternal servant." Thus the Vedic statements describe that the Absolute has no legs, no hands, no eyes, no ears and no mind, and yet He can act through His potencies and

fulfill the needs of all living entities. As stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā,* His hands and legs are everywhere; He is all-pervasive. The hands, legs, ears and eyes of all living entities are acting and moving by the direction of the Supersoul sitting within the living entity's heart. Unless the Supersoul is present, it is not possible for the hands and legs to be active. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is so great, independent and perfect, however, that even without having any eyes, legs and ears, He is not dependent on others for His activities. On the contrary, others are dependent on Him for the activities of their different sense organs. Unless the living entity is inspired and directed by the Supersoul, he cannot act.

The fact is that ultimately the Absolute Truth is the Supreme Person. But because He is acting through His different potencies which are impossible for the gross materialists to see, the materialists accept Him as impersonal. For example, one can observe the personal artistic work in a painting of a flower, and one can understand that the color adjustment, the shape, etc., have demanded the minute attention of the artist. The artist's work is clearly exhibited in a painting of different blooming flowers. But the gross materialist, without seeing the hand of God in such artistic manifestations as the actual flowers blooming in nature, concludes that the Absolute Truth is impersonal. Actually, the Absolute is personal, but He is independent. He does not require to personally take a brush and colors to paint the flowers, but His potencies are acting so wonderfully that it appears as if flowers have come into being without the aid of an artist. The impersonal view of the Absolute Truth is accepted by less intelligent men because unless one is engaged in the service of the Lord, he cannot understand how the Supreme is acting—he cannot even know His name. Everything about His activities and personal features is revealed to the devotee only through his loving service attitude.

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* it is clearly said, *bhoktāraṁ yajña tapasām:* the Lord is the enjoyer of all kinds of sacrifices and of the results of all austerities. Then again the Lord says, *sarva-loka-maheśvaram:* "I am the proprietor of all planets." So that is the position of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Although He is present in Vṛndāvana and enjoys transcendental pleasure in the company of His eternal associates, the *gopīs* and the cowherd boys, His potencies are acting under His direction all over the creation. They do not disturb His eternal pastimes.

Through devotional service only can one understand how the Supreme Personality of Godhead, by His inconceivable potencies, simultaneously acts impersonally and as a person. He is acting just like the supreme

emperor, and many thousands of kings and chiefs are working under Him. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is the supreme independent controlling person, and all the demigods—including Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva, Indra the king of heaven, the king of the moon planet, and the king of the sun planet—are working under His direction. It is confirmed in the *Vedas* that the sun is shining, the air is blowing, and fire is distributing heat out of fear of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The material nature is producing all kinds of movable and immovable objects within the material world, but none of them can independently act or create without the direction of the Supreme Lord. All of them are acting as tributaries, just like subordinate kings who offer their annual taxes to the emperor.

The Vedic injunction states that every living entity lives by eating the remnants of foodstuffs offered to the Personality of Godhead. In great sacrifices the injunction is that Nārāyaṇa should be present as the supreme predominating Deity of the sacrifice, and after the sacrifice is performed, the remnants of foodstuffs are distributed amongst the demigods. This is called *yajña-bhāga.* Every demigod has an allotment of *yajña-bhāga* which he accepts as *prasādam.* The conclusion is that the demigods are not independently powerful; they are posted as different executives under the order of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and they are eating *prasādam* or the remnants of sacrifices. They are executing the order of the Supreme Lord exactly according to His plan. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is in the background, and His orders are carried out by others. It only appears that He is impersonal. In our grossly materialistic way, we cannot conceive how the Supreme Person is above the impersonal activities of material nature. Therefore the Lord explains in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that there is nothing superior to Himself and that the impersonal Brahman is subordinately situated as a manifestation of His personal rays. Śrīpāda Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī has therefore composed a nice verse in this regard: "Let me offer my respectful obeisances unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who has no material senses but through whose direction and will all the material senses are working. He is the supreme potency of all material senses or sense organs. He is omnipotent, and He is the supreme performer of everything. Therefore He is worshipable by everyone. Unto that Supreme Person do I offer my respectful obeisances."

Kṛṣṇa Himself declares in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that He is Puruṣottama, which means the Supreme Personality. *Puruṣa* means person, and *uttama* means supreme or transcendental. Also in *Bhagavad-gītā* the Lord declares that because He is transcendental to all sentient and insentient beings, He

is therefore known as the *puruṣottama.* In another place the Lord says that as the air is situated in the all-pervading sky, so everyone is situated in Him, and everyone is acting under His direction.

The *Vedas* personified continued. "Our dear Lord," they prayed, "You are equal to all, with no partiality toward a particular type of living entity. As Your parts and parcels, all living entities enjoy or suffer in different conditions of life. They are just like the sparks of a fire. Just as sparks dance on a blazing fire, so all living entities are dancing on Your support. You are providing them with everything they desire, and yet You are not responsible for their position of enjoyment or suffering. There are different types of living entities—demigods, human beings, animals, trees, birds, beasts, germs, worms, insects and aquatics—and all are enjoying or suffering in life by resting on You. The living entities are of two kinds: one class is called ever-liberated, *nitya-mukta,* and the other class is called *nitya-baddha.* The *nitya-mukta* living entities are in the spiritual kingdom, and the *nitya-baddha* are in the material world.

"In the spiritual world both the Lord and the living entities are manifest in their original status, like live sparks in a blazing fire. But in the material world, although the Lord is all-pervasive in His impersonal feature, the living entities have forgotten their Kṛṣṇa consciousness, just as sparks sometimes fall from a blazing fire and lose their original brilliant condition. Some sparks fall onto dry grass and thus ignite another big fire. This is a reference to the pure devotees who take compassion on the poor and innocent living entities. The pure devotee enlightens Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the hearts of the conditioned souls, and thus the blazing fire of the spiritual world becomes manifest even within this material world. Some sparks fall onto water; they immediately lose their original brilliance and become almost extinct. This is comparable to the living entities who take their birth in the midst of gross materialists, in which case their original Kṛṣṇa consciousness becomes almost extinct. Some sparks fall to the ground and remain midway between the blazing and extinct conditions. Thus some living entities are without Kṛṣṇa consciousness, some are between having and not having Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and some are actually situated in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The demigods in the higher planets, beginning from Lord Brahmā, Indra, Candra, the sun-god, the moon-god, and various other demigods, are all Kṛṣṇa conscious. Human society is between the demigods and the animals, and thus some are more or less Kṛṣṇa conscious, and some are completely forgetful of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The third-grade living entities, namely the animals, beasts, plants, trees and aquatics, have completely forgotten Kṛṣṇa consciousness. This

example stated in the *Vedas* of the sparks of a blazing fire is very appropriate for understanding the condition of different types of living entities. But above all other living entities is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa or Puruṣottama, who is always liberated from all material conditions.

"The question may be raised as to why the living entities have fallen by chance into different conditions of life. To answer this question, we first have to understand that there cannot be any influence of chance for the living entities; chance is for nonliving entities. According to the Vedic literatures, living entities have knowledge, and thus they are called *caitanya,* which means in knowledge. Their situation in different conditions of life, therefore, is not accidental. It is by their choice because they have knowledge. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* the Lord says, 'Give up everything and just surrender unto Me.' This process of realizing the Supreme Personality of Godhead is open for everyone, but still it is the choice of the particular living entity whether to accept or reject this proposal. In the last portion of the *Bhagavad-gītā,* Lord Kṛṣṇa very plainly said to Arjuna, 'My dear Arjuna, now I have spoken everything to You. Everything now depends on whether you choose to accept it.' Similarly, the living entities who have come down to this material world have made their own choice to enjoy this material world. It is not that Kṛṣṇa sent them into this material world. The material world is created for the enjoyment of living entities who wanted to give up the eternal service of the Lord to become the supreme enjoyer themselves. According to Vaiṣṇava philosophy, when a living entity desires to gratify his senses and forgets the service of the Lord, he is given a place in the material world to act freely according to his desire, and therefore he creates a condition of life in which he either enjoys or suffers. We should know definitely that both the Lord and the living entities are eternally cognizant. There is no birth and death for either the Lord or the living entities. When creation takes place, it does not mean that the living entities are created. The Lord creates this material world to give the conditioned souls a chance to elevate themselves to the higher platform of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. If the conditioned soul does not take advantage of this opportunity, then after the dissolution of this material world, he enters into the body of Nārāyaṇa and remains there in deep sleep until the time of another creation.

"In this connection the example of the rainy season is very appropriate. Seasonal rainfall may be taken as the agent for creation because after the rainfall the wet fields are favorable for growing different types of vegetation. Similarly, as soon as there is creation by the Lord's glancing over the

material nature, immediately the living entities spring up in their different living conditions, just as different types of vegetation grow after a rainfall. The rainfall is one, but the creation of the different vegetables is varied. The rain falls equally on the whole field, but the different vegetables sprout up in different shapes and different forms according to the seeds planted. Similarly, the seeds of our desires are varied. Every living entity has a different type of desire, and that desire is the seed which causes his growth in a certain type of body. This is explained by Rūpa Gosvāmī by the word *pāpa-bīja. Pāpa* means sinful. All our material desires are to be taken as *pāpa-bīja,* or the seeds of sinful desires. *Bhagavad-gītā* explains that our sinful desire is that we do not surrender unto the Supreme Lord. The Lord therefore says in *Bhagavad-gītā,* 'I shall give you protection from the resultant actions of sinful desires.' These sinful desires are manifested in different types of bodies; therefore, no one can accuse the Supreme Lord of partiality in His giving one type of body to a certain type of living entity and another type of body to another living entity. All the bodies of the 8,400,000 species come according to the mental condition of the individual living entities. The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Puruṣottama, only gives them a chance to act according to their desires. Therefore, the living entities are acting, taking advantage of the facility given by the Lord.

"At the same time, they are born from the transcendental body of the Lord. This relationship between the Lord and the living entities is explained in the Vedic literatures, wherein it is said that the Supreme Lord maintains all His children, giving them whatever they want. Similarly, in the *Bhagavad-gītā,* the Lord says, 'I am the seed-giving father of all living entities.' It is very simple to understand that the father gives birth to the children, but the children act according to their own desires. Therefore the father is never responsible for the different futures of his children. Each child can take advantage of the father's property and instruction, but even though the inheritance and instruction may be the same for all the children, out of their different desires, each child creates a different life and thereby suffers or enjoys.

"Similarly, the *Bhagavad-gītā's* instructions are equal for everyone; everyone should surrender unto the Supreme Lord, and He will take charge of them and protect them from sinful reactions. The facilities of living in the creation of the Lord are equally offered to all living entities. Whatever there is, either on the land, on water or in the sky, is equally given to all living entities. Since they are all sons of the Supreme Lord, everyone can enjoy the material facilities given by the Lord, but

unfortunate living entities create unfavorable conditions of life by fighting among themselves. The responsibility for this fighting and creating favorable and unfavorable situations of life lies with the living entities, not with the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Therefore, if the living entities take advantage of the Lord's instructions as given in the *Bhagavad-gītā* and develop Kṛṣṇa consciousness, then their lives become sublime, and they can go back to Godhead.

"One may argue that because this material world is created by the Lord, He is therefore responsible for its condition. Certainly He is indirectly responsible for the creation and maintenance of this material world, but He is never responsible for the different conditions of the living entities. The Lord's creation of this material world is compared to the cloud's creation of vegetation. In the rainy season the cloud creates different varieties of vegetables. The cloud pours water on the surface of the earth, but it never touches the earth directly. Similarly, the Lord creates this material world simply by glancing over the material energy. This is confirmed in the *Vedas:* He threw His glance over the material nature, and thus there was creation. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* it is also confirmed that simply by His transcendental glance over the material nature, He creates different varieties of entities, both movable and immovable, living and dead.

"The creation of the material world can therefore be taken as one of the pastimes of the Lord; it is called one of the pastimes of the Lord because He creates this material world whenever He desires. This desire of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is also extreme mercy on His part because it gives another chance to the conditioned souls to develop their original consciousness and thus go back to Godhead. Therefore no one can blame the Supreme Lord for creating this material world.

"From the subject matter under discussion, we can gain a clear understanding of the difference between the impersonalists and the personalists. The impersonal conception recommends merging in the existence of the Supreme, and the voidist philosophy recommends making all material varieties void. Both these philosophies are known as Māyāvāda. Certainly the cosmic manifestation comes to a close and becomes void when the living entities merge into the body of Nārāyaṇa to rest until another creation, and this may be called an impersonal condition, but these conditions are never eternal. The cessation of the variegatedness of the material world and the merging of the living entities into the body of the Supreme are not permanent because the creation will take place again, and the living entities who merge into the body of the Supreme without

having developed their Kṛṣṇa consciousness will again appear in this material world when there is another creation. The *Bhagavad-gītā* confirms the fact that this material world is created and annihilated. This is going on perpetually, and conditioned souls who are without Kṛṣṇa consciousness come back again and again whenever the material creation is manifest. If such conditioned souls take advantage of this opportunity and develop Kṛṣṇa consciousness under the direct instruction of the Lord, then they are transferred to the spiritual world and do not have to come back again to the material creation. It is said, therefore, that the voidists and the impersonalists are not very intelligent because they do not take shelter under the lotus feet of the Lord. Because they are less intelligent, these voidists and impersonalists take to different types of austerities, either to attain the stage of *nirvāṇa,* which means finishing the material conditions of life, or to attain oneness by merging into the body of the Lord. All of them again fall down because they neglect the lotus feet of the Lord."

In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta,* the author, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, after studying all the Vedic literature and hearing from all authorities, has given his opinion that Kṛṣṇa is the only supreme master and that all living entities are His eternal servants. His statement is confirmed in the prayers by the personified *Vedas.* The conclusion is, therefore, that everyone is under the control of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, everyone is serving under the supreme direction of the Lord, and everyone is afraid of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. It is out of fear of Him that activities are being rightly executed. Everyone's position is to be subordinate to the Supreme Lord, yet the Lord has no partiality in His view of the living entities. He is just like the unlimited sky; as the sparks of a fire dance in the fire, similarly, all living entities are like birds flying in the unlimited sky. Some of them are flying very high, some are flying at a lesser altitude, and some are flying at a still lesser altitude. The different birds are flying in different positions according to their respective abilities to fly, but the sky has nothing to do with this ability. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* also, the Lord confirms that He awards different positions to different living entities according to their proportionate surrender. This proportionate reward by the Personality of Godhead to the living entities is not partiality. Therefore, in spite of the living entities' being situated in different positions, in different spheres, and in different species of life, all of them are always under the control of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and yet He is never responsible for their different living conditions. It is foolish and artificial, therefore, to think oneself equal to the Supreme Lord, and it is still more foolish to think that one has not seen God. Everyone is seeing

God in His different aspects; the only difference is that the theist sees God as the Supreme Personality, the most beloved, Kṛṣṇa, and the atheist sees the Absolute Truth as ultimate death.

The personified *Vedas* continued to pray. "Our dear Lord, from all Vedic information it is understood that You are the supreme controller, and all living entities are controlled. Both the Lord and the living entities are called *nitya,* eternal, and so are qualitatively one, yet the singular *nitya,* or the Supreme Lord, is the controller, whereas the plural *nityas* are controlled. The individual controlled living entity resides within the body, and the supreme controller, as Supersoul, is also present there, but the Supersoul is controlling the individual soul. That is the verdict of the *Vedas.* If the individual soul were not controlled by the Supersoul, then how could one explain the Vedic version that a living entity transmigrates from one body to another, enjoying and suffering the effects of his past deeds? Sometimes he is promoted to a higher standard of life, and sometimes he is degraded to a lower standard of life. Thus the conditioned souls are not only under the control of the Supreme Lord, but they are also conditioned by the control of the material nature. This relationship of the living entities to the Supreme Lord as the controlled and the controller definitely proves that although the Supersoul is all-pervasive, the individual living entities are never all-pervasive. If the individual souls were all-pervasive, there would be no question of their being controlled. The theory that the Supersoul and the individual soul are equal is therefore a polluted conclusion, and no sensible person accepts it; rather, one should try to understand the distinctions between the supreme eternal and the subordinate eternals."

The personified *Vedas* therefore concluded, "O Lord, both You and the limited *dhruvas,* the living entities, are eternal. The form of the unlimited eternal is sometimes calculated as the universal form, and in the Vedic literatures like the *Upaniṣads,* the form of the limited eternal is vividly described. It is said therein that the original spiritual form of the living entity is one ten-thousandth the size of the tip of a hair. It is stated that the spirit is greater than the greatest and smaller than the smallest. The individual living entities, who are eternally part and parcel of God, are smaller than the smallest. With our material senses, we can perceive neither the Supreme, who is greater than the greatest, nor the individual soul, who is smaller than the smallest. We have to understand both the greatest and the smallest from the authoritative sources of Vedic literature. Vedic literature states that the Supersoul is sitting within the body of a living entity and is as big as a thumb. Therefore the argument may be put

forward, how can something the size of a thumb be accommodated within the heart of an ant? The answer is that this thumb measurement of the Supersoul is imagined in proportion to the body of the living entity. In all circumstances, therefore, the Supersoul and the individual living entity cannot be taken as one, although both of them enter within the material body of a living entity. The Supersoul living within the heart is for directing or controlling the individual living entity. Although both are *dhruva,* or eternal, the living entity is always under the direction of the Supreme.

"It may be argued that because the living entities are born of the material nature, they are all equal and independent. In the Vedic literature, however, it is said that the Supreme Personality of Godhead impregnates the material nature with the living entities, and then they come out. Therefore, the appearance of the individual living entities is not factually due to material nature alone, just as a child produced by a woman is not her independent production. A woman is first impregnated by a man, and then a child is produced. As such, the child produced by the woman is part and parcel of the man. Similarly, the living entities are apparently produced by the material nature, but not independently. It is due to the impregnation of material nature by the supreme father that the living entities are present. Therefore the argument that the individual living entities are not part and parcel of the Supreme cannot stand. For example, the different parts and parcels of the body cannot be taken as equal to the whole; rather, the whole body is the controller of the different limbs. Similarly, the parts and parcels of the supreme whole are always dependent and are always controlled by the source of the parts and parcels. It is confirmed in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that the living entities are part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa: *mamaivāṁśo.* No sane man, therefore, will accept the theory that the Supersoul and the individual soul are of the same category. They are equal in quality, but quantitatively the Supersoul is always the Supreme, and the individual soul is always subordinate to the Supersoul. That is the conclusion of the *Vedas.*"

Two significant words used in this connection are *yanmaya* and *cinmaya.* In Sanskrit grammar, the word *mayat* is used in the sense of transformation, and also in the sense of sufficiency. The Māyāvādī philosophers interpret that *yanmaya* or *cinmaya* indicates that the living entity is always equal to the Supreme. But one has to consider whether this affix, *mayat,* is used for sufficiency or for transformation. The living entity never possesses anything exactly in the same proportion as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Therefore, this *mayat* affix cannot be used to mean that the individual

living entity is self-sufficient. The individual living entity never has sufficient knowledge; otherwise, how could he have come under the control of *maya,* or the material energy? The word sufficient can be accepted, therefore, only in proportion to the magnitude of the living entity. The spiritual oneness of the Supreme Lord and the living entities is never to be accepted as homogeneity. Each and every living entity is individual. If homogenous oneness is accepted, then by the liberation of one individual soul, all other individual souls would have been liberated immediately. But the fact is that every individual soul is differently enjoying and suffering in the material world.

The word *mayat* is also used in the sense of transformation, or sometimes it is used to mean by-product. The impersonalist theory is that Brahman Himself has accepted different types of bodies and that this is His *līlā* or pastime. There are, however, many hundreds and thousands of species of life in different standards of living conditions, such as human beings, demigods, animals, birds and beasts, and if all of them were expansions of the Supreme Absolute Truth, then there would be no question of liberation because Brahman is already liberated. Another interpretation put forward by the Māyāvādīs is that in every millennium different types of bodies are manifested, and when the millennium is closed, all the different bodies or expansions of Brahman automatically become one, ending all different manifestations. Then in the next millennium, according to this theory, Brahman again expands in different bodily forms. If we accept this theory, then Brahman becomes subject to change. But this cannot be accepted. From *Vedānta-sūtra* we understand that Brahman is by nature joyful. He cannot, therefore, change Himself into a body which is subject to painful conditions. Actually, the living entities who are part and parcel of Brahman are infinitesimal particles prone to be covered by the illusory energy. As explained before, the particles of Brahman are like sparks blissfully dancing within a fire, but there is a chance of their falling from the fire to smoke, although smoke is another condition of fire. This material world is just like smoke, and the spiritual world is just like a blazing fire. The innumerable living entities are prone to fall down to the material world from the spiritual world when influenced by illusory energy, and it is also possible for the living entity to become liberated again when by cultivation of real knowledge he becomes completely freed from the contamination of the material world.

The theory of the *asuras* is that the living entities are born of material nature, or *prakṛti,* in touch with the *puruṣa.* This theory also cannot be accepted because both the material nature and the Supreme Personality

of Godhead are eternally existing. Neither the material nature nor the Supreme Personality of Godhead can be born. The Supreme Lord is known as *aja,* or unborn. Similarly, the material nature is also called *ajā.* Both these terms, *aja* and *ajā,* mean unborn. Because both the material nature and the Supreme Lord are unborn, it is not possible that they can beget the living entities. As water in contact with air sometimes presents innumerable bubbles, so a combination of material nature and the Supreme Person causes the appearence of the living entities within this material world. As bubbles in the water appear in different shapes, similarly the living entities also appear in the material world in different shapes and conditions, influenced by the modes of material nature. As such, it is not improper to conclude that the living entities appearing within this material world in different shapes, such as human beings, demigods, animals, birds, beasts, etc., all get their respective bodies due to different desires. No one can say when such desires were awakened in them, and therefore it is said, *anādi-karma:* the cause of such material existence is untraceable. No one knows when material life began, but it is a fact that it does have a point of beginning because originally every living entity is a spiritual spark. As sparks falling onto the ground from a fire have a beginning, similarly the living entities coming to this material world have a beginning, but no one can say when. Even during the time of dissolution, these living entities remain merged in the spiritual existence of the Lord, as if in deep sleep, but their original desires to lord it over the material nature do not subside. Again, when there is cosmic manifestation, they come out to fulfill the same desires, and therefore they appear in different species of life.

This merging into the Supreme at the time of dissolution is compared to honey. In the honeycomb, the taste of different flowers and fruits are conserved. When one drinks honey, one cannot distinguish what sort of honey has been collected from what sort of flower, but the palatable taste of the honey presupposes that the honey is not homogenous, but is a combination of different tastes. Another example is that although different rivers ultimately mix with the water of the sea, that does not mean that the individual identities of the rivers are thereby lost. Although the water of the Ganges and the Yamunā mixes with the water of the sea, the River Ganges and River Yamunā still continue to exist independently. The merging of different living entities into Brahman at the time of dissolution involves the dissolution of different types of bodies, but the living entities, along with their different tastes, remain individually submerged in Brahman until another manifestation of the material world. As the salty taste of sea water and the sweet taste of Ganges water are different, and this difference

continually exists, so the difference between the Supreme Lord and the living entities continually exists, even though it appears that at the time of dissolution they merge. The conclusion is, therefore, that even when the living entities become free from all contamination of material conditions, they merge into the spiritual kingdom, but still their individual tastes in relationship with the Supreme Lord continue to exist.

The personified *Vedas* continued: "Our dear Lord, it is our conclusion that all living entities are attracted by Your material energy, and only due to their mistakenly identifying themselves as products of the material nature are they transmigrating from one kind of body to another in forgetfulness of their eternal relationship with You. Because of ignorance, these living entities are misidentifying themselves in different species of life, and especially when they are elevated to the human form of life, they identify with a particular class of men, or a particular nation or race or so-called religion, forgetting their real identity as eternal servants of Your Lordship. Due to this faulty conception of life, they are undergoing repeated birth and death. Out of many millions of them, if one becomes intelligent enough, by association with pure devotees, he comes to the understanding of Kṛṣṇa consciousness and comes out of the jurisdiction of the material misconception."

In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* it is confirmed by Lord Caitanya that the living entities are wandering within this universe in different species of life, but if one of them becomes intelligent enough, by the mercy of the spiritual master and the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, then he begins his devotional life in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. It is said, *hariṁ vinā na mṛtim taranti:* without the help of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, one cannot get out of the clutches of repeated birth and death. In other words, only the Supreme Lord, the Personality of Godhead, can relieve the conditioned souls from the cycle of repeated birth and death.

