

Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsadeva

ŚRĪMAD BHĀGAVATAM
(Bhāgavata Purāṇa)

The Story of the Fortunate One



Canto 5

Translated by Anand Aadhar

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CANTO 5: The Creative Impetus

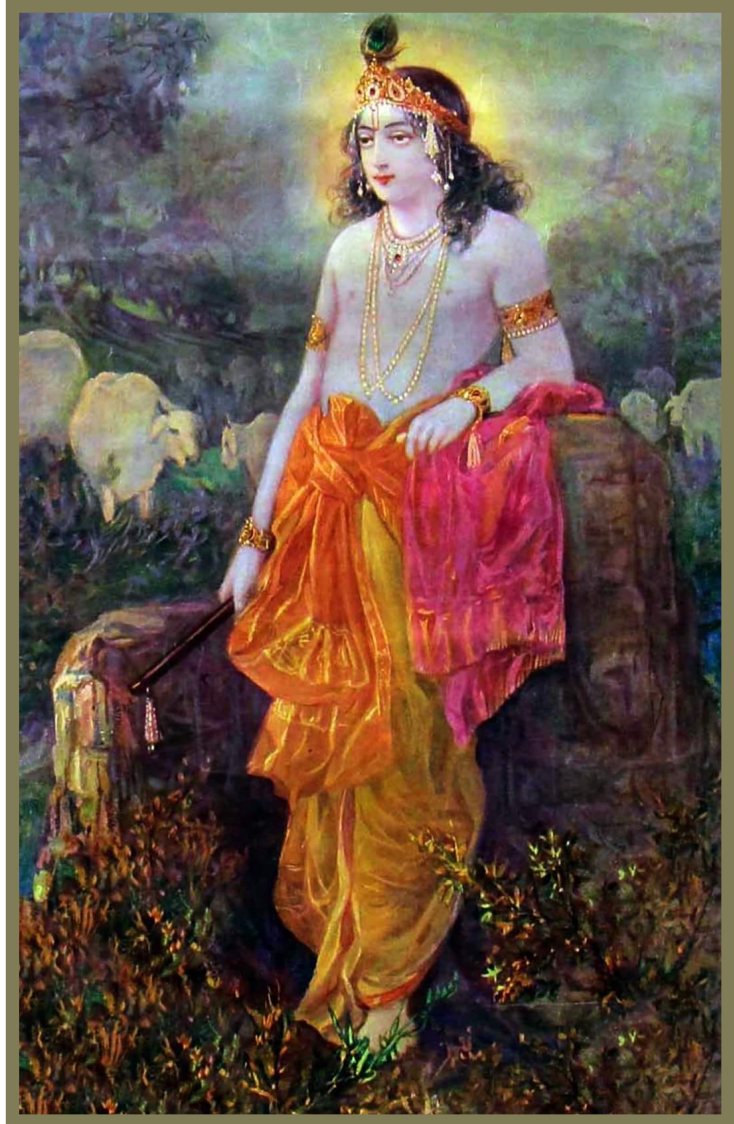
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Viṣṇu [the name for the transcendental form of Lord Kṛṣṇa]. We owe him much gratitude. He undertook the daring task of enlightening the materialist westerners, the advanced philosophers and theologians, in order to help them to overcome the perils and loneliness of impersonalism and the philosophy of emptiness.

The representative of Viṣṇu on earth is named the Fortunate One in this book. We know Him specifically by the names of Lord Rāma and Lord Kṛṣṇa. The Fortunate One is the Lord who is known by His different forms or incarnations, the so-called *avatāras*. But also the devotees are part of His reality and are also called *bhāgavata* when they are of pure devotion. On top of that the book is

Introduction

This book relates the story of the Lord and His incarnations since the earliest records of Vedic history, the history of the original culture of knowledge of India. It is verily the Kṛṣṇa 'bible' [in Sanskrit called a *saṁhitā*] of the Hindu universe. The [Bhagavad Gītā](#) relates to this book the way in Christianity the sermon on the mountain, by Lord Jesus, relates to the full Bible. It has about 18,000 verses contained in 335 chapters and consists of 12 subdivisions of books that are called Cantos. These books together tell the complete history of the Vedic culture and cover the essence of the classical collections of stories called the Purāṇas. This specific collection of Vedic stories is considered the most important one of all the great eighteen classical Purāṇas of India. It includes the cream of the Vedic knowledge compiled from all the Vedic literatures, as also the story of the life of Lord Kṛṣṇa in full ([Canto 10](#)). Lord Kṛṣṇa constitutes a watershed in history between the old Vedic culture and the 'modern' political culture of a continuous word struggle, in which the rule of state no longer automatically is led by the spiritual order. The book tells the story of His birth, His youth, all wonderful proofs of His divine nature and His superhuman feats of defeating all kinds of demons, up to the great Mahābhārata war at Kurukṣetra. In this war the Vedic culture fell down to be replaced by the fragmented religiosity we these days call Hinduism. This leading Purāṇa, also called the 'perfect Purāṇa', is a brilliant story that has been brought to the West by [Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda](#) (1896-1977). He was a Caitanya Vaiṣṇava, a bhakti (devotional) monk of Lord



also called *bhāgavata*. Thus there is the Lord in His many appearances, the devotee with as many faces, and the book. They are all called *bhāgavata* or fortunate. The word *bhāga* means fortune or luck, while the term *bhaga* refers to gracious lord, happiness and wealth. To be fortunate Vedicly means to be of the opulence, or to carry, or live by, the fullness of God's riches, beauty, fame, power, knowledge and detachment.

The writer of this book is named Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsadeva, and is also known as Bādarāyana. He is the Lord, the *Bhagavān* or venerable one among the philosophers, who in India assembled all the holy texts. He compiled the Vedas, four basic scriptures also known as the *śruti* meaning 'that what is heard', containing the basic wisdom, the mantras for the rituals and the hymns. The Purāṇas together with the Itihāsas (the separate stories) belong to the so-called *smṛti*, 'that what is remembered'. This knowledge is sometimes considered a fifth Veda. Vyāsa also wrote the book titled Mahābhārata. It is considered the greatest epic poem in the world. It describes the history (Itihāsa) of the great fall the Vedic culture once made, this culture based on spiritual knowledge. The Bhagavad Gītā is the most important part of it. Vyāsa also wrote the rest of the eighteen great story books (the Purāṇas) of India as also the Brahma-sūtra, his masterpiece on the Absolute Truth. Vyāsa was a grandfather of the Kuru dynasty. He lived a very long time. His long duration of life enabled him to write the story of the Fortunate One and all the other books. He had a son called Śukadeva who handed down the message of this holy story book, in the presence of other sages, to another member of the family, Emperor Parīkṣit, who had difficulty respecting the classical wisdom. This emperor is in this book, presented in the form of a frame story, present as a model for us normal people who seek their stability in wisdom. This knowledge was by Śuka conveyed to him in disciplic succession (*paramparā*) for the sake of the science of devotional service (bhakti), to be taught by those who teach by example (the *ācāryas*). Swami A. C. Bhaktivedanta Prabhupāda, from this disciplic succession was commissioned to disseminate this book in the West. He realized this together with his pupils (known as the Hare Kṛṣṇas of ISKCON), with [a verse by verse commented series of books](#) covering the entire Bhāgavatam. This site offers not all these texts (see [vedabase.io](#)) but it does offer, under the Creative

Commons Copyright, an as-it-is translation, independent from ISKCON, of the verses in a concatenated accessible form, complete with the [Sanskrit original version](#) and [a dictionary covering the terms used in the book](#), the previous version, a reading in mp3's and 74 bhajans for performing the necessary chanting alone and in association. This text is regularly updated and maintained by us. As a devotee I as the translator, the undersigned, received my instructions for devotional service in the temples of ISKCON, as also elsewhere. My predecessor in this duty in the Netherlands was [Śrī Hayeśvar das \(Hendrik van Teylingen 1938-1998\)](#), who was initiated by Prabhupāda. He covered most of the formal ISKCON translations into Dutch.

For the translation of this internet version were consulted the translations of C.L Goswami, M.A., Sāstrī (from the Gītā Press, Gorakhpur), the *paramparā* [disciplic succession] version of Śrīla Viṣvanātha Cakravartī Thākura and the later version of this book by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. The latter translators as *ācāryas* of the age-old Indian Vaiṣṇava tradition, are representatives of a culture of reformation of the devotion for God or bhakti, the way it has been practiced in India since the 16th century. This reformation asserts that the false authority of the caste system and single dry book knowledge is to be rejected. Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, also called Caitanya Mahāprabhu (1486-1534), the *avatāra* [an incarnation of the Lord] who heralded this reform, restored the original purpose of developing devotion unto the person of God. He endeavored in particular for the dissemination of the two main sacred scriptures expounding on that devotion in relation to Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. These scriptures are the [Bhagavad Gītā](#) and this Bhāgavata Purāṇa, which is also called the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam. From this scripture all the Vaiṣṇava teachers of example derived, and still derive, their wisdom for the purpose of the instruction and shaping of their exemplary devotion. The word for word translations as also the full text and commentaries of this book were studied within and without the Hare Kṛṣṇa temples where the teaching of this culture takes place.

The purpose of the translation is first of all to make this glorious text available to a wider audience over the Internet. Since the Bible, the Koran and numerous other holy texts are readily avail-

lable, the translator, the undersigned, meant that this book could not stay behind on the shelf of his own bookcase as a token of material possessiveness. When we started with this endeavor in the year 2000 there was no proper web presentation of this book. Knowledge not shared is knowledge lost, and certainly this type of knowledge, which stresses the yoga of non-possessiveness and devotion as one of its leading principles, could not be left out. The version of Swami Prabhupāda is very extensive covering some 2400 pages of plain fine printed text, including his commentaries. And these covered only the first ten Cantos. The remaining two Cantos were posthumously translated, commented and published by his pupils in full respect of his spirit.

I thus was faced with two daring challenges: one was to concatenate the text, or make a readable running narrative, of the book that had been dissected and commented to the single word. The second challenge was to put it into a language that would befit the 21st century with all its modern and postmodern experience and digital progress of the present cultural order of the world, without losing anything of its original verses. Thus another verse to verse as-it-is translation came about in which Viṣvanātha's, Prabhupāda's and Sāstrī's words were pruned, retranslated and set to the understanding and realization of today. This realization, in my case, originated directly from the disciplic line of succession of the Vaiṣṇava line of *ācāryas*, as also from a realization of the total field of Indian philosophy of enlightenment and yoga discipline, as was brought to the West by also non-Vaiṣṇava gurus and maintained by their pupils. Therefore the author has to express his gratitude also to all these great heroes who dared to face the adamantine of western philosophy with all its doubts, concreticism and skepticism. In particular the pupils of Prabhupāda, members of the renounced order (*sannyāsīs*) who instructed the author in the independence and maturity of the philosophy of the bhakti-yogis of Lord Caitanya, need to be mentioned. I was already initiated in India by a non-Vaiṣṇava guru who gave me the name Swami Anand Aadhar ('teacher of the foundation of happiness'). That name the Kṛṣṇa community converted into Anand Aadhar Prabhu ('master of the foundation of happiness), without further ceremonies of Vaiṣṇava initiation (apart from a basic training). With the name Anand Aadhar I am a withdrawn devotee, a so-called *vānapraṣṭa*, who does

his devotional service independently in the silence and modesty of his local adaptations of the philosophy.

In most cases the word for word translations and grammatical directions of Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda/ISKCON, Viṣvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura and C.L. Goswami M.A., Sāstrī, have been followed as they were used in their translations. I have checked them with the help of the Monier-Williams Sanskrit Dictionary [see [the file of the terms used](#)]. In footnotes and between square brackets [] sometimes a little comment and extra info is given to accommodate the reader when the original text is drawing from a more experienced approach. Terms in italics are explained in the glossary ([the lexicon](#)). On the internet site [bhagavata.org](#) of this book, my - from ISKCON independent - version directly links to the version of Prabhupāda at each verse, together with my own previous version, so that it is possible to retrace at any moment what we, [Sakhya Devi Dāsī](#), who faithfully always assisted me for more than 23 years in the duty, and I, this servant of the Lord, have done with the text. It was realized in accordance with the scientific tradition of the Vaiṣṇava community.

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With love and devotion,
 Anand Aadhar Prabhu,
 Sakhya Devi Dāsī,
 Enschede, The Netherlands, January 24, 2024.

Chapter 1

The Activities of Mahārāja Priyavrata

(1) The King [Parīkṣit] said: 'Why, oh sage, was Priyavrata, the great devotee content with the soul, so happy to stay at home, the place that is the root cause of bondage in karma and contempt [for the renounced order]? (2) Surely such a thing as indulgence in family affairs, oh wisest of the twice-born, cannot be desirable for that kind of people free from attachments? (3) It suffers no doubt that the consciousness of great souls finds its satisfaction in the shade of the feet of the Lord praised in the verses, and not so much in the mind of attachment to kith and kin. (4) This is my great doubt, oh brahmin: how can [as with Priyavrata] on account of the forces of one's wife, home, children and so on, perfection and an unflinching determination unto Kṛṣṇa come about?'

(5) Śrī Śuka said: 'You are perfectly right in what you said about the hearts of liberated persons and devotees that are absorbed in the nectarean honey of the talks at the lotuslike feet of their beloved Lord praised in the scriptures. Despite the setbacks they sometimes encounter, they practically never give up their most exalted position. (6) It is a well-known fact, oh King, that prince Priyavrata indeed was a supreme devotee who, in his service at Nārada's feet, very quickly became aware of the complete truth concerning the spiritual purpose that he constantly discussed in dedicated enthusiasm. Even though his father asked him to rule over the surface of the earth because he incorporated so many of the best qualities, he

could not be happy with it. He did not want to be distracted in his great liking for, with all of his senses and actions, in yoga being absorbed in the Supreme Lord of the Soul of the Universe, but for no reason he could refuse to accept that post because, when he in any other way would forgo the untrue, that certainly would lead to [cultural] decay. (7) And so it happened that the first among the demigods Lord Brahmā, surrounded by all his personal associates and the Vedas, descended from his abode. It is he who is always thinking of the welfare of the complete of this universal creation consisting of the three modes. He knows its ultimate purpose, the Supreme Soul, from which he originated himself. (8) Alike the moon in the sky among the stars, he on his way here and there by the leaders of the demigods was worshiped from their heavenly carriers. And the same was done by groups of perfected souls, inhabitants of heaven, refined souls, singers and sages [respectively the Siddhas, the Gandharvas, the Cāranas, the Sādhyas and the Munis] when he thus as the radiating center reached the vicinity of the Gandhamādana mountains [where Priyavrata was meditating]. (9) Recognizing the swan-carrier of his almighty father Lord Hiraṇyagarbha [Brahmā] the *devaṛṣi* [Nārada], Priyavrata and his father [Svāyambhuva Manu] present there immediately rose to their feet



with their hands folded in order to be respectfully of worship with all the paraphernalia. (10) Oh son of Bhārata, the Lord, the original person of the universe, who thus out of gratitude for the glory of his descent, according to the customs, was confronted with the articles of worship and the praise of his qualities in lofty language, then addressed Priyavrata, while he looked at him with a compassionate smile.

(11) **T**he great Lord said: 'My son, pay attention to the truth I'm telling you, you should not be jealous of the Godhead who is beyond our ken. We, Lord Śiva, your father and this great Ṛṣi [Nārada] all carry out His order and cannot deviate. (12) No living entity that accepted a material body can escape from what was decided by Him; not by austerity nor by education, not by yoga nor by one's strength or intelligence, nor can one ever defy His will by one's opulence, by the virtue of one's duty, with the help of someone else or by any personal endeavor. (13) Oh my dear, under the direction of the One Unseen, all living entities accept it to be connected to a material body for performing actions according to their karma and are thus always bound to birth and death, sadness and illusion, fear, happiness and distress. (14) My son, in our inevitable bondage to *guṇa* and *karma* we, just like the four-legged [bull] that with a rope through its nose is bound to the two-legged [driver], are tied to the long rope of Vedic instruction and to all [who within the *varnāśrama* system are] engaged in contributing to please the Lord. (15) Like blind men being led by someone who can see, my best one, we [being submitted to His Vedic rope] inevitably have to face the distress and happiness associated with the qualities and the work, depending the situation of the body that our Protector gave us. (16) Even a liberated person must for a lifetime maintain his body that he obtained as a consequence of the past, enjoying it free from erroneous conceptions. But as far as another material body is concerned [a repeated birth], he sees matters like someone who awakened from sleep; he will never follow the lead of its material qualities. (17) Someone not paying attention to this [someone not willing to control his senses] has, even when he resides in the forest, to fear because of the six co-wives [of the five senses and the

mind]. But [on the other hand] what harm can a householder's existence do to a self-satisfied, learned man who has conquered his senses? (18) Having entered a household existence, anyone who wants to conquer those six adversaries must first try to master them from within that stronghold. For only when the unregulated desires of those firm enemies have lost their strength one, thus having ripened with experience, can move about freely. (19) When you have conquered these six opponents and are freed from attachments by these special orders of the Original Person, you, sheltered in this fortress by the safe haven of the lotus feet of Him with the lotuslike navel, can enjoy all pleasures in the world and thus find your way.'

(20) **Śrī Śuka** said: 'The great devotee of [Brahmā] the mighty Lord who is the spiritual master of the three worlds, thus being fully instructed, as a humble soul bowed his head in acceptance of his order and said: 'Yes I will' and respectfully carried out what he said. (21) With Priyavrata and Nārada in peace taking notice, the great Lord was also duly respected by Manu. Thereupon he left to return to his abode, the place above all places which is indescribable and unfathomable. (22) Manu who, as well supported by Lord Brahmā, executed his plan and with the permission of Nārada handed the responsibility for the maintenance and protection of all the worlds in the universe over to his son, was [therewith] personally relieved from his desires in the so very dangerous, poisonous ocean of the material world. (23) [Priyavrata, Manu's son who as] the emperor of the universe, according to the order of the Lord, thus was fully engaged in material affairs, was by constantly meditating on the two lotus feet of the Supreme Lord, the Original Person whose transcendental influence destroys all bondage, completely purified with all the dirt washed from his heart and ruled the material world with the only wish to honor the great souls. (24) He thereupon married Barhiṣmatī, the daughter of Viśvakarmā, one of the founding fathers, and begot in her, next to a daughter who as the youngest of his children carried the name Ūrjastvati, ten sons who in their character, qualities, activities, beauty and prowess were of a greatness equal to his own. (25) His sons he all gave the

names of Agni, the god of fire: Āgnīdhra, Idhmajihva, Yajñabāhu, Mahāvīra, Hiraṇyaretā, Gṛtapṛṣṭha, Savana, Medhātithi, Vītihotra and Kavi. (26) Three of them, Kavi, Mahāvīra and Savana were celibate souls who motivated from within, from the beginning of their childhood lived for the transcendental knowledge, on the basis of which they, well conversant with the highest spiritual perfection, took to the renounced order [the *paramahansa-āśrama*]. (27) These transcendental sages lived, by the peace of the qualities of that celebrated order (*), for the protection of the association of all living beings who, in fear and anxiety about their material existence, have the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord Vāsudeva, as their only shelter. In their constant remembrance they [the brothers], free from contaminations being purified by virtue of the highest form of yoga - the yoga of devotion - observed in their hearts the Supreme Lord of all living beings. They saw Him directly as situated within themselves and realized that they were equal to Him in their quality, that they [in that sense] did not differ from the Lord of the Supersoul. (28) In another wife he begot three more sons named Uttama, Tāmasa and Raivata, who all became rulers of the Manu period [of 71 *mahāyugas* long]. (29) After his sons were trained in the renounced order he [Priyavrata] thus became the master of the universe where he, endowed with powerful arms of command, together with them pulled the bowstring loudly to defeat all who opposed the dharma. Without interruption for 110 million years there was the rule of the great soul who with the daily increasing amiability, femininity, shyness, laughs, glances and exchanges of love [in his repeated births] with his wife Barhiṣmatī enjoyed a life of pleasure. But confounded and defeated by it he lost his discernment. (30) Not appreciating that the sun god, as long as he circumambulated mount Meru, lit up one side of the earth and left the other half in the dark, he who in his worship of the Fortunate One was of a supernatural power then said: 'I will make the night as brilliant as the day', and to enforce that he followed the orbit of the sun in a chariot, exactly seven times and with the same speed, like he was a second sun. (31) With the rims of the wheels of his chariot creating trenches, were by him thus operating the seven oceans brought about that di-

vided the earth [Bhū-maṇḍala] into the seven *dvīpas* [the continents or 'islands']. (32) Known as Jambū, Plakṣa, Śālmali, Kuśa, Krauñca, Śāka and Puṣkara each of them is produced all around outside and twice as big as the one preceding it. (33) The seven oceans - [figuratively like a kind of body fluids] consisting of salt water, sugarcane juice, liquor, clarified butter, milk, fluid yogurt and sweet water - are of the same size as the islands that they, as the trenches [of his wheels], one after the other consecutively fully enclose. For each of the *dvīpas* separately the husband of Barhiṣmatī, beginning with Jambūdvīpa, installed as their ruler one of his faithful sons named Āgnīdhra, Idhmajihva, Yajñabāhu, Hiraṇyaretā, Gṛtapṛṣṭha, Medhātithi and Vītihotra.

(34) He further gave the daughter named Ūrjasvatī in marriage to the great sage Uśanā [Śukrācārya who is also called Kavi or Kavya]. She gave birth to a daughter named Devayānī. (35) For the devotees of the Lord of the Great Steps [Urukrama, see 1.3: 19] who, by resorting to the dust of His feet, are able to conquer the six qualities [of material life: hunger, thirst, lamentation, illusion, old age and death **], such a[n achievement of] personal power is not that surprising at all, for even a fifth-class person [an outcaste] will immediately forsake his material attachment when he only once utters the name of the Lord. (36) He [Priyavrata], thus unparalleled in strength and influence, one day understood that he, despite his surrender to the feet of the *devarṣi* [Nārada], had fallen down because of his concern with the basic qualities of matter in which he found no satisfaction [compare 1.5: 17]. In a spirit of renunciation he then said to himself: (37) 'Oh what a wrong I have done, for I was completely absorbed in the nescience of a life of sense gratification! The dark well of material pleasure made me guilty of a lot of distress and look like a dancing monkey, insignificant and of no importance in the hands of my wife. Doomed and damned I am indeed!' Thus he criticized himself. (38) With his self-realization achieved by the mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead in the beyond, with handing over the earth to his faithfully following sons, with dividing the inheritance, with forsaking his queen whom he had enjoyed so much, with giving up the dead corpus of

his great opulence and with his heart in perfect surrender having taken to renunciation, he was certain to be back on the path of the great saint Nārada and the stories about the Lord. (39) The following verses apply to him: 'What was done by Priyavrata no one could have done except for the Supreme Lord.' 'He dissipated the darkness and created the seven seas by the impressions of the rims of the wheels of his chariot.' (40) 'It was he who, in order to stop the fighting of the nations on the different continents, created the situation of the boundaries in this world in the form of rivers, mountain ranges and forests and such [compare 4.14: 45-46].' (41) 'He as the most beloved follower of the Original Person, considered all opulence of the lower worlds, the heavens and the earth, as also that what is acquired by fruitive action and by yoga [the *siddhis*], to be nothing but hell.'***

*: There are four stages in accepting the renounced order: 1) *Kuṭīcaka*: one stays outside one's village in a cottage, and one's necessities, especially one's food, are supplied from home. 2) *Bahūdaka*: one no longer accepts anything from home: instead, one, *mādhukart*, with the "profession of the bumblebees", collects one's necessities, especially one's food, from many places. 3) *Parivrājakācārya*: one travels all over the world to preach the glories of Lord Vāsudeva collecting one's necessities, especially one's food, from many places, and 4) *Paramahansa*: he finishes his preaching work and sits down in one place, strictly for the sake of advancing in spiritual life.¹¹

** : According to Sāstrī Goswami and Śrīla Viṣvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākur these 'six qualities' can also be understood as the five senses and the mind.

***: There seems to be a gross contradiction between the description of the universe found in the Bhāgavatam and the modern scientific, materialistic, view of the universe. For this reason many insufficiently trained Vaiṣṇava bhaktas became disappointed studying the book, having arrived at Canto 5. In 5-1: 30-35, seven islands are mentioned, or continents, separated by seven oceans in a concentric way. These would have been created by the wheels of a ruler named Priyavrata who moved in circles after the sun in a chariot because

the sun "always illumined only half of the world". One should know that Vyāsa in this chapter explains also, in verse 29, that this ruler, even though a great devotee, lost his discrimination for being attached to a householder's existence. But especially the statements that these oceans consisted of sugarcane juice, milk, clarified butter and liquor and such fluids, baffled many and made some of them bloop or never take the Bhāgavatam (the Lord in a literary form!) serious again.

It is important to understand in this context that in the different Cantos different styles of logic, types of intelligence, or views are exercised. In epistemology - the theory of knowledge - these matters are well known and holy books like the Bhāgavatam of course must give evidence of a full coverage of the different types of logic that belong to a divine type of comprehension, a full approach of the understanding of and logical reasoning about what we call 'reality'.

Thus, in these verses in the fifth Canto evidently things must not only be considered in the context of discussing the pros and cons of a householder's life, but also must not, and cannot be, taken literally. Straight literal materialistic interpretations of holy texts constitute a classical offense. These verses display the logic of art and literature, like: "He ran in circles after the sun, to fight the darkness of its shadow, he made trenches with his wheels, separating islands that men know etc. etc" - It is an analytic approach, called *sāṅkhya* - that is more interested in concise abstracted divisions and figures of speech without further explanation like one also finds in fairy tales, fictional novels and other works of art.

So, with Vyāsa entering this type of literary, artful logic in Canto 5, not giving further explanations - like he by contrast did before in 4.27 with the allegory of Purañjana's nine gate city -, these oceans seem to represent fluids belonging to the social body where water, milk, ghee and liquor are found everywhere like in oceans. The universe thus is equated with the social body. The material world as the body of the Lord was several times before stressed as a central theme in this Purāna. Therefore

re no further explanation anymore by Vyāsa. The reader is supposed to know by now.

The concentric tracks made by Priyavrata's wheels, thus seen, represent the time factor - also a recurring essential theme - and the continents or islands then represent different types of societies or cultures - historically developing one after the other like concentric circles do in a pond after a stone is thrown in - that find peace by boundaries, a feat for which Priyavrata is later commemorated (in verse 40).

This is how this text can make sense as good concise effective literature. Just give up the mistaken notion that only one type of logic would cover the entirety of the Absolute Truth (!). Evidently India runs on at least six types of logic or philosophical views. These are called '*śad-darśana*' and are essential for a comprehensive approach of what is called '*ātmatattva*', of Vedic spiritual knowledge, a type of epistemological knowledge one may also translate with the term - as coined by me - of filognoy: "the love for the knowledge of self-realization". Please read my books (e.g. 'The Person' at <http://filognoy.org>) for an in depth discussion of this epistemological matter.

Chapter 2 The Activities of Mahārāja Āgnīdhra

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'When his father chose the path of liberation and Āgnīdhra, as ordered, took his place, he, strictly following the dharma, protected the citizens, the inhabitants of Jambūdvīpa, like they were his children. (2) One day he desired a woman from the realm of the godly and engaged in austerities at the foot of the mountains where their playground is found. After he, in compliance with the rules of his forefathers, had gathered all the necessities for the service, he, fully attentive executing penances, was of worship for the master, the highest power of creation in the universe [Lord Brahmā]. (3) Understanding [what he wanted] the almighty Lord, the first person of the universe, sent down from his abode the celestial girl, the Apsara Pūrvacitti. (4) She there wandered

around in the woods near that place of meditation, that most beautiful was dense with various trees with masses of high reaching, golden creepers attached to the branches. The clear waters of the lake filled with lotuses resounded with the vibrations of the pleasant sounds of communicating pairs of land birds and on their turn responding water birds like ducks and swans. (5) The prince then, in the ecstasy of his yoga, heard the pleasant sounds of her ankle bells, that tinkled with every step she made with her so very attractive way of moving around playfully. Looking up with his half open lotus bud shaped eyes, he spotted her. (6) By her playful movements, shy glances, humility, sweet voice and by her limbs beautiful to behold and contemplate she, nearby just like a honeybee smelling the beautiful flowers, paved for both normal men and men of heaven the way for the flower bearing god of love. The goddess was stunning, making herself heard by the sweet nectar pouring out of her smiling and talking mouth, the sight of the hasty, stylish, little movements of her feet to [escape] the intoxicated bees surrounding her, the movements of her jug-like breasts, the weight of her hips, the braids of her hair and the belt around her waist. The mere sight of the goddess brought him fully under the control of the almighty Cupid and thus he seized the opportunity to address her.

(7) 'Who are you and what do you intend to do on this hill, oh choice of the *munis*? Are you some illusory appearance of the Supreme Lord, our God in the beyond? Dear friend, do you carry your two bows without strings [your eyebrows] for your own protection or are you hunting the heedless animals in this forest? (8) These two arrows [these eyes] of you, oh fortunate lady, that have feathers like lotus petals, have no shaft and are peaceful and very lovely. Who do you want to pierce with their sharp heads, loitering around in this forest? May your prowess be of service for the welfare of all of us who dull-witted fail to understand this! (9) All these followers around you [the bees], oh worshipable lady, are enjoying the resort of the tresses of your hair and all the flowers falling down from them, while they incessantly sing unto the Lord the prayers of the Sāma Veda and the Upaniṣad, like being sages of respect for the diffe-



rent types of Vedic literature. (10) From the resounding vibration alone of your ankle bells, I can very distinctly hear the tittiri birds, oh brahmin [girl], without seeing their form. Seeing your beautiful round hips with the lovely color of kadamba flowers and around them a belt red as burning cinders, I wonder where your [ascetic] bark dress would be. (11) What is it, oh twice-born one, that fills the two horns, oh heavenly appearance of beauty, that you carry to your slim waist? What do they contain that is so attractive to my eyes? And what is that fragrant red powder on the two of them with which you, oh fortunate one, are perfuming my spiritual resort? (12) Please show me where you live, oh dearest friend. Where was a person with such wonderful limbs like you born? For a person like me the many wonders of your lovely words and inviting gestures that are as sweet as nectar to the mouth, are something very arousing. (13) And what kind of food you have in your mouth? I can smell the pure ingredients of what you are chewing, my sweetest. You have to

be an expansion of Lord Viṣṇu, with your two wide open eyes and brilliant restless shark-shaped earrings in your ears, the rows of your beautiful teeth and your face that resembles a lake amidst the swarm of the bees around you. (14) My eyes are restless being distracted by the ball you strike with your lotus palm in all directions. Do you not care about the curls of your hair hanging loose? Is that lower garment of you not giving you trouble being taken up by the wind, like a man does who is interested in a woman? (15) Oh beauty, oh treasure of the sages, by what austerity did you manage to unsettle this way [with this body] so unfailingly the penance of all retired souls? You should practice the austerity with me, oh friend. Maybe you are meant for me because the creator of the created [Brahmā] is pleased with me. (16) I will not give up on you, oh sweetheart given to me by the god of spiritual rebirth. I have fixed my mind and eyes on you; I will not leave you and will keep you close to me, oh beauty with the marvelous breasts. You may lead me wherever you want, I am your follower, and your fine friends may follow.'