The personified *Vedas* continued: "The influence of time—past, present and future—and the material miseries, such as excessive heat, excessive cold, birth, death, old age, disease, are all simply the movement of Your eyebrows. Everything is working under Your direction. It is said in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that all material activity is going on under the direction of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa. All the conditions of material existence are opposing elements for persons who are not surrendered unto You. But for those who are surrendered souls and are in full Kṛṣṇa consciousness, these things cannot be a source of fearfulness. When Lord Nṛsiṁhadeva appeared, Prahlāda Mahārāja was never afraid of Him, whereas his atheist father was immediately faced with death personified and

was killed. Therefore, although Lord Nṛsiṁhadeva appears as death for an atheist like Hiraṇyakaśipu, He is always kind and is the reservoir of all pleasure to the devotees like Prahlāda. A pure devotee is not, therefore, afraid of birth, death, old age and disease.

Śrīpāda Śrīdhara Svāmī has composed a nice verse, the purport of which is as follows: "My dear Lord, I am a living entity perpetually disturbed by the conditions of material existence. I have been cracked into different pieces by the smashing wheel of material existence, and because of my various sinful activities while existing in this material world, I am burning in the blazing fire of material reaction. Somehow or other, my dear Lord, I have come to take shelter under Your lotus feet. Please accept me and give me protection." Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākur also prays like this: "My dear Lord, O son of Nanda Mahārāja, associated with the daughter of Vṛṣabhānu, I have come to take shelter under Your lotus feet after suffering greatly in the material condition of life, and I am praying that You please be merciful upon me. Please do not kick me away; I have no other shelter but You."

The conclusion is that any process of self-realization or God realization other than *bhakti-yoga,* or devotional service, is extremely difficult. Taking shelter of devotional service to the Lord in full Kṛṣṇa consciousness is therefore the only way to become free from the contamination of material conditional life, especially in this age. Those who are not in Kṛṣṇa consciousness are simply wasting their time, and they have no tangible proof of spiritual life.

It is said by Lord Rāmacandra, "I always give confidence and security to anyone who surrenders unto Me and decides definitely that He is My eternal servant because that is My natural inclination." Similarly, Lord Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā,* "The influence of the material nature is insurmountable, but anyone who surrenders unto Me can verily overcome the influence of material nature." The devotees are not at all interested in arguing with the nondevotees to nullify their theories. Rather than wasting their time, they always engage themselves in the transcendental loving service of the Lord in full Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

The personified *Vedas* continued: "Our dear Lord, although great mystic *yogīs* may have full control over the elephant of the mind and the hurricane of the senses, unless they take shelter of a bona fide spiritual master, they fall victims to the material influence and never become successful in their attempts at self-realization. Such unguided persons are compared to merchants going to sea on a ship without a captain. By his personal attempts, therefore, no one can get free from the clutches of

material nature. One has to accept a bona fide spiritual master and work according to his direction. Then it is possible to cross over the nescience of material conditions. Śrīpāda Śrīdhara Svāmī has composed a nice verse in this connection, in which he says, "O all-merciful spiritual master, representative of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, when will my mind be completely surrendered unto your lotus feet? At that time, only by your mercy, I shall be able to get relief from all obstacles to spiritual life, and I shall be situated in blissful life."

Actually, ecstatic *samādhi* or absorption in the Supreme Personality of Godhead can be achieved by constant engagement in His service, and this constant engagement in devotional service can be performed only when one is working under the direction of a bona fide spiritual master. The *Vedas* therefore instruct that in order to know the science of devotional service, one has to submit himself unto the bona fide spiritual master. The bona fide spiritual master is he who knows the science of devotional service in disciplic succession. This disciplic succession is called *śrotriyam.* The prime symptom of one who has become a spiritual master in disciplic succession is that he is one hundred percent fixed in *bhakti-yoga.* Sometimes people neglect to accept a spiritual master, and instead they endeavor for self-realization by mystic *yoga* practice, but there are many instances of failure, even by great *yogīs* like Viśvāmitra. Arjuna said in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that controlling the mind is as impractical as stopping the blowing of a hurricane. Sometimes the mind is compared to a maddened elephant. Without following the direction of a spiritual master one cannot control the mind and the senses. In other words, if one practices *yoga* mysticism and does not accept a bona fide spiritual master, he will surely fail. He will simply waste his valuable time. The Vedic injunction is that no one can have full knowledge without being under the guidance of an *ācārya. Ācāryavān puruṣo veda:* one who has accepted an *ācārya* knows what is what. The Absolute Truth cannot be understood by arguments. One who has attained the perfect brahminical stage naturally becomes renounced; he does not strive for material gain because by spiritual knowledge he has come to the conclusion that in this world there is no insufficiency. Everything is sufficiently provided by the Supreme Personality of Godhead. A real *brāhmana,* therefore, does not endeavor for material perfection; rather, he approaches a bona fide spiritual master to accept orders from him. A spiritual master's qualification is that he is *brahmaniṣṭham,* which means that he has given up all other activities and has dedicated his life to working only for the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa. When a bona fide student approaches a bona fide spiritual master,

he submissively prays to the spiritual master, "My dear Lord, kindly accept me as your student and train me in such a way that I will be able to give up all other kinds of processes for self-realization and simply engage in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, devotional service."

The devotee engaged by the direction of the spiritual master in the transcendental loving service of the Lord contemplates as follows: "My dear Lord, You are the reservoir of pleasure. Since You are present, what is the use of the transient pleasure derived from society, friendship and love? Persons who are unaware of the supreme reservoir of pleasure falsely engage in deriving pleasure from sense gratification, but this is transient and illusory." In this connection, Vidyāpati, a great Vaiṣṇava devotee and poet, says, "My dear Lord, undoubtedly there is some pleasure in the midst of society, friendship and love, although it is materially conceived, but such pleasure cannot satisfy my heart, which is like a desert." In a desert there is need of an ocean of water. But if only a drop of water is poured on the desert, what is the value of such water? Similarly, our material hearts are full of multi-desires, which cannot be fulfilled within the material society of friendship and love. When our hearts begin to derive pleasure from the supreme reservoir of pleasure, then we can be satisfied. That transcendental satisfaction is only possible in devotional service, in full Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

The personified *Vedas* continued: "Our dear Lord, You are *sac-cid-ānanda-vigraha,* the ever-blissful form of knowledge, and because the living entities are parts and parcels of Your personality, their natural state of existence is to be fully conscious of You. In this material world, anyone who has developed such Kṛṣṇa consciousness is no longer interested in the materialistic way of life. A Kṛṣṇa conscious being becomes disinterested in family life or opulent living conditions, and he requires only a little concession for his bodily needs. In other words, he is no longer interested in sense gratification. The perfection of human life is based on knowledge and renunciation, but it is very difficult to attempt to reach the stage of knowledge and renunciation while in family life. Kṛṣṇa conscious persons therefore take shelter of the association of devotees or sanctified places of pilgrimage. Such persons are aware of the relationship between the Supersoul and the individual living entities, and they are never in the bodily concept of life. Because they always carry You in full consciousness within their hearts, they are so purified that any place they go becomes a holy place of pilgrimage, and the water which washes their feet is able to deliver many sinful persons hovering within this material world."

When Prahlāda Mahārāja was asked by his atheistic father to describe

something very good which he had learned, he replied to his father that for a materialistic person who is always full of anxieties due to being engaged in temporary and relative truths, the best course is to give up the blind well of family life and go to the forest to take shelter of the Supreme Lord. Those who are actually pure devotees are celebrated as *mahātmās,* or great sages, personalities perfect in knowledge. They always think of the Supreme Lord and His lotus feet, and thus they become automatically liberated. Devotees who are always situated in that position become electrified by the inconceivable potencies of the Lord, and thus they themselves become the source of liberation for their followers and devotees. A Kṛṣṇa conscious person is fully electrified spiritually, and therefore anyone who touches or takes shelter of such a pure devotee becomes similarly electrified with spiritual potencies. Such devotees are never puffed up with material opulences. Generally, the material opulences are good parentage, education, beauty and riches, but although a devotee of the Lord may possess all four of these material opulences, he is never carried away by the pride of possessing such distinctions. Great devotees of the Lord travel all over the world from one place of pilgrimage to another, and on their way they meet many conditioned souls and deliver them by their association and distribution of transcendental knowledge. They reside in places like Vṛndāvana, Mathurā, Dvārakā, Jagannātha Purī and Navadvīpa because only devotees assemble in such places. In this way they take advantage of saintly association, and by such association the devotees advance more and more in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Such advancement is not possible in ordinary household life which is devoid of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

The personified *Vedas* continue: "Our dear Lord, there are two classes of transcendentalists, the impersonalists and the personalists. The opinion of the impersonalists is that this material manifestation is false and that only the Absolute Truth is factual. The view of the personalist, however, is that the material world, although very temporary, is nevertheless not false, but is factual. Such transcendentalists have different arguments to establish the validity of their philosophies. Factually, the material world is simultaneously both truth and untruth. It is truth because everything is an expansion of the Supreme Absolute Truth, and it is untruth because the existence of the material world is temporary; it is created, and it is annihilated. Because of its different conditions of existence, the cosmic manifestation has no fixed position. Those who advocate acceptance of this material world as false are generally known by the maxim *brahma satya jagan mithyā.* They put forward the argument that everything in the

material world is prepared from matter. For example, there are many things made of clay, such as earthen pots, dishes and balls. After their annihilation, these things may become transformed into many other material objects, but in all cases, their existence as clay continues. An earthen water jug, after being broken, may be transformed into a bowl or dish, but either as a dish, bowl or water jug, the earth itself continues to exist. Therefore, the forms of a water jug, bowl or dish are false, but their existence as earth is real. This is the impersonalists' version. This cosmic manifestation is certainly produced from the Absolute Truth, but because its existence is temporary, it is therefore false; the impersonalists' understanding is that the Absolute Truth, which is always present, is the only truth. In the opinion of other transcendentalists, however, this material world, being produced of the Absolute Truth, is also truth. The impersonalists' counter-argument is that the material world is not factual because sometimes it is found that matter is produced from spirit soul, and sometimes spirit soul is produced from matter. Such philosophers push forward the argument that although cow dung is dead matter, sometimes it is found that scorpions come out of cow dung. Similarly, dead matter like nails and hair comes out of the living body. Therefore, things produced of of a certain thing are not always the same. On the strength of this argument, Māyāvādī philosophers establish that although this cosmic manifestation is certainly an emanation from the Absolute Truth, the cosmic manifestation does not necessarily have truth in it. According to this view, the Absolute Truth, Brahman, should therefore be accepted as truth, whereas the cosmic manifestation, although a product of the Absolute Truth, cannot be taken as truth.

The view of the Māyāvādī philosopher, however, is stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā* to be the view of the *asuras,* or demons. The Lord says in *Bhagavad-gītā, asatyam apratiṣṭham te jagad āhur anīśvaram.* The *asuras'* view of this cosmic manifesattion is that the whole creation is false. The *asuras* think that the mere interaction of matter is the source of the creation, and there is no controller or God. But actually that is not the fact. From the Seventh Chapter of the *Bhagavad-gītā,* we understand that the five gross elements—earth, water, air, fire and sky—plus the subtle elements—mind, intelligence and false ego—are the eight separated energies of the Supreme Lord. Beyond this inferior material energy, there is a spiritual energy, which is known as the living entities. The living entities are also accepted as the superior energy of the Lord. The whole cosmic manifestation is a combination of the inferior and superior energies, and the source of the energies is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The Supreme Personality of Godhead has many different types of energies.

That is confirmed in the *Vedas: parāsya śaktir vividhaiva śrūyate* the transcendental energies of the Lord are variegated, and because such varieties have emanated from the Supreme Lord, they cannot be false. The Lord is ever-existing, and the energies are ever-existing. Some of the energy is temporary—sometimes manifested and sometimes unmanifested—but that does not mean that it is false. The example may be given that when a person is angry he does things which are different from his normal condition of life, but that the mood of anger only appears and disappears does not mean that the energy of anger is false. As such, the argument of the Māyāvādī philosophers that this world is false is not accepted by the Vaiṣṇava philosophers. It is confirmed by the Lord Himself that the view that there is no supreme cause of this material manifestation, that there is no God, and that everything is only the creation of the interaction of matter is a view of the *asuras.*

The Māyāvādī philosopher sometimes puts forward the argument of the snake and the rope. In the dark of evening, a curled up rope is sometimes, due to ignorance, taken for a snake. But mistaking the rope as a snake does not mean that the rope or the snake is false, and therefore this example, used by the Māyāvādīs to illustrate the falsity of this material world, is not valid. When a thing is taken as fact but actually has no existence at all, it is called false. But if something is mistaken for something else, that does not mean that it is false. The Vaiṣṇava philosophers use a very appropriate example comparing this material world to an earthen pot. When we see an earthen pot, it does not at once disappear and turn into something else. It may be temporary, but the earthen pot is taken into use for bringing water, and we continue to see it as an earthen pot. Therefore, although the earthen pot is temporary and is different from the original earth, still we cannot say that it is false. We should therefore conclude that the entire earth and the earthen pot are both truths because one is the product of the other. We understand from *Bhagavad-gītā* that after the dissolution of this cosmic manifestation, the energy enters into the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is ever-existing with His varied energies. Because the material creation is an emanation from Him, we cannot say that this cosmic manifestation is a product of something void. Kṛṣṇa is not void. Whenever we speak of Kṛṣṇa, He is present with His form, quality, name, entourage and paraphernalia. Therefore, Kṛṣṇa is not impersonal. The original cause of everything is neither void nor impersonal, but is the Supreme Person. Demons may say that this material creation is *anīśvara,* without a controller or God, but such arguments ultimately cannot stand.

The example given by the Māyāvādī philosophers that inanimate matter

like nails and hair comes out from the living body is not a very sound argument. Nails and hair are undoubtedly inanimate, but they come not from the animate living being, but from the inanimate material body. Similarly, the argument that the scorpion comes from cow dung, meaning that a living entity comes from matter, is also not sound. The scorpion which comes out of the cow dung is certainly a living entity, but the living entity does not come out of the cow dung. Only the living entity's material body, or the body of the scorpion, comes out of the cow dung. The sparks of the living entity, as we understand from *Bhagavad-gītā*, are impregnated within material nature, and then they come out. The body of the living entity in different forms is supplied by material nature, but the living entity himself is begotten by the Supreme Lord. The father and the mother give the body which is necessary for the living entity under certain conditions. The living entity transmigrates from one body to another according to his different desires. The desires in the subtle form of intelligence, mind and false ego accompany the living entity from body to body, and by superior arrangement a living entity is put into the womb of a certain type of material body, and then he develops a similar body. Therefore, the spirit soul is not produced from matter, but it takes on a particular type of body under superior arrangement. To our present experience, this material world is a combination of matter and spirit. The spirit is moving the matter. The spirit soul (the living entity) and matter are different energies of the Supreme Lord. Since both the energies are products of the supreme eternal or the supreme truth, they are therefore factual; they are not false. Because the living entity is part and parcel of the Supreme, he is existing eternally. Therefore, there cannot be any question of birth or death. So-called birth and death occur because of the material body. The Vedic version *sarvaṁ khalv idaṁ brahma* means that since both the energies have emanated from the Supreme Brahman, everything that we experience is not different from Brahman.

There are many arguments about the existence of this material world, but the Vaiṣṇava philosophical conclusion is the best. The example of the earthen pot is very suitable: the form of the earthen pot may be temporary, but it has a specific purpose. The purpose of the earthen pot is to carry water from one place to another. Similarly, this material body, although temporary, has a special use. The living entity is given a chance from the beginning of the creation to evolve different kinds of material bodies according to the reserve desires he has accumulated from time immemorial. The human form of body is a special chance in which the developed form of consciousness can be utilized.

Sometimes the Māyāvadī philosophers push forward the argument that if this material world is truth, then why are householders advised to give up their connection with this material world and take *sannyāsa*? But the Vaiṣṇava philosopher's view of *sannyāsa* is not that because the world is false, one must therefore give up material activities. The purpose of Vaiṣṇava *sannyāsa* is to utilize things as they are intended. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has given two formulas for our dealing with this material world. When a Vaiṣṇava renounces this materialistic way of life and takes to *sannyāsa,* it is not on the conception of the falsity of the material world, but to devote himself fully to engaging everything in the service of the Lord. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī therefore gives this formula: one should be unattached to the material world because material attachment is meaningless. The entire material world, the entire cosmic manifestation, belongs to God, Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, everything should be utilized for Kṛṣṇa, and the devotee should remain unattached to material things. This is the purpose of Vaiṣṇava *sannyāsa.* A materialist sticks to the world for sense gratification, but a Vaiṣṇava *sannyāsī,* although not accepting anything for his personal sense gratification, knows the art of utilizing everything for the service of the Lord. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has therefore criticized the Māyāvādī *sannyāsīs* because they do not know that everything has a utilization for the service of the Lord. On the contrary, they take the world to be false and thus falsely think of being liberated from the contamination of the material world. Since everything is an expansion of the energy of the Supreme Lord, the expansions are as real as the Supreme Lord is.

That the cosmic world is only temporarily manifested does not mean that it is false or that the source of its manifestation is false. Since the source of its manifestation is truth, the manifestation is also truth, but one must know how to utilize it. The same example can be cited: the temporary earthen pot is produced from the whole earth, but when it is utilized for a proper purpose, the earthen pot is not false. The Vaiṣṇava philosophers know how to utilize the temporary construction of this material world, just as a sane man knows how to utilize the temporary construction of the earthen pot. When the earthen pot is utilized for a wrong purpose, that is false. Similarly, this human form of body, or this material world, when utilized for false sense gratification, is false. But if this human form of body and the material creation are utilized for the service of the Supreme Lord, their activities are never false. It is therefore confirmed in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that a little service attitude in utilizing this body and the material world for the service of the Lord can deliver a

person from the gravest danger of life. When they are properly utilized, neither the superior nor inferior energies emanating from the Supreme Personality of Godhead are false. As far as fruitive activities are concerned, they are mainly based on the platform of sense gratification. Therefore an advanced Kṛṣṇa conscious person does not take to them. The result of fruitive activities can elevate one to the higher planetary system, but as it is said in the *Bhagavad-gītā,* foolish persons, after exhausting the results of their pious activities in the heavenly kingdom, come back again to this lower planetary system and then again try to go to the higher planetary system. Their only profit is to take the trouble of going and coming back, just as at present many material scientists are spoiling their time by trying to go to the moon planet and again come back. Those who are engaged in such activities are described by the *Vedas* personified as *andha-paramparā,* or blind followers of the Vedic ritualistic ceremonies. Although such ceremonies are certainly mentioned in the *Vedas,* they are not meant for the intelligent class of men. Men who are too much attached to material enjoyment are captivated by the prospect of being elevated to the higher planetary systems, and so they take to such ritualistic activities. But a person who is intelligent, or who has taken shelter of a bona fide spiritual master to see things as they are, does not take to fruitive activities, but engages himself in the transcendental loving service of the Lord.

Persons who are not devotees take to the Vedic ritualistic ceremonies for materialistic reasons, and then they are bewildered. A vivid example can be given: an intelligent person possessing millions of dollars in currency notes does not hold the money without using it, even though he knows perfectly well that the currency notes in themselves are nothing but paper. When one has one million dollars in currency notes, he is actually holding only a huge bunch of papers, but if he utilizes it for a purpose, then he benefits. Similarly, although this material world may be false, just like the paper, it has its proper beneficial utilization. Because the currency notes, although paper, are issued by the government, they therefore have full value. Similarly, this material world may be false or temporary, but because it is an emanation from the Supreme Lord, it has its full value. The Vaiṣṇava philosopher acknowledges the full value of this material world and knows how to properly utilize it, whereas the Māyāvādī philosopher, mistaking the currency note for false paper, gives it up and cannot utilize the money. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī therefore declares that if one rejects this material world as false, not considering the importance of this material world as a means to serve the Supreme Personality of Godhead, such renunciation has very little value. A person who knows the intrinsic

value of this material world for the service of the Lord, who is not attached to the material world, and who renounces the material world by not accepting it for sense gratification is situated in real renunciation. This material world is an expansion of the material energy of the Lord. Therefore it is real. It is not false, as it is sometimes concluded from the example of the snake and the rope.

The personified *Vedas* continued: "The cosmic manifestation, because of the flickering nature of its impermanent existence, appears to less intelligent men to be false." The Māyāvādī philosophers take advantage of the flickering nature of this cosmic manifestation to prove their thesis that this world is false. According to the Vedic version, before the creation this world had no existence, and after dissolution the world will no longer by manifested. Voidists also take advantage of this Vedic version and conclude that the cause of this material world is void. But Vedic injunction does not say that it is void. The Vedic injunction defines the source of creation and dissolution as *yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante,* "He from whom this cosmic manifestation has emanated and in whom, after annihilation, everything will merge." The same is explained in the *Vedānta-sūtra* and in the first verse of the First Chapter of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* by the word *janmādyasya,* He from whom all things emanate. All these Vedic injunctions indicate that the cosmic manifestation is due to the Supreme Absolute Personality of Godhead, and when it is dissolved it merges into Him. The same is confirmed in the *Bhagavad-gītā:* this cosmic manifestation is coming into existence and again dissolving, and after dissolution it merges into the existence of the Supreme Lord. This statement definitely confirms that the particular energy known as *bahiraṅgā-māyā,* or the external energy, although of flickering nature, is the energy of the Supreme Lord, and as such it cannot be false. It simply appears to be false. The Māyāvādī philosophers conclude that because the material nature has no existence in the beginning and is nonexistent after dissolution, it is therefore false. But by the example of the earthen pots and dishes the Vedic version is presented: although the existence of the particular by-products of the Absolute Truth are temporary, the energy of the Supreme Lord is permanent. The earthen pot or water jug may be broken or transformed into another shape, such as that of a dish or or bowl, but the ingredient, or the material basis, namely the earth, continues to be the same. The basic principle of this cosmic manifestation is always the same, Brahman, or the Absolute Truth; therefore, the Māyāvādī philosophers' theory that it is false is certainly only mental concoction. That the cosmic manifestation is flickering and tempo-

rary dose not mean that it is false. The definition of falsity is that which never had any existence but is existing only in name. For instance, the eggs of a horse or the flower of the sky or the horn of a rabbit are phenomena which exist only in name. There is no horse's eggs, there is no rabbit's horn, nor are there flowers growing in the sky. There are many things which exist in name or imagination but actually have no factual manifestation. Such things can be called false. But the Vaiṣṇava cannot take this material world to be false simply because its temporary nature is manifesting and again dissolving.