(17) Śrī Śuka said: 'Very expert in winning over women, he thus as intelligent as the gods with his flattery managed to gain the favor of the heavenly girl. (18) She who also was attracted to the intelligence, manners, beauty, youth, opulence and magnanimity of him, that master among the heroes, then enjoyed all earthly and heavenly pleasures, for an endless, countless number of years spending her time in attachment to him as the king of Jambūdvīpa. (19) Āgnīdhra, the best of all kings, begot in her nine sons named Nābhi, Kimpuruṣa, Harivarṣa, Ilāvṛta, Ramyaka, Hiraṇmaya, Kuru, Bhadrāśva and Ketumāla. (20) After she year after year had given birth to her sons, Pūrvacitti left home in order to return to the unborn godhead [Brahmā]. (21) The sons of Āgnīdhra, who because of their mother's care had strong, well-built bodies, were by their father allotted the divisions of the kingdom of Jambūdvīpa to be ruled by them that he gave their names [probably the Eurasian continent]. (22) King Āgnīdhra, not satisfied in his sensual desires, thought every day more and more about her, and [thus], as it is described

in the scriptures [in e.g. B.G. 8: 6], reached the place in heaven where she resided, the place [Pitrloka] where the forefathers live in delight. (23) After the departure of their father the nine brothers married the nine daughters of Meru who carried the names Merudevī, Prtirūpā, Ugradamṣṭrī, Latā, Ramyā, Śyāmā, Nārī, Bhadrā and Devavīti.'

Chapter 3

Rṣabhadeva's Appearance in the Womb of Merudevī, the Wife of King Nābhi

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'Nābhi, the son of Āgnīdhra, desiring to have sons with Merudevī who had not given birth to any children yet, offered together with her with great attention prayers in worship of the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu, the enjoyer of all sacrifices. (2) While he with great faith and devotion and a pure mind was of worship, the Supreme Lord out of His love to fulfill the desires of His devotees, manifested Himself in His most beautiful, unconquerable form pleasing to the mind and eyes. He saw Him with all of His captivating, beautiful limbs, even though that [normally] cannot be achieved merely by the means for performing the *pravargya* ceremony he was engaged in: the place and time, hymns, priests, gifts to the priests and the regulative principles. (3) When He manifested Himself very brightly in His four-handed form as the topmost of all living beings, in a yellow silk garment and with the beauty of the Śrīvatsa mark on His chest, His conch shell, lotus flower, disc, flower garland, the Kaustubha jewel and His club that characterize Him, He, radiating brilliantly with His helmet, earrings, bracelets, girdle, necklace, armllets, ankle bells etc. that ornamented His body, made king Nābhi, the priests and the others feel like poor people who had obtained a great treasure. Thereupon they, with great regard and all paraphernalia of worship, reverentially bent their heads. (4-5) The priests said: 'Please, oh Most Exalted One, accept the repeated offerings of respect of our worship. By that worship we, Your servants, are able to act, provided we follow the instructions of the exalted souls. Anyone not in control of his mind because of complete-

ly being absorbed by the fickleness of natural phenomena [the *guṇas*], can acquire knowledge of the names, forms and qualities that belong to the position in this world of You, the Supreme Lord above and beyond the influence of the material world! But, by most auspiciously expressing in words the excellence of Your transcendental qualities that wipe out all the sinful actions of mankind, we can only partly know You. (6) You are most pleased, oh Supreme Lord, by Your servants who in great ecstasy do their prayers with faltering voices and perform their worship with water, fresh twigs of green, *tulasī* leaves and sprouts of grass. (7) We do not see of what use it otherwise would be for Your sake to be encumbered with performing sacrifices and all the articles of worship. (8) You as the direct, self-sufficient embodiment of the civil virtues [the *puruṣārthas*], are of an endless and unlimited constant increase, oh Lord, but our desire for this blessing of You, can only be there for



the purpose of obtaining Your grace. (9) Even though You personally wish to open up, with Your causeless and inexhaustible mercy and glory, the path of liberation [called *apavarga*], and for that purpose have come here and are present for any ordinary man to see, we fail in our worship unto You. For we, oh Lord of Lords, are but fools unaware of Your ultimate welfare. (10) This before the eyes of Your devotees appearing of You here in this sacrifice of King Nābhi, oh Best of the Benefactors, really constitutes the greatest blessing, oh most worshipable one. (11) To those sages of whom strengthened by detachment countless impurities were removed by the fire of knowledge, to those sages satisfied within who attained Your qualities by incessantly reiterating Your stories and discussing Your many attributes, You [being present in person] are the highest blessing to achieve. (12) When we happen to stumble and fall down, suffer hunger, are bored, find ourselves in an awkward position and such or when we have a fever or lie on our deathbed and thus are not capable of remembering You, then let it be so that Your names, activities and qualities are discussed that have the potency to drive away all our sins. (13) Moreover this pious king [Nābhi] nevertheless aspires to be blessed by You with offspring, a son whom he hopes to be exactly like You: a supreme controller of the benedictions of heaven and the path leading there. With the notion of children as the ultimate goal of life asking this in worship of You, he thus behaves like a poor man who asks a wealthy person willing to donate for a bit of grain! (14) Who, failing to respect the feet of the great souls, is in this world of Yours not defeated by the unconquerable illusory energy [of *māyā*] because of which one cannot find one's path? Whose intelligence would not be bewildered by all the sensual pleasure that works like poison? Whose nature is not checked by that stream [that chain of consequences]? (15) Please excuse us in Your [divine indifference of] sameness with each and all, for having invited You again in this arena of sacrifice as the performer of many wonders, please tolerate us ignorant souls who, less intelligent being of disrespect for the divinity of You as the God of Gods, are aspiring a material outcome.'

(16) Śrī Śuka said: 'After the Supreme Lord, the leader of the sages, with this speech had been worshiped by the preservers of the realm [the priests of Nābhi] bowed down at His feet, He kindly addressed them. (17) The Supreme Lord said: 'Alas, pleased as I am by you, oh sages whose words are all true, the benediction you were asking for that there may be a son of Nābhi alike Me, is a thing most difficult to achieve. Being One without a second there cannot exist anyone else equal to Me. But the words of you brahmins cannot prove to be false [either], for the class of the brahmins represents My mouth. (18) Because there is no one to be found equal to Me, I shall, by personally expanding into a plenary portion of Myself, descend in [Merudevī,] the wife of Āgnīdhra's son.'

(19) Śrī Śuka said: 'After He thus, with her being present, had spoken to the husband of Merudevī, the Supreme Lord disappeared. (20) Oh grace of Viṣṇu [Parīkṣit], in order to please King Nābhi the Supreme Lord, who in this sacrificial arena was propitiated by the best of the sages, then appeared in his wife Merudevī. He manifested in His original *avatāra* form of pure goodness with the desire to show the sages of renunciation - who barely clothe themselves, lead an ascetic life and are of a continuous celibacy - the way to practice the dharma [the righteousness, the religion, the true nature].'

Chapter 4 The Characteristics of Rṣabhadeva

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'Because He [the son of king Nābhi, see previous chapter and 2.7: 10] from the beginning of His appearance distinguished Himself every day more and more with the authority of all the characteristics of the Supreme Lord, like being equal minded to all, being of perfect peace and renunciation and having all influence and powers, the ministers, citizens, the brahmins and the demigods longed greatly for the day that He would rule the earth. (2) Because of the in grand verses [by the poets] glorified exalted state of His auspicious appearance, His prowess, strength, beauty, fame, influence and heroism, His father gave Him the name Rṣabha, the Best One.'

(3) King Indra, jealous of His greatness, allowed no rain in Bhārata-varṣa, but the Supreme Lord Rṣabhadeva who knew [why that happened], being the Master of yoga smiled about it and then, from His internal [*yogamāyā*] potency, made the waters rain down on the place where He resided that was called Ajanābha. (4) King Nābhi who as he wanted had gotten the most beautiful son he could wish for, was in a state of illusion about Him, the Supreme Lordship and oldest, Original Person, who in his eyes behaved like a normal human being. Accepting Him as such he, overwhelmed by an excess of great jubilation, in ecstasy with a faltering voice said things like: 'my dear son, my darling' and thus raising Him achieved a state of transcendental happiness. (5) Knowing how popular Rṣabha was in His service to the citizens and the state, King Nābhi, who wanted to protect the people strictly to the principle, put his son on the throne. Entrusting Him to the brahmins he then, together with Merudevī in Badarikāśrama completely absorbed in yoga, with great satisfaction skillfully performed austerities in worship of Nara-Nārāyaṇa, [a plenary expansion of] the Supreme Lord Vāsudeva. This way he in the course of time attained His glorious abode [Vaikunṭha].

(6) Oh son of Pāṇḍu [Parīkṣit, see family tree], two verses are recited about him: 'Which person can follow the example of the pious king Nābhi, who by the purity of his actions got the Lord as his son?' and: (6) 'Is there besides Nābhi, a better devotee of the brahmins? Being satisfied and honored by him the scholars by dint of their prowess were able to show him the Lord of all sacrifices in the sacrificial arena.'

(8) The Supreme Lord Rṣabha, after accepting His kingdom as His field of work, set an example by living with His spiritual teachers and giving them donations upon finishing His studies. Being ordered to take up the duties of a householder He married Jayantī who had been offered to Him by Indra. He then taught by example how to

perform both types of activities as mentioned in the scriptures [of defending the religion and fighting injustice]. He begot a hundred sons [in her and in co-wives or through his sons with daughters-in-law] who were exactly like Him. (9) The eldest son Bharata was a great yoga practitioner. He had the best qualities and it was because of him that the people call this land Bhārata-varṣa. (10) Of the ninety-nine other sons who were born after Bharata, the eldest ones were called Kuśāvarta, Ilāvarta, Brahmāvarta, Malaya, Ketu, Bhadrāsena, Indraspṛk, Vidarbha and Kīkaṭa. (11-12) Among the rest of them Kavi, Havi, Antarikṣa, Prabuddha, Pīpalāyana, Āvirhotra, Drumila, Camasa and Karabhājana were nine highly advanced devotees in defense of the truth of this Bhāgavatam. About their fine characters evincing the glories of the Lord, I



will give you later on [in Canto 11] a colorful account when I discuss the conversation between Vāsudeva and Nārada that gives the mind the highest satisfaction. (13) The eighty-one younger sons of Jayantī were, faithful to what their father said, well cultured with a fine command of the scriptural truth and were most skilled in performing sacrifices. Very pure in their actions, they became great brahmins.

(14) **T**he Supreme Lord named Rṣabha was truly a completely independent Lordship full of pure transcendental bliss, a person always transcendental to the ever repeating miseries of material life [birth, old age disease and death]. Equiposed and unperturbed, He, friendly and merciful educated [by His example] the ignorant because of whose neglect in performing the dharma in the course of time only contrary karmic actions are found. He also regulated for the common people the religion and economy so that a good reputation, offspring, happiness in household life and eternal life was within their reach [compare B.G. 4: 13]. (15) Whatever is done by leading personalities is followed by the common people [see also B.G 3: 21]. (16) Despite knowing everything about the confidential Vedic instructions constituting the essence of all civil duties, He still [as a *kṣatriya*] followed the path laid out by the brahmins and ruled the people with sense control and tolerance and such. (17) Being of worship [unto Viṣṇu] He, also in respect of the different gods and purposes and, in line with the instructions, providing in abundance for everything that was needed, performed according to time and circumstance a hundred times over all kinds of ceremonial sacrifices with priests of the proper age and faith. (18) Being protected by the Supreme Lord Rṣabha no one on this planet, not even the most common man, fostered a desire for but even the smallest thing whatever, whenever, for himself or from anyone else, just as one would not desire a castle in the air. All one cared about was an innerly ever increasing, great love for the one carrying the burden. (19) When He, the Supreme Lord, once toured around and reached the holy land of Brahmāvarta [between the rivers the Sarasvatī and Dr̥ṣadvatī to the north west of Hastināpura], he before an audience of citizens in a meeting of prominent brahmins, said

the following to his attentive and well-behaved sons. He lectured them despite the fact that they excelled in self-control and devotion.'

Chapter 5

Lord Rṣabhadeva's Teachings to His Sons

(1) **L**ord Rṣabha said: 'My dear sons, this body you carry along within this material world, does not deserve it to suffer under the difficulties of a sense gratification like that of dogs and hogs [that eat disgusting things]. It is more worth the trouble to undergo the divine austerity from which the heart finds its purification and from which one achieves lasting spiritual happiness. (2) To be of service to the great souls, so one says, constitutes the way of liberation and to seek the association of those who are attached to women forms a gateway to darkness. Truly advanced are they who [in their spirituality] have an equal regard for all, are peaceful, take no offense, wish everyone the best and know how to behave. (3) They who are eager to live in a loving relationship with Me*, are not attached to people who are motivated only for the physical aspect of life consisting of a home, spouse, children, wealth, friends and making money; they engage in worldly matters only according to necessity. (4) The madly being engaged in unwanted activities for the sake of this material satisfaction I consider as not befitting the soul, the conscientious self, that thus arrived at this temporary body despite the misery associated with it. (5) As long as one does not want to know about the reality of the soul, there will be misery because of ignorance. As long as one is of fruitful activities, there will be the mind ruled by karma that will bind one to this material body. (6) As long as unto Me, Vāsudeva, there is no love, a soul, that way being ruled by ignorance, will have a mind led by fruitful activities and will thus not be free from the [miseries of the] body it is identified with. (7) When one, even properly educated, does not see how useless the endeavor of gratifying the senses [in an unregulated manner] is, one will, not thinking properly about one's self-interest, very soon be crazy about it and as a fool find nothing but

material miseries in a homely existence ruled by sexual intercourse. (8) Because of the sexual attraction between man and woman their hearts are tied together and therefrom they call for a home, a territory, children, wealth and relatives. This now is the illusion of the living being known as 'I' and 'mine'. (9) The moment the tight mental knot in the heart is slackened of such a person bound by the consequences of his karma, the conditioned soul turns away from this [false conception of] 'us' and then, forsaking that cause [of egoism], being liberated returns to the transcendental world. (10-13) With the help of one's intelligence one can give up the false identification with the material world, the cause of material bondage.



That is achieved by following a spiritually advanced person, a guru as also by devotional service unto Me, by not desiring, by exercising tolerance with the dual world and by inquiries; by realizing the truth of the miseries of the living beings everywhere, by practicing austerities and penances and by giving up on sensual pleasures; by working for Me, listening to stories about Me as also by always keeping company with devoted souls; by singing about My qualities, by freedom from enmity, by being equal to all, by subduing one's emotions, oh sons; by trying to forsake the identification with one's home and body, by studying yoga literatures; by living alone, by entirely controlling the breath, the senses and the mind; by developing faith, by continually observing celibacy, by constant vigilance, by restraint of speech; by thinking of Me, seeing Me everywhere, by developing knowledge and through wisdom in being illumined by the practice of yoga; and by being endowed with determination, enthusiasm and goodness. (14) When one by means of this yoga practice completely being liberated from desiring results, as I told you, has un-

tied the knot of the bondage in one's heart that was caused by ignorance, one [finally also] must desist from this method of detachment [this yoga] itself. (15) The king or guru who, desiring My abode, thinks that reaching Me is the goal of life, should, in this manner relating to his sons or disciples, be of instruction and tell them not to engage in fruitful actions. He should not be angry with them when they, because of lacking in spiritual knowledge, wish to be so engaged. What can one achieve [spiritually] when one engages someone else in karmic activities? Such a king or guru factually would cause these souls whose vision is clouded [by material motives] to fall down in the pit [of falsehood. Compare B.G. 3: 26]. (16) People who, obsessed in their desire for material goods, have lost sight of their real welfare, live with their efforts for the sake of temporary happiness in enmity with each other and run, foolish as they are, without having a clue, into all kinds of trouble [see also B.G. 7: 25]. (17) Which man of learning and mercy, well versed in spiritual knowledge, would, facing someone with such a bad intelligence, en-



gage him further in that ignorance? That would be like leading a blind man on the wrong path. (18) Someone not capable of delivering those depending on him from the repetition of [birth and] death, must not evolve into a father, a mother, a spouse, a spiritual teacher or a worshipable god-head. (19) I who am inconceivable in this [transcendental] embodiment have a heart of pure goodness filled with dharma [devotional service]. Because I left *adharma* [the non-devotional] far behind Me, those faithful to Me truthfully call Me the Best One or R̥ṣabha. (20) You are all born from My heart. Therefore try, with an intelligence free from impurities, to maintain your reverence for Me and be of service to your brother Bharata, who rules over the people.

(21-22) Among the manifested forms of existence the living ones are superior to the ones without life and among them the ones who move around are far superior to the plants. Of those the ones who developed intelligence are better and the best ones among them are the human beings. The spiritual beings [the meditators of Śiva] are the better ones

among the humans and the singers of heaven [the Gandharvas] are superior to them again. Next one finds the perfected souls [the Siddhas] above whom the superhuman beings [the Kinnaras] are situated. The unenlightened souls [the Asuras who can master the ones aforementioned] are dominated by the gods led by Indra and above them the sons of Brahmā like Dakṣa are situated. Lord Śiva is the best of them and above him we find Lord Brahmā from whom he originated. He in his turn is a devotee of Mine, I [Viṣṇu] the god of the gods of [spiritual] rebirth [the brahmins]. (23) No other entity compares to the brahmins. To my knowledge, oh scholars, there is no one superior to them. With them I eat with more satisfac-

tion from the food that by the people with faith and love in proper ceremony was offered [to the mouth of Me and those belonging to Me], than from the food that [without them] was offered in [the mouth of] the fire. (24) It are the brahmins who maintain My eternal and shining body [in the form of the Vedas] in this world. In them one finds the qualities of supreme goodness [*sattva*] and purification [*pavitra*], control over the mind [*śama*], control over the senses [*dama*], truthfulness [*satya*], mercy [*anugraha*], penance [*tapasya*], tolerance [*titikṣā*] and understanding derived from experience [*anubhava*, see also B.G. 18: 42]. (25) They, who perform their devotional service without claiming worldly possessions, desire nothing but Me, the One of unlimited prowess who, higher than the highest, is capable of redemption and bestowing all the heavenly happiness. Why would they need anyone else? (26) My dear sons, with your vision [thus] clear, be at all times of respect for all living beings moving and not moving, for I reside in all of them. That is how you respect Me. (27) Engage all of your mind, your words and the perception of all your active

and receptive senses directly in My worship, for without it a person will not be able to free himself from the great illusion that binds him to death.'

(28) Śrī Śuka said: 'After for the sake of mankind personally thus having instructed His sons, in spite of their high spiritual standard of living, the great personality, the well-wisher and Supreme Lord of all who was celebrated as the Best One or Rṣabha, placed Bharata, the eldest of His hundred sons, a topmost devotee and follower of the divine order, on the throne to rule the planet. The instruction for His sons describes the dharma of those who free from material desires no longer engage for the profit and as great sages, as the best of the human beings [*paramahānsas*], are characterized by devotional service, spiritual insight and detachment. While Rṣabha, [first] remained home, He [to set an example for His teachings] like a madman with His hair disheveled, accepted only His body [as His property]. Then, clad in nothing but the air [naked thus], He, with the Vedic fire that He kept burning within, left Brahmāvarta to wander around. (29) As someone unconcerned about the world [an *avadhūta*], He appeared to be idle, blind, deaf and dumb, like a ghost or madman, for even when He was addressed by the people He, having taken a vow of silence, refrained from speaking. (30) Passing through cities, villages, mines, lands, gardens and communities situated in valleys, through military encampments, cowsheds, farms, resting places for pilgrims, hills, forests, hermitages and so on, He was here and there surrounded by bad people, like they were flies, and was, just like an elephant appearing from the forest, beaten away and threatened, urinated and spit upon, pelted with stones, stool and dirt, farted at and abused. But He did not care about it because He, from His understanding how the body relates to the soul, knew that this dwelling place of the body that one calls real, is just an illusory covering. In negation of the 'I' and 'mine', He rather remained situated in His personal glory as He wandered the earth unperturbed and alone. (31) With His most delicate hands, feet, chest, long arms, shoulders, neck and face etc., with the lovely nature of His well proportioned limbs, His natural smile, beautiful lotus petal like graceful mouth, the marvel of His reddish widespread eyes and the

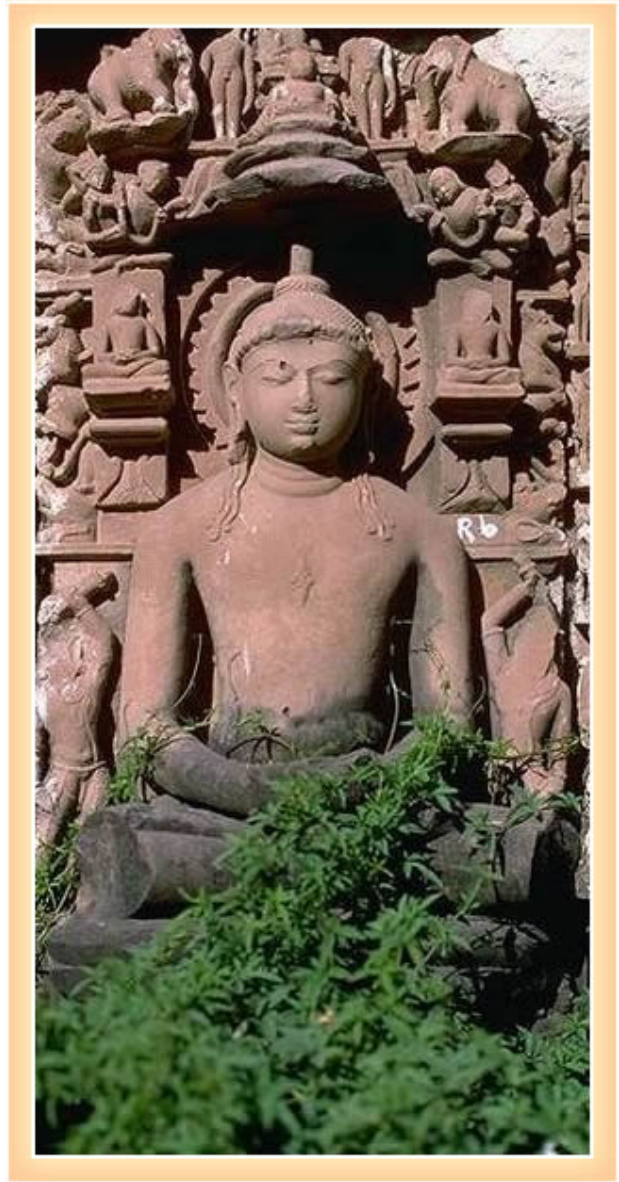
great beauty of His forehead, ears, neckline, nose and expressive lip - because of which His face was like a festival to all household women in whose hearts He everywhere would have aroused Cupid - He, with His great abundance of curly brown hair, which was matted, dirty and neglected, made his body appear as of someone haunted by a ghost. (32) When He, the Supreme Lord, noticed that the people directly opposed this yoga practice, He, as a countermeasure, resorted to the abominable behavior of lying down as a python, smearing His body with the food He chewed and the drink He drank, while rolling Himself in the stool and urine that He passed. (33) The wind perfumed by the fragrance of His stool made the countryside smell pleasantly for ten *yojanas* around. (34) With His actions of moving, standing, sitting and lying down with the cows, the crows and the deer, He, exactly like the cows, the crows and deer do, ate, drank and passed urine. (35) Thus practicing the various ways of mystical yoga Rṣabha, the Supreme Lord, the Master of Enlightenment, incessantly enjoyed the Supreme in great bliss. He experienced the symptoms of loving emotions unto Vāsudeva, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is situated in the heart of all living beings, and achieved by His fundamental indifference the complete perfection in the Supreme Self. But, oh King Parīkṣit, the fullness of the mystical powers of yoga He thus accidentally achieved - like traveling through the air, moving with lightening speed, the ability to stay unseen, the ability to enter the bodies of others, the power to see without difficulty things from afar and other perfections [the *sid-dhis*, see also 2.2: 22; 2.9: 17; 3.15: 45; 3.25: 37]-, He could never fully accept in His heart.'

*: The five main loving relationships or *rasas* by which with the Lord all higher human emotions are experienced, are the neutral relationship (*santa*), the servant-master relation (*dāsyā*), the relation of friendship (*sakhya*), the parent-child relation (*vātsalya*) and the amorous relation (*śṛṅgāra*).

Chapter 6 Lord Rṣabhadeva's Activities

(1) **T**he king said: 'Oh Supreme One, self-satisfied souls of whom the seed of fruitive action has been burned by the spiritual knowledge acquired by the practice of yoga, automatically achieve mystical powers; how can those *siddhis* become a hindrance?'

(2) **T**he sage said: 'You are quite right [in saying that yoga leads to certain powers], but in this world one, just like a cunning hunter, does not directly put faith in the [special talents of the] mind that [just like game] always runs off. (3) Therefore they say that one should never make friends with the restless mind. Even the greatest souls [like Lord Śiva and sage Saubhari] got disturbed putting faith in it after for a long time having practiced austerities. (4) Just as a husband with an adulterous wife must guard against competitors, also a yoga practitioner must guard against putting faith in the mind that always offers opportunity to lust and the enemies [of greed and anger] belonging to it. (5) Which man of wisdom would confide in the [undirected] mind that is the breeding ground for the lust, anger, pride, greed, lamentation, illusion and fear that together constitute the bondage to one's karma? (6) Even though He [R̥ṣabha] was the head of all kings and rulers of this universe, He, in terms of this logic, acted in the dress, with the language and the character of an *avadhūta* [5.5: 29], as if He was dumb. He concealed His supreme lordship in order to be able to teach the yogis, by the example of His own personal vehicle of time, how to forsake in yoga. As if He was a normal mortal being trying to forsake his physical body He, according to the supreme command of the Soul, not being hindered by the illusory nature of matter, always kept to Himself the inner vision of the love transcendental to all vice and thus put an end to His material existence. (7) With Him, the Supreme Lord R̥ṣabhadeva, free from identification with His material form, we thus witnessed the apparent physical presence, the engagement of His body in this illusory world. He all alone traveled the lands of South India: Koṅka, Veṅka and Kuṭaka in the province of Karnāṭa, and reached a forest nearby Kuṭakācala. There He, with a handful of stones in His mouth, wandered around naked with scattered hair, like He was a madman. (8) In a fierce forest fire blazing all



around - that was caused by the friction of bamboo stalks tossed about by the force of the wind - His body in that forest then burned to ashes.

(9) **H**earing about His pastimes of being free from all ritual and custom, the king of Koṅka, Veṅka and Kuṭaka who carried the name Arhat [the Jain, the venerable one] took to an imitation of them. Bewildered by an increase of irreligious life that forebode the arrival of the Kali-yuga Age of Quarrel, he gave up the safe path of religion that wards off all fear and adopted a non-conformistic, wrong, heretical view by introducing most foolish-

ly a concoction of his own. (10) The lowest of mankind in this age of Kali who, lacking in character, cleanliness and dutifulness in respect of the rules and regulations, are bewildered by the illusory energy of God, will, because of this in neglect of the divine, self-willed and with wrong principles, follow strange rules, like not bathing, not cleaning the mouth, being dirty and plucking out the hair. With their consciousness spoiled by an abundance of modern time *adharmā* [or forsaking of duties] they will fall into blaspheming the Vedas, the brahmins, rituals such as sacrifices and the Supreme Personality and the devotees. (11) They who, encouraged by blind predecessors, with a deviating practice have built their own little world [or cult], will, themselves being blinded, land in darkness [compare B.G. 16: 16, 16: 23]. (12) This *avatāra* of the Lord was there for the purpose of instructing the people, who are overwhelmed by passion, in the matter of emancipation, the path to attain eternal happiness [or final beatitude, *kaivalya*]. (13) In line with these teachings the people sing the following verses about Him: 'Oh, of all the lands on the continents of this world with its seven seas, this land [of Bhārata-varṣa, India] is the most meritorious, for their people sing about the all-auspicious activities of Murāri in His many incarnations [Kṛṣṇa as the enemy of the foolish one, Mura].' (14) 'Oh, what should one say about the pure and renown dynasty of King Priyavrata wherein the Original Person, the Supreme Personality, descended as an incarnation? He, the Unparalleled One, performed the religious duty that puts an end to profit-minded labor.' (15) 'Is there any other yogi of perseverance and determination who, desiring the perfections that for being insubstantial were rejected by Rṣabha, can follow but even in his mind the example of this unborn Godhead?'

(16) I have thus expounded on the pure activities of the Lord named Rṣabha, who is the supreme master of all Vedic knowledge, for the common man, the God-conscious souls, the brahmins and the cows. He who with a growing faith and devotion attentively listens to, speaks to others about or personally attends to this refuge of His great and supreme auspiciousness, that puts an end to all the sins of every living being, will unto Him, the

Supreme Lord Vāsudeva, be favorably disposed with an unflinching devotion in both the positions of listening and speaking. (17) Incessantly bathing themselves in that devotion in order to be free from suffering the various troublesome conditions of material existence, those who developed spiritual wisdom enjoy the highest bliss. But despite having achieved that liberation they do not strive for that supreme goal of all human beings. Having entered a relationship with the Supreme Personality they, after all, attained all their goals. (18) Dear King [Parīkṣit], He undoubtedly was the maintainer and teacher, the worshipable deity, friend and master of your Yadu line and sometimes He even acted as a servant. Thus, my best one, He indeed was Mukunda, the Supreme Lord of Liberation [*mukti*] of those engaged in devotion. But to [confidentially] engage someone in His devotional service [like He did with Arjuna on the battlefield] He does not that easily. (19) All glories to Him, the Supreme Lord Rṣabhadeva, He who, constantly aware of His true identity, complete within Himself and without desires, was as graceful to expand, for the true welfare of man, His activities on the material plane and, for the human being whose intelligence slept a long time, gave instruction about the true self free from fear.'