The personified *Vedas* continued to say that the Supersoul and the individual soul, or Paramātmā and *jīvātmā,* cannot be equal in any circumstance, although both of them are sitting within the same body, like two birds sitting in the same tree. As declared in the *Vedas,* these two birds, although sitting as friends, are not equal. One is simply a witness. This bird is Paramātmā, or the Supersoul. And the other bird is eating the fruit of the tree. That is *jīvātmā.* When there is cosmic manifestation, the *jīvātmā,* or the individual soul, appears in the creation in different forms, according to his previous fruitive activities, and due to his long forgetfulness of real existence, he identifies himself with a particular form awarded to him by the laws of material nature. After assuming a material form, he becomes subjected to the three material modes of nature and acts accordingly to continue his existence in the material world. While enwrapped in such ignorance, his natural opulences, although existing in minute quantity, are almost extinct. The opulences of the Supersoul, or the Supreme Personality of Godhead, however, are not diminished, although He appears within this material world. He maintains all opulences and perfections in full and yet keeps Himself apart from all the tribulations of this material world. The conditioned soul becomes entrapped in the material world, whereas the Supersoul, or the Supreme Personality of Godhead, leaves it without affection, just as a snake sheds his skin. The distinction between the Supersoul and the conditioned individual soul is that the Supersoul, or the Supreme Personality of Godhead, maintains His natural opulences, known as *ṣaḍ-aiśvarya, aṣṭa-siddhi and aṣṭa-guṇa.*

Because of their poor fund of knowledge, the Māyāvādī philosophers forget the fact that Kṛṣṇa is always full of six opulences, eight transcendental qualities and eight kinds of perfection. The six opulences are that no one is greater than Kṛṣṇa in wealth, in strength, in beauty, in fame, in knowledge and in renunciation. The first of Kṛṣṇa's six transcendental qualities is that He is always untouched by the contamination of material existence. This is also mentioned in the *Īśopaniṣad: apāpa-viddham:* just as the sun is

never polluted by any contamination, the Supreme Lord is never polluted by any sinful activities. Similarly, although Kṛṣṇa's actions might sometimes seem to be impious, He is never polluted by such actions. The second transcendental quality is that Kṛṣṇa never dies. In the *Bhagavad-gītā,* Fourth Chapter, He informs Arjuna that both He and Arjuna had many appearances in this material world, but He alone remembers all such activities—past, present and future. This means that He never dies. Forgetfulness is due to death. As we die, we change our bodies. That is forgetfulness. Kṛṣṇa, however, is never forgetful. He can remember everything that has happened in the past. Otherwise, how could He remember that He first taught the *Bhagavad-gītā yoga* system to the sun-god, Vivasvān? Therefore, He never dies. Nor does He ever become an old man. Although Kṛṣṇa was a great-grandfather when He appeared on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra, He did not appear as an old man. Kṛṣṇa cannot be polluted by any sinful activities, Kṛṣṇa never dies, Kṛṣṇa never becomes old, Kṛṣṇa never becomes subjected to any lamentation, Kṛṣṇa is never hungry, and He is never thirsty. Whatever He desires is perfectly lawful, and whatever He decides cannot be changed by anyone. These are the transcendental qualities of Kṛṣṇa. Besides that, Kṛṣṇa is known as Yogeśvara. He has all the opulences or facilities of mystic powers, such as *aṇima-siddhi,* the power to become smaller than the smallest. It is stated in the *Brahma-saṁhitā* that Kṛṣṇa has entered even within the atom, *aṇḍāntarastha-paramāṇu-cayāntarastham.* Similarly, Kṛṣṇa, as Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, is within the gigantic universe, and He is lying in the Causal Ocean as Mahā-Viṣṇu in a body so gigantic that when He exhales, millions and trillions of universes emanate from His body. This is called *mahima-siddhi.* Kṛṣṇa also has the perfection of *laghimā:* He can become the lightest. It is stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that it is because Kṛṣṇa enters within this universe and within the atoms that all the planets are floating in the air. That is the explanation of weightlessness. Kṛṣṇa also has the perfection of *prāpti:* He can get whatever He likes. Similarly, He has the facility of *īśitā,* controlling power. He is called the supreme controller, Parameśvara. In addition, Kṛṣṇa can bring anyone under His influence. This is called *vaśitā.*

Kṛṣṇa is endowed with all opulences, transcendental qualities and mystic powers. No ordinary living being can be compared to Him. Therefore, the Māyāvādīs' theory that the Supersoul and the individual soul are equal is only a misconception. The conclusion is, therefore, that Kṛṣṇa is worshipable and that all other living entities are simply His servants. This understanding is called self-realization. Any other realization of one's self beyond this relationship of eternal servitorship of Kṛṣṇa is impelled by *māyā.* It is

said that the last snare of *māyā* is to dictate to the living entity to try to become equal to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The Māyāvādī philosopher claims to be equal to God, but he cannot reply to the question of why he has fallen into material entanglement. If He is the Supreme God, then how is it that he has been overtaken by impious activities and thereby subjected to the tribulations of the law of *karma?* When the Māyāvādīs are asked about this, they cannot properly answer. The speculation that one is equal to the Supreme Personality of Godhead is another symptom of sinful life. One cannot take to Kṛṣṇa consciousness unless he is completely freed from all sinful activities. The very fact that the Māyāvādī claims to become one with the Supreme Lord means that he is not yet freed from the reactions of sinful activities. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* says that such persons are *aviśuddha-buddhayā,* which means that they falsely think themselves liberated, although at the same time they think themselves equal with the Absolute Truth. Their intelligence is not purified.

The personified *Vedas* said that if the *yogīs* and the *jñānīs* do not free themselves from sinful desires, then their particular process of self-realization will never be successful. "My dear Lord," the personified *Vedas* continued, "if saintly persons do not take care to eradicate completely the roots of sinful desires, they cannot experience the Supersoul, although He is sitting side by side with the individual soul. *Samādhi,* or meditation, means that one has to find the Supersoul within himself. One who is not free from sinful reactions cannot see the Supersoul. If a person has a jeweled locket in his necklace but forgets the jewel, it is almost as though he does not possess it. Similarly, if an individual soul meditates but does not actually perceive the presence of the Supersoul within himself, he has not realized the Supersoul. Persons who have taken to the path of self-realization must therefore be very careful to be uncontaminated by the influence of *māyā.* Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī says that a devotee should be completely free from all sorts of material desires. A devotee should not be affected by the resultant actions of *karma* and *jñāna.* One simply has to understand Kṛṣṇa and carry out His desires. That is the pure devotional stage. Mystic *yogīs* who still have contaminated desires for sense gratification never become successful in their attempt, nor can they realize the Supersoul within the individual self. As such, the so-called *yogīs* and *jñānīs* who are simply wasting their time in different types of sense gratification, either by mental speculation or by exhibition of limited mystic powers, will never become liberated from conditional life and will continue to go through repeated births and deaths. For such persons, both this life and the next life becomes sources of tribulation. Such sinful persons are al-

ready suffering tribulation in this life, and because they are not perfect in self-realization, they will be plagued with further tribulation in the next life. Despite all endeavors to attain perfection, such *yogīs,* contaminated by desires for sense gratification, will continue to suffer in this life and in the next.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākur remarks in this connection that if *sannyāsīs* and persons in the renounced order of life who have left their homes for self-realization do not engage themselves in the devotional service of the Lord but become attracted by philanthropic work, such as opening educational institutions, hospitals, or even monastaries, churches or temples of demigods, they find only trouble from such engagements, not only in this life but in the next. *Sannyāsīs* who do not take advantage of this life to realize Kṛṣṇa simply waste their time and energy in activities outside the jurisdiction of the renounced order of life. A devotee's attempt to engage his energies in such activities as constructing a Viṣṇu temple is, however, never wasted. Such engagements are called *Kṛṣṇārthe akhila-ceṣṭā,* variegated activities performed to please Kṛṣṇa. A philanthropist's opening a school building and a devotee's constructing a temple are not on the same level. Although a philanthropist's opening an educational institution may be pious activity, it comes under the laws of *karma,* whereas constructing a temple for Viṣṇu is devotional service.

Devotional service is never within the jurisdiction of the law of *karma.* It is stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that devotees transcend the reaction of the three modes of material nature and stand on the platform of Brahman realization: *brahma-bhūyāya kalpate.* The *Bhagavad-gītā* says, *sa guṇān samatityaitān brahma-bhūyāya: kalpate:* devotees of the Personality of Godhead transcend all the reactions of the three modes of material nature and are situated on the transcendental Brahman platform. The devotees are liberated both in this life and in the next life. Any work done in this material world for Yajña or Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa is considered to be liberated work, but without connection with Acyuta, the infallible Supreme Personality of Godhead, there is no possibility of stopping the resultant actions of the law of *karma.* The life of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the life of liberation. The conclusion is that a devotee, by the grace of the Lord, is liberated, both in this life and the next, whereas *karmīs, jñānīs* and *yogīs* are never liberated, either in this life or in the next.

The personified *Vedas* continued: "Dear Lord, anyone who, by Your grace, has understood the glories of Your lotus feet is callous to material happiness and distress. The material pangs are inevitable as long as we are existing within the material world, but a devotee does not divert his atten-

tion to such actions and reactions, which are the result of pious and impious activities. Nor is a devotee very much disturbed or pleased by praise or condemnation by the people in general. A devotee is sometimes greatly praised by the people in general because of his transcendental activities, and sometimes he is criticized, even though there is no reason for adverse criticism. The pure devotee is always callous to praise or condemnation by the ordinary people. Actually, the devotee's activities are on the transcendental plane. He is not interested in the praise or condemnation of people engaged in material activities. If the devotee can thus maintain his transcendental position, then his liberation in this life and in the next life is guaranteed by the Supreme Personality of Godhead. A devotee's transcendental position within this material world is maintained in the association of pure devotees, simply by hearing the glorious activities enacted by the Lord in different ages and in different incarnations."

The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is based on this principle. Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākur has sung, "My dear Lord, let me be engaged in Your transcendental loving service, as indicated by the previous *ācāryas,* and let me live in the association of pure devotees. That is my desire, life after life." In other words, a devotee does not much care whether or not he is liberated, but he is anxious only for devotional service. Devotional service means that one does not do anything independently of the sanction of the *ācāryas.* The actions of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement are directed by the previous *ācāryas,* headed by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī; in the association of devotees following these principles, a devotee is able to perfectly maintain his transcendental position.

In the *Bhagavad-gītā,* the Lord says that a devotee who knows Him perfectly is very dear to Him. Four kinds of pious men take to devotional service. If a man is pious, then in his distressed condition he approaches the Lord for mitigation of his distress. If a pious man is in need of material help, he also prays to the Lord for such help. If a pious man is actually inquisitive about the science of God, he also approaches the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa. Similarly, a pious man who is simply anxious to know the science of Kṛṣṇa also approaches the Supreme Lord. Out of these four classes of men, the last is praised by Kṛṣṇa Himself in the *Bhagavad-gītā.* A person who tries to understand Kṛṣṇa with full knowledge and devotion by following in the footsteps of previous *ācāryas* conversant with the scientific knowledge of the Supreme Lord is praiseworthy. Such a devotee can understand that all conditions of life, favorable and unfavorable, are created by the supreme will of the Lord. And when he has fully surrendered unto the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord, he does

not care whether his condition of life is favorable or unfavorable. A devotee takes even an unfavorable condition to be the special favor of the Personality of Godhead. Actually, there are no unfavorable conditions for a devotee. He sees everything coming by the will of the Lord as favorable, and in any condition of life he is simply enthusiastic to discharge his devotional service. This devotional attitude is explained in the *Bhagavad-gītā:* a devotee is never distressed in reverse conditions of life, nor is he overjoyed in favorable conditions. In the higher stages of devotional service, a devotee is not even concerned with the list of do's and do not's. Such a position can be maintained only by following in the footsteps of the *ācāryas.* Because a pure devotee follows in the footsteps of the *ācāryas,* any action he performs to discharge devotional service is to be understood to be on the transcendental platform. Lord Kṛṣṇa therefore instructs us that an *ācārya* is above criticism. A neophyte devotee should not consider himself to be on the same plane as the *ācārya.* It should be accepted that the *ācāryas* are on the same platform as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and as such, neither Kṛṣṇa nor His representative *ācārya* should be subject to any adverse criticism by the neophyte devotees.

The personified *Vedas* thus worshiped the Supreme Personality of Godhead in different ways. Offering worship to the Supreme Lord by praying means remembering His transcendental qualities, pastimes and activities. But the Lord's pastimes and qualities are unlimited. It is not possible for us to remember all the qualities of the Lord. Therefore, the personified *Vedas* worshiped to the best of their ability, and at the end they spoke as follows.

"Our dear Lord, although Lord Brahmā, the predominating deity of the highest planet, Brahmaloka, and King Indra, the predominating demigod of the heavenly planet, as well as the predominating deities of the sun planet, the moon planet, etc., are all very confidential directors of this material world, they have very little knowledge about You. And what to speak of ordinary human beings and mental speculators? It is not possible for anyone to enumerate the unlimited transcendental qualities of Your Lordship. No one, including the mental speculators and the demigods in higher planetary systems, is actually able to estimate the length and breadth of Your form and characteristics. We think that even Your Lordship does not have complete knowledge of Your transcendental qualities. The reason is that You are unlimited. Although it is not befitting in Your case to say that You do not know Yourself, it is nevertheless practical to understand that because You have unlimited qualities and energies and because Your knowledge is also unlimited, there is unlimited

competition between Your knowledge and Your expansion of energies."

The idea is that because God and His knowledge are both unlimited, as soon as God is cognizant of some of His energies, He perceives that He has still more energies. In this way, both His energies and His knowledge increase. Because both of them are unlimited, there is no end to the energies and no end to the knowledge with which to understand the energies. God is undoubtedly omniscient, but the personified *Vedas* say that even God Himself does not know the full extent of His energies. This does not mean that God is not omniscient. When an actual fact is unknown to a certain person, this is called ignorance or lack of knowledge. This is not applicable to God, however, because He knows Himself perfectly, but still His energies and activities increase. Therefore He also increases His knowledge to understand it. Both are increasing unlimitedly, and there is no end to it. In that sense it can be said that even God Himself does not know the limit of His energies and qualities.

How God is unlimited in His expansion of energies and activities can be roughly calculated by any sane and sober living entity. It is said in the Vedic literature that innumerable universes issue forth when Mahā-Viṣṇu exhales in His *yoga-nidrā,* and innumerable universes enter His body when He again inhales. We have to imagine that these universes, which, according to our limited knowledge, are expanded unlimitedly, are so great that the gross ingredients, the five elements of the cosmic manifestation, namely earth, water, fire, air and sky, are not only within the universe, but are covering the universe in seven layers, each layer ten times bigger than the previous one. In this way, each and every universe is very securely packed, and there are numberless universes. All these universes are floating within the innumerable pores of the transcendental body of Mahā-Viṣṇu. It is stated that just as the atoms and particles of dust are floating within the air along with the birds and their number cannot be calculated, so innumerable universes are floating within the pores of the transcendental body of the Lord. For this reason, the *Vedas* say that God is beyond the capacity of our knowledge. *Abāṅmanasagocara:* to understand the length and breadth of God is beyond the jurisdiction of our mental speculation. Therefore, a person who is actually learned and sane does not claim to be God, but tries to understand God, making distinctions between spirit and matter. By such careful discrimination, one can clearly understand that the Supreme Soul is transcendental to both the superior and inferior energies, although He has a direct connection with both. In the *Bhagavad-gītā,* Lord Kṛṣṇa explains that although everything is resting on His energy, He is different or separate from the energy.

Nature and the living entities are sometimes designated as *prakṛti* and

puruṣa respectively. The whole cosmic manifestation is an amalgamation of the *prakṛti* and *puruṣa.* Nature is the ingredient cause, and the living entities are the effective cause. These two causes combine together, and the effect is this cosmic manifestation. When one is fortunate enough to come to the right conclusion about this cosmic manifestation and everything which is going on within it, he knows it to be caused directly and indirectly by the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself. It is concluded in the *Brahma-saṁhitā,* therefore, *īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ anādir ādir govindaḥ sarva-kāraṇa-kāraṇam.*

After much deliberation and consideration, when one has attained the the perfection of knowledge, he comes to the conclusion that Kṛṣṇa, or God, is the original cause of all causes. Instead of speculating about the measurement of God—whether He is so long or so wide—or philosophizing, one should come to the conclusion of *Brahma-saṁhitā: sarva-kāraṇa-kāraṇam:* "Kṛṣṇa, or God, is the cause of all causes." That is the perfection of knowledge.

Thus the *Veda-stuti,* or the prayers offered by the personified *Vedas* to the Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, were first narrated in disciplic succession by Sanandana to his brothers, all of whom were born of Brahmā. In the beginning the four Kumāras were the first-born of Brahmā; therefore they are known as *pūrva-jāta.* It is stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that the *paramparā* system, or the disciplic succession, begins with Kṛṣṇa Himself. Similarly, here, in the prayers of the personified *Vedas,* it is to be understood that the *paramparā* system begins with the Personality of Godhead Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi. We should remember that this *Veda-stuti* is being narrated by Kumāra Sanandana, and the narration is being repeated by Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi in Bodi Āśrama. Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi is the incarnation of Kṛṣṇa for showing us the path of self-realization by undergoing severe austerities. In this age Lord Caitanya demonstrated the path of pure devotional service by putting Himself in the role of a pure devotee. Similarly, in the past Lord Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi was an incarnation of Kṛṣṇa who performed severe austerities in the Himalayan ranges. Śrī Nārada Muni was hearing from Him. So in the statement given by Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi to Nārada Muni, as it was narrated by Kumāra Sanandana in the form of *Veda-stuti,* it is understood that God is the one supreme and that all others are His servants.

In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* it is stated, *ekalā īśvara kṛṣṇa:* "Kṛṣṇa is the only Supreme God." *Āra sava bhṛtya:* "All others are His servants." *Yāre yaiche nācāya, se taiche kare nṛtya:* "The Supreme Lord, as He desires, is engaging all the living entities in different activities, and thus they are exhibiting their different talents and tendencies." This *Veda-stuti* is thus the original instruction regarding the relationship existing between the living entity

their different talents and tendencies." This *Veda-stuti* is thus the original instruction regarding the relationship existing between the living entity and the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The highest platform of realization for the living entity is the attainment of this devotional life. One cannot be engaged in devotional life or Kṛṣṇa consciousness unless he is fully free from material contamination. Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi informed Nārada Muni that the essence of all *Vedas* and Vedic literatures (namely, the four *Vedas,* the *Upaniṣads,* the *Purāṇas*) teaches the rendering of transcendental loving service to the Lord. In this connection Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi has used one particular word—*rasa.* In devotional service this *rasa* is the via media or the basic principle for exchanging a relationship between the Lord and the living entity. A *rasa* is also described in the *Vedas* as *īśāvāsya:* "The Supreme Lord is the reservoir of all pleasure." All the Vedic literatures, the *Purāṇas,* the *Vedas,* the *Upaniṣads,* the *Vedānta-sūtras,* etc., are teaching the living entities how to attain the stage of *rasa.* The *Bhāgavatam* also says that the statements in the *Mahāpurāṇa (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam)* contain the essence of *rasas* in all Vedic literatures. *Nigama-kalpa-taror galitaṁ phalaṁ.* The *Bhāgavatam* is the essence of the ripen fruit in the tree of the Vedic literature.

We understand that with the breathing of the Supreme Personality of Godhead there issued forth the four *Vedas,* namely the *Ṛg-veda,* the *Sāma-veda, Yajur-veda,* and the *Atharva-veda,* and the histories like the *Mahābhārata* and all the *Purāṇas,* which are also considered to be the history of the world. The Vedic histories like the *Purāṇas* and *Mahābhārata* are called the fifth *Veda.*

The verses of *Veda-stuti* are to be considered the essence of all Vedic knowledge. The four Kumāras and all other authorized sages know perfectly that devotional service in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the essence of all Vedic literatures, and they are preaching this in different planets, traveling in outer space. It is stated herein that such sages, including Nārada Muni, hardly ever travel on land; they are perpetually traveling in space.

Sages like Nārada and the Kumāras travel throughout the universe in order to educate the conditioned souls and show them that their business in the world is not that of sense gratification, but of reinstating themselves again in their original position of devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. It is stated in several places that the living entities are like sparks of the fire, and the Supreme Personality of Godhead is like the fire itself. Somehow or other when the sparks fall out of the fire they lose their natural illumination; thus it is ascertained that the living entities come into this material world exactly as sparks fall from a great fire. The

reason for this fall, as stated by the Gosvāmīs, is sense gratification. The living entity wants to imitate Kṛṣṇa and tries to lord it over material nature; thus he forgets his original position, and his illuminating power, his spiritual identity, is extinguished. However, if a living entity takes to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, he is reinstated in his original position. Sages and saints like Nārada and the Kumāras are traveling all over the universe educating people and encouraging their disciples to preach this process of devotional service so that all the conditioned souls may be able to revive their original consciousness, or Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and thus gain relief from the miserable conditions of material life.

Śrī Nārada Muni is *naiṣṭika-brahmacārī.* There are four types of *brahmacārī,* and the first is called *sāvitra,* which refers to a *brahmacārī* who, after initiation and the sacred thread ceremony, must observe at least three days celibacy. The next is called *prājāpatya,* which refers to a *brahmacārī* who strictly observes celibacy for at least one year after initiation. The next is called *brāhma-brahmacārī,* which refers to a *brahmacārī* who observes celibacy from the time of initiation up to the time of the completion of his study of Vedic literature. The next stage is called *naiṣṭika,* which refers to a *brahmacārī* who is celibate throughout his whole life. Out of these, the first three are *upakurvāna,* which means that the *brahmacārī* can marry later on after the *brahmacārī* period is over. The *naiṣṭika-brahmacārī* is completely reluctant to have any sex life; therefore the Kumāras and Nārada are known as *naiṣṭika-brahmacārīs.* The *brahmacārī* system of life is especially advantageous in that it increases the power of memory and determination. It is specifically mentioned in this connection that because Nārada was *naiṣṭika-brahmacārī* he could remember whatever he heard from his spiritual master and would never forget it. One who can remember everything perpetually is called *śruta-dhara.* A *śruta-dhara brahmacārī* can repeat all that he has heard verbatim without notes and without reference to books. The great sage Nārada has this qualification, and therefore, taking instruction from Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi, he is engaged in propagating the philosophy of devotional service all over the world. Because such great sages can remember everything, they are very much thoughtful, self-realized and completely fixed in the service of the Lord. Thus the great sage Nārada, after hearing from his spiritual master Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi, became completely realized. He became established in the truth, and he became so happy that he offered the following prayers to Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi.

A *naiṣṭhika-brahmacārī* is also called *vīra-vrata.* Nārada Muni addressed Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi as an incarnation of Kṛṣṇa, and he specifically addressed him

as the supreme well-wisher of the conditioned souls. It is stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that Lord Kṛṣṇa descends in every millennium just to give protection to His devotees and to annihilate the nondevotees. Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi, also being an incarnation of Kṛṣṇa, is also addressed as the well-wisher of the conditioned souls. As is stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā,* everyone should know that there is no well-wisher like Kṛṣṇa. Everyone should understand that Lord Kṛṣṇa is the well-wisher of everyone and should take shelter unto Kṛṣṇa. In this way one can become completely confident and satisfied knowing that he has someone who is able to give him all protection. Kṛṣṇa Himself, His incarnations and His plenary expansions are all supreme well-wishers of the conditioned souls, but Kṛṣṇa is the well-wisher even for the demons, for He gave salvation to all demons who came to kill Him at Vṛndāvana; therefore Kṛṣṇa's welfare activities are absolute, for even though He annihilates a demon or gives protection to a devotee, His activities are one and the same. It is said that the demon Pūtanā was elevated to the same position as Kṛṣṇa's mother. When Kṛṣṇa kills a demon it should be known that the demon is supremely benefitted by this; however, a pure devotee is always protected by the Lord.

Nārada Muni, after offering respects to his spiritual master, went to the *āśrama* of Vyāsadeva and narrated the entire story to his disciple. Thus Nārada Muni, being properly received by Vyāsadeva in his *āśrama* and seated very comfortably, began to narrate what he had heard from Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi. In this way Śukadeva Gosvāmī informed Mahārāja Parīkṣit of the answers to his questions regarding the essence of Vedic knowledge and regarding what is considered to be the ultimate goal in the *Vedas.* The supreme goal in life is to seek the transcendental blessings of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and thus become engaged in the loving service of the Lord. One should follow in the footsteps of Śukadeva Gosvāmī and all the Vaiṣṇavas in the disciplic succession and should pay respectful obeisances unto Lord Kṛṣṇa the Supreme Personality of Godhead Hari. The four sects of Vaiṣṇava disciplic succession, namely the Madhva-sampradāya, the Rāmānuja-sampradāya, the Viṣṇusvāmī-sampradāya, and the Nimbārka-sampradāya, in pursuance of all Vedic conclusions, agree that one should surrender unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

The Vedic literatures are divided into two parts: the *śrutis* and the *smṛtis.* The *śrutis* are the four *Vedas: Ṛk, Sāma, Atharva* and *Yajus,* and the *Upaniṣads,* and the *smṛtis* are the *Purāṇas* like *Mahābhārata,* which includes *Bhagavad-gītā.* The conclusion of all these is that one should know Śrī Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He is the

Parampuruṣa, or the Supreme Personality of Godhead under whose superintendence material nature works, being created, maintained and destroyed. After the creation, the Supreme Lord incarnates into three, Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Lord Śiva. All of these take charge of the three qualities of material nature, but the ultimate direction is in the hand of Lord Viṣṇu. The complete activities of material nature under the three modes are being conducted under the direction of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa. This is confirmed in the *Bhagavad-gītā, nyadarśana,* and in the *Vedas: sa aikṣata.*

The atheistic Sāṅkhyaite philosophers offer their arguments that this material cosmic manifestation is due to *prakṛti* and *puruṣa.* They argue that nature and material energy constitute the material cause and the effective cause. But Kṛṣṇa is the cause of all causes. He is the cause of all material and effective causes. *Prakṛti* and *puruṣa* are not the ultimate cause. Superficially it appears that a child is born due to the combination of the father and mother, but the ultimate cause of both the father and the mother is Kṛṣṇa. He is therefore the original cause, or the cause of all causes, as is confirmed in the *Brahma-saṁhitā.*

In the material nature, both the Supreme Lord and the living entities enter. The Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, by one of His plenary expansions, manifests as the Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu and the Mahā-Viṣṇu, the gigantic Viṣṇu form lying in the Causal Ocean. Then from that gigantic form of the Mahā-Viṣṇu, the Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu expands in every universe. From Him, Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva expand. Viṣṇu enters into the hearts of all living entities, as well as into all material elements, including the atom. The *Brahma-saṁhitā* says: *aṇḍāntarastha-paramāṇu-cayāntarastham.* He is within this universe and also within every atom.