Chapter 7 The Activities of King Bharata

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'When Bharata ['to be maintained'], who was a most exalted devotee, according to the order of his father decided to rule the earth, he, assuming that supreme command, married the daughter of Viśvarūpa, Pañcajanī. (2) The way identifying oneself with matter [false ego] leads to the five sense objects [of sound, taste etc.], Bharata likewise arrived at the five sons he begot in her and who were just like him: Sumati, Rāṣṭrabhṛta, Sudarśana, Āvaraṇa and Dhūmraketu. (3) From the beginning of the rule of Bharata this part of the world, that was called Ajanābha [referring to king Nābhi, see 5: 3], is celebrated as Bhārata-varṣa [the land of Bharata, now India]. (4) He, who was a great scholar, was a ruler as great as his father and grandfather. Governing with a

caring heart, he kept both himself and his citizens engaged in the classical vocational duties. (5) Next to that he worshiped the Supreme Lord with great and small sacrifices, with and without animals. Full of faith *agni-hotra*, *darśa*, *pūrṇamāsa*, *cāturmāsya*, *paśu* and *soma-rasa yajñas* were performed in part or fully, that, as was prescribed, practically always were conducted by four priests (*). (6) When the expert priests with all supplementary rites were engaged in performing the various sacrifices, he, who was constantly thinking of Vāsudeva, the Supreme Lord, and who in the spirit of the hymns was freed from lust and anger, recognized that all the different demigods, the recipients of the results, the ingredients of the offering and he himself the sacrificer, were all part of the body of the One Original Person. He [Vāsudeva] was the one enjoyer who, irrespective the results of the sacrificial ceremony in question that was performed for the purpose of dharma, was their controller, their doer and their origin; He was the one responsible for the complete of all the gods. (7) He [Bharata] in the perfection of his service was thus of the purest goodness unto the Supersoul within the heart of the ethereal body, unto the impersonal spirit of Brahman and unto Bhagavān, the Supreme Lord, Vāsudeva, the Supreme Personality whose form is recognized by the Śrīvatsa mark on the chest, the Kaustubha gem, the flower garland, the disc, the conch shell, the club and other symbols. Once He as an indelible image has appeared in the heart of the devotee, He, who on the highest level is known by His radiating personal form, has the power to increase one's devotion day after day. (8) Thus for a countless number of millennia [by this exemplary practice] having ascertained the wealth he had received from his forefathers, he, at the right moment for abandoning his earthly duties, properly divided his kingdom personally among his sons and then left that ancestral abode behind to go to the meditation resort of Pulaha in Hardwar. (9) It is at that place where even today the Supreme Lord Hari, being moved by His



paternal affection, shows Himself to the devotees residing there in the form they prefer. (10) That meditation resort is on all sides sanctified by the water of the main river, the Cakra-nadī [the Gaṇḍakī]. In that river one finds the [round] stones with the concentric circles on top and below [the black oval pebbles that serve as objects of worship, the so-called Śālagrāma-śilās]. (11) There, alone in the fields of Pulaha's meditation resort, he, with offerings of roots, bulbs and fruits combined with water, twigs, *tulasī* leaves and all kinds of flowers, worshiped the Supreme Lord and was thus, being delivered from all material desires, purified in a steady increase of transcendental tranquility that brought him satisfaction. (12) By that constant practice of serving the Original Personality of the Supreme Lord, the laxity of his heart disappeared with the weight of the incessantly increasing attachment to Him. By the force of his transcendental bliss the hairs on his body stood

on end with tears blurring his vision that sprang into his eyes because of his intense longing. Thus meditating on the pink lotus feet of the Lord, there was from his bhakti-yoga an increase, spreading everywhere, of the highest and deepest spiritual ecstasy in his heart, in which he was immersed as in a lake, and because of which he, despite his intelligence, no longer was capable to keep the performance of the worship of the Lord in mind. (13) Dressed in a deerskin he, with the mass of his beautiful brown, curly, matted hair being wet because of bathing three times a day, was thus, in his vow to serve the Supreme Lord, of worship for the Original Personality in the form of His golden appearance as the sun globe (**). Therewith he at sunrise payed homage to [Him as] the Sun God by reciting the following Vedic hymn: (14) 'Beyond passion [in goodness] minding this created universe, there is the self-effulgence that illumines, the grace of the Lord fulfilling with sacred knowledge. Time and again entering [this world with Your radiating sun globe or as a Viṣṇu *avatāra*] You supervise the living being hankering after material pleasure. All my respects for Him residing among us who moves all!'

*: Such sacrifices are now impossible to conduct in this age due to the scarcity of expert brahmins or *ṛtvijaḥ* who are able to take the responsibility. In the absence of these, the *sankīrtana-yajña* singing of the holy names is recommended.

** : The deity of the sun is by the common Hindu nowadays worshiped by means of the Gāyatrī mantra, one of the most important mantras of purification and liberation kindred to the one expressed in this chapter by Bharata Mahārāj: *om bhūr bhuvah svaḥ tat savitur vareṇyam bhargo devasya dhīmahi, dhyo yo naḥ pracodayāt*, a prayer meaning:

The original form of the body,
the life force and the supreme abode;
that source of life most excellent,
that divine luster we meditate -
may this light illumine our intellect.

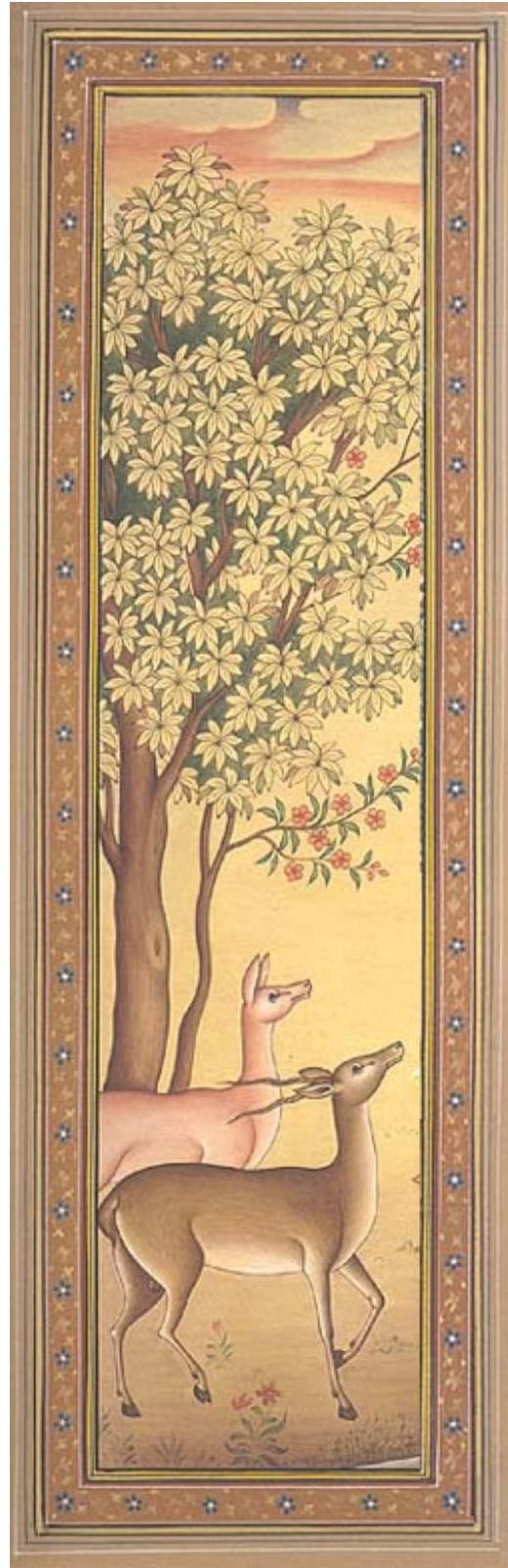
Chapter 8

The Rebirth of Bharata Mahārāja

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'One day having taken a bath in the great Gaṇḍakī, the [Bharata], after performing his daily duties, sat for a few minutes on the bank of the river to chant the transcendental syllable [AUM]. (2) Oh King, he then saw a single doe that, being thirsty, had come to the river. (3) As it eagerly drank from the water, suddenly nearby the loud roar of a lion sounded that terrifies all living beings. (4) When the doe heard that loud sound, it, fearfully looking about, out of fear for the lion immediately, without having quenched her thirst, leaped over the river. (5) Because of the force of the leap it made in great fear, the doe, being pregnant, lost its baby that slipped from its womb and fell into the water. (6) Being exhausted from the miscarriage that was caused by the jumping and the fear, the black doe, being separated from its flock, fell some place into a cave and died. (7) Seeing that the deer calf, being separated from its mother, helplessly floated away in the stream, the wise king Bharata, considering it orphaned, compassionately as a friend took it to his *āśrama*. (8) Adopting it as his child, feeding it every day, protecting it, raising it and petting it, he became greatly attached to this deer calf. Very soon he, having given up his routines, his self-restraint and his worship of the Original Person, thus lost his entire practice of detachment. (9) 'Alas! [he thought to himself], by the Controller turning the wheel of time this creature was deprived of its family, friends and relatives. Finding me for its shelter, it has only me as its father, mother, brother and member of the herd. Surely having no one else it puts great faith in me as the support to rely upon and thus fully depends on me for its learning, sustenance, love and protection. I have got to admit that it is wrong to neglect someone who has taken shelter and must accordingly act without regrets. (10) Undoubtedly all honorable and pious souls will, however detached they are, put aside even their most important self-interests, in order to observe those principles as friends of the poor.'

(11) Sitting, lying down, walking, bathing, eating and such with the young animal, his heart thus

having grown attached became captivated by affection. (12) When he went into the forest to collect flowers, firewood, *kuśa* grass, leaves, fruits, roots and water, he, apprehensive about wolves, dogs and other animals of prey, always took the deer with him. (13) On his way he, with a mind and heart full of love, carried it on his shoulder now and then, and kept, fond as he was of the young, it fondling on his lap or on his chest when he slept and derived great pleasure from it. (14) During worship the emperor sometimes got up despite not being finished, just to look after the deer calf and then felt happy bestowing all his blessings saying: 'Oh my dear calf, I wish you all the best.' (15) Sometimes, not seeing the calf anywhere, he was so anxious that he got upset like a piteous, miserly man who has lost his riches. He then found himself in a state wherein he could not think of anything else anymore. Thus he ran into the greatest illusion entertaining thoughts like: (16) 'Oh, alas! My dear child, that orphan of a deer, must be very distressed. It will turn up again and put faith in me as being a perfectly gentle member of its own kind. It will forget about me being such an ill-behaved cheater, such a bad-minded barbarian. (17) Shall I see that creature protected by the gods again walk around and nibble grass unafraid in the garden of my *āśrama*? (18) Or would the poor thing be devoured by one of the many packs of wolves or dogs, or else by a lone wandering tiger? (19) Alas, the Supreme Lord of the entire universe, the Lord of the three Vedas who is there for the prosperity of all, is [in the form of the sun] already setting; and still this baby that the mother entrusted to me has not returned! (20) Will that princely deer of mine really return and please me who gave up his different pious exercises? It was so cute to behold. Pleasing it in a way befitting its kind drove away all unhappiness! (21) Playing with me when I with closed eyes feigned to meditate, it would nervously out of love, trembling and timidly approach to touch my body with the tips of its horns that are as soft as water drops. (22) When I grumbled at it for polluting the things placed on the *kuśa* grass for worship, it immediately in great fear stopped its play to sit down in complete restraint of its senses, just like the son of a saint would do. (23) Oh, what practice of penance performed by the most austere



souls on this planet, can bring the earth the wealth of the sweet, small, beautiful and most auspicious soft imprints of the hooves of this most unhappy creature in pain of being lost! To me they point the way to achieve the wealth of the body of her lands that, on all sides adorned by them, are turned into places of sacrifice to the gods and the brahmins so desirous on the path to heaven! (24) Could it be that the moon [god] so very powerful and kind to the unhappy, out of compassion for the young that lost its mother because of her fear for the great beast of prey, is now protecting this deer child that strayed from my protective *āśrama*? (25) Or would the moon god out of love by means of his rays, which so peaceful and cool stream from his face like nectarean water, comfort my heart, that red lotus flower to which the little deer submitted itself as my son and that now, in the fire of separation, burns with the flames of a forest fire?'

(26) **W**ith a heart saddened by a mind derived from what he had undertaken in the past, he was thus carried away by the impossible desire of having a son that looked like a deer. Consequently he failed in his yoga exercises, his penances and devotional service to the Supreme Lord. How could he, attached as he was to the body of a different species, to the body of a deer calf, fulfill his life's purpose now with such a hindrance? How could that be while he previously had abandoned his so difficult to forsake sons whom he had fathered with a loving heart? King Bharata, who, absorbed in maintaining, pleasing, protecting and fondling a baby deer, because of that hindrance was obstructed in the execution of his yoga, thus neglected [the interest of] his soul. Meanwhile with most rapid strides inevitably his time approached, like a snake entering the hole of a mouse. (27) The moment he left this world he found at his side the deer, lamenting like his son, that had occupied his mind. With his body dying in the presence of the deer, he thereafter himself obtained the body of a deer [see also B.G. 8: 6]. [But] when he after his death obtained another body, his memory of his previous existence was not destroyed. (28) In that birth constantly remembering, as a consequence of his past devotional activities, what the cause was of having obtained the body of a deer, he remorsefully said: (29) 'Oh what a misery! I have fallen from

the way of life of the self-realized, despite having given up my sons and home and living solitary in a sacred forest as someone who, perfectly in accord with the soul, takes shelter of the Supersoul of all beings. Despite constantly listening to and thinking about Him, the Supreme Lord Vāsudeva and spending all my hours on being absorbed in chanting, worshiping and remembering. In due course of time a mind fixed in such a practice turns into a mind fully established in the eternal reality, but having fallen deeply in my affection for a young deer, I by contrast am a great fool again!'

(30) **T**hus in silence turning away from the world [he as] the deer gave up his deer mother and turned back from the Kālāñjara mountain where he was born, to the place where he before had worshiped the Supreme Lord, the *āśrama* of Pulastya and Pulaha in the village called Śālagrāma that is so dear to the great saints living there in complete detachment. (31) In that place eating fallen leaves and herbs, he awaited his time in the eternal company of the Supersoul. Vigilantly guarding against bad association, he existed with the only motivation to put an end to the cause of his deer body. That body he ultimately gave up, bathing in the water of the holy place.'

Chapter 9

The Supreme Character of Jaḍa Bharata

(1-2) **Śrī Śuka** said: 'After having given up his life of being embodied as a deer, Bharata, the most exalted devotee and most honored of all saintly kings, in his last incarnation acquired the brahmin status. He was the male half of a twin brother and sister, so one says, who were born from the second wife of a high-minded brahmin in the line of saint Aṅgirā. This brahmin, being endowed with all the qualities, was of a perfect control over the mind and the senses, of penance, Vedic study and recitation, of renunciation, satisfaction, tolerance, kindness, knowledge, of no envy and of spiritual happiness in the wisdom of the soul. With his first wife he had nine sons all equal to him in education, character, behavior, beauty and magnanimity.

(3) Also in that birth he remembered his previous lives by the special mercy of the Lord. As a consequence he was greatly apprehensive not to fall down again in associating with his own kind. Always afraid of being obstructed on the path of devotional service he kept his mind focussed upon his soul. For that purpose he always thought of the two lotus feet of the Supreme Lord and listened to and remembered the descriptions of His qualities that vanquish the bondage to fruitful labor. But to the local people he posed as someone with a mad, dull and blind character [because of which he was called Jaḍa]. (4) His brahmin father, who affectionately felt obliged to his son, thought that he, as a father to his son, should teach him that the regulative principles should be observed, even though Jaḍa had no interest in it. Thus he practiced until the end of his student life, again as someone of the sacred thread, the duties of cleanliness of the purification process as prescribed by the *śāstras*. (5) But he also in the presence of his father acted as if he could not understand a thing of what was instructed. During the onset of the rainy season the father wished to teach him the Vedic mantras including the Gāyatrī preceded by Omkāra, but despite his thorough instruction, he during the four months of the summer did not succeed in teaching him their full mastery. (6) Supposing that his son, despite not feeling for it, had to be fully instructed by him in all the cleanliness, Vedic literature, vows, principles, sacrifice and service to the guru that belongs to the celibate state [the *brahmacarya-āśrama*], the brahmin, who considered his son his life breath, in reality acted out of household attachment. Therefore he died, when he was seized by death not as forgetful [as he was], as a man full of frustration about the unfit obstinacy of his son. (7) His youngest wife from whose womb the twins were born, thereupon entrusted them to the first wife and then followed



her husband to where he resided in his afterlife [Patiloka].