The living entity has a small material body, taken from various species and forms, and similarly the whole universe is but the material body of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This body is described in the *śāstras* as *virāṭa rūpa.* As the individual living entity maintains his particular body, the Supreme Personality of Godhead maintains the whole cosmic creation and everything within it. As soon as the individual living entity leaves the material body, the body is immediately annihilated, and similarly as soon as Lord Viṣṇu leaves the cosmic manifestation, everything is annihilated. Only when the individual living entity surrenders unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead is his liberation from material existence assured. This is confirmed in the *Bhagavad-gītā: mām eva ye prapadyante māyām etāṁ taranti te.* Surrendering unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead is therefore the cause of liberation and nothing else. How the living entity

becomes liberated from the modes of material nature after surrendering unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead is illustrated by a sleeping man within a room. When a man is sleeping, everyone sees that he is present within the room, but actually the man himself is not within that body, for while sleeping a man forgets his bodily existence, although others may see that his body is present. Similarly, a liberated person engaged in devotional service of the Lord may be seen by others to be engaged in the household duties of the material world, but since his consciousness is fixed in Kṛṣṇa he does not live within this world. His engagements are different, exactly as the sleeping man's engagements are different from his bodily engagements. It is confirmed in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that a devotee engaged full time in the transcendental loving service of the Lord has already surpassed the influence of the three modes of material nature. He is already situated on the Brahman platform of spiritual realization, although he appears to be living with the body or within the material world.

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī stated in this connection in his *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* that the person whose only desire is to serve the Supreme Personality of Godhead may be situated in any condition in the material world, but he is to be understood as *jīvanmukta,* that is to say he is to be considered liberated while living within the body or the material world. The conclusion, therefore, is that a person fully engaged in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is a liberated person. Such a person has actually nothing to do with the material world. Those who are not in Kṛṣṇa consciousness are called *karmīs* and *jñānīs,* and they hover on the bodily and mental platform and thus are not liberated. This situation is called *kaivalya-nirasta-yoni.* A person situated on the transcendental platform becomes freed from the repetition of birth and death. This is also confirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā,* Fourth Chapter. Simply by knowing the transcendental nature of the Supreme Personality of Godhead Kṛṣṇa, one becomes free from the chains of the repetition of birth and death, and after quitting his present body he goes back home, back to Godhead. This is the conclusion of all the *Vedas.* Thus one should surrender unto the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa after understanding the prayers offered by the personified *Vedas.*

Thus end the Bhaktivedanta purports of the Second Volume, Thirty-Second Chapter of Kṛṣṇa, *"Prayers by the Personified* Vedas."



33 / Deliverance of Lord Śiva

As a great devotee of Kṛṣṇa, King Parīkṣit was already liberated, but for clarification he was asking various questions of Śukadeva Gosvāmī. In the previous chapter, King Parīkṣit's question was, "What is the ultimate goal of the *Vedas?*" And Śukadeva Gosvāmī explained the matter, giving authoritative descriptions from the disciplic succession, beginning with Sanandana down to Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi, Nārada, Vyāsadeva, and then he himself. The conclusion was that devotional service, or *bhakti,* is the ultimate goal of the *Vedas.* A neophyte devotee may question, "If the ultimate goal of life, or the conclusion of the *Vedas,* is to elevate oneself to the platform of devotional service, then why is it observed that a devotee of Lord Viṣṇu is generally not very prosperous materially, whereas a devotee of Lord Śiva is found to be very opulent?" In order to clarify this matter, Parīkṣit Mahārāja asked Śukadeva Gosvāmī: "My dear Śukadeva Gosvāmī, it is generally found that those who engage in the worship of Lord Śiva, whether in human, demoniac, or demigod society, become very opulent materially, although Lord Śiva himself lives just like a poverty-stricken person. On the other hand, the devotees of Lord Viṣṇu, who is the controller of the goddess of fortune, do not appear to be very prosperous, and sometimes they are even found to be living without any material opulence at all. Lord Śiva lives underneath a tree or in the snow of the Himalayan Mountains. He does not even construct a house for himself, but still the worshipers of Lord Śiva are very rich. Kṛṣṇa, or Lord Viṣṇu, however, lives very opulently, whether in Vaikuṇṭha or in this material world, but His devotees appear to be poverty-stricken. Why is this so?"

Mahārāja Parīkṣit's question is very intelligent. The two classes of devotees, namely the devotees of Lord Śiva and the devotees of Lord Viṣṇu, are always in disagreement. Even today in India these two classes of devotees still criticize each other, and especially in South India, the

followers of Rāmānujācārya and the followers of Śaṅkarācārya hold occasional meetings for understanding the Vedic conclusion. Generally, the followers of Rāmānujācārya come out victorious in such meetings. So Parīkṣit Mahārāja wanted to clarify the situation by asking this question of Śukadeva Gosvāmī. That Lord Śiva lives as a poor man although his devotees appear to be very opulent, whereas Lord Kṛṣṇa or Lord Viṣṇu is always opulent, and yet His devotees appear to be poverty-stricken, is a situation which appears contradictory and puzzling to a discriminating person.

Śukadeva Gosvāmī began to reply to King Parīkṣit's inquiry about the apparent contradictions regarding the worship of Lord Śiva and that of Lord Viṣṇu. Lord Śiva is the master of the material energy. The material energy is represented by goddess Durgā, and Lord Śiva happens to be her husband. Since goddess Durgā is completely under the subjugation of Lord Śiva, it is to be understood that Lord Śiva is the master of this material energy. The material energy is manifested in three qualities, namely goodness, passion and ignorance, and therefore Lord Śiva is the master of these three qualities. Although he is in association with these qualities for the benefit of the conditioned soul, Lord Śiva is the director and is not affected. Although the conditioned soul is affected by the three qualities, Lord Śiva, because he is the master of these qualities, is not affected by them.

From the statements of Śukadeva Gosvāmī we can understand that the effects of worshiping different demigods are not, as some less intelligent persons suppose, the same as the effects of worshiping Lord Viṣṇu. He clearly states that by worshiping Lord Śiva one achieves one reward, whereas by worshiping Lord Viṣṇu one achieves a different reward. This is also confirmed in the *Bhagavad-gītā:* those who worship the different demigods achieve the desired results which the respective demigods can reward. Similarly, those who worship the material energy receive the suitable reward for such activities, and those who worship the *pitās* receive similar results. But those who are engaged in devotional service or worship of the Supreme Lord, Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa, go to the Vaikuṇṭha planets or Kṛṣṇaloka. One cannot approach the transcendental region or *paravyoma,* the spiritual sky, by worshiping Lord Śiva or Brahmā or any other demigod.

Since this material world is a product of the three qualities of material nature, all varieties of manifestations come from those three qualities. With the aid of materialistic science, modern civilization has created many machines and comforts of life, and yet they are only varieties of the interactions of the three material qualities. Although the devotees of Lord

Śiva are able to obtain many material acquisitions, we should know that they are simply collecting products manufactured by the three qualities. The three qualities are again subdivided into sixteen, namely the ten senses (five working senses and the five knowledge-acquiring senses), the mind, and the five elements (earth, water, air, fire and sky). These sixteen items are further extensions of the three qualities. Material happiness or opulence means gratification of the senses, specifically the genitals, the tongue and the mind. By exercising our minds we create many pleasurable things just for enjoyment by the genitals and the tongue. The opulence of a person within this material world is estimated in terms of his exercise of the genitals and the tongue, or in other words, how well he is able to utilize his sexual capacities and how well he is able to satisfy his fastidious taste by eating palatable dishes. Material advancement of civilization necessitates creating objects of enjoyment by mental concoction just to become happy on the basis of these two principles: pleasures for the genitals and pleasures for the tongue. Herein lies the answer to King Parīkṣit's question to Sukadeva Gosvāmī as to why the worshipers of Lord Śiva are so opulent.

The devotees of Lord Śiva are only opulent in terms of the material qualities. Factually, such so-called advancement of civilization is the cause of entanglement in material existence. It is actually not advancement, but degradation. The conclusion is that because Lord Śiva is the master of the three qualities, his devotees are given things manufactured by the interaction of these qualities for satisfaction of the senses. In the *Bhagavad-gītā*, however, we get instruction from Lord Kṛṣṇa that one has to transcend the qualitative existence. *Nistraiguṇyo bhavārjuna:* the mission of human life is to become transcendental to the three qualities. Unless one is *nistraiguṇya,* he cannot get free from material entanglement. In other words, favors received from Lord Śiva are not actually beneficial to the conditioned souls, although apparently such facilities seem to be opulent.

Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued: "The Supreme Personality of Godhead Hari is transcendental to the three qualities of material nature." It is stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that anyone who surrenders unto Him surpasses the control of the three qualities of material nature. Therefore, since Hari's devotees are transcendental to the control of the three material qualities, certainly He Himself is transcendental. It is stated, therefore, in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that Hari, or Kṛṣṇa, is the original Supreme Personality. There are two kinds of *prakṛtis,* or potencies, namely the internal potency and the external potency, and Kṛṣṇa is the overlord of both these *prakṛtis* or potencies. He is *sarva-dṛk,* or the overseer of all the

actions of the internal and external potencies, and He is also described as *upadraṣṭa,* the supreme advisor. Because He is the supreme advisor, He is above all the demigods, who merely follow the directions of the supreme advisor. As such, if one directly follows the instructions of the Supreme Lord, as inculcated in the *Bhagavad-gītā* and the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* then gradually one becomes *nirguṇa,* or above the interaction of the material qualities. To be *nirguṇa* means to be bereft of material opulences because, as we have explained, material opulence means an increase of the actions and reactions of the three material qualities. By worshiping the Supreme Personality of Godhead, instead of being puffed up with material opulences one becomes enriched with spiritual advancement of knowledge in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. To become *nirguṇa* means to achieve eternal peace, fearlessness, religiousness, knowledge and renunciation. All these are symptoms of becoming free from the contamination of the material qualities.

Śukadeva Gosvāmī, in answering Parīkṣit Mahārāja's question, went on to cite an historical instance regarding Parīkṣit Mahārāja's grandfather, King Yudhiṣṭhira. He said that after finishing the *aśvamedha* sacrifice in the great sacrificial arena, King Yudhiṣṭhira, in the presence of great authorities, enquired on that very same point: how is it that the devotees of Lord Śiva become materially opulent, whereas the devotees of Lord Viṣṇu do not? Śukadeva Gosvāmī specifically referred to King Yudhiṣṭhira as "your grandfather" so that Mahārāja Parīkṣit would be encouraged to think that he was related to Kṛṣṇa and that his grandfathers were intimately connected with the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Although Kṛṣṇa is always very satisfied by nature, when this question was asked by Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira He became even more satisfied because these questions and their answers would bear a great meaning for the entire Kṛṣṇa conscious society. Whenever Lord Kṛṣṇa speaks about something to a specific devotee, it is not only meant for that devotee, but for the entire human society. Instructions by the Supreme Personality of Godhead are important even to the demigods, headed by Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva and others, and anyone who does not take advantage of the instructions of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who descends within this world for the benefit of all living entities, is certainly very unfortunate.

Lord Kṛṣṇa answered the question of Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira as follows: "If I especially favor a devotee and especially wish to care for him, the first thing I do is take away his riches." When the devotee becomes a penniless pauper or is put into a comparatively poverty-stricken position, his relatives and family members no longer take interest in him, and in most cases they give up their connection with him. The devotee then

becomes doubly unhappy. First of all he becomes unhappy because his riches have been taken away by Kṛṣṇa, and he is made even more unhappy when his relatives desert him because of his poverty-stricken position. We should note, however, that when a devotee falls into a miserable condition in this way, it is not due to past impious activities, known as *karma-phala;* the poverty-stricken position of the devotee is a creation of the Personality of Godhead. Similarly, when a devotee becomes materially opulent, that is also not due to his pious activities. In either case, whether the devotee becomes poorer or richer, the arrangement is made by the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This arrangement is especially made by Kṛṣṇa for His devotee just to make him completely dependent upon Him and to free him from all material obligations. He can then concentrate his energies, mind and body—everything—for the service of the Lord, and that is pure devotional service. In the *Nārada-pañcarātra* it is therefore explained, *sarvopādhi-vinirmuktam,* which means "being freed from all designations." Works performed for family, society, community, nation, or humanity are all designated: "I belong to this society," "I belong to this community," "I belong to this nation," "I belong to this species of life." Such identities are all merely designations. When, by the grace of the Lord, a devotee becomes freed from all designation, his devotional service is actually *naiṣkarma. Jñānīs* are very much attracted by the position of *naiṣkarma,* in which one's actions no longer have material effect. When the devotee's actions are freed from effects, they are no longer in the category of *karma-phalam,* or fruitive activities. As explained before by the personified *Vedas,* the unhappiness and distress of a devotee are produced by the Personality of Godhead for the devotee, and the devotee therefore does not care whether he is in happiness or in distress. He goes on with his duties in executing devotional service. Although his behavior seems to be subject to the action and reaction of fruitive activities, he is actually freed from the results of action.

It may be questioned why a devotee is put into such tribulation by the Personality of Godhead. The answer is that this kind of arrangement by the Lord is just like the father's sometimes becoming unkind to his sons. Because the devotee is a surrendered soul and is taken charge of by the Supreme Lord, whenever the Lord puts him into any condition of life—either in distress or happiness—it is to be understood that behind this arrangement there is a large plan designed by the Personality of Godhead. For example, Lord Kṛṣṇa put the Pāṇḍavas into a distressed condition so acute that even Grandfather Bhīṣma could not comprehend how such distress could occur. He lamented that although the whole Pāṇḍava family was headed by King Yudhiṣṭhira, the most pious king, and protected by

the two great warriors Bhīma and Arjuna, and although, above all, the Pāṇḍavas were all intimate friends and relatives of Lord Kṛṣṇa, they still had to undergo such tribulations. Later on, however, it was proved that this was planned by the Supreme Personality of Godhead Kṛṣṇa as part of His great mission to annihilate the miscreants and protect the devotees.

Another question may be raised: Since a devotee is put into different kinds of happy and distressful conditions by the arrangement of the Personality of Godhead, and a common man is put into such conditions as a result of his past deeds, then what is the difference? How is the devotee any better than the ordinary *karmī?* The answer is that the *karmīs* and the devotees are not on the same level. In whatever condition of life the *karmī* may be, he continues in the cycle of birth and death because the seed of *karma,* or fruitive activity, is there, and it fructifies whenever there is opportunity. By the law of *karma* a common man is perpetually entangled in repeated birth and death, whereas a devotee's distress and happiness, not being under the laws of *karma,* are part of a temporary arrangement by the Supreme Lord which does not entangle the devotee. Such an arrangement is made by the Lord only to serve a temporary purpose. If a *karmī* performs auspicious acts, he is elevated to the heavenly planets, and if he acts impiously, he is put into a hellish condition of life. But whether a devotee acts in a so-called pious or in an impious manner, he is neither elevated nor degraded, but is transferred to the spiritual kingdom. Therefore a devotee's happiness and distress and a *karmī's* happiness and distress are not on the same level. This fact is corroborated by a speech by Yamarāja to his servants in connection with the liberation of Ajāmila. Yamarāja advised his followers that persons who have never uttered the holy name of the Lord nor remembered the form, quality and pastimes of the Lord should be approached by his watchguards. Yamarāja also advised his servants never to approach the devotees. On the contrary, he instructed his messengers that if they meet a devotee they should offer their respectful obeisances. So there is no question of a devotee's being promoted or degraded within this material world. As there is a gulf of difference between the punishment awarded by the mother and the punishment awarded by an enemy, so a devotee's distressed condition is not the same as the distressed condition of a common *karmī.*

Here another question may be raised. If God is all-powerful, why should He try to reform His devotee by putting him into distress? The answer is that when the Supreme Personality of Godhead puts His devotee into a condition of distress, it is not without purpose. Sometimes the purpose is that in distress a devotee's feelings of attachment to Kṛṣṇa are magnified.

For example, when Kṛṣṇa, before leaving the capital of the Pāṇḍavas for His home, was asking for permission to leave, Kuntīdevī said, "My dear Kṛṣṇa, in our distressed condition You are always present with us. Now, because we have been elevated to a royal position, You are leaving us. I would therefore prefer to live in distress than to lose You." When a devotee is put into a situation of distress, his devotional activities are accelerated. Therefore, to show special favor to a devotee, the Lord sometimes puts him into distress. Besides that, it is stated that the sweetness of happiness is sweeter to those who have tasted bitterness. The Supreme Lord descends to this material world just to protect His devotees from distress. In other words, if devotees were not in a distressed condition, the Lord would not have come down. As for His killing the demons or the miscreants, this can be easily done by His various energies, just as many *asuras* are killed by His external energy, goddess Durgā. Therefore the Lord does not need to come down personally to kill such demons, but when His devotee is in distress He must come. Lord Nṛsiṁhadeva appeared not to kill Hiraṇyakaśipu but to see Prahlāda and to give him blessings. In other words, because Prahlāda Mahārāja was put into very great distress, the Lord appeared.

When, after the dense, dark night, there is finally sunrise in the morning, it is very pleasant. When there is scorching heat, cold water is very pleasant. And when there is freezing winter, hot water is very pleasant. Similarly, when a devotee, after experiencing the condition of the material world, relishes the spiritual happiness awarded by the Lord, his position becomes still more pleasant and enjoyable.

The Lord continued: "When My devotee is bereft of all material riches and is deserted by his relatives, friends and family members, because he has no one to look after him, he completely takes shelter of the lotus feet of the Lord." Śrīla Narottamadāsa Ṭhākur has sung in this connection, "My dear Lord Kṛṣṇa, O son of Nanda Mahārāja, You are now standing before me along with Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, the daughter of King Vṛṣabhānu. I am now surrendering unto You. Please accept me. Please do not kick me away. I have no shelter other than You."

When a devotee is thus put into so-called miserable conditions and is bereft of riches and family, he tries to revive his original position of material opulence. But although he tries again and again, Kṛṣṇa again and again takes away all his resources. Thus he finally becomes disappointed in material activities, and in that stage of frustration in all endeavors, he can fully surrender unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Such persons are advised by the Lord from within to associate with devotees. By associating with devotees they naturally become inclined to render service

to the Personality of Godhead, and they immediately get all facilities from the Lord to advance in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The non-devotees, however, are very careful about preserving their material condition of life. Generally, therefore, such nondevotees do not come to worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead, but worship Lord Śiva or other demigods for immediate material profit. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* it is said, therefore, *kāṅkṣantaḥ karmaṇāṁ siddhiṁ yajanta iha devatāḥ:* the *karmīs,* in order to achieve success within this material world, worship the various demigods. It is also stated by Lord Kṛṣṇa that those who worship the demigods are not mature in their intelligence. The devotees of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, therefore, because of their strong attachment for Him, do not foolishly go to the demigods.

Lord Kṛṣṇa said to King Yudhiṣṭhira: "My devotee is not deterred by any adverse conditions of life; he always remains firm and steady. Therefore I give Myself to him, and I favor him so he can achieve the highest success in life." The mercy bestowed upon the tried devotee by the Supreme Personality is described as *Brahman,* which indicates that the greatness of that mercy can be compared only to the all-pervasive greatness. *Brahman* means unlimitedly great and unlimitedly expanding. That mercy is also described as *parama,* for it has no comparison within this material world, and it is also called *sūkṣmam,* very fine. The Lord's mercy upon the tried devotee is not only great and unlimitedly expansive, but it is of the finest quality of transcendental love between the devotee and the Lord. Such mercy is further described as *cinmātram,* completely spiritual. The use of the word *mātram* indicates absolute spirituality, with no tinge of material qualities. That mercy is also called *sat,* eternal, and *anantakam,* unlimited. Since the devotee of the Lord is awarded such unlimited spiritual benefit, why should he worship the demigods? A devotee of Kṛṣṇa does not worship Lord Śiva or Brahmā or any other subordinate demigod. He completely devotes himself to the transcendental loving service of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued: "The demigods, headed by Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva and including Lord Indra, Candra, Varuṇa and others, are apt to become very quickly satisfied and very quickly angered by the good and ill behavior of their devotees. But this is not so with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Viṣṇu," This means that any living entity within this material world, including the demigods, is conducted by the three modes of material nature, and therefore the qualities of ignorance and passion are very prominent within the material world. Those devotees who take blessings from the demigods are also infected with the material quali-

ties, especially passion and ignorance. Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa has therefore stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that to take blessings from the demigods is less intelligent because when one takes benedictions from the demigods, the results of such benedictions are temporary. It is easy to get material opulence by worshiping the demigods, but the result is sometimes disastrous. As such, the benedictions derived from demigods are appreciated by the less intelligent class of men. Persons who derive benedictions from the demigods gradually become puffed up with material opulence and neglectful of their benefactors.

Śukadeva Gosvāmī addressed King Parīkṣit thus: "My dear King, Lord Brahmā, Lord Viṣṇu, and Lord Śiva, the principal trio of the material creation, are able to bless or to curse anyone. Of this trio, Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva become very easily satisfied, and at the same time they become very easily angered. When they are satisfied they give benedictions without any consideration, and when they are angry, they curse the devotee without any consideration. But Lord Viṣṇu is not like that. Lord Viṣṇu is very considerate. Whenever a devotee wants something from Lord Viṣṇu, Lord Viṣṇu first of all considers whether such a benediction will ultimately be good for the devotee. Lord Viṣṇu never bestows any benediction which will ultimately prove disastrous to the devotee, He is, by His transcendental nature, always merciful; therefore, before giving any benediction, He considers whether it will prove beneficial for the devotee. Since the Supreme Personality of Godhead is always merciful, even when it appears that He has killed a demon, or even when He apparently becomes angry toward a devotee, His actions are always auspicious. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is therefore known as all-good. Whatever He does is good.

As for the benedictions given by demigods like Lord Śiva, there is the following historical incident cited by great sages. Once, Lord Śiva, after giving benediction to a demon named Vṛkāsura, the son of Śakuni, was himself entrapped in a very dangerous position. Vṛkāsura was searching after a benediction and was trying to decide which of the three presiding deities to worship in order to get it. In the meantime he happened to meet the great sage Nārada and consulted with him as to whom he should approach to achieve quick results from his austerity. He inquired, "Of the three deities, namely Lord Brahmā, Lord Viṣṇu and Lord Śiva, who is most quickly satisfied?" Nārada could understand the plan of the demon, and he advised him, "You had better worship Lord Śiva; then you will quickly get the desired result. Lord Śiva is very quickly satisfied and very quickly dissatisfied also. So you try to satisfy Lord Śiva." Nārada also cited instances wherein demons like Rāvaṇa and Bāṇāsura were enriched

with great opulences simply by satisfying Lord Śiva with prayers. Because the great sage Nārada was aware of the nature of the demon Vṛkāsura, he did not advise him to approach Viṣṇu or Lord Brahmā. Persons such as Vṛkāsura who are situated in the material mode of ignorance, cannot stick to the worship of Viṣṇu.

After receiving instruction from Nārada, the demon Vṛkāsura went to Kedāranātha. The pilgrimage site of Kedāranātha still exists near Kashmere. It is almost always covered by snow, but for part of the year, during the month of July, it is possible to see the deity, and devotees go there to offer their respects. Kedāranātha is for the devotees of Lord Śiva. According to the Vedic principle, when something is offered to the deities to eat, it is offered in a fire. Therefore a fire sacrifice is necessary in all sorts of ceremonies. It is specifically stated in the *śāstras* that gods are to be offered something to eat through the fire. The demon Vṛkāsura therefore went to Kedāranātha and ignited a sacrificial fire to please Lord Śiva.

After igniting the fire in the name of Śiva, he began to offer his own flesh, by cutting it from his body so as to please Lord Śiva. Here is an instance of worship in the mode of ignorance. In the *Bhagavad-gītā,* different types of sacrifice are mentioned. Some sacrifices are in the mode of goodness, some are in the mode of passion, and some are in the mode of ignorance. There are different kinds of *tapasya* and worship because there are different kinds of people within this world. But the ultimate *tapasya,* Kṛṣṇa consciousness, is the topmost *yoga* and the topmost sacrifice. As confirmed in the *Bhagavad-gītā,* the topmost *yoga* is to think always of Lord Kṛṣṇa within the heart, and the topmost sacrifice is to perform the *saṅkīrtana-yajña.*

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* it is stated that the worshipers of the demigods have lost their intelligence. As will be revealed later in this chapter, Vṛkāsura wanted to satisfy Lord Śiva for a third-class materialistic objective, which was temporary and without real benefit. The *asuras* or persons within the mode of ignorance will accept such benedictions from the demigods. In complete contrast to this sacrifice in the modes of ignorance, the *arcanā-viddhi* process for worshiping Lord Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa is very simple. Lord Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that He accepts from His devotee even a little fruit, a flower or some water, which can be gathered by any person, poor or rich. Of course, those who are rich are not expected to offer only a little water, a little piece of fruit or a little leaf to the Lord. A rich man should offer according to his position, but if the devotee happens to be a very poor man the Lord will accept even the most meager offering. The worship of Lord Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa is very simple,

and it can be executed by anyone in this world. But worship in the mode of ignorance, as exhibited by Vṛkāsura, is not only very difficult and painful, but it is also a useless waste of time. Therefore *Bhagavad-gītā* says that the worshipers of the demigods are bereft of intelligence; their process of worship is very difficult, and at the same time the result obtained is flickering and temporary.