(8) Jaḍa Bharata's stepbrothers, who had fixed their minds on the ritual culture of the three Vedas, had no understanding for the true knowledge of the Self. After the death of the father they gave up the endeavor to teach anything to their half brother whom they, unaware of his faculties, considered a dullard. (9-10) When he by these materialistic and [in fact] two-legged animals was addressed as being mad, dull, deaf and dumb, he used to reply in likewise terms. He did the things he by force was summoned to do. He used to eat whatever small or large quantity of palatable or tasteless food he obtained, by begging, by wages or what came of its own accord. He never lived to please his senses as he had forever stopped to live for the material cause. All by himself he had accomplished the transcendental blissful vision of someone in knowledge of the true Self who, with the dual causes of happiness and distress, summer and win-

ter, wind and rain, did not identify with the body. Firm of limbs he, as strong as a bull, never covered himself. He did not bathe, was dirty from lying on the ground and never massaged his body. His loins were covered by a dirty cloth and he wore a sacred thread darkened of dirt. In his spiritual splendor he was like a hidden gem. He wandered around disrespected by ignorant folk who called him, a brahmin of birth, just a brahmin's friend ['*brahma-bandu*']. (11) Because he only looked for work in order to obtain in exchange food from others, even his stepbrothers engaged him in agricultural work in the fields - a job to which he had no idea of what should be leveled or left uneven or where he had to pile things up. Usually only eating broken rice, oil cakes, chaff, worm-eaten grains or burned rice that stuck to the pot, it was nevertheless all nectar to him.

(12) Then, at a certain moment, some dacoit leader appeared on the scene who desired a son and was looking for an animalistic person whom he could offer to the goddess Bhadra Kālī. (13) The animal type he looked for, had escaped and his followers on their way to find him could, in the dead of night, not catch that animalistic man. As arranged by providence they stumbled upon the brahmin son from the line of Aṅgirā who from an elevated position was guarding the fields against deer, wild pigs and other creatures. (14) Discovering that he had the right character, they next, with shining faces understanding that he could serve for their master's work, elated took him to the temple of the goddess, tightly bound in ropes. (15) In order to prepare him as the man-animal for the sacrifice, the followers of the dacoit then, according to their own customs, bathed him, gave him new clothes, covered his body with ornaments, smeared him with sandalwood pulp and garlanded him. Vibrating songs, prayers, drums and bugles, they seated him before the goddess Kālī, fully dressed up and properly fed, with incense, lamps, strings of flowers, parched grains, twigs and sprouts, fruits and other articles of worship. (16) The priest of that dacoit leader, ready to offer a flow of blood from the animalistic man to the deity of Bhadra Kālī, next took a fearful razor sharp sword and consecrated it with the appropriate mantras. (17) These contemptible types who, being of a passionate and

ignorant nature, in their materialistic bewilderment were driven by minds full of imagination and thus, acting to their own notions, followed a wrong course, were in offense with the heroic association of the Supreme Lord, the brahmins. Proceeding with a lust for violence against others they acted most cruelly directly against an expansion of the Lord Himself, someone of a brahmin birth, a son of spiritual wisdom who had no enemies and who was a well-wisher to all. But at the very last moment the goddess Bhadra Kālī, who saw what was about to happen in defiance of the law and against the will of the Lord, broke out of her statue with a burning physical appearance that was of an excessively bright, unbearable, spiritual effulgence. (18) Full of indignation she totally lost herself in the force of her anger with raised eyebrows, crooked teeth, bloodshot eyes, a frightening laugh and an agitated fearful face, as if she wanted to destroy the entire universe. Released [from the idol] because of her great fury she, coming forth from the altar, severed with the same blade as they wanted to use [for the sacrifice], the heads from the bodies of all the sinful offenders and then, together with her associates, drank from the blood that oozed from the necks as a very hot intoxicating beverage. Overwhelmed by all that intoxicating drinking she with her associates next loudly sang and danced, making fun throwing the heads at each other like they were balls.

(19) When one, relating to great souls, has crossed the line, as in this case, one will always, because of that wrong action, oneself have to undergo the result of that offense. (20) Oh, Viṣṇudatta ['protected by Viṣṇu'; Parīkṣit], to those who are not perplexed, this is not such a great miracle. They who without animosity are of goodness to all, are by the Supreme Lord of the invincible Time who carries the best of all weapons [the Sudarśana disc], personally fully liberated from the very strong and tight knot in the heart [that is the consequence] of a false physical concept of life. Even when threatened by decapitation [or by other attacks on their lives], those liberated souls and devotees, who full of surrender are protected at His lotus feet, are never upset by these kinds of emotional conditions; they have nothing to fear.'

Chapter 10

Jaḍa Bharata Meets Mahārāja Rahūgaṇa

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'So it came to pass that Rahūgaṇa ['he who outshines the sun'], the ruler of Sindhu and Sauvīra, while traveling on the bank of the river Ikṣumatī, needed another palanquin carrier. He then sent the leader of his carriers to look for a suitable candidate. His search led by chance to the excellent brahmin [Jaḍa Bharata] who, being a stout young man, with firm limbs and the strength of an ass, was chosen by him supposing that he was capable of carrying the load. Being forced to it the great soul carried the palanquin, but he was not fit for the job. (2) Engaged this way the blessed brahmin constantly looked three feet ahead [not to step on ants]. Thus being all the time out of pace with the others the palanquin was shaking. Rahūgaṇa noticing this then said to the men who carried him: 'Oh carriers, please walk in pace! Why is this palanquin carried so uneven?'

(3) Hearing their master speak that reproachfully, they told him apprehensively that it was due to the fourth carrier: (4) 'Oh, it is not so, oh god of man, that we who always obey your orders, have fallen in neglect! We certainly do the best we can, but it is this new man who recently has been contracted to work with us, because of whom we can not do our work as carriers. He is rather slow!'

(5) Although he, from the intimations, was certain that the problem had risen because of a fault of one of them, king Rahūgaṇa, hearing the fearful words of the servants, gave, in spite of his political experience, out of his *kṣatriya* nature slightly in to the violence of anger. Unto him, whose spiritual effulgence because of his innate intelligence could not be clearly distinguished, he with a mind full of passion said: (6) 'Alas, what a trouble it is, my brother! All alone on such a long journey you certainly must have gotten very tired. And these colleagues of you are not of much help either. Nor is your cooperative, firm body very strong. You must be troubled by old age my friend!'

Thus he sarcastically criticized him severely. But there was no protest of a false belief of 'I' and 'mine' from him, who in silence kept carrying the palanquin. As someone on the spiritual platform, he happened to be of such a particular disposition concerning the physical matters of having a, from ignorance resulting, finite vehicle of time, a physical body that consists of a mixture of the natural modes, the workload and material intentions. (7) Thereupon again being shaken because of the uneven carrying of his palanquin, Rahūgaṇa got very angry and said: 'Fool! What crap is this! You, living corpse, ignore my reproaches completely. You just forget about them! Are you out of your mind? Just like Yamarāja with the common people, I shall teach you a lesson so that you will know your position here!'

(8) Despite that load of nonsense from the side of him who rebuking, angrily out of passion and ignorance, thought that he could rule as a god of man, as a learned scholar and a by countless devotees honored votary of the Lord, the self-realized brahmin smiled faintly, free from pride, with the poise of a master of yoga, a friend of all living beings, and then addressed the not so wise ruler as follows. (9) The brahmin said: 'What you so clearly stated, oh great hero, does not contravene [what I factually am]. That would have been the case if I would [really] be this body, that carrier of the load. If to acquire a well-fed, strong body would be the way, I can tell you that that is no subject of importance to the person of self-realization present within the body. (10) To be strong and stout or skinny and weak, to be in physical or mental pain or to be hungry, thirsty, afraid, quarrelsome, desirous, old aged, sleepy or sensually motivated, to be angry or false, to be bewildered or to be of lamentation, are matters belonging to this body, to the one born, but they are not the reality of what I [originally] am [see also B.G. 2: 20]. (11) To be a living soul bound to death [to be a 'living corpse'] is something settled by nature, oh King, [it just as well applies to you, for] everything has a beginning and an end. But, oh respected one, when one has an eye for what is unchangeable within the things that transform - to which one [as you defend] sees servants and masters - one speaks of doing the right thing in yoga. (12) Discriminating

to the person [as you do in acting as the master] betrays a narrow vision and I do not see what other use it, besides the convention, would have. Who is [of this arranged order] the master and who is the one to be controlled? Nevertheless, oh King [with you as my 'master'] what can I do for you? (13) From my state of self-realization, oh King, you gathered that I was a disheveled, mad ignoramus. [If that would be true], what use would it then have to be punished by you? How can one teach a crazy, stupid person something? It is like grinding flour!"



(14) Śrī Śuka said: 'The great sage, consequently responding to all the words that had been used, then calm and peaceful rested his case. As for the cause of matters strange to the soul, he accepted that things happened as a consequence of what he had done in the past, and so he, in order to put his karma to an end, continued to carry the king's palanquin as he did before. (15) Oh best of the Pāṇḍu dynasty, also he, the ruler of Sindhu and Sauvira, fully believed in discussions concerning the subject of the Absolute Truth. Thus well informed hearing what the brahmin said about that what eradicates the falsehood in the heart and is approved by all yoga practices and literature, he hastily came down [from his vehicle] and threw himself head-on flat on the ground at the lotus feet to be excused for his offense. That way giving up his false claim that he should be respected as the king, he said: (16) 'Who are you among the twice-born souls, moving so secretly around in this world? I see you wear a sacred thread. Of which forsaker of the world are you [the disciple]? From where and for what purpose have you come here? Are you, as a soul of pure goodness, here for our benefit or maybe not? (17) I do not fear Indra's thunderbolt or Śiva's trident nor to be punished by

Yamarāja, neither do I fear the heat of the sun's rays, the moon, the wind or the weapons of the heavenly treasurer [Kuvera]. My greatest fear is to offend the brahmin class. (18) Could you, who as someone fully detached, like a dullard, conceals the power of wisdom, who as someone completely indifferent wanders around, therefore please speak to us? For no one of us, oh saint, is able to fathom to any degree the meaningful yogic words you uttered. (19) I am asking you, as a direct representative of the Lord of spiritual knowledge, of the master of yoga and best preceptor of the saintly scholars in the science of self-realization, what, being engaged in this world, would be the most secure shelter [see 3.25]. (20) Are you in your goodness maybe Him in person who, without revealing your true identity, travels the surface of the earth to study the motives of the people here? How can someone bound to family affairs missing the needed intelligence, have a clear view of the final destination of the masters of yoga? (21) One can see that when one physically is engaged in a certain way, one will become tired. I suppose that is also true in your case in your movements as a carrier. That is a generally accepted fact, as certain as the fact that on the basis of an absence of water, it cannot be so that one can come bringing it and such. (22) Because of the heat under a cooking pot, the milk put in it gets hot and because of the

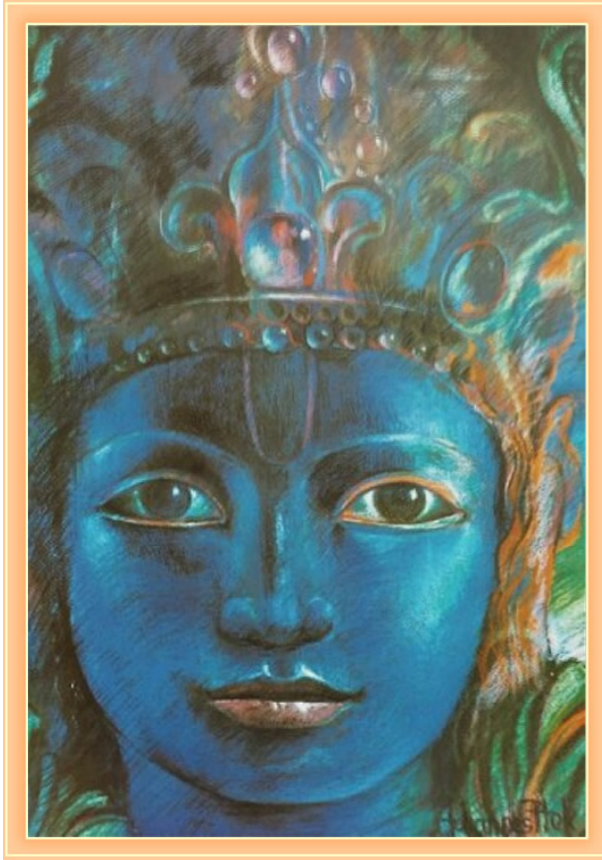
hot milk the hard kernel of the rice in it is cooked. The same way there is for the person - who [like a grain of rice] has to comply with the [heat of the] material world - the [inescapable] bondage to the sensual experience of one's material existence. (23) The governor, who as a human ruler over the citizens wishes his subjects all the best, should be a servant and must[, so to say,] not grind the flour that is already ground [by pointlessly imposing his will upon his subjects. In stead of imposing himself by punishment] he, in fulfilling his occupational duties, rather should be of worship for the Infallible One in whose service being engaged one is released from all kinds of sin. (24) Be therefore, from the truthfulness and goodness of your repentant self, as good to show me, to this maddened and proud god of man, kindly your causeless mercy as a friend of all people in distress. For then I may find relief from the sin of being in contempt of such a great personality as you. (25) You as a friend of the Friend of All, are in your equanimity, as someone far removed from the bodily concept of life, not shaken at all. But even when someone is as powerful as Lord Śiva [Śūlapāṇi], he will certainly soon be destroyed, just like me with my practice of pride in relation to the greatest souls.'

Chapter 11 Jaḍa Bharata Instructs King Rahūgaṇa

(1) **T**he brahmin [Jaḍa Bharata] said: 'Lacking in experience you use the words of experienced souls. That does not make you a leader of those who know! Matters of conduct like these are by intelligent souls never discussed without a favorable view on the Absolute Truth. (2) Oh King, among those who, in combination with the Vedas [*veda-vādī*], take great interest in the extensive knowledge of the rituals of a material household, one thus as good as never finds the actual spiritual science [*tattva-vāda*] of the sages who clear and pure, are free from material motives. (3) The most exalted vision of the real purpose of the Veda is not directly theirs, even though they are sufficiently versed in the words. Only later one realizes from one's own experience that one has to abandon the happiness of a worldly life, that compares to a dream. (4) As long as one's mind, because of

the [compelling] power of the senses of action and perception, is ruled by the natural basic qualities of passion, goodness and ignorance, actions - auspicious or otherwise - are automatically the result, just like it is with an independently roaming elephant. (5) Being driven by the forces of the natural modes, that mind is endowed with many desires [*vāsanās*], attached to material happiness and transformed [by emotions]. As the chief of the sixteen elements that typify a material existence [the material, the active and the perceptual elements plus the mind], the wandering mind accepts different forms of life with different names. Thus [leading to different births] it manifests itself in different physical appearances of a higher or lower quality [compare B.G. 3: 27]. (6) As a result of the bewildering potency of the matter that envelops the original living being, the mind creates for itself the vicious circle [the false order and self-justification] of material actions and reactions [karma]. Therefrom in the course of time the happiness, the unhappiness and the other very severe result is obtained that differs from these two [viz. intemperance]. (7) As long as that mind exists, the outer characteristics always manifest themselves that attest to [the quality] of the knower of the field [the individual soul]. For that reason scholars speak of the mind as the cause of the, in higher or lower conditions of life, [respectively] being entangled in or being free from the *guṇas*, the basic qualities of material nature. (8) Bound to the *guṇas* the living entity is conditioned, but free from the modes there is the ultimate benefit [of beatitude]. Just like the wick of a lamp burning produces smoke or else, being properly positioned, enjoys the clarified butter [and burns brightly], the mind bound by the modes takes shelter of different material activities or else is [brightly functioning] in its true position [of being directed at the soul].