Although Vṛkāsura continued his sacrifice for six days, he was nevertheless unable to personally see Lord Śiva, which was his objective; he wanted to see him face to face and ask him for a benediction. Here is another contrast between a demon and a devotee. A devotee is confident that whatever he offers to the Deity in full devotional service is accepted by the Lord, but a demon wants to see his worshipable deity face to face so that he can directly take the benediction. A devotee, however, does not worship Viṣṇu or Lord Kṛṣṇa for any benediction. Therefore a devotee is called *akāma,* free of desire, and a nondevotee is called *sarva-kāma,* or desirous of everything. On the seventh day, the demon Vṛkāsura decided that he should cut off his head and offer it to satisfy Lord Śiva. Thus he took bath in the nearby lake, and without drying his body and hair, he prepared to cut off his head. According to the Vedic system, an animal which is to be offered as a sacrifice has to be bathed first, and while the animal is wet he is sacrificed. When the demon was thus preparing to cut off his head, Lord Śiva became very compassionate. This compassion, however, is a symptom of the quality of goodness. Lord Śiva is called *triliṅga.* Therefore his manifestation of the nature of compassion is a sign of the quality of goodness. This compassion, however, is present in every living entity. The compassion of Lord Śiva was aroused because the demon was offering his flesh to the sacrificial fire. This is natural compassion. Even if a common man sees someone preparing to commit suicide, it is his duty to try to save him. He does so automatically. There is no need to appeal to him. Therefore when Lord Śiva appeared from the fire to check the demon from suicide, it was not as a very great favor to him.

The demon was saved from committing suicide by the touch of Lord Śiva; his bodily injuries immediately healed, and his body became as it was before. Then Lord Śiva told the demon, "My dear Vṛkāsura, you do not need to cut off your head. You can ask from me any benediction you like, and I shall fulfill your desire. I do not know why you wanted to cut off your head to satisfy me. I become satisfied even by an offering of a little water." Actually, according to the Vedic process, the Śiva *liṅga* in the temple or the form of Lord Śiva in the temple is worshiped simply by offering Ganges water because it is said that Lord Śiva is greatly satisfied

when Ganges water is poured upon his head. Generally, devotees offer Ganges water and the leaves of the *bilva* tree, which are especially meant for offering to Lord Śiva and the goddess Durgā. The fruit of this tree also is offered to Lord Śiva. Lord Śiva assured Vṛkāsura that he becomes satisfied by a very simple process of worship. Why then was he so anxious to cut off his head, and why was he taking so much pain by cutting his body to pieces and offering it in the fire? There was no need of such severe penances. Anyway, out of compassion and sympathy, Lord Śiva prepared to give him any benediction he liked.

When the demon was offered this facility by Lord Śiva, he asked for a very fearful and abominable benediction. The demon was very sinful, and sinful persons do not know what sort of benediction should be asked from the deity. Therefore he asked Lord Śiva to be benedicted with such power that as soon as he would touch anyone's head, immediately it would crack, and the man would die. The demons are described in the *Bhagavad-gītā* as *duṣkṛtinas,* or miscreants. *Kṛtī* means very meritorious, but when *duṣ,* is added, it means abominable. Instead of surrendering unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the *duṣkṛtinas* worship different demigods in order to derive abominable material benefits. Sometimes such demons as material scientists discover lethal weapons. They cannot show their meritorious power by discovering something which can save man from death, but instead they discover weapons which accelerate the process of death. Because Lord Śiva is powerful enough to give any benediction, the demon could have asked of him something beneficial for human society, but for his personal interest he asked that anyone whose head would be touched by his hand would at once die.

Lord Śiva could understand the motive of the demon, and he was very sorry that he had assured him whatever benediction he liked. He would not withdraw his promise, but he was very sorry in his heart that he was to offer him a benediction so dangerous to human society. The demons are described as *duṣkṛtinas,* miscreants, because although they have brain power and merit, the merit and brain power are used for abominable activities. Sometimes, for example, the materialistic demons discover a lethal weapon. The scientific research for such a discovery certainly requires a very good brain, but instead of discovering something beneficial to human society, they discover something to accelerate the death which is already assured to every man. Similarly, Vṛkāsura, instead of asking Lord Śiva for something beneficial to human society, asked for something very dangerous to human society. Therefore Lord Śiva felt sorry within himself. Devotees of the Personality of Godhead, however, never

ask any benediction from Lord Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa, and even if they ask something from the Lord, it is not at all dangerous for human society. That is the difference between the demons and the devotees, or the worshipers of Lord Śiva and the worshipers of Lord Viṣṇu.

While Śukadeva Gosvāmī was narrating the history of Vṛkāsura, he addressed Mahārāja Parīkṣit as *Bhārata,* referring to King Parīkṣit's birth in a family of devotees. Mahārāja Parīkṣit was saved by Lord Kṛṣṇa while he was in his mother's womb. Similarly, he could have asked Lord Kṛṣṇa to save him from the curse of the *brāhmaṇa,* but he did not do so. The demon, however, wanted to become immortal by killing everyone with the touch of his hand. Lord Śiva could understand this, but because he had promised, he gave him the benediction.

The demon, however, being very sinful, immediately decided that he would use the benediction to kill Lord Śiva and take away Gaurī (Pārvatī) for his personal enjoyment. He immediately decided to place his hand on the head of Lord Śiva. Thus Lord Śiva was put into an awkward position because he was endangered by his own benediction to a demon. This is also another instance of a materialistic devotee's misusing the power derived from the demigods.

Without further deliberation, the demon Vṛkāsura immediately approached Lord Śiva to place his hand on Lord Śiva's head. Lord Śiva was so afraid of him that his body trembled, and he began to flee from the land to the sky and from the sky to other planets until he reached the limits of the universe, above the higher planetary systems. Lord Śiva fled from one place to another, but the demon Vṛkāsura continued to chase him. The predominating deities of other planets, such as Brahmā, Indra and Candra, could not find any way to save Lord Śiva from the impending danger. Wherever Lord Śiva went, they remained silent.

At last Lord Śiva approached Lord Viṣṇu, who is situated within this universe in the planet known as Śvetadvīpa. Śvetadvīpa is the local Vaikuṇṭha planet beyond the jurisdiction of the influence of external energy. Lord Viṣṇu in His all-pervasive feature remains everywhere, but wherever He remains personally is the Vaikuṇṭha atmosphere. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* it is stated that the Lord remains within the heart of all living entities. As such, the Lord remains within the heart of many low-born living entities, but that does not mean that He is low-born. Wherever He remains is transformed into Vaikuṇṭha. So the planet within this universe known as Śvetadvīpa is also Vaikuṇṭhaloka. It is said in the *śāstras* that residential quarters within the forest are in the mode of goodness, residential quarters in big cities, towns and villages are in the

mode of passion, and residential quarters in an atmosphere wherein indulgence in the four sinful activities of illicit sex, intoxication, meat-eating and gambling predominate are in the mode of ignorance. But residential quarters in a temple of Viṣṇu, the Supreme Lord, are in Vaikuṇṭha. It doesn't matter where the temple is situated, but the temple itself, wherever it may be, is Vaikuṇṭha. Similarly, the Śvetadvīpa planet, although within the material jurisdiction, is Vaikuṇṭha.

Lord Śiva finally entered Śvetadvīpa Vaikuṇṭha. In Śvetadvīpa there are great saintly persons who are completely freed from the envious nature of the material world and are beyond the jurisdiction of the four principles of material activities, namely, religiousness, economic development, sense gratification and liberation. Anyone who enters into that Vaikuṇṭha planet never comes back again to this material world. Lord Nārāyaṇa is celebrated as a lover of His devotees, and as soon as He understood that Lord Śiva was in great danger, He appeared as a *brahmacārī* and personally approached Lord Śiva to receive him from a distant place. The Lord appeared as a perfect *brahmacārī,* with a belt around His waist, sacred thread, deerskin, a *brahmacārī* stick and *raudra* beads. (*Raudra* beads are different from *tulasī* beads. *Raudra* beads are used by the devotees of Lord Śiva.) Dressed as a *brahmacārī,* Lord Nārāyaṇa stood before Lord Śiva. The shining effulgence emanating from His body attracted not only Lord Śiva but also the demon Vṛkāsura.

Lord Nārāyaṇa offered his respects and obeisances unto Vṛkāsura, just to attract his sympathy and attention. Thus checking the demon, the Lord addressed him as follows: "My dear son of Śakuni, you appear to be very tired, as if coming from a very distant place. What is your purpose? Why have you come so far? I see that you are very tired and fatigued, so I request you to take a little rest. You should not unnecessarily tire your body. Everyone greatly values his body because with this body only can one fulfill all the desires of one's mind. We should not, therefore, unnecessarily give trouble to this body."

The *brahmacārī* addressed Vṛkāsura as the son of Śakuni just to convince him that He was known to his father, Śakuni. Vṛkāsura then took the *brahmacārī* to be someone known to his family, and therefore the *brahmacārī's* sympathetic words appealed to him. Before the demon could argue that he had no time to take rest, the Lord began to inform him about the importance of the body, and the demon was convinced. Any man, especially a demon, takes his body to be very important. Thus Vṛkāsura became convinced about the importance of his body.

Then, just to pacify the demon, the *brahmacārī* told him, "My dear lord,

if you think that you can disclose the mission for which you have taken the trouble to come here, maybe I shall be able to help you so that your purpose will be easily served." Indirectly, the Lord informed him that because the Lord is the Supreme Brahman, certainly He would be able to adjust the awkward situation created by Lord Śiva.

The demon was greatly pacified by the sweet words of Lord Nārāyaṇa in the form of a *brahmacārī,* and at last he disclosed all that had happened in regard to the benediction offered by Lord Śiva. The Lord replied to the demon as follows: "I myself cannot believe that Lord Śiva has in truth given you such a benediction. As far as I know, Lord Śiva is not in a sane mental condition. He had a quarrel with his father-in-law Dakṣa, and he has been cursed to become a *piśāca* (ghost). Thus he has become the leader of the ghosts and hobgoblins. Therefore I cannot put any faith in his words. But if you have faith still in the words of Lord Śiva, my dear king of the demons, then why don't you make an experiment by putting your hand on your head? If the benediction proves false, then you can immediately kill this liar, Lord Śiva, so that in the future he will not dare to give out false benedictions."

In this way, by Lord Nārāyaṇa's sweet words and by the expansion of His superior illusion, the demon became bewildered, and he actually forgot the power of Lord Śiva and his benediction. He was thus very easily persuaded to put his hand on his own head. As soon as the demon did that, his head cracked, as if struck by thunder, and he immediately died. The demigods from heaven began to shower flowers on Lord Nārāyaṇa, praising Him with all glories and all thanksgiving, and they offered their obeisances to the Lord. On the death of Vṛkāsura, all the denizens in the higher planetary systems, namely, the demigods, the *pitās,* the Gandharvas and the inhabitants of Janaloka, began to shower flowers on the Personality of Godhead.

Thus Lord Viṣṇu in the form of a *brahmacārī* released Lord Śiva from the impending danger and saved the whole situation. Lord Nārāyaṇa then informed Lord Śiva that this demon, Vṛkāsura, was killed as the result of his sinful activities. He was especially sinful and offensive because he wanted to experiment on his own master, Lord Śiva. Lord Nārāyaṇa then told Lord Śiva, "My dear lord, a person who commits an offense to great souls cannot continue to exist. He becomes vanquished by his own sinful activities, and this is certainly true of this demon, who has committed such an offensive act against you."

Thus, by the grace of the Supreme Personality of Godhead Nārāyaṇa, who is transcendental to all material qualities, Lord Śiva was saved from

being killed by a demon. Anyone who hears this history with faith and devotion certainly becomes liberated from material entanglement as well as from the clutches of his enemies.

Thus ends the Bhaktivedanta purport of the Second Volume, Thirty-third Chapter, of Kṛṣṇa, *"Deliverance of Lord Śiva."*



34 / The Superexcellent Power of Kṛṣṇa

Long, long ago, there was an assembly of great sages on the bank of the River Sarasvatī, and they performed a great sacrifice of the name *Satrayajña.* In such assemblies, the great sages present usually discuss Vedic subject matters and philosophical topics, and in this particular meeting the following question was raised: The three predominating deities of this material world, namely, Lord Brahmā, Lord Viṣṇu and Lord Śiva, are directing all the affairs of the this cosmos, but who among them is the Supreme? After much discussion on this question, the great sage named Bhṛgu, who is the son of Lord Brahmā, was deputed to test all three predominating deities and report to the assembly as to who is the greatest.

Being thus deputed, the great sage Bhṛgumuni first of all went to his father's residence in Brahmaloka. The three deities are the controllers of the three material qualities, namely the qualities of goodness, passion and ignorance. The plan decided upon by the sages was for Bhṛgu to test which of the predominating deities possesses the quality of goodness in full. Therefore, when Bhṛgumuni reached his father, Lord Brahmā, because he wanted to test whether he had the quality of goodness, he purposely did not offer his respects to his father either by offering obeisances or by offering prayers. It is the duty of a son or a disciple to offer respects and recite suitable prayers when he approaches his father or spiritual master. But Bhṛgumuni purposefully failed to offer respects, just to see Lord Brahmā's reaction to this negligence. Lord Brahmā was very angry at his son's impudency, and he showed signs which definitely proved this to be so. He was even prepared to condemn Bhṛgu by cursing him, but because Bhṛgu was his son, Lord Brahmā controlled his anger with his great intelligence. This means that although the quality of passion was prominent in Lord Brahmā, he had the power to control it. Lord Brahmā's anger and his controlling his anger are likened to fire and water. Water is produced from

fire, but at the same time, fire can be extinguished with water. Similarly, although Lord Brahmā was very angry due to his quality of passion, he could still control his passion because Bhṛgumuni was his son.

After testing Lord Brahmā, Bhṛgumuni went directly to the planet Kailāsa, where Lord Śiva resides. Bhṛgumuni happened to be Lord Śiva's brother. Therefore, as soon as Bhṛgumuni approached, Lord Śiva became very glad and personally rose to embrace him. But when Lord Śiva approached, Bhṛgumuni refused to embrace him. "My dear brother," he said, "you are always very impure. Because you smear your body with ashes, you are therefore not very clean. Please do not touch me." When Bhṛgumuni refused to embrace his brother, saying that Lord Śiva was very impure, the latter became very angry with him. It is said that an offense can be committed either with the body, with the mind or by speech. Bhṛgumuni's first offense, committed towards Lord Brahmā, was an offense with the mind. His second offense, committed towards Lord Śiva by insulting him, criticizing him for unclean habits, was an offense by speech. Because the quality of ignorance is prominent in Lord Śiva, when he heard Bhṛgu's insult, his eyes immediately became red with anger. With uncontrollable rage, he took up his trident and prepared to kill Bhṛgumuni. At that time, Lord Śiva's wife, Pārvatī, was present. Her personality is a mixture of the three qualities, and therefore she is called Triguṇamayī. In this case, she saved the situation by evoking Lord Śiva's quality of goodness. She fell down at the feet of her husband, and with her sweet words she talked him out of killing Bhṛgumuni.

After being saved from the anger of Lord Śiva, Bhṛgumuni went directly to the planet Śvetadvīpa, where Lord Viṣṇu was lying on a bed of flowers, accompanied by His wife, the goddess of fortune, who was engaged in massaging His lotus feet. There Bhṛgumuni purposely committed the greatest sin by offending Lord Viṣṇu by his bodily activities. The first offense committed by Bhṛgumuni was mental, the second offense was vocal, and the third offense was corporal. These different offenses are progressively greater in degree. An offense committed within the mind is a positive offense, the same offense, committed verbally is comparitively more grave, and when committed by bodily action it is superlative in offensiveness. So Bhṛgumuni committed the greatest offense by touching the chest of the Lord with his foot in the presence of the goddess of fortune. Of course, Lord Viṣṇu is all-merciful. He did not become angry at the activities of Bhṛgumuni because Bhṛgumuni was a great *brāhmaṇa.* A *brāhmaṇa* is to be excused even if he sometimes commits an offense, and Lord Viṣṇu set the example. Yet it is said that from the time of this

incident, the goddess of fortune, Lakṣmī, has not been very favorably disposed towards the *brāhmaṇas,* and therefore because the goddess of fortune witholds her benedictions from them, the *brāhmaṇas* are generally very poor. Bhṛgumuni's touching the chest of Lord Viṣṇu with his foot was certainly a great offense, but Lord Viṣṇu is so great that He did not care. The so-called *brāhmaṇas* of the Kali-yuga are sometimes very proud that they can touch the chest of Lord Viṣṇu with their feet. But when Bhṛgumuni touched the chest of Lord Viṣṇu with his feet, it was different because although it was the greatest offense, Lord Viṣṇu, being greatly magnanimous, did not take it very seriously.

Instead of being angry or cursing Bhṛgumuni, Lord Viṣṇu immediately got up from His bed along with His wife, the goddess of fortune, and offered respectful obeisances to the *brāhmaṇa.* He addressed Bhṛgumuni as follows: "My dear *brāhmaṇa,* it is a great blessing for Me that you have come here. Please, therefore, sit down on this cushion for a few minutes. My dear *brāhmaṇa,* I am very sorry that when you first entered I could not receive you properly. It was a great offense on My part, and I beg you to pardon Me. You are so pure and great that the water which washes your feet can purify even the places of pilgrimage. Therefore, I request you to purify the Vaikuṇṭha planet where I live with My associates. My dear father, O great sage, I know that your feet are very soft, like a lotus flower, and that My chest is as hard as a thunderbolt. I am therefore afraid that you may have felt some pain by touching My chest with your feet. Let Me therefore touch your feet to relieve the pain you have suffered." Lord Viṣṇu then began to massage the feet of Bhṛgumuni.

The Lord continued to address Bhṛgumuni. "My dear lord," He said, "My chest has now become sanctified because of the touch of your feet, and I am now assured that the goddess of fortune, Lakṣmī, will be very glad to live there perpetually." Another name for Lakṣmī is Cañcalā. She does not stay in one place for a long time. Therefore, we see that a rich man's family sometimes becomes poor after a few generations, and sometimes we see that a poor man's family becomes very rich. Lakṣmī, the goddess of fortune, is Cañcalā in this material world, whereas in the Vaikuṇṭha planets she eternally lives at the lotus feet of the Lord. Because Lakṣmī is famous as Cañcalā, Lord Nārāyaṇa indicated that she might not have been living perpetually by His chest, but because His chest had been touched by the feet of Bhṛgumuni, it was now sanctified, and there was no chance that the goddess of fortune would leave. Bhṛgumuni, however, could understand his position and that of the Lord, and he was struck with wonder at the behavior of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Because

of his gratitude, his voice choked up, and he was not able to reply to the words of the Lord. Tears glided from his eyes, and he could not say anything. He simply stood silently before the Lord.

After testing Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva and Lord Viṣṇu, Bhṛgumuni returned to the assembly of great sages on the bank of the River Sarasvatī and described his experience. After hearing him with great attention, the sages concluded that of all the predominating deities, certainly Viṣṇu is situated in the mode of goodness in the highest degree. In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* these great sages are described as *brahma-vādinām. Brahma-vādinām* means those who talk about the Absolute Truth but have not yet come to a conclusion. Generally *brahma-vādi* refers to the impersonalists or to those who are students of the *Vedas.* It is to be understood, therefore, that all the gathered sages were serious students of Vedic literature, but had not come to definite conclusions as to who is the Supreme Absolute Personality of Godhead.

After hearing of Bhṛgumuni's experience in meeting all three predominating deities, Lord Śiva, Lord Brahmā, and Lord Viṣṇu, the sages concluded that Lord Viṣṇu is the Supreme Truth, the Personality of Godhead. It is said in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that after hearing the details from Bhṛgumuni, the sages were astonished because although Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva were immediately agitated, Lord Viṣṇu, in spite of being kicked by Bhṛgumuni, was not agitated in the least. The example is given that small lamps may become agitated by a little breeze, but the greatest lamp or the greatest illuminating source, the sun, is never moved, even by the greatest hurricane. One's greatness has to be estimated by one's ability to tolerate provoking situations. The sages gathered on the bank of the River Sarasvatī concluded that if anyone wants actual peace and freedom from all fearfulness, he should take shelter of the lotus feet of Viṣṇu. If Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva lost their peaceful attitude upon a slight provocation, how could they maintain the peace and tranquility of their devotees? As for Lord Viṣṇu, however, it is stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that anyone who accepts Lord Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa as the supreme friend attains the highest perfection of peaceful life.

The sages thus concluded that by following the principles of *vaiṣṇava-dharma,* one becomes actually perfect. But if one follows all the religious principles of a particular sect and does not become advanced in understanding the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Viṣṇu, all such labor of love is fruitless. To execute religious principles means to come to the platform of perfect knowledge. If one comes to the platform of perfect knowledge, then he will be disinterested in material affairs. Perfect know-

ledge means to know one's own self and to know the Supreme Self. The Supreme Self and the individual self, although one in quality, are different in quantity. This analytical understanding of knowledge is perfect. Simply to understand, "I am not matter; I am spirit," is not perfect knowledge. The real religious principle is devotional service, or *bhakti.* This is confirmed in the *Bhagavad-gītā.* Lord Kṛṣṇa says, "Give up all other religious principles and simply surrender unto Me." Therefore, the term *dharma* applies only to the *vaiṣṇava-dharma* or *bhagavad-dharma,* following which all other good qualities and advancements in life are automatically achieved.

The highest perfectional knowledge is to know the Supreme Lord. He cannot be understood by any process of religion other than devotional service; therefore, the immediate result of perfect knowledge is achieved by executing devotional service. After attainment of knowledge, one becomes disinterested in the material world. This is not because of dry philosophical speculation. The devotees become disinterested in the material world, not simply because of theoretical understanding, but practical experience. When a devotee realizes the effect of association with the Supreme Lord, he naturally hates the association of so-called society, friendship and love. This detachment is not dry, but is due to achieving a higher status of life by relishing transcendental mellows. It is further stated in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that after attainment of such knowledge and detachment from material sense gratification, one's advancement in the eight opulences attained by mystic *yoga* practice, namely the *aṇimā, laghimā* and *prāpti siddhis,* etc., are also achieved without separate effort. The perfect example is Mahārāja Ambarīṣa. He was not a mystic *yogī* but was a great devotee, yet in a disagreement with Mahārāja Ambarīṣa, the great mystic Durvāsā was defeated in the presence of his devotional attitude. In other words, a devotee does not need to practice the mystic *yoga* system to achieve power. The power is behind him by the grace of the Lord, just as when a small child is surrendered to a powerful father, all the powers of the father are behind him.

When a person becomes famous as a devotee of the Lord, his reputation is never to be extinguished. Lord Caitanya, when discoursing with Rāmānanda Rāya, questioned, "What is the greatest fame?" Rāmānanda Rāya replied that to be known as a pure devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa is the perfect fame. The conclusion, therefore, is that Viṣṇu-*dharma,* or the religion of devotional service unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is meant for persons who are thoughtful. By proper utilization of thoughtfulness, one comes to the stage of thinking of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. By thinking of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, one

becomes free from the contamination of the faulty association of the material world, and thus one becomes peaceful. The world is in a disturbed condition because of a scarcity of such peaceful devotees in human society. Unless one is a devotee, one cannot be equal to all living entities. A devotee is equally disposed towards the animals, the human beings and all living entities because he sees every living entity as a part and parcel of the Supreme Lord. In the *Īśopaniṣad* it is clearly stated that one who has come to the stage of seeing all living beings equally does not hate anyone or favor anyone. The devotee does not hanker to possess more than he requires. Devotees are therefore *akiñcana;* in any condition of life a devotee is satisfied. It is said that a devotee is evenminded whether he is in hell or in heaven. A devotee is callous to all subjects other than his engagement in devotional service. This mode of life is the highest perfectional stage, from which one can be elevated to the spiritual world, back home, back to Godhead. The devotees of the Supreme Personality of Godhead are especially attracted by the highest material quality, goodness, and the qualified *brāhmaṇa* is the symbolic representation of this goodness. Therefore, a devotee is attached to the brahminical stage of life. He is not very much interested in passion or ignorance, although these qualities also emanate from the Supreme Lord, Viṣṇu. In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* the devotees are described as *nipuṇa-buddhayaḥ,* which means that they are the most intelligent class of men. Uninfluenced by attachment or hatred, the devotee lives very peacefully and is not agitated by the influence of passion and ignorance.

It may be questioned here why a devotee should be attached to the quality of goodness in the material world if he is transcendental to all material qualities. The answer is that there are different kinds of people existing in the modes of material nature. Those who are in the mode of ignorance are called *rākṣasas,* those in the mode of passion are called *asuras,* and those in the mode of goodness are called *suras,* or demigods. Under the direction of the Supreme Lord, these three classes of men are created by material nature, but those who are in the mode of goodness have a greater chance to be elevated to the spiritual world, back home, back to Godhead.

Thus all the sages who assembled on the bank of the River Sarasvatī to try to determine who is the supreme predominating Deity became freed from all doubts about Viṣṇu worship. All of them thereafter engaged in devotional service, and thus they achieved the desired result and went back to Godhead.

Those who are actually anxious to become liberated from material entanglement would do better to accept at once the conclusion given by

Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī in the beginning of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.* It is said there that hearing the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is extremely conducive to liberation because it is spoken by Śukadeva Gosvāmī. The same fact is again confirmed by Sūta Gosvāmī: if anyone who is travelling aimlessly within this material world cares to hear the nectarean words spoken by Śukadeva Gosvāmī, certainly he will come to the right conclusion; simply by discharging devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead he will be able to stop the fatigue of migrating from one material body to another perpetually. In other words, by proper hearing one will become fixed in loving devotional service to Viṣṇu. He will certainly be able to get relief from this material journey of life, and the process is very simple. One has to give aural reception to the sweet words spoken by Śukadeva Gosvāmī in the form of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.*

Another conclusion is that we should never consider the demigods, even Lord Śiva and Lord Brahmā, to be on an equal level with Lord Viṣṇu. If we do this, then according to *Padma Purāṇa,* we immediately become atheists. In the Vedic literature known as *Harivaṁśa* it is also stated that only the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Viṣṇu, is to be worshiped. The Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahāmantra,* or any such Viṣṇu *mantra,* is always to be chanted. In the Second Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* Lord Brahmā says, "Both Lord Śiva and myself are engaged by the Supreme Personality of Godhead to act in different capacities under His direction." In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* it is also stated that the only master is Kṛṣṇa, and everyone in all categories of life are servants of Kṛṣṇa only.

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* it is confirmed by the Lord that there is no truth superior to Kṛṣṇa. Śukadeva Gosvāmī also, in order to draw attention to the fact that among all *Viṣṇu-tattva* forms, Lord Kṛṣṇa is one hundred percent the Supreme Personality of Godhead, narrated the story of an incident which took place when Lord Kṛṣṇa was present.

Once upon a time, a *brāhmaṇa's* wife gave birth to a child. Unfortunately, however, just after being born and touching the ground, the child immediately died. The *brāhmaṇa* father took the dead child and went directly to Dvārakā to the palace of the king. The *brāhmaṇa* was very upset because of the untimely death of the child in the presence of his young father and mother. Thus his mind became very disturbed. Formerly, when there were responsible kings, up to the time of Dvāpara-yuga, when Lord Kṛṣṇa was present, the king was liable to be blamed for the untimely death of a child in the presence of his parents. Similarly, such responsibility was there during the time of Lord Rāmacandra. As we have explained in the First Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* the king was so responsible for the

comforts of the citizens that he was to see that there was not even excessive heat or cold. Although there was no fault on the part of the king, the *brāhmaṇa* whose child had died immediately went to the palace door and began to accuse the king as follows.

"The present King, Ugrasena, is envious of the *brāhmaṇas!*" The exact word used in this connection is *brāhma-dviṣaḥ.* One who is envious of the *Vedas* or one who is envious of a qualified *brāhmaṇa* or the *brāhmaṇa* caste is called *brahma-dvit.* So the King was accused of being *brahma-dvit.* He was also accused of being *śaṭha-dhī,* falsely intelligent. The executive head of a state must be very intelligent to see to the comforts of the citizens, but, according to the *brāhmaṇa* the king was not at all intelligent, although he was occupying the royal throne. Therefore he also called him *lubdha,* which means greedy. In other words, a king or an executive head of state should not occupy the exalted post of presidency or kingship if he is greedy and self-interested. But it is natural that an executive head becomes self-interested when he is attached to material enjoyment. Therefore, another word used here is *viṣayātmanaḥ.*

The *brāhmaṇa* also accused the king of being *kṣatra-bandhu,* which refers to a person born in the family of *kṣatriyas* or the royal order who is without the qualifications of a royal personality. A king should protect brahminical culture and should be very alert to the welfare of his citizens; he should not be greedy due to attachment to material enjoyment. If a person with no qualifications represents himself as a *kṣatriya* of the royal order, he is not called a *kṣatriya,* but a *kṣatra-bandhu.* Similarly, if a person is born of a *brāhmaṇa* father but has no brahminical qualification, he is called *brahma-bandhu,* or *dvija-bandhu.* This means that a *brāhmaṇa* or a *kṣatriya* is not accepted simply by birth. One has to qualify himself for the particular position; only then is he accepted as a *brāhmaṇa* or a *kṣatriya.*

Thus the *brāhmaṇa* accused the King that his newly born baby was dead due to the disqualifications of the king. The *brāhmaṇa* took it most unnaturally, and therefore he held the king to be responsible. We also find in Vedic history that if a *kṣatriya* king were irresponsible, sometimes a consulting board of *brāhmaṇas* maintained by the monarchy would dethrone him. Considering all these points, it appears that the post of monarch in the Vedic civilization is a very responsible one.

The *brāhmaṇa* therefore said, "No one should offer respects or worship to a king whose only business is envy. Such a king spends his time either hunting and killing animals in the forest or killing citizens for criminal acts He has no self-control and possesses bad character. If such a king is worshiped or honored by the citizens, the citizens will never be happy. They will always remain poor, full of anxieties and aggrievement, and always

unhappy." Although in modern politics the post of monarch is abolished, the president is not held responsible for the comforts of the citizens. In this age of Kali, the executive head of a state somehow or other gets votes and is elected to an exalted post, but the condition of the citizens continues to be full of anxiety, distress, unhappiness, and dissatisfaction.

The *brāhmaṇa's* second child was also born dead, and the third also. He had nine children, and each of them was born dead, and each time he came to the gate of the palace to accuse the King. When the *brāhmaṇa* came to accuse the King of Dvārakā for the ninth time, Arjuna happened to be present with Kṛṣṇa. On hearing that a *brāhmaṇa* was accusing the King of not properly protecting him, Arjuna became inquisitive and approached the *brāhmaṇa.* He said, "My dear *brāhmaṇa,* why do you say that there are no proper *kṣatriyas* to protect the citizens of your country? Is there not even someone who can pretend to be a *kṣatriya,* who can carry a bow and arrow at least to make a show of protection? Do you think that all the royal personalities in this country simply engage in performing sacrifices with the *brāhmaṇas* but have no chivalrous power?" Thus Arjuna indicated that *kṣatriyas* should not sit back comfortably and engage only in performing Vedic rituals. Rather, they must be very chivalrous in protecting the citizens. *Brāhmaṇas,* being engaged in spiritual activities, are not expected to do anything which requires physical endeavor. Therefore, they need to be protected by the *kṣatriyas* so that they will not be disturbed in the execution of their higher occupational duties.

"If the *brāhmaṇas* feel unwanted separation from their wives and children," Arjuna continued, "and the *kṣatriya* kings do not take care of them, then such *kṣatriyas* are to be considered no more than stage players. In dramatical performances in the theater, an actor may play the part of a king, but no one expects any benefits from such a make-believe king. Similarly, if the king or the executive head of a state cannot give protection to the head of the social structure, he is considered merely a bluffer. Such executive heads simply live for their own livelihood while occupying exalted posts as chiefs of state. My lord, I promise that I shall give protection to your children, and if I am unable to do so, then I shall enter into blazing fire so that the sinful contamination which has infected me will be counteracted."

Upon hearing Arjuna speak in this way, the *brāhmaṇa* replied, "My dear Arjuna, Lord Balarāma is present, but He could not give protection to my children. Lord Kṛṣṇa is also present, but He also could not give them protection. There are also many other heroes, such as Pradyumna and Aniruddha, carrying bows and arrows, but they could not protect my children." The *brāhmaṇa* directly hinted that Arjuna could not do that

which was impossible for the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He felt that Arjuna was promising something beyond his power. The *brāhmaṇa* said, "I consider your promise to be like that of an inexperienced child. I cannot put my faith in your promise."

Arjuna then understood that the *brāhmaṇa* had lost all faith in the *kṣatriya* kings. Therefore, to encourage him, Arjuna spoke as if criticizing even his friend, Lord Kṛṣṇa. While Lord Kṛṣṇa and others were listening, he specifically attacked Kṛṣṇa by saying, "My dear *brāhmaṇa,* I am neither Saṅkarṣaṇa nor Kṛṣṇa nor one of Kṛṣṇa's sons like Pradyumna or Aniruddha. My name is Arjuna, and I carry the bow known as Gāṇḍīva. You cannot insult me because I have satisfied even Lord Śiva by my prowess when we were both hunting in the forest. I had a fight with Lord Śiva, who appeared before me as a hunter, and when I satisfied him by my prowess, he gave me the weapon known as *paśupatāstra.* Do not doubt my chivalry. I shall bring back your sons even if I have to fight with death personified." When the *brāhmaṇa* was assured by Arjuna in such exalted words, he somehow or other was convinced, and thus he returned home.

When the *brāhmaṇa's* wife was to give birth to another child, the *brāhmaṇa* began to chant, "My dear Arjuna, please come now and save my child." After hearing him, Arjuna immediately prepared himself by touching sanctified water and uttering holy *mantras* to protect his bows and arrows from danger. He specifically took the arrow which was presented to him by Lord Śiva, and while going out, he began to remember Lord Śiva and his great favor. In this way, he appeared in front of the maternity home, equipped with his bow, known as Gāṇḍīva, and with various other weapons.

It appears that Arjuna did not leave Dvārakā because he had to fulfill his promise to the *brāhmaṇa.* He was called at night when the *brāhmaṇa's* wife was to give birth to the child. While going to the maternity home to attend to the delivery case of the *brāhmaṇa's* wife, Arjuna remembered Lord Śiva, and not his friend Kṛṣṇa; he thought that since Kṛṣṇa could not give protection to the *brāhmaṇa,* it was better to take shelter of Lord Śiva. This is another instance of how a person takes shelter of the demigods. This is explained in the *Bhagavad-gītā: kāmais tais tair hṛta-jñānāḥ:* a person who loses his intelligence because of greediness and lust forgets the Supreme Personality of Godhead and takes shelter of the demigods. Of course, Arjuna was not an ordinary living entity, but because of his friendly dealings with Kṛṣṇa, he thought that Kṛṣṇa was unable to give protection to the *brāhmaṇa* and that he would do better to remember Lord Śiva. Later on it was proved that Arjuna's taking shelter of Lord Śiva

instead of Kṛṣṇa was not at all successful. Arjuna, however, did his best by chanting different *mantras,* and he took up his bow to guard the maternity home from all directions.

The *brāhmaṇa's* wife delivered a male child, and as usual the child began to cry. But suddenly, within a few minutes, both the child and Arjuna's arrows disappeared in the sky. It appeared that the *brāhmaṇa's* house was near Kṛṣṇa's residence and that Lord Kṛṣṇa was enjoying everything that was taking place apparently in defiance of His authority. It was He who played the trick of taking away the *brāhmana's* baby as well as the arrows, including the one given by Lord Śiva, of which Arjuna was so proud. *Tad bhavati alpamedhasām:* less intelligent men take shelter of the demigods due to bewilderment and are satisfied with the benefits they award.

In the presence of Lord Kṛṣṇa and others, the *brāhmaṇa* began to accuse Arjuna: "Everyone see my foolishness! I put my faith in the words of Arjuna, who is impotent and who is expert only in false promises. How foolish I was to believe Arjuna. He promised to protect my child when even Pradyumna, Aniruddha, Lord Balarāma and Lord Kṛṣṇa failed. If such great personalities could not protect my child, then who can do so? I therefore condemn Arjuṇa for his false promise, and I also condemn his celebrated bow Gāṇḍīva and his impudency in declaring himself greater than Lord Balarāma, Lord Kṛṣṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha. No one can save my child, for he has already been transferred to another planet. Due to sheer foolishness only, Arjuna thought that he could bring back my child from another planet."

Thus condemned by the *brāhmaṇa,* Arjuna empowered himself with a mystic *yoga* perfection so that he could travel to any planet to find the *brāhmaṇa's* baby. It seems that Arjuna had mastered the mystic yogic power by which *yogīs* can travel to any planet they desire. He first of all wnet to the planet known as Yamaloka, where the superintendent of death, Yamarāja, lives. There he searched for the *brāhmaṇa's* baby, but he was unable to find him. He then immediately went to the planet where the King of heaven, Indra, lives. When he was unable to find the baby there, he went to the planets of the fire demigods, Nairṛti, and then to the moon planet. Then he went to Vāyu and to Varuṇaloka. When he was unable to find the baby in those planets, he went down to the Rasātala planet, the lowest of the planetary systems. After traveling to all these different planets, he finally went to Brahmaloka, where even the mystic *yogīs* cannot go. By the grace of Lord Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna had that power, and he went above the heavenly planets to Brahmaloka. When he was unable to find the baby even after searching all possible planets, he then attempted to throw

himself into a fire, as he had promised the *brāhmaṇa* if unable to bring back his baby. Lord Kṛṣṇa, however, was very kind toward Arjuna because Arjuna happened to be the most intimate friend of the Lord. Lord Kṛṣṇa persuaded Arjuna not to enter the fire in disgrace. Kṛṣṇa indicated that since Arjuna was His friend, if he were to enter the fire in hopelessness, indirectly it would be a blemish on Him. Lord Kṛṣṇa therefore checked Arjuna, assuring him that He would find the baby. He told Arjuna, "Do not foolishly commit suicide."

After addressing Arjuna in this way, Lord Kṛṣṇa called for His transcendental chariot. He mounted it along with Arjuna and began to proceed north. Lord Kṛṣṇa, the all-powerful Personality of Godhead, could have brought the child back without effort, but we should always remember that He was playing the part of a human being. As a human being has to endeavor to achieve certain results, so Lord Kṛṣṇa, like an ordinary human being, or like His friend Arjuna, left Dvārakā to bring back the *brāhmaṇa's* baby. By appearing in human society and exhibiting His pastimes as a human being, Kṛṣṇa definitely showed that there was not a single personality greater than He. "God is great." That is the definition of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. So at least within this material world, while He was present, Kṛṣṇa proved that there was no greater personality within the universe.

Seated on His chariot with Arjuna, Kṛṣṇa began to proceed north, crossing over many planetary systems. These are described in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* as *sapta-dvīpa. Dvīpa* means island. All these planets are sometimes described in the Vedic literature as *dvīpas.* The planet on which we are living is called Jambūdvīpa. Outer space is taken as a great ocean of air, and within that great ocean of air there are many islands, which are the different planets. In each and every planet there are oceans also. In some of the planets, the oceans are of salt water, and in some of them there are oceans of milk. In others there are oceans of liquor, and in others there are oceans of ghee or oil. There are different kinds of mountains also. Each and every planet has a different type of atmosphere.

Kṛṣṇa passed over all these planets and reached the covering of the universe. This covering is described in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* as great darkness. This material world as a whole is described as dark. In the open space there is sunlight, and therefore it is illuminated, but in the covering, because of the absence of sunlight, it is naturally dark. When Kṛṣṇa approached the covering layer of this universe, the four horses which were drawing His chariot—Śaibya, Sugrīva, Meghapuṣpa and Balāhaka—all appeared to hesitate to enter the darkness. This hesitation is also a part of

the pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa because the horses of Kṛṣṇa are not ordinary. It is not possible for ordinary horses to go all over the universe and then enter into its outer covering layers. As Kṛṣṇa is transcendental, similarly His chariot and His horses and everything about Him are also transcendental, beyond the qualities of this material world. We should always remember that Kṛṣṇa was playing the part of an ordinary human being, and His horses also, by the will of Kṛṣṇa, played the parts of ordinary horses in hesitating to enter the darkness.

Kṛṣṇa is known as Yogeśvara, as is stated in the last portion of *Bhagavad-gītā. Yogeśvara Hari:* all mystic powers are under His control. In our experience, we can see many human beings who have yogic mystic power. Sometimes they perform very wonderful acts, but Kṛṣṇa is understood to be the master of all mystic power. Therefore, when He saw that His horses were hesitant to proceed into the darkness, He immediately released His disc, known as the Sudarśana cakra, which illuminated the sky a thousand times brighter than sunlight. The darkness of the covering of the universe is also a creation of Kṛṣṇa's, and the Sudarśana cakra is Kṛṣṇa's constant companion. Thus the darkness was penetrated by His keeping the Sudarśana cakra in front. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* states that the Sudarśana cakra penetrated the darkness just as an arrow released from the Śārṅga bow of Lord Rāmacandra penetrated the army of Rāvaṇa. *Su* means very nice, and *darśana* means observation; by the grace of Lord Kṛṣṇa's disc, Sudarśana, everything can be seen very nicely, and nothing can remain in darkness. Thus Lord Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna crossed over the great region of darkness covering the material universes.

Arjuna then saw the effulgence of light known as the *brahmajyoti.* The *brahmajyoti* is situated outside the covering of the material universes, and because it cannot be seen with our present eyes, this *brahmajyoti* is sometimes called *avyakta.* This spiritual effulgence is the ultimate destination of the impersonalists known as Vedāntists. The *brahmajyoti* is also described as *anantapāram,* unlimited and unfathomed. When Lord Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna reached this region of the *brahmajyoti,* Arjuna could not tolerate the glaring effulgence, and he closed his eyes. Lord Kṛṣṇa's and Arjuna's reaching the *brahmajyoti* region is described in *Harivaṁśa.* In that portion of the Vedic literature, Kṛṣṇa informed Arjuna, "My dear Arjuna, the glaring effulgence, the transcendental light which you are seeing, is My bodily rays. O chief of the descendants of Bharata, this *brahmajyoti* is Myself." As the sun disc and the sunshine cannot be separated, similarly Kṛṣṇa and His bodily rays, the *brahmajyoti,* cannot be separated. Thus Kṛṣṇa claimed that the *brahmajyoti* is He Himself. This is clearly stated in

the *Harivaṁśa* when Kṛṣṇa says, *"ahaṁ saḥ."* The *brahmajyoti* is a combination of the minute particles known as spiritual sparks, or the living entities known as *citkana.* The Vedic word *so'ham,* or "I am the *brahmajyoti,"* can also be applied to the living entities, who can also claim to belong to the *brahmajyoti.* In the *Harivaṁśa,* Kṛṣṇa further explains, "This *brahmajyoti* is an expansion of My spiritual energy."

Kṛṣṇa told Arjuna, "The *brahmajyoti* is beyond the region of My external energy, known as *māyā-śakti.* When one is situated within this material world, it is not possible for him to experience this Brahman effulgence. Therefore, in the material world this effulgence is not manifested, whereas in the spiritual world, it is manifested. That is the purport of the words *vyakta-avyakta.* In the *Bhagavad-gītā* it is said *avyakto-'vyaktāt sanātanaḥ:* both these energies are eternally manifested.

After this, Lord Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna entered a vast extensive spiritual water. This spiritual water is called the Kāraṇārṇava Ocean or Virajā which means that this ocean is the origin of the creation of the material world. In the *Mṛtyuñjaya Tantra,* a Vedic literature, there is a vivid description of this Kāraṇa Ocean, or Virajā. It is stated there that the highest planetary system within the material world is Satyaloka, or Brahmaloka. Beyond that there are Rudraloka and Mahā-Viṣṇuloka. Regarding this Mahā-Viṣṇuloka, it is stated in the *Brahma-saṁhitā, yaḥ kāraṇārṇava-jale bhajati sma yoga:* "Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu is lying in the Kāraṇa Ocean. When He exhales, innumerable universes come into existence, and when He inhales, innumerable universes enter within Him." In this way, the material creation is generated and again withdrawn. When Lord Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna entered the water, it appeared that there was a strong hurricane of transcendental effulgence brewing, and the water of the Kāraṇa Ocean was greatly agitated. By the grace of Lord Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna had the unique experience of being able to see the very beautiful Kāraṇa Ocean.

Accompanied by Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna saw a large palace within the water. There were many thousands of pillars and columns made of valuable jewels, and the glaring effulgence of those columns was so beautiful that Arjuna became charmed by it. Within that palace, Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa saw the gigantic form of Anantadeva, who is also known as Śeṣa. Lord Anantadeva or Śeṣanāga was in the form of a great serpent with thousands of hoods, and each one of them was decorated with valuable, effulgent jewels, which were beautifully dazzling. Each of Anantadeva's hoods had two eyes which appeared to be very fearful. His body was as white as the mountaintop of Kailāsa, which is always covered by snow. His neck was bluish, as were His tongues. Thus Arjuna saw the Śeṣanāga form, and he

also saw that on the very soft, white body of Śeṣanāga, Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu was lying very comfortably. He appeared to be all-pervading and very powerful, and Arjuna could understand that the Supreme Personality of Godhead in that form is known as Puroṣottama. He is known as Puruṣottama, the best, or the Supreme Personality of Godhead, because from this form emanates another form of Viṣṇu, which is known as Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu within the material world. The Mahā-Viṣṇu form of the Lord, *Puruṣottama,* is beyond the material world. He is also known as *Uttama. Tama* means darkness, and *ut* means above, transcendental; therefore, *Uttama* means above the darkest region of the material world. Arjuna saw that the bodily color of Puruṣottama, Mahā-Viṣṇu, was as dark as a new cloud in the rainy season; He was dressed in very nice yellow clothing. His face was always beautifully smiling, and His eyes, which were like lotus petals, were very attractive. Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu's helmet was bedecked with valuable jewels, and His beautiful earrings enhanced the beauty of the curling hair on His head. Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu had eight arms, all very long, reaching to His knees. His neck was decorated with the Kaustubha jewel, and His chest was marked with the symbol of *śrīvatsa,* which means the resting place of the goddess of fortune. The Lord wore a garland of lotus flowers down to His knees. This long garland is known as a *vaijayantī* garland.

The Lord was surrounded by His personal associates Nanda and Sunanda, and the personified Sudarśana disc was also standing by Him. As is stated in the *Vedas,* the Lord has innumerable energies, and they were also standing there personified. The most important among them were as follows: *puṣṭi,* the energy for nourishment, *śrī,* the energy of beauty, *kīrti,* the energy of reputation, and *ajā,* the energy of material creation. All these energies are invested in the administrators of the material world, namely Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva and Lord Viṣṇu, and in the kings of the heavenly planets, Indra, Candra, Varuṇa and the sun-god. In other words, all these demigods, being empowered by the Lord with certain energies, engage in the transcendental loving service of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The Mahā-Viṣṇu feature is an expansion of Kṛṣṇa's body. It is also confirmed in the *Brahma-saṁhitā* that Mahā-Viṣṇu is a portion of a plenary expansion of Kṛṣṇa. All such expansions are nondifferent from the Personality of Godhead, but since Kṛṣṇa appeared within this material world to manifest His pastimes as a human being, He and Arjuna immediately offered their respects to Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu by bowing down before Him. It is stated in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that Lord Kṛṣṇa offered respect to Mahā-Viṣṇu; this means that He offered obeisances unto Him

only because Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu is nondifferent from He Himself. This offering of obeisances by Kṛṣṇa to Mahā-Viṣṇu is not, however, the form of worship known as *ahaṅgraha-upāsanā,* which is sometimes recommended for persons who are trying to elevate themselves to the spiritual world by performing the sacrifice of knowledge. This is also stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā: jñāna-yajñena cāpy ante yajanto mām upāsate.*

Although there was no necessity for Kṛṣṇa to offer obeisances, because He is the master teacher, He taught Arjuna just how respect should be offered to Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu. Arjuna, however, became very much afraid upon seeing the gigantic form of everything, distinct from the material experience. Seeing Kṛṣṇa offering obeisances to Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu, he immediately followed Him and stood before the Lord with folded hands. After this, the gigantic form of Mahā-Viṣṇu, greatly pleased, smiled pleasingly and spoke as follows.

"My dear Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, I was very anxious to see you both, and therefore I arranged to take away the babies of the *brāhmaṇa* and keep them here. I have been expecting to see you both at this palace. You have appeared in the material world as My incarnations in order to minimize the force of the demoniac persons who burden the world. Now after killing all these unwanted demons, you will please again come back to Me. Both of you are incarnations of the great sage Nara-Nārāyaṇa. Although you are both complete in yourselves, to protect the devotees and to annihilate the demons and especially to establish religious principles in the world so that peace and tranquility may continue, you are teaching the basic principles of factual religion so that the people of the world may follow you and thereby be peaceful and prosperous."

Both Lord Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna then offered their obeisances to Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu, and taking back the *brāhmaṇa's* children, they returned to Dvārakā via the same route by which they had entered the spiritual world. All the children of the *brāhmaṇa* had duly grown up. After returning to Dvārakā, Lord Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna delivered to the *brāhmaṇa* all of his sons.

Arjuna, however, was struck with great wonder after visiting the transcendental world by the grace of Lord Kṛṣṇa. And by the grace of Kṛṣṇa he could understand that whatever opulence there may be within this material world is an emanation from Him. Any opulent position a person may have within this material world is due to Kṛṣṇa's mercy. One should therefore always be in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, in complete gratefulness to Lord Kṛṣṇa, because whatever one may possess is all His mercy.