(9) **A**ssociated with the five senses of action, the five senses of knowing and the pride, there are eleven engagements of the mind. Oh hero, with those eleven forms of mental concern one speaks of the fields, realms or spheres of life of the different forms of engagement, sorts of sense objects and diverse places [one's private place, public places, one's workplace and one's preferred association or club, see B.G. 13: 5-7]. (10) The ele-



ments of smell, form, touch, taste and hearing [the knowing senses]; evacuation, sexual intercourse, movement, speech and manual control [the senses of action] and the eleventh of accepting the notion of 'mine' [identification], thus result in the 'I' [or ego-awareness] of this body, that by some is said to be the twelfth element. (11) [Agitated] by the different materials, by nature itself, by culture, by the karma and by time, these eleven elements of the mind are modified into the many hundreds, thousands and millions [of considerations of one's material awareness]. These engagements of the mind do not follow from one another nor from themselves, but [are caused by] the knower of the field. (12) All these different activities of the mind of the living being - that are sometimes manifest [when one is awake] and then again are not manifest [during sleep] - are, for an impure soul who is bound to material activities [to karma], raised by the bewildering influence of the material world [*māyā*, in particular the body the soul identifies with]. But being purified the knower of the field is aware of this. (13-14) The knower of the field is

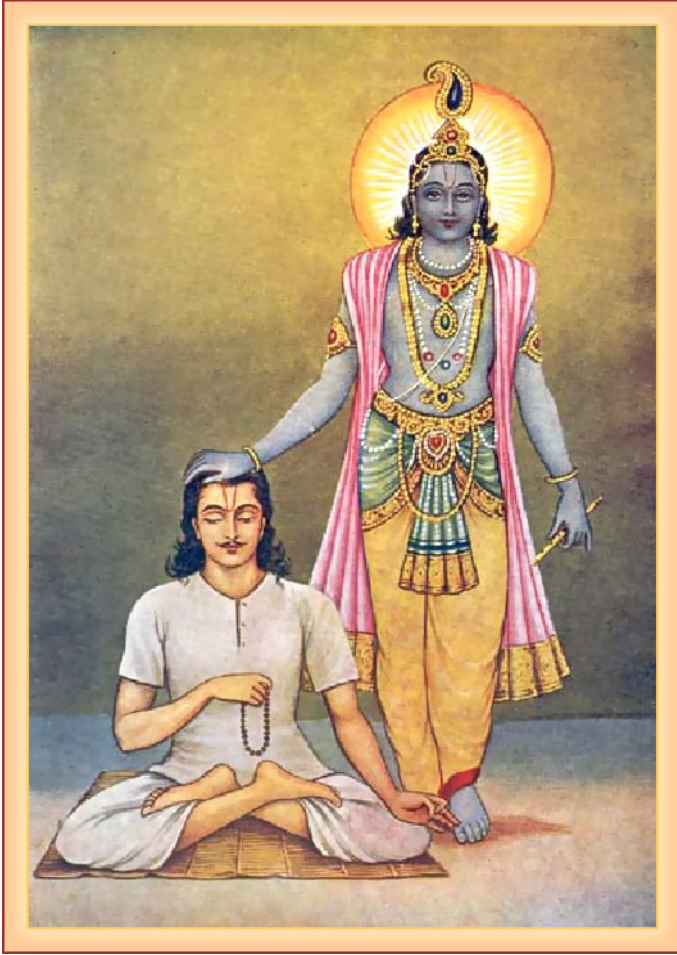
[originally] the all-pervading, omnipresent, authentic person, the Oldest One who is seen and heard of as existing by His own light. He is never born, He is the transcendental Nārāyaṇa, the Supreme Lord Vāsudeva. He is the one who, just like the air present within the body, by His own potency, exists in the soul as the controller of the moving and unmoving living entities. He is the Supersoul of expansion who has entered [and initiated the creation] and thus is of control as the Fortunate One in the beyond. He is the shelter and knower of everyone in every field. He is the vital force [the Mover of Time] that appeared in this material world [see also B.G. 9: 10 & 15: 15].

(15) As long as the embodied soul, oh King, is not free from this influence of the material world by, in freedom from attachments, developing wisdom and conquering the six enemies [the five senses and the mind, but also the so-called *ṣaṭ-ūrmi*: hunger, thirst, decay, death, grief and illusion], he will have to wander around here until he knows the spiritual truth. (16) As long as one has this mind that, as the symptom of the fixation of the soul [in the *līṅga*], for the living entity is the breeding ground for all the worldly miseries of lamentation, illusion, disease, attachment, greed and enmity, one has to face the 'I' and 'mine' [of egoism] that is the consequence. (17) This mind, that formidable enemy which grows by neglect [of one's spiritual duty], is very, very powerful. He who, free from illusion, wields [against it] the weapon of worshipping the lotus feet of the spiritual teacher and the Lord, conquers the falsehood [of the physical interest] that has covered the soul.'

Chapter 12

The Conversation between Mahārāja Rahūgaṇa and Jaḍa Bharata

(1) Rahūgaṇa said: 'My respectful obeisances unto you who emanated from the embodiment of the Original Cause [Rṣabhadeva, see 5.4], unto you who in his self-realization despises all strife and quarrel, unto you who as a forsaker of the world in the form of a brahmin friend has concealed his realization of the eternal truth. (2) You are like the



medicine for a by fever distressed patient, you are like the cool water for someone scorched by the sun and for someone like me, whose vision in this gross body has been poisoned by the serpent of pride, you are the miracle potion of the gods. (3) Now, please explain to me, burning with curiosity, again [in simple words], so that I may clearly understand, your concise speech concerning the yoga of self-realization. Personal matters not clear to me I will submit to you later. (4) You said, oh Master of Yoga, that what clearly can be distinguished as a result of one's actions [the 'fatigue', see 5.10: 21] is based on someone's behavior and not fit for an inquiry into the ultimate reality [5.11: 1]. With that explanation your goodness has bewildered my mind.'

(5-6) **The brahmin said:** 'Moving around on the earth in [a body] that is made of earth, you, oh King also endowed with such an earthly body,

recognize an earthly person in me. Why would your grace, with these [carrier's] feet and above them these ankles, calves, knees, thighs, waist, neck, shoulders and upon those shoulders the wooden palanquin upon which a soul sits who is thus known as the King of Sauvīra, have to impose your will in this haughty manner with 'I, the King of Sindhu' and thus have to be a captive of false pride? (7) The way you control these poor, helpless people by mercilessly restraining them with violence and [on top of that even] boast 'I am your protector', you with your impudence cut a sorry figure in the society of the old and wise! (8) Because we as moving or unmoving life forms consist of earth, we are also familiar with the everlasting appearance and disappearance [of our earthly forms]. We only differ in name from each other when we speak of factual behavior. Let us consider how things really are to be inferred. (9) By the words we thus use for worldly matters [for e.g. racial and national distinctions] is that what exists not truthfully described. What one in one's mind imagines of the particular characteristics, the aggregation and the dissolution again in the constituent atomic particles [of returning to 'dust'] of matter, covers but an unconscious, less intelligent notion of existence [see B.G. 13: 23]. (10) Please understand that being meager, fat, tiny or big, existing as an individual entity, inanimate matter or whatever other natural phenomenon of disposition, all concerns impermanence in the name of a certain place, time and activity; a temporary state [inherent] to the operation of nature's duality. (11) The spiritual knowing perfectly pure that constitutes the ultimate goal, is the Oneness without an inside or an outside, the Absolute Truth of the Spirit [Brahman], the inner peace [of the meditator] that in a higher [personal] sense is known as Bhagavān, the Supreme Lord [of all opulence], who by the scholars is called Vāsudeva [the Soul of God within, Viṣṇu, or Lord Kṛṣṇa as the son of Vasudeva].

(12) **Dear King Rahūgaṇa,** this cannot be realized by [just] doing penance, by deity worship or by putting an end to one's material activities, nor by one's household life, by celibacy and study or by

self-restraint in relation to water, fire or the sun [alone]. This is not revealed unless one smears the dust of the lotus feet of the great examples all over one's body! (13) There where the qualities of Him praised in the scriptures are discussed, worldly concerns find their end. When one day after day seriously listens to those whose purpose it is to find liberation [in devotional service], one's meditation will durably be turned to Vāsudeva. (14) In a previous birth I was known as a king named Bharata who found liberation through personal insight and association in worship of the Supreme Lord. Thus always engaged, I [nevertheless] became a deer [in my next life] because I, intimately associated with one, had neglected my duties. (15) Despite being a deer, oh great hero, the memory of my activities of worship unto Kṛṣṇa [the Lord as the One known by His dark skin] did not leave me. For that reason I, out of fear moving about unseen, [now] keep myself far from associating with ordinary folk. (16) Therefore, when a human being with the help of the sword of knowledge has cut with worldly association, he even in this world can break away completely from the bewildered state. By both listening to and talking about the stories of the activities of the Lord, the lost consciousness is regained and the ultimate goal of the way [back to Godhead] is attained.'

Chapter 13

Further Talks between Mahārāja Rahūgaṇa and Jaḍa Bharata

(1) The brahmin said: 'With a karmic [profit-minded] vision being divided [acting alternately] in passion, goodness and ignorance, the conditioned soul, having trodden the difficult path of a material life, wanders around in the forest [of illusion], which he entered with the purpose of gaining a higher position and wealth, and cannot find [lasting] happiness [that way]. (2) He who, following the wrong lead, chases dreams, oh god of men, is in that place plundered by the six brigands [of the senses and the mind]. Entering his heart just like foxes they seize the maddened social climber, the way tigers seize lambs. (3) In the bowers, full

of creepers, grasses and thickets, where he sometimes [in a daydream] imagines to have landed among the Gandharvas and then again in no time gets possessed [by an evil spirit], he is cruelly disturbed by biting mosquitos [nasty consequences]. (4) On that worldly path moving hither and thither to call some place, water and wealth his own, oh King, he has lost his direction and is sometimes blinded because of the smoky dust raised by a whirlwind. (5) Disturbed by the noises of invisible crickets in his ear, upset in his mind and heart by the vibrations of owls, and suffering from hunger taking shelter of fruitless trees, he at times runs after the waters of a mirage. (6) One time going for rivers that ran dry [earning nothing] and asking food [or financial support] from others who themselves ran out of stock, he some other time despairs about the forest fire of his material existence and the wealth that was seized by the rogues [other profit-minded people]. (7) Sometimes finding himself taxed by his ruling superiors [the 'demigods'], he experiences grief in his heart and loses his mind getting bewildered in his complaints, and then again he, for a moment, is filled with joy having entered a heavenly kingdom [on earth] as if he would have found true happiness. (8) Sometimes, wandering around, his feet are hurt by thorns and small stones when he wants to climb the hills [of social convention], which depresses him at every step, and sometimes he, as a family man, is dispirited with a hungry stomach [his ambitions], and gets angry with his own family members. (9) At times left to his own devices in the forest the conditioned soul is swallowed by the python [of indolence] and does not understand a thing. Attacked by poisonous snakes and bitten [disadvantaged by egoists], he then sometimes, fallen into an unseen well [in adversity], then lies his head down blinded in utter darkness. (10) Then again searching for some honey [for sense gratification] he is disappointed by the disquieted beehive in question [by institutes of social control]; or else, at the very moment he with great difficulty tries to have his way, his object of desire next is harshly stolen away by a [sexual] rival. (11) Sometimes also not able to fight the cold, the heat, the wind or the rains, he feels helpless and miserable; and then again with others trying to do a little business, he lands - as is commonly known - in



the mutual enmity of cheating for the profit. (12) Now and then in that forest being destitute, he has to do without bedding, a place to sit, a house and family comforts and then begs from others. Not getting what he needs, he desires the possessions of others and resorts to disgraceful actions. (13) When he tries to progress materially by getting married [getting settled], a greatly troublesome life results in which enmity grows as a consequence of the financial entanglement with others. On the path of material existence he is then completely ruined by misfortune and a lack of funds [financial crises]. (14) Thus wandering about for their own interest, all living beings are put up with the duty to leave the ones who died behind and take along the ones they gave a life. Oh hero, even until now, no one here following this material path, has ever reached the ultimate

goal of [devotional service and beatitude in] yoga.

(15) They who cleverly managed to conquer the elephants [the greatest heroes] of the directions, are in this world caught by the concept of 'mine' and [ultimately] all have to lay down their lives in battle with the enmity they created. They do not reach the reality of the staff of renunciation [the voluntary penance, *sannyāsa*] that, free from enmity, does lead to the perfection. (16) Clinging to the shelter of the arms of one's spouse, who is like a creeper, one sometimes sings a strange [adulterous] song in one's desire to hear the song of another bird of shelter. And when one happens to be scared enough by the Lord of the Cakra [by the compelling order of Time], one makes friends with the cranes, the herons and the vultures [cheaters and leeches]. (17) Cheated by them one next contacts the swans [brahmins, intellectuals], but dissatisfied with their practices one approaches the monkeys [debauchees, preachers of sense gratification] in the association of whom one, most satisfied in one's sensuality, stares one another in the face unaware

of one's impending death. (18) Enjoying in one's [bourgeois] tree, being attached to wife and children and poor of heart, one cannot let go, being bound to the consequences of one's actions. Beset by fear for the elephant of death clasp the creeper, one sometimes lands in a cave in the mountains where one gets trapped [an incurable disease]. (19) Somehow or other escaping from this danger, oh killer of the enemies, one again takes up the same life of that path of enjoyment, which is followed by the soul conditioned under the influence of *māyā*, wherein one until one's death fails to understand a thing. (20) Oh King Rahūgaṇa, you surely also walk this path [through the forest] of material existence, but once you have given up your political power and are acting friendly towards all living beings, you will feel no longer drawn towards the untrue and take up the,

by means of service to the Lord, sharpened sword of knowledge to pass over to the supreme reality in the beyond!

(21) **T**he king said: 'Oh, a human birth is the best of all births! What use has it to be of a higher birth [among the gods]? There is nothing superior about it when one in a new life cannot enjoy abundantly the association with truly great souls [like you], whose hearts are purified by the glory of Hṛṣīkeṣa [the Lord and master of the senses]. (22) To be completely freed from all contamination by the dust of your lotus feet of love and devotion unto Adhokṣaja [the Lord in the Beyond], is not that surprising at all. Being associated with you for just a moment, the root of ignorance of my false reasoning was completely vanquished. (23) My obeisances unto all the great personalities, whether they appear as boys, as young men or as elderly celibates. Let there because of these self-realized souls of transcendence, who walk this earth in different guises of forsaking, be happiness for all the dynasties!'