Arjuna's wonderful experience due to the mercy of Kṛṣṇa is one of the many thousands of pastimes performed by Lord Kṛṣṇa during His stay in this material world. They were all unique and have no parallel in the history of the world. All these pastimes prove fully that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, yet while He was present within this material world, He played just like an ordinary man possessing many worldly duties. He played the part of an ideal householder, and although He possessed 16,000 wives, 16,000 palaces and 160,000 children, He also performed many sacrifices, just to teach the royal order how to live in the material world for the welfare of humanity. As the ideal Supreme Personality, He fulfilled the desires of everyone, from the *brāhmaṇas,* the highest persons in human society, down to the ordinary living entities, including the lowest of men. Just as King Indra is in charge of distributing rain all over the world to satisfy everyone in due course, so Lord Kṛṣṇa satisfies everyone by pouring down His causeless mercy. His mission was to give protection to the devotees and to kill the demoniac kings; therefore, He killed many hundreds and thousands of demons. Some of them He killed personally, and some of them were killed by Arjuna, who was deputed by Kṛṣṇa. In this way He established many pious kings such as Yudhiṣṭhira at the helm of world affairs. Thus, by His divine arrangement He created the good government of King Yudhiṣṭhira, and there ensued peace and tranquility.

Thus ends the Bhaktivedanta purport of the Second Volume, Thirty-fourth Chapter, of Kṛṣṇa, *"The Superexcellent Power of Kṛṣṇa."*



35 / Summary Description of Lord Kṛṣṇa's Pastimes

After returning from the spiritual kingdom, which he was able to visit personally along with Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna was very much astonished. He thought to himself that although he was only an ordinary living entity, by the grace of Kṛṣṇa it had been possible for him to see personally the spiritual world. Not only had he seen the spiritual world, but he had also personally seen the original Mahā-Viṣṇu, the cause of the material creation. It is said that Kṛṣṇa never goes out of Vṛndāvana. *Vṛndāvanaṁ parityajya na pādam ekaṁ gacchati.* Kṛṣṇa is supreme in Mathurā, He is more supreme in Dvārakā, and He is most supreme in Vṛndāvana. Kṛṣṇa's pastimes in Dvārakā are displayed by His Vāsudeva portion, yet there is no difference between the Vāsudeva portion manifested in Mathurā and Dvārakā and the original manifestation of Kṛṣṇa at Vṛndāvana. In the beginning of this book we have discussed that when Kṛṣṇa appears, all His incarnations, plenary portions and portions of the plenary portions come with Him. Thus some of His different pastimes are manifested not by the original Kṛṣṇa Himself but by His different portions and plenary portions of incarnation. Arjuna was therefore puzzled about how Kṛṣṇa went to see the Kāraṇārṇavaśāyī Viṣṇu in the spiritual world. This is fully discussed in the commentaries of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākur.

It is understood from the speech of Mahā-Viṣṇu that He was very anxious to see Kṛṣṇa. It may be said, however, that since Mahā-Viṣṇu took away the *brāhmaṇa's* sons, He certainly must have gone to Dvārakā to do so. Therefore, why did He not see Kṛṣṇa there? A possible answer is that Kṛṣṇa cannot be seen even by the Mahā-Viṣṇu who is lying in the Causal Ocean of the spiritual world, unless Kṛṣṇa gives His permission. Thus Mahā-Viṣṇu took away the *brāhmaṇa's* sons one after another just after their births so that Kṛṣṇa would come personally to retrieve them and then Mahā-Viṣṇu would be able to see Him there. If that is so, the next

question is this: Why would Mahā-Viṣṇu come to Dvārakā personally if He were not able to see Kṛṣṇa? Why did He not send some of His associates to take away the sons of the *brāhmaṇa?* A possible answer is that it is very difficult to put any of the citizens of Dvārakā into trouble in the presence of Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, it was not possible for any of Mahā-Viṣṇu's associates to take away the *brāhmaṇa's* sons, and thus He personally came to take them.

Another question may also be raised: The Lord is known as *brahmaṇya-deva,* the worshipable Deity of the *brāhmaṇas,* so why was He inclined to put a *brāhmaṇa* into such a terrible condition of lamentation over one son after another until the ninth son was taken away? The answer is that Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu was so anxious to see Kṛṣṇa that He did not hesitate even to give trouble to a *brāhmaṇa.* Although giving trouble to a *brāhmaṇa* is a forbidden act, Lord Viṣṇu was prepared to do anything in order to see Kṛṣṇa—He was so anxious to see Him. After losing each of his sons, the *brāhmaṇa* would come to the gate of the palace and accuse the King of not being able to give the *brāhmaṇas* protection and of thus being unfit to sit on the royal throne. It was Mahā-Viṣṇu's plan that the *brāhmaṇa* would accuse the *kṣatriyas* and Kṛṣṇa, and Kṛṣṇa would be obliged to come see Him to take back the *brāhmaṇa's* sons.

Still another question may be raised: If Mahā-Viṣṇu cannot see Kṛṣṇa, then how was Kṛṣṇa obliged to come before Him after all to take back the sons of the *brāhmaṇa?* The answer is that Lord Kṛṣṇa went to see Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu not exactly to take away the sons of the *brāhmaṇa* but only for Arjuna's sake. His friendship with Arjuna was so intimate that when Arjuna prepared himself to die by entering the fire, Kṛṣṇa wanted to give him complete protection. Arjuna, however, would not desist from entering the fire unless the sons of the *brāhmaṇa* were brought back. Therefore Kṛṣṇa promised him, "I will bring back the *brāhmaṇa's* sons. Do not try to commit suicide."

If Lord Kṛṣṇa were going to see Lord Viṣṇu only to reclaim the sons of the *brāhmaṇa,* then He would not have waited until the ninth son was taken. But when the ninth son was taken away by Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu and Arjuna was therefore ready to enter the fire because his promise was going to prove false, that serious situation made Lord Kṛṣṇa decide to go with Arjuna to see Mahā-Viṣṇu. It is said that Arjuna is an empowered incarnation of Nara-Nārāyaṇa. He is even sometimes called Nara-Nārāyaṇa. The Nara-Nārāyaṇa incarnation is also one of Lord Viṣṇu's plenary expansions. Therefore, when Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna went to see Lord Viṣṇu, it is to be understood that Arjuna visited in His Nara-Nārāyaṇa capacity, just as

Kṛṣṇa, when He displayed His pastimes in Dvārakā, acted in His Vāsudeva capacity.

After visiting the spiritual world, Arjuna concluded that whatever opulence anyone can show within the material or spiritual worlds is all a gift of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Lord Kṛṣṇa is manifested in various forms, as *Viṣṇu-tattva* and *jīva-tattva,* or, in other words, as *sāṁśa* and *vibhinnāṁśa. Viṣṇu-tattva* is known as *sāṁśa,* and *jīva-tattva* is known as *vibhinnāṁśa.* He can, therefore, display Himself by His different transcendental pastimes, either in the portion of *sāṁśa* or *vibhinnāṁśa,* as He likes, but still He remains the original Supreme Personality of Godhead .

The concluding portion of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes is found in the Nintieth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* and in this chapter Śukadeva Gosvāmī wanted to explain how Kṛṣṇa lived happily at Dvārakā with all opulences. Kṛṣṇa's opulence of strength has already been displayed in His different pastimes, and now it will be shown how His residence at Dvārakā displayed His opulences of wealth and beauty. In this material world, which is only a perverted reflection of the spiritual world, the opulences of wealth and beauty are considered to be the highest of all opulences. Therefore, while Kṛṣṇa stayed on this planet as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, His opulences of wealth and beauty had no comparison within the three worlds. Kṛṣṇa enjoyed sixteen thousand beautiful wives, and it is most significant that He lived at Dvārakā as the only husband of these hundreds and thousands of beautiful women. It is specifically stated in this connection that He was the only husband of sixteen thousand wives. It is, of course, not unheard of in the history of the world that a powerful king would keep many hundreds of queens, but although such a king might be the only husband of so many wives, he could not enjoy all of them at one time. Kṛṣṇa, however, enjoyed all of His sixteen thousand wives simultaneously.

Although it may be said that *yogīs* also can expand their bodies into many forms, the *yogis'* expansion and Lord Kṛṣṇa's expansion are not one and the same. Kṛṣṇa is therefore sometimes called *yogeśvara,* the master of all *yogīs.* In the Vedic literature we find that the *yogī* Saubhari Muni expanded himself into eight. But that expansion was like a television expansion. The television image is manifested in millions of expansions, but those expansions cannot act differently; they are simply reflections of the original and can only act exactly as the original does. Kṛṣṇa's expansion is not material like the expansion of the television or the *yogī.* When Nārada visited the different palaces of Kṛṣṇa, he saw that Kṛṣṇa, in His different expansions, was variously engaged in each and every palace of the queens.

It is also said that Kṛṣṇa lived at Dvārakā as the husband of the goddess of fortune. Queen Rukmiṇī is the goddess of fortune, and all the other queens are her expansions. So Kṛṣṇa, the chief of the Vṛṣṇi dynasty, enjoyed with the goddess of fortune in full opulence. The queens of Kṛṣṇa are described as permanently youthful and beautiful. Although Kṛṣṇa had grandchildren and great-grandchildren, neither Kṛṣṇa nor His queens looked older than sixteen or twenty years of age. The young queens were so beautiful that when they moved they appeared like lightning moving in the sky. They were always dressed with exalted ornaments and garments and were always engaged in sportive activities like dancing, singing or playing ball on the roofs of the palaces. The dancing and tennis playing of girls in the material world appear to be perverted reflections of the original pastimes of the original Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, and His wives.

The roads and streets of the city of Dvārakā were always crowded with elephants, horses, chariots and infantry soldiers. When elephants are engaged in service, they are given liquor to drink, and it is said that the elephants in Dvārakā were given so much liquor that they would sprinklė a great quantity of it on the road and still would walk on the streets intoxicated. The infantry soldiers passing on the streets were profusely decorated with golden ornaments, and horses and golden chariots plied along the streets. In all directions of Dvārakā City, wherever one would turn his eyes he would find green parks and gardens, and each of them was filled with trees and plants laden with fruits and flowers. Because there were so many nice trees of fruits and flowers, all the sweetly chirping birds and the buzzing bumblebees joined together to make sweet vibrations. The city of Dvārakā thus fully displayed all opulences. The heroes in the dynasty of Yadu used to think themselves the most fortunate residents of the city, and actually they enjoyed all transcendental facilities.

All the sixteen thousand palaces of Kṛṣṇa's queens were situated in this beautiful city of Dvārakā, and Lord Kṛṣṇa, the supreme eternal enjoyer of all these facilities, expanded Himself into sixteen thousand forms and simultaneously engaged in different family affairs in those sixteen thousand palaces. In each and every one of the palaces there were nicely decorated gardens and lakes. The crystal clear water of the lakes contained many blooming lotus flowers of different colors like blue, yellow, white and red, and the saffron powder from the lotus flowers was blown all around by the breeze. All the lakes were full of beautiful swans, ducks and cranes, crying occasionally with melodious sounds. Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa sometimes entered those lakes, or sometimes the rivers, with His wives and enjoyed

swimming pastimes with them in full jubilation. Sometimes the wives of Lord Kṛṣṇa, who were all goddesses of fortune, would embrace the Lord in the midst of the water while swimming or taking bath, and the red vermilion of *kuṅkuma* decorating the beauty of their breasts would adorn the chest of the Lord with a reddish color.

The impersonalists would not dare to believe that in the spiritual world there are such varieties of enjoyment, but in order to demonstrate the factual, ever-blissful enjoyment in the spiritual world, Lord Kṛṣṇa descended on this planet and showed that the spiritual world is not devoid of such pleasurable facilities of life. The only difference is that in the spiritual world such facilities are eternal, never-ending occurrences, whereas in the material world they are simply impermanent perverted reflections. When Lord Kṛṣṇa was engaged in such enjoyment, the Gandharvas and professional musicians would glorify Him with melodious musical concerts, accompanied by *mṛdaṅgas,* drums, kettledrums, stringed instruments and brass bugles, and the whole atmosphere would change into a greatly festive celebration. In a festive mood, the wives of the Lord would sometimes sprinkle water on the Lord's body with a syringe-like instrument, and the Lord would similarly wet the bodies of the queens. When Kṛṣṇa and the queens engaged themselves in these pastimes, it seemed as if the heavenly King, Yakṣarāja, were engaged in such pastimes with his many wives. (Yakṣarāja is also known as Kuvera and is considered to be the treasurer of the heavenly kingdom.) When the wives of Lord Kṛṣṇa thus became wet, their breasts and thighs would increase in beauty a thousand times, and their long hair would fall down to decorate those parts of their bodies. The beautiful flowers which were placed in their hair would fall, and the queens, being seemingly harassed by the Lord's throwing water at them, would approach Him on the plea of snatching the syringe-like instrument, and this attempt would create a situation wherein the Lord could embrace them as they willingly approached Him. Upon being embraced, the wives of the Lord would feel on their mouths a clear indication of conjugal love, and this would create an atmosphere of spiritual bliss. When the garland on the neck of the Lord then touched the breasts of the queens, their whole bodies became covered with saffron yellow. Being engaged in their celestial pastimes, the queens forgot themselves, and their loosened hair appeared like the beautiful waves of a river. When the queens sprinkled water on the body of Kṛṣṇa or He sprinkled water on the bodies of the queens, the whole situation appeared just like an elephant enjoying in a lake along with many she-elephants.

After enjoying fully amongst themselves, the queens and Lord Kṛṣṇa would come out of the water, and their wet garments, which were very valuable, would be given up by them to be taken away by the professional singers and dancers. These singers and dancers had no other means of subsistence than the rewards of valuable garments and ornaments left by the queens and kings on such occasions. The whole system of society was so well planned that all the members of society in their different positions as *brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas, vaiśyas,* and *śūdras* had no difficulty in earning their livelihood. There was no competition among the divisions of society. The original conception of the caste system was so planned that one group of men engaged in a particular type of occupation would not compete with another group of men engaged in a different occupation.

In this way, Lord Kṛṣṇa used to enjoy the company of His sixteen thousand wives. Devotees of the Lord who want to love the Supreme Personality of Godhead in the mellow of conjugal love are elevated to the position of becoming wives of Kṛṣṇa, and Kṛṣṇa also keeps them always attached to Him by His kind behavior. Kṛṣṇa's behavior with His wives, His movements, His talking with them, His smiling, His embracing, and similar other activities just like a loving husband kept them always very much attached to Him. That is the highest perfection of life. If someone remains always attached to Kṛṣṇa, it is to be understood that he is liberated, and his life is successful. With any devotee who loves Kṛṣṇa with his heart and soul, Kṛṣṇa reciprocates in such a way that the devotee cannot remain unattached to Him. The reciprocal dealings of Kṛṣṇa and His devotees are so attractive that a devotee cannot think of any subject matter other than Krsna.

For all the queens, Kṛṣṇa only was their worshipable objective. They were always absorbed in thought of Kṛṣṇa, the lotus-eyed and beautifully blackish Personality of Godhead. Sometimes, in thought of Kṛṣṇa, they remained silent, and in great ecstasy of *bhāva* and *anubhāva* they sometimes spoke as if in delirium. Sometimes, even in the presence of Lord Kṛṣṇa, they vividly described the pastimes they had enjoyed in the lake or in the river with Him. Some of such talk may be described here.

One of the queens said to the bird *kurarī,* "My dear *kurarī,* now it is very late at night. Everyone is sleeping. The whole world is now calm and peaceful. At this time, the Supreme Personality of Godhead is sleeping, although His knowledge is undisturbed by any circumstance. Then why are you not sleeping? Why are you lamenting like this throughout the whole night? My dear friend, is it that you are also attracted by the lotus eyes of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and by His sweet smiling and

attractive words, exactly as I am? Do those dealings of the Supreme Personality of Godhead pinch your heart as they do mine?

"Hello *cakravākī.* Why have you closed your eyes? Are you searching after your husband, who might have gone to foreign countries? Why are you lamenting so pitiably? Alas, it appears that you are very much aggrieved. Or is it a fact that you also are willing to become an eternal servitor of the Supreme Personality of Godhead? I think that you are anxious to put a garland on the lotus feet of the Lord and then place it on your hair.

"O my dear ocean, why are you roaring all day and night? Don't you like to sleep? I think that you have been attacked by insomnia, or, if I am not wrong, my dear Śyāmasundara has tactfully taken away your gravity and power of forbearence, which are your natural qualifications. Is it a fact that for this reason you are suffering from insomnia like me? Yes, I admit that there is no remedy for this disease.

"My dear moon-god, I think that you have been attacked by a severe type of tuberculosis. For this reason, you are becoming thinner and thinner day by day. O my lord, you are now so weak that your thin rays cannot dissipate the darkness of night. Or is it a fact that, just as I have, you also have been stunned by the mysteriously sweet words of my Lord Śyāmasundara. Is it a fact that it is because of this severe anxiety that you are so grave?

"O breeze from the Himalayas, what have I done to you that you are so intent on teasing me by awakening my lust to meet Kṛṣṇa? Do you not know that I have already been injured by the crooked policy of the Personality of Godhead? My dear Himalayan breeze, please know that I have already been stricken. There is no need to injure me more and more.

"My dear beautiful cloud, the color of your beautiful body exactly resembles my dearmost Śyāmasundara's bodily hue. I think, therefore, that you are very much dear to my Lord, the chief of the dynasty of the Yadus, and because you are so dear to Him, you are, exactly as I am, absorbed in meditation. I can appreciate that your heart is full of anxiety for Śyāmasundara. You appear to be excessively eager to see Him, and I see that for this reason only, there are drops of tears gliding down from your eyes, just as there are from mine. My dear black cloud, we must admit frankly that to establish an intimate relationship with Śyāmasundara means to purchase unnecessary anxieties while we are otherwise comfortable at home."

Generally the cuckoo sounds its cooing vibration at the end of night or early in the morning. When the queens heard the cooing of the cuckoo at

the end of night, they said, "Dear cuckoo, your voice is very sweet. As soon as you vibrate your sweet voice, we immediately remember Śyāmasundara because your voice exactly resembles His. We must frankly admit that your voice is imbued with nectar, and it is so invigorating that it is competent to bring back life to those who are almost dead in separation from their dearmost friend. So we are very much obliged to you. Please let us know how we can welcome you or how we can do something for you."

The queens continued talking like that, and they addressed the mountain as follows: "Dear mountain, you are very generous. By your gravitation only, the whole crust of this earth is properly maintained, and because you are discharging your duties very faithfully, you do not know how to move. Because you are so grave, you do not move hither and thither, nor do you say anything. Rather, you always appear to be in a thoughtful mood. It may be that you are always thinking of a very grave and important subject matter, but we can guess very clearly what you are thinking of. We are sure that you are thinking of placing the lotus feet of Śyāmasundara on your raised peaks, as we want to place His lotus feet on our raised breasts.

"Dear dry rivers, we know that because this is the summer season, all your beds are dry and you have no water. Because all your water has now been dried up, you are no longer beautified by blooming lotus flowers. At the present moment, you appear to be very lean and thin, so we can understand that your position is exactly like ours. We have lost everything due to being separated from Śyāmasundara, and we no longer hear His pleasing words. Our hearts no longer work properly, and therefore we also have become very lean and thin. We think, therefore, that you are just like us. You have turned lean and thin because you are not getting any water from your husband, the ocean, through the clouds." The example given herewith by the queens is very appropriate. The river beds become dry when the ocean no longer supplies water through the clouds. The ocean is supposed to be the husband of the river and therefore is supposed to support her. Unless a woman is supported by the husband with the necessities of life, she also becomes as dry as a dry river.

One queen addressed a swan as follows. "My dear swan, please come here, come here. You are welcome. Please sit down and take some milk. My dear swan, can you tell me if you have any message from Śyāmasundara? I take you to be a messenger from Him. If you have any such news, please tell me. Our Śyāmasundara is always very independent. He never comes under the control of anyone. We have all failed to control Him, and

therefore we ask you, is He keeping Himself well? I may inform you that Śyāmasundara is very fickle. His friendship is always temporary; it breaks even by slight agitation. But would you kindly explain why He is so unkind to me? Formerly He said that I alone am His dearmost wife. Does He remember this assurance? Anyway, you are welcome. Please sit down. But I cannot accept your entreaty to go to Śyāmasundara. When He does not care for me, why should I be mad after Him? I am very sorry to let you know that you have become the messenger of a poor-hearted soul. You are asking me to go to Him, but I am not going. What is that? You talk of His coming to me? Does He desire to come here to fulfill my long expectation for Him? All right. You can bring Him here. But don't bring with Him His most beloved goddess of fortune. Do you think that He cannot be separated from the goddess of fortune even for a moment? Could He not come here alone, without Lakṣmī? His behavior is very displeasing. Does it mean that without Lakṣmī, Śyāmasundara cannot be happy? Can't He be happy with any other wife? Does it mean that the goddess of fortune has the ocean of love for Him, and none of us can compare to her?"

All the wives of Lord Kṛṣṇa were completely absorbed in thought of Him. Kṛṣṇa is known as the *yogeśvara,* the master of all *yogīs,* and all the wives of Kṛṣṇa at Dvārakā used to keep this *yogeśvara* within their hearts. Instead of trying to be master of all yogic mystic powers, it is better if one simply keeps the supreme *yogeśvara,* Kṛṣṇa, within his heart. Thus one's life can become perfect, and one can very easily be transferred to the kingdom of God. It is to be understood that all the queens of Kṛṣṇa who lived with Him at Dvārakā were in their previous lives very greatly exalted devotees who wanted to establish a relationship with Kṛṣṇa in conjugal love. Thus they were given the chance to become His wives and enjoy a constant loving relationship with Him. Ultimately, they were all transferred to the Vaikuṇṭha planets.

The Supreme Absolute Truth Personality of Godhead is never impersonal. All the Vedic literatures glorify the transcendental performance of His various personal activities and pastimes. It is said that in the Vedas and in the *Rāmāyaṇa,* only the activities of the Lord are described. Everywhere in the Vedic literature, His glories are sung. As soon as soft-hearted people such as women hear those transcendental pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa, they immediately become attracted to Him. Soft-hearted women and girls are therefore very easily drawn to the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. One who is thus drawn to the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement and tries to keep himself in constant touch with such consciousness certainly gets the supreme salvation, going back to Kṛṣṇa at Goloka Vṛndāvana. If simply by

developing Kṛṣṇa consciousness one can be transferred to the spiritual world, one can simply imagine how blissful and blessed were the queens of Lord Kṛṣṇa, who talked with Him personally and who saw Lord Kṛṣṇa eye to eye. No one can properly describe the fortune of the wives of Lord Kṛṣṇa. They took care of Him personally by rendering various transcendental services like bathing Him, feeding Him, pleasing Him and serving Him. Thus no one's austerities can compare to the service of the queens at Dvārakā.

Śukadeva Gosvāmī informed Mahārāja Parīkṣit that for self-realization the austerities and penances performed by the queens at Dvārakā have no comparison. The objective of self-realization is one: Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, although the dealings of the queens with Kṛṣṇa appear just like ordinary dealings between husband and wife, the principal point to be observed is the queens' attachment for Kṛṣṇa. The entire process of austerity and penance is meant to detach one from the material world and to enhance one's attachment to Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Kṛṣṇa is the shelter of all persons advancing in self-realization. As an ideal householder, He lived with His wives and performed the Vedic rituals just to show less intelligent persons that the Supreme Lord is never impersonal. Kṛṣṇa lived with wife and children in all opulence, exactly like an ordinary conditioned soul, just to exemplify to those souls who are actually conditioned that one may enter into the circle of family life as long as Kṛṣṇa is the center. For example, the members of the Yadu dynasty lived in the family of Kṛṣṇa, and Kṛṣṇa was the center of all their activities.

Renunciation is not as important as enhancing one's attachment to Kṛṣṇa. The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is especially meant for this purpose. We are preaching on the principle that it does not matter whether a man is a *sannyāsī* or *gṛhastha.* One simply has to increase his attachment for Kṛṣṇa, and then his life is successful. Following in the footsteps of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, one can live with his family members or within the society or nation, not for the purpose of indulging in sense gratification but to realize Kṛṣṇa by advancing in attachment for Him. There are four principles of elevation from conditional life to the life of liberation, which are technically known as *dharma, artha, kāma* and *mokṣa* (religion, economic development, sense gratification and liberation). If one lives a family life following in the footsteps of Lord Kṛṣṇa's family members, one can achieve all four of these principles of success simultaneously by making Kṛṣṇa the center of all activities.

It is already known to us that Kṛṣṇa had 16,108 wives. All these wives were exalted liberated souls, and among them Queen Rukmiṇī was the

chief. After Rukmiṇī there were seven other principal wives, and the names of the sons of these eight principal queens have already been mentioned. Besides these eight queens, Lord Kṛṣṇa had ten sons by each of the other queens. Thus all together Kṛṣṇa's children numbered 16,108 times ten. One should not be astonished to hear that Kṛṣṇa had so many sons. One should always remember that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead and that He has unlimited potencies. He claims all living entities as His sons, so even if He had sixteen million sons attached to Him personally, there would be no cause for astonishment.

Among Kṛṣṇa's greatly powerful sons, eighteen sons were *mahā-rathas.* The *mahā-rathas* could fight alone against many thousands of soldiers, charioteers, cavalry and elephants. The reputations of these eighteen sons are very widespread and are described in almost all the Vedic literatures. The eighteen *mahā-ratha* sons are listed as Pradyumna, Aniruddha, Dīptimān, Bhānu, Sāmba, Madhu, Bṛhadbhānu, Citrabhānu, Vṛka, Aruṇa, Puṣkara, Vedabāhu, Śrutadeva, Sunandana, Citrabāhu, Virūpa, Kavi and Nyagrodha. Of these eighteen *mahā-ratha* sons of Kṛṣṇa, Pradyumna is considered to be the foremost. Pradyumna happened to be the eldest son of Queen Rukmiṇī, and he inherited all the qualities of his great father, Lord Kṛṣṇa. He married the daughter of his maternal uncle, Rukmī, and Aniruddha, the son of Pradyumna, was born from that marriage. Aniruddha was so powerful that he could fight against ten thousand elephants. He married the granddaughter of Rukmī, the brother of his grandmother, Rukmiṇī. Because the relationship between these cousins was distant, such a marriage was not uncommon. Aniruddha's son was Vajra. When the whole Yadu dynasty was destroyed by the curse of a *brāhmaṇa,* only Vajra survived. Vajra had one son whose name was Pratibāhu. The son of Pratibāhu was named Subāhu, the son of Subāhu was named Śāntasena, and the son of Śāntasena was Śatasena.

It is stated by Śukadeva Gosvāmī that all the members of the Yadu dynasty had many children. Just as Kṛṣṇa had many sons, grandsons and great-grandsons, so each one of the kings named herewith also had similar family extensions. Not only did all of them have many children, but all were extraordinarily rich and opulent. None of them were weak or short-lived, and above all, all the members of the Yadu dynasty were staunch devotees of the brahminical culture. It is the duty of the *kṣatriya* kings to maintain the brahminical culture and to protect the qualified *brāhmaṇas,* and all these kings discharged their duties very rightly. The members of the Yadu dynasty were so numerous that it would be very difficult to describe them all even if one had a duration of life of many thousands of

years. Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī informed Mahārāja Parīkṣit that he had heard from reliable sources that simply to teach the children of the Yadu dynasty, there were as many as 38,800,000 tutors or *ācāryas*. If so many teachers were needed to educate their children, one can simply imagine how vast was the number of family members. As for their military strength, it is said that King Ugrasena alone had ten quadrillion soldiers as personal bodyguards.

Before the advent of Lord Kṛṣṇa within this universe, there were many battles between the demons and the demigods. Many demons died in the fighting, and they all were given the chance to take birth in high royal families on this earth. Because of their royal exalted posts, all these demons became very much puffed up, and their only business was to harass their subjects. Lord Kṛṣṇa appeared on this planet just at the end of Dvāpara-yuga in order to annihilate all these demonic kings. As it is said in the *Bhagavad-gītā, paritrāṇāya sādhūnāṁ vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām:* The Lord comes to protect the devotees and to annihilate the miscreants. Some of the demigods were also asked to appear on this earth to assist in the transcendental pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa. When Kṛṣṇa appeared, He came in the association of His eternal servitors, but the demigods also were requested to come down to assist Him, and thus all of them took their births in the Yadu dynasty. The Yadu dynasty had 101 clans in different parts of the country. All the members of these different clans respected Lord Kṛṣṇa in a manner befitting His divine position, and all of them were His devotees heart and soul. Thus all the members of the Yadu dynasty were very opulent, happy and prosperous, and they had no anxieties. Because of their implicit faith in and devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa, they were never defeated by any other kings. Their love of Krsna was so intense that in their regular activities—in sitting, sleeping, traveling, talking, sporting, cleansing and bathing—they were simply absorbed in thoughts of Kṛṣṇa and paid no attention to bodily necessities. That is the symptom of a pure devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Just as when a man is fully absorbed in some particular thought, he sometimes forgets his other bodily activities, so the members of the Yadu dynasty acted automatically for their bodily necessities, but their actual attention was always fixed on Kṛṣṇa. Their bodily activities were performed mechanically, but their minds were always absorbed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī has concluded the Ninetieth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* by pointing out five particular excellences of Lord Kṛṣṇa. The first excellence is that before Lord Kṛṣṇa's appearance in the Yadu family, the River Ganges was known as the purest

of all things; even impure things could be purified simply by touching the water of the Ganges. This superexcellent power of the Ganges water was due to its having emanated from the toe of Lord Viṣṇu. But when Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Viṣṇu, appeared in the family of the Yadu dynasty, He traveled personally throughout the kingdom of the Yadus, and by His intimate association with the Yadu dynasty, the whole family not only became very famous but also became more effective in purifying others than the water of the Ganges.

The next excellence of Lord Kṛṣṇa's appearance was that although apparently He gave protection to the devotees and annihilated the demons, both the devotees and the demons achieved the same result. Lord Kṛṣṇa is the bestower of five kinds of liberation, of which *sāyujya-mukti,* or the liberation of becoming one with the Supreme, was given to the demons like Kaṁsa, whereas the *gopīs* were given the chance to associate with Him personally. The *gopīs* kept their individuality to enjoy the company of Lord Kṛṣṇa, but Kaṁsa was accepted into His impersonal *brahmajyoti.* In other words, both the demons and the *gopīs* were spiritually liberated, but because the demons were enemies and the *gopīs* were friends, the demons were killed and the *gopīs* were protected.

The third excellence of Lord Kṛṣṇa's appearance was that the goddess of fortune, who is worshiped by demigods like Lord Brahmā, Indra and Candra, remained always engaged in the service of the Lord, even though the Lord gave more preference to the *gopīs.* Lakṣmījī, the goddess of fortune, tried her best to be on an equal level with the *gopīs,* but she was not successful. Nevertheless, she remained faithful to Kṛṣṇa, although generally she does not remain at one place even if worshiped by demigods like Lord Brahmā.

The fourth excellence of Lord Kṛṣṇa's appearance concerns the glories of His name. It is stated in the Vedic literature that by chanting the different names of Lord Viṣṇu a thousand times, one may be bestowed with the same benefits as by thrice chanting the holy name of Lord Rāma. And by chanting the holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa only once, one receives the same benefit. In other words, of all the holy names of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, including Viṣṇu and Rāma, the holy name of Kṛṣṇa is the most powerful. The Vedic literature therefore specifically stresses the chanting of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. Lord Caitanya introduced this chanting of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa in this age, thus making liberation more easily obtainable than in other ages. In other words, Lord Kṛṣṇa is more excellent than His other incarnations,

although all of them are equally the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

The fifth excellence of Lord Kṛṣṇa's appearance is that He established the most excellent of all religious principles by His one statement in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that simply by surrendering unto Him, one can discharge all the principles of religious rites. In the Vedic literature there are twenty kinds of religious principles mentioned, and each of them is described in different *śāstras.* But Lord Kṛṣṇa is so kind to the fallen conditioned souls of this age that He personally appeared and asked everyone to give up all kinds of religious rites and simply surrender unto Him. It is said that this age of Kali is three-fourths devoid of religious principles. Hardly one fourth of the principles of religion are still observed in this age. But by the mercy of Lord Kṛṣṇa, this vacancy of Kali-yuga has not only been completely filled, but the religious process has been made so easy that simply by rendering transcendental loving service unto Lord Kṛṣṇa by chanting His holy names, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare, one can achieve the highest result of religion, namely, being transferred to the highest planet within the spiritual world, Goloka Vṛndāvana. One can thus immediately estimate the benefit of Lord Kṛṣṇa's appearance and can understand that His giving relief to the people of the world by His appearance was not at all extraordinary.

Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmi thus concludes his description of the super-exalted position of Lord Kṛṣṇa by glorifying Him in the following way: "O Lord Kṛṣṇa, all glories unto You. You are present in everyone's heart as Paramātmā. Therefore You are known as Jananivāsa, one who lives in everyone's heart." As confirmed in the *Bhagavad-gītā, īśvaraḥ sarva-bhūtānāṁ hṛd-deśe 'rjuna tiṣṭhati:* The Supreme Lord in His Paramātma feature lives within everyone's heart. This does not mean, however, that Kṛṣṇa has no separate existence as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The Māyāvādī philosophers accept the all-pervading feature of Para-brahman, but when Parabrahman, or the Supreme Lord, appears, they think that He appears under the control of material nature. Because Lord Kṛṣṇa appeared as the son of Devakī, the Māyāvādī philosophers accept Kṛṣṇa to be an ordinary living entity who takes birth within this material world. Therefore Śukadeva Gosvāmī warns them that *devakī-janma-vāda,* which means that although Kṛṣṇa is famous as the son of Devakī, actually He is the Supersoul or the all-pervading Supreme Personality of Godhead. The devotees, however, take this word *devakī-janma-vāda* in a different way. The devotees understand that actually Kṛṣṇa was the son of mother Yaśodā. Although Kṛṣṇa first of all appeared as the son of Devakī, He immediately transferred Himself to the lap of mother Yaśodā, and His

childhood pastimes were blissfully enjoyed by mother Yaśodā and Nanda Mahārāja. This fact was also admitted by Vasudeva himself when he met Nanda Mahārāja and Yaśodā at Kurukṣetra. He admitted that Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were actually the sons of mother Yaśodā and Nanda Mahārāja. Vasudeva and Devakī were only Their official father and mother. Their actual father and mother were Nanda and Yaśodā. Therefore Śukadeva Gosvāmī addressed Lord Kṛṣṇa as *devakī-janma-vāda.*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī then glorifies the Lord as one who is honored by the *yadu-vara-pariṣat,* the assembly house of the Yadu dynasty, and as the killer of different kinds of demons. Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, could have killed all the demons by employing His different material energies, but He wanted to kill them personally in order to give them salvation. There was no need of Kṛṣṇa's coming to this material world to kill the demons. Simply by His willing, many hundreds and thousands of demons could have been killed without His personal endeavor. But actually He descended for His pure devotees, to play as a child with mother Yaśodā and Nanda Mahārāja and to give pleasure to the inhabitants of Dvārakā. By killing the demons and by giving protection to the devotees, Lord Kṛṣṇa established the real religious principle, which is simply love of God. By following the factual religious principles of love of God, even the living entities known as *sthira-cara* were also delivered of all material contamination and were transferred to the spiritual kingdom. *Sthira* means the trees and plants, which cannot move, and *cara* means the moving animals, specifically the cows. When Kṛṣṇa was present, He delivered all the trees, monkeys and other plants and animals who happened to see Him and serve Him both in Vṛndāvana and in Dvārakā.

Lord Kṛṣṇa is especially glorified for His giving pleasure to the *gopīs* and the queens of Dvārakā. Śukadeva Gosvāmī glorifies Lord Kṛṣṇa for His enchanting smile, by which He enchanted not only the *gopīs* at Vṛndāvana but also the queens at Dvārakā. The exact word used in this connection is *vardhayan kāmadevam.* In Vṛndāvana as the boy friend of many *gopīs* and in Dvārakā as the husband of many queens, Kṛṣṇa increased their lusty desires to enjoy with Him. For God realization or self-realization, one generally has to undergo severe austerities and penances for many, many thousands of years, and then it may be possible to realize God. But the *gopīs* and the queens of Dvārakā, simply by enhancing their lusty desires to enjoy Kṛṣṇa as their boy friend or husband, received the highest type of salvation.

This behavior of Lord Kṛṣṇa with the *gopīs* and queens is unique in the history of self-realization. Usually people understand that for

self-realization one has to go to the forest or to the mountains and undergo severe austerities and penances. But the *gopīs* and the queens, simply by being attached to Kṛṣṇa in conjugal love and enjoying His company in a so-called sensuous life full of luxury and opulence, achieved the highest salvation, which is impossible to be achieved even by great sages and saintly persons. Similarly, the demons such as Kaṁsa, Dantavakra, Śiśupāla, etc., also got the highest benefit of being transferred to the spiritual world.

In the beginning of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* Śrīla Vyāsadeva offered his respectful obeisances to the Supreme Truth, Vāsudeva, Kṛṣṇa. After that he taught his son, Śukadeva Gosvāmī, to preach *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.* It is in this connection that Śukadeva Gosvāmī glorifies the Lord as *jayati.* Following in the footsteps of Śrīla Vyāsadeva, Śukadeva Gosvāmī and all the *ācāryas* in disciplic succession, the whole population of the world should glorify Lord Kṛṣṇa, and for their best interest they should take to this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. The process is easy and helpful. It is simply to chant the *mahāmantra,* Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. Lord Caitanya has therefore recommended that one should be callous to the material ups and downs. Material life is temporary, and so the ups and downs of life may come and go. When they come, one should be as tolerant as a tree and as humble and meek as the straw in the street, but certainly he must engage himself in Kṛṣṇa consciousness by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare.

The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, the Supersoul of all living entities, out of His causeless mercy comes down and manifests His different transcendental pastimes in different incarnations. Hearing the attractive pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa's different incarnations is a chance for liberation for the conditioned soul, and the most fascinating and pleasing activities of Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself are still more attractive because Lord Kṛṣṇa personally is all-attractive.

Following in the holy footsteps of Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī, we have tried to present this book *Kṛṣṇa* for being read and heard by the conditioned souls of this age. By hearing the pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa, one is sure and certain to get salvation and be transferred back home, back to Godhead. It is recommended by Śukadeva Gosvāmī that as we hear the transcendental pastimes and activities of the Lord, we gradually cut the knots of material contamination. Therefore, regardless of what one is, if one wants the association of Lord Kṛṣṇa in the transcendental kingdom of God for eternity in blissful existence, one must hear about the pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa and chant the *mahāmantra,* Hare Kṛṣṇa,

Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

The transcendental pastimes of the Supreme Personality of Godhead Kṛṣṇa are so powerful that simply by hearing, reading and memorizing this book *Kṛṣṇa,* one is sure to be transferred to the spiritual world, which is ordinarily very difficult to achieve. The description of the pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa is so attractive that automatically it gives us an impetus to study repeatedly, and the more we study the pastimes of the Lord, the more we become attached to Him. This very attachment to Kṛṣṇa makes one eligible to be transferred to His abode, Goloka Vṛndāvana. As we have learned from the previous chapter, to cross over the material world is to cross over the stringent laws of material nature. The stringent laws of material nature cannot check the progress of one who is attracted by the spiritual nature. This is confirmed in the *Bhagavad-gītā* by the Lord Himself: although the stringent laws of material nature are very difficult to overcome, if anyone surrenders unto the Lord, he can very easily cross over nescience. There is, however, no influence of material nature in the spiritual world. As we have learned from the Second Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* the ruling power of the demigods and the influence of material nature are conspicuous by their absence in the spiritual world.

Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī has therefore advised Mahārāja Parīkṣit in the beginning of the Second Canto that every conditioned soul should engage himself in hearing and chanting the transcendental pastimes of the Lord. Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī also informed King Parīkṣit that previously many other kings and emperors went to the jungle to prosecute severe austerities and penances in order to go back home, back to Godhead. In India, it is still a practice that many advanced transcendentalists give up their family lives and go to Vṛndāvana to live there alone and completely engage in hearing and chanting of the holy pastimes of the Lord. This system is recommended in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* and the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana followed it, but at the present moment many *karmīs* and pseudo-devotees have overcrowded the holy place of Vṛndāvana just to imitate this process recommended by Śukadeva Gosvāmī. It is said that many kings and emperors formerly went to the forest for this purpose, but Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākur Gosvāmī Mahārāja does not recommend that one take up this solitary life in Vṛndāvana prematurely.

One who goes prematurely to Vṛndāvana to live in pursuance of the instructions of Śukadeva Gosvāmī again falls a victim of *māyā,* even while residing in Vṛndāvana. To check such unauthorized residence in Vṛndāvana, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākur has sung a nice song in this

connection, the purport of which is as follows: "My dear mind, why are you so proud of being a Vaiṣṇava? Your solitary worship and chanting of the holy name of the Lord are based on a desire for cheap popularity, and therefore your chanting of the holy name is only a pretension. Such an ambition for a cheap reputation can be compared to the stool of a hog because such popularity is another extension of the influence of *māyā.*" One may go to Vṛndāvana for cheap popularity, and instead of being absorbed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, one may always think of money and women, which are simply temporary sources of happiness. It is better that one engage whatever money and women he may have in his possession in the service of the Lord because sense enjoyment is not for the conditioned soul.

The master of the senses is Hṛṣīkeśa, Lord Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, the senses should always be engaged in His service. As for material reputation, there were many demons like Rāvaṇa who wanted to go against the laws of material nature, but they all failed. One should therefore not take to the demoniac activity of claiming to be a Vaiṣṇava just for false prestige, without performing service to the Lord. But when one engages oneself in the devotional service of the Lord, automatically the Vaiṣṇava reputation comes to him. There is no need to be envious of the devotees who are engaged in preaching the glories of the Lord. We have practical experience of being advised by the so-called *bābājīs* in Vṛndāvana that there is no need to preach and that it is better to live in Vṛndāvana in a solitary place and chant the holy name. Such *bābājīs* do not know that if one is engaged in preaching work or in glorifying the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the good reputation of a preacher automatically follows one. One should not, therefore, prematurely give up the honest life of a householder to lead a life of debauchery in Vṛndāvana. Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī's recommendation to leave home and go to the forest in search of Kṛṣṇa is not for immature persons. Mahārāja Parīkṣit was mature. Even in his householder life, or from the very beginning of his life, he worshiped Lord Kṛṣṇa's *mūrti.* In his childhood he worshiped the Deity of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and later, although he was a householder, he was always detached, and therefore when he got the notice of his death, he immediately gave up all connection with household life and sat down on the bank of the Ganges to hear *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in the association of devotees.

Thus ends the Bhaktivedanta purport of the Ninetieth Chapter of Kṛṣṇa, *"Summary Description of Lord Kṛṣṇa's Pastimes."*

Thus ends Volume Two of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.



Glossary

Akṣauhiṇī—a military division consisting of 21,870 chariots, 21,870 elephants, 206,950 infantry soldiers and 65,600 cavalry

Ātmārāma—self-satisfied sage

Bahulāśva—King of Videha who personally received the Supreme Lord as a guest in his home

Bali Mahārāja—king of the lower planetary system, Sutalaloka; he gave everything to Kṛṣṇa in His incarnation as Vāmana

Balvala—giant demon killed by Balarāma

Bāṇāsura—thousand-armed demon who arrested Aniruddha

Bhaumāsura—demon killed by Lord Kṛṣṇa after complaints by Lord Indra

Brahma-rākṣasas—*brāhmaṇas* who have become ghosts

Cāmara—whisk or fan used by Kṛṣṇa's queens in Dvārakā to fan the Lord

Dantavakra—demon friend of Śālva, killed by a blow of Kṛṣṇa's club

Dvārakā—Lord Kṛṣṇa's opulent, fortified city built within the water

Dvivida—gorilla demon killed by Balarāma

Hastināpura—capital city of the Pāṇḍavas, entered by Kṛṣṇa at the time of the Rājasūya sacrifice

Jāmbavān—a devotee of Lord Rāmacandra who fought with Kṛṣṇa over the Syamantaka jewel

Jāmbavatī—one of Kṛṣṇa's wives, the daughter of Jāmbavān

Kālindī—the Yamunā River personified, a wife of Kṛṣṇa

Kaumudī—an especially fragrant flower found on the bank of the Yamunā River

Kuṅkuma—a sweetly flavored reddish powder which is thrown upon the bodies of worshipable persons

Kuntīdevī—the mother of the Pāṇḍavas, a paternal aunt and pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa

Lakṣmaṇā—wife of Kṛṣṇa who heard of Him from Nārada and was taken

by Kṛṣṇa during her *svayaṁvara.* Lakṣmaṇā is also the name of a wife of Sāmba.

Māgadhas—professional singers present at sacrifices

Mahā-ratha—a warrior who can fight against ten thousand others

Māyāvāda—the system of philosophy propounded by the impersonalists

Mitravindā—a wife whom Kṛṣṇa won in her *svayaṁvara* competition

Nāgapāśa—snake-noose, used by Bāṇāsura to subdue Aniruddha

Nārāyaṇaśastra—weapon of Nārāyaṇa (Kṛṣṇa) used by Him to counteract Lord Śiva's *Pāśupataśastra* weapon

Nṛga—king who had to become a lizard due to his discrepancies in giving charity

Paramahaṁsa—(literally, the supreme swan) a person who can draw out the spiritual essence, just as a swan can extract milk from water

Pāriṣāta—a type of flower found only in the heavenly planets

Pauṇḍraka—an imposter who, claiming to be the Supreme Personality of Godhead, challenged Kṛṣṇa and was killed by His Sudarśana-cakra

Pradyumna—son of Kṛṣṇa and Queen Rukmiṇī

Rājasūya-yajña—great sacrifice performed by Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira and attended by Lord Kṛṣṇa

Rohiṇī—a wife of Kṛṣṇa

Romaharṣaṇa—disciple of Vyāsadeva who failed to offer Lord Balarāma respects and was killed by Balarāma with a blade of grass

Rukmiṇī—Lord Kṛṣṇa's principal queen at Dvārakā

Śālva—demon who attacked Dvārakā with a mystic airplane and was killed by Lord Kṛṣṇa

Saṅkīrtana-yajña—the recommended sacrifice for the age of Kali, chanting of the holy names of God

Śāstras—revealed scriptures

Śatadhanvā—a demon who killed Satrājit for the Syamantaka jewel and was later killed by Kṛṣṇa's disc

Satyā—wife of Kṛṣṇa whom He won by subduing seven bulls

Satyabhāmā—one of Kṛṣṇa's principal queens

Sāyujya-mukti—merging into the existence of the Supreme. This type of impersonal liberation was awarded to demons, such as Śiśupāla, personally killed by Kṛṣṇa

Śiśupāla—demon who insulted Kṛṣṇa at the Rājasūya-*yajña* and was killed by Him

Śonitāpura—capital city of the demon Bhaumāsura

Śrutadeva—poor *brāhmaṇa* who received Kṛṣṇa in his home and pleased the Lord

Subhadrā—sister of Kṛṣṇa who was kidnapped and married by Arjuna
Sudāmā—brāhmaṇa devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa who was an intimate boyhood friend of the Lord
Sudarśana-cakra—personal weapon of Śrī Kṛṣṇa
Śukadeva Gosvāmī—the exalted son of Vyāsadeva, the first narrator of the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*
Sūta Gosvāmī—the speaker of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* before the sages at Naimiṣāraṇya
Sūtas—professional singers present at sacrifices
Svayaṁvara—ceremony of open competition in which the conquering prince wins a princess in marriage
Tridaṇḍa—three rods carried by Vaiṣṇava *sannyāsīs,* indicating service to God in mind, body and words
Uṣā—girl who married Kṛṣṇa's grandson Aniruddha after a battle with Bhaumāsura's army
Vaiṣṇava—devotee of Lord Nārāyaṇa (Kṛṣṇa) who sees every living entity as part and parcel of the Lord
Vāruṇī—daughter of the demigod Varuṇa who came in the form of liquid honey which was drunk by Lord Balarāma
Viṣṇu-tattva—expansions of Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead
Yudhiṣṭhira Mahārāja—eldest Pāṇḍava brother, a cousin to Kṛṣṇa, and a pure devotee of the Lord



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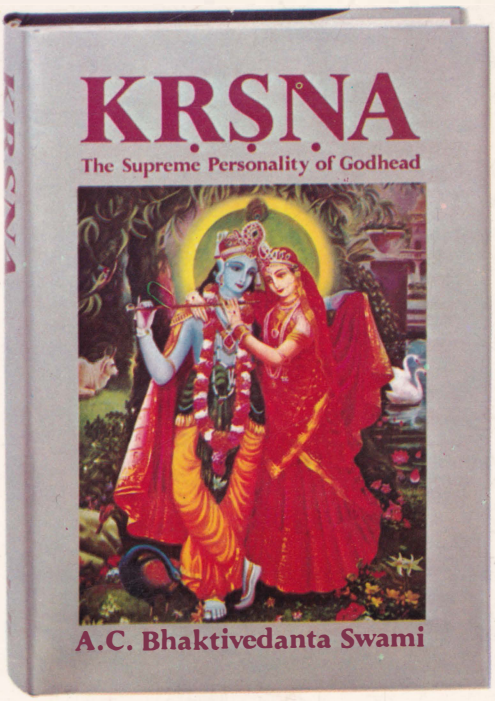
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