(24) **Śrī Śuka** said: 'Because of the quality of his great kindness and supreme spiritual realization, oh son of Uttarā [Parīkṣit], that son of brahmin wisdom, despite being insulted, thus could be of instruction for the ruler of Sindhu about the reality of the soul. He whose lotus feet by Rahūgaṇa so full of pity were worshiped and who had a heart in which, like in a full ocean, all the waves of [sensory input of] the senses were completely silenced, [thereafter in freedom] continued to roam this earth [compare 3.25: 21]. (25) Oh King, the king of Sauvīra who from [being instructed by] an elevated person had arrived at the full understanding of the reality of the supreme soul, thus managed to completely give up on the physical conception of the self that he in his ignorance had entertained, and [from then on] faithfully followed the path of disciplic succession originating from the Lord.'

(26) **T**he king [Parīkṣit] said: 'That what you, oh greatest of devotion, described here in figures of speech so knowledgeable about the individual soul's path in material existence, is set in words comprehensible to those who developed their minds, not so much directly to common people of

a lesser experience. Can you, for the sake of a full understanding of this subject matter which is so hard to grasp, therefore please tell us in different words what it exactly means?'

Chapter 14

The Material World as the Great Forest of Enjoyment

(1) **T**he sage [Śukadeva] said: 'Those who take the body for the real self, being different with the mode of goodness and such, consider matters from the wrong perspective. Basing themselves on the six gateways of their senses and their mind, they alternatively operating favorably, unfavorably or with a mixed approach, have to deal with a never ending process of transmigration through different series of physical frames they time and again have to forsake and pick up again. In relation to Viṣṇu, the Transcendental Personality who is the Lord, the bound soul who acting under the control of *māyā*, the illusory of matter, moves on the difficult path of the hard to cross forest of material existence, is engaged like a merchant who wants to make money with things desired by the people. He who engages his body for the sake of the profit experiences the material world in which he landed as a cemetery [a dead-end street for his self-realization] where he encounters a lot of resistance for as long as he does not succeed to progress in following the example of the bumblebees, the ones devoted to the lotus feet of the Lord and His representatives, who put an end to the trouble of reaching His jewel [His glory]. (2) In that forest he is guaranteed faced with the six senses and the mind whom one, because of their activities may call one's plunderers. From the wanton soul, who as someone lacking in self-control is walking the wrong path, they steal away every little bit of hard-won wealth so perfectly suited for performing sacrifices. The acquired wealth, that one at home for the purpose of gratifying one's senses cherishes in one's determination to see, touch, hear, taste and smell, leads, so say the sages, only to a better life in the hereafter when one directly uses it for the religious [*varṇāśrama*] practice according to the principles, a practice that is characterized by the worship of the Supreme Personality.



(3) In this respect the members of his family, beginning with those whom he calls his wife and children, are tigers and jackals in their actions; they seize, despite his resistance against it, the wealth he miserly does not want to share, just like a lamb that before the eyes of the herdsman [by predators] by force is seized from the midst of the herd. (4) Just as in a field, that is plowed every year, the seeds of the bushes, grasses and creepers that did not burn are preserved and sprout again together with the plants sown, as it happens in any other garden, so too in the field of action of one's family life, the karmic [fruitive] activities do not disappear. For that reason this world is called the storehouse of desires. (5) Being lost in that life, on this material path of existence sometimes wandering in the spheres of wealth - his life-breath so to say, he [the follower of falsehood] is disturbed by low-class characters, who are like gadflies and mosquitos, as also by thieves [who are like] rats, locusts and birds of prey. Ignorant in his fruitive motives because of a lusty mind, he looks with a

wrong vision at this human world where one never reaches one's goal: he sees castles in the air. (6) He who sometimes is engaged in chasing a fata morgana in his eagerness to drink, eat and have sex and such, is there [in that human world] consequently a reprobate, someone who is a slave of his senses. (7) Sometimes looking for gold, he, being obsessed by that particular type of yellowish rubbish - which is also an unlimited source of wickedness - is just like someone who [in the dark] aching for fire chases a fathom light. (8) A person thus, in this material forest, at times is fully engaged in running hither and thither for the sake of the various items of a dwelling place, water and wealth, deemed necessary for one's subsistence. (9) Sometimes, in the dark of night driven by a momentary whirlwind of passion, he copulates like mad, in a total neglect of the rules. Blinded by the strength of that passion he, notwithstanding the divinities [of the sun and the moon, of regularity and order], then loses all notion being overcome by a mind full of lust. (10) Occasionally, he for a

moment awakens to the meaninglessness of the bodily concept of his self that destroys his remembrance and because of which he runs after matters like after the water of a mirage. (11) Exactly like it is with the typical penetrating, repeated sounds of owls and crickets, there is sometimes the agitation caused, directly or indirectly, by enemies and state officials, who by their punitive actions trouble his ear and heart. (12) When the conditioned soul has exhausted [the merit of] his good deeds in his previous life and at that time [in need of financial support] approaches the rich with their dead souls, he himself is then just as dead within, because they are like the *kāraskara*, *kākatuṇḍa* and more of such [fruitless] trees. They are just like fouled wells never capable of making one happy. (13) Occasionally associating with insincere people of a limited understanding, it is as if he's diving in a shallow river [so that he breaks his neck]; seeking the company of atheists will make him very unhappy in both respects [spiritual and physical]. (14) When he fails in [acquiring] the wealth of others, he next gives trouble to his father and son, even about the most insignificant that his father or son possesses. (15) Burned by the flames of grief he, getting most disappointed, sometimes experiences his life at home as a forest fire that brings no good but only more and more sadness. (16) Sometimes, the wealth he holds dear is plundered by a carnivorous government that grew corrupt over time, so that he, bereft of all his good life, remains like a corpse with the life air expired. (17) Then again thinking that his father, grandfather and others, who deceased a long time ago, are there again for real [as an incarnation], he experiences the type of happiness one feels in dreams. (18) At other times he, as a householder with a mind in hot pursuit of material matters, wants to climb the mountain of precepts for [religious sacrifices for the sake of] fruitive activities and next he then [being frustrated about all the demands] laments like having entered a field full of thorns and sharp stones. (19) Occasionally [fasting religiously but] unable to bear the fire of hunger and thirst, he runs out of patience and gets angry with his family members. (20) Repeatedly being devoured by the python of sleep he, in the grip of ignorance finding himself in deep darkness, is like a corpse that, left behind in the forest, just lies there not knowing a

thing any more [see also B.G. 6: 16 & 14: 8]. (21) So now and then with his teeth of honor broken by [the envy of] his serpent-like enemies, he suffers insomnia and then falls into the blind well of illusion with a consciousness gradually deteriorating because of a [by debilitating rumination] disturbed heart. (22) And then it happens that, searching for the sweet [honey] drops of desire of another man's woman or riches, he appropriates them so that he is severely chastised by the government or the relatives involved and thus ends up in an incomparably hellish life. (23) This now is the reason why the Vedic authority states that the fruitful activity [the karma] of a living entity constitutes the cause of both this life and a next one in the ocean of matter. (24) If he manages to stay away from the chastising, a trader such ['Devadatta'] takes his money away and another friend of Viṣṇu so ['Viṣṇumitra'] in his turn takes it from him again, and so the riches [as a part of the Lord's opulence] then move from one hand to the other. (25) It also happens that one, because of natural causes like heat and cold, other living beings and the operation of one's own body and mind [resp. *adhidaivika*, *adhibhautika*, *adhyātmika kleśas*, see also 2.10: 8], is unable to counter the conditions of life, so that one remains being troubled by severe anxieties and depressions. (26) Sometimes, trading with one another, about whatever little bit of money or farthing that was appropriated with cheating, however insignificant, there rises enmity because of the dishonesty.

(27) **O**n the path of material existence one encounters these forms of misfortune that are associated with happiness and unhappiness, attachment, hate, fear, false prestige, illusion, madness, lamentation, bewilderment, greed, envy, enmity, insult, hunger, thirst, tribulations, disease, birth, old age, death, and so on. (28) Under the influence of the illusory energy *māyā*, one is sometimes, being firmly embraced by the creepers of the arms of a female companion, deeply embarrassed by finding oneself at a loss, void of all intelligence and wisdom. In one's desire to please her and offer her a suitable place to live, one's heart gets engrossed in the concern with one's consciousness being seized by the talks and nice looks offered by the sons and daughters under the loving care of one's wife.



Having lost the command over oneself one is then thrown into the endless darkness of a life ruled by ignorance.

(29) Thus it may happen that, because of the *cakra* of the Controller, the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu's disc of Time, the influence of which stretches from the first expansion of atoms to the duration of the complete life of Brahmā, one has to suffer the symptoms of its rotating. With that rotation in the course of time, swiftly before one's eyes [in terms of eternity], in a moment, all lives of the living entities are spent, from Brahmā to the simplest blade of grass. Directly of Him, the Controller whose personal weapon is the disc of Time, one is afraid at heart. As a consequence not caring about the Supreme Lord, the Original Person of Sacri-

fice, one then accepts as worshipable what lacks foundation, with self-invented gods who, operating like buzzards, vultures, herons and crows, are denied by the scriptures of one's civilization. (30) When one as a conditioned soul by the atheists, who themselves are cheated, is cheated even more, one takes to the school of the brahmins. But with them [because of their demands] not finding satisfaction in the good character of engaging with the sacred thread according to principle and scripture, nor in the trusted culture of the dutiful worship of the Supreme Lord and Original Person of Sacrifice, one then turns to the association of *karmis* [karma motivated people or *śudras*], who are not purified by behaving according to the Vedic injunctions. With them, in a materialistic sex life maintaining the family, one finds oneself in the company of those who think they descended from monkeys [instead of spiritual masters]. (31) In that condition uninhibited, unrestricted enjoying [like the monkeys] with a serious lack of knowledge and insight, one forgets how short life is when one, staring into each other's faces and such, hankers only for gratification and material results. (32) Sometimes, just like a monkey with its tree, eager to improve

one's home, one spends time caring about and having fun with one's wife and children. (33) Being confined to this course one abides, out of fear for the elephant of death, by a darkness as deep as that of a mountain cave. (34-35) In relation to the objects of one's senses one is sometimes, [as said] in one's inability to counteract the insurmountable miseries of the heat and cold of nature, other living beings and one's own existence, caught in sadness because of [the enmity that rose about] whatever little bit of wealth one in mutual transactions happened to acquire by cheating. (36) Now and then running out of money and bereft of the pleasure of accommodations for sleeping, sitting and eating, one has to endure the derision and such of the people that rose as a consequence of what one, having no

success, has decided in one's desire to realize matters a dishonest way. (37) Even though one, because of financially determined relations, more and more relates in enmity, one nevertheless engages in marriages that, based on this desire [to advance materially], consequently end in divorces. (38) On this path through the ocean of matter one is plagued by the different miseries of a material existence, to which anyone himself - or anybody else for that matter - now and then thinks that he has won and then again thinks that he has lost. Thereto one experiences in giving up [deceased] relatives and welcoming newborn babies in ones bondage at times a lot of sorrow, illusion and fear to which one loudly cries while one at other times is so happy that one starts to sing. Up to the present day save for the saintly souls no one of this entire world of self-interested human beings has ever returned to the one [place of God] where this material course started and of which the defenders of the peace declare that it is also the end station. (39) They [these materially motivated human beings] do not follow the instructions of yoga, nor do they attain this [supreme abode] that is easily attained by the sages who, naturally living and abiding by peace, are in control of their mind and senses. (40) Even when one is the saintliest of kings, victorious in all fields and expert in performing all the sacrifices, one is but an earthly human being who has to lay down his life, has to give up the fight, has to meet his demise because of the self-created enmity with others and who has to stop thinking about things in terms of 'mine' [compare 1.2: 13]. (41) Taking shelter of the creeper of karma [believing in fruitful actions] one somehow or other [living virtuously] may be freed from the misfortune of a hellish position [of being entangled in the material world], but whatever the higher world one is thus promoted to, one yet again, that way treading the worldly path, enters the [conflictuous] field of human self-interest.

(42) **T**here is not a single king able to follow, even in his mind, the path that we celebrated here as the way of the great soul Jaḍa Bharata, the son of the great saintly king R̥ṣabhadeva, any more than a fly can follow Garuḍa, the carrier of Viṣṇu. (43) It was he who gave up the difficult to forsake wealth of a family, friends and well-wishers and the royal

realm. Fond of Uttamaśloka, the Lord praised in the verses, he, only in his prime years, renounced all that occupied his heart, like it was stool. (44) To those whose minds are attracted by the loving service unto the killer of Madhu [Kṛṣṇa] being performed by the greatest souls, everything that is so difficult to give up, the world, the children, relatives, riches and a wife, all that is desirable of the goddess of fortune, the glances of mercy of the best demigods and even freedom from rebirth (liberation), is of no significance; and that befitted him as a king. (45) 'The Enjoyer of all sacrifices, the Propounder of the Religion, He who teaches by the regulative principles [the *vidhi* see 1.17: 24], the yoga in person, the teacher of analysis [*sāṅkhya*, see Kapila: 3.25], the Controller of the Creation, Nārāyaṇa, the shelter of all living beings, unto Lord Hari, I offer my obeisances!', was what he prayed aloud with a smile, even when he resided in the body of a deer. (46) He who listens to or describes to others this, by the great devotees highly appreciated, all auspicious narration about the wise king Bharata, so pure in his qualities and actions, will live long, be fortunate, be well thought of, reach the higher worlds or attain beatitude [final liberation]. Glorifying the character of the devotee and the Lord will bring someone all blessings possible, leaving nothing left to desire from others.'

Chapter 15

The Glories of the Descendants of King Priyavrata

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'The son of Bharata named Sumati who followed the path of R̥ṣabha, will in this age of Kali, by some heretics lacking in civilization be considered a godhead, according to a self-made, unsubstantial idea not found in the Vedas [see also 5.6: 9]. (2) From the womb of Sumati's wife Vṛddhasenā a son was born named Devatājit. (3) Thereafter from Āsurī a son of Devatājit was born who was called Devadyumna. From the womb of Devadyumna's wife Dhenumatī the son Parameṣṭhī appeared from whose wife Suvarcalā the son Pratīha appeared. (4) He [Pratīha] who personally propounded the science of self-



realization, was a purified soul of perfect understanding who always remembered the Original Personality. (5) From Pratiḥa's wife Suvarcalā three sons were born named Pratihartā, Prastotā and Udgātā, who were all expert in the Vedic rituals. Pratihartā's wife Stutī gave birth to the two sons Aja and Bhūmā. (6) From Bhūmā's wife Ṛṣikulyā Udgītha was born, from him Prastāva was born from the womb of Devakulyā, and Prastāva begot in his wife Niyutsā the son Vibhu. From Vibhu's wife Ratī, further Pṛthuṣena was born who in Ākūti begot a son called Nakta. From Nakta there was a son born from the womb of Druti: Gaya. He, being a most exalted wise king famous for his piety, was by his qualities recognized as a direct expansion of the Supreme Soul, Lord Viṣṇu, who took his birth for the purpose of protecting the entire world. He, moved by pure goodness, became the leading personality [the *mahāpuruṣa*] in society. (7) In the performance of his duties he protected his subjects by maintaining them [*poṣaṇa*], he made them happy in all respects [*prīṇana*], treated them as his children [*upalālana*] and sometimes chastised them as a king [*anuśāsana*]. He in every respect performed all the prescribed religious ceremonies for the Supreme

Lord, the great Personality and source of all living beings who is the Supreme Brahman [in person]. By his surrender, the many of his spiritual qualities and by his service of the lotus feet of the self-realized souls, he managed to be of devotional service unto the Supreme Lord, for he, who in the purest consciousness continuously was absorbed in the soul, had personally realized the cessation of all identification with his material self. Despite his awareness of his exalted spiritual position he, remaining without any false pride [demonstrations of power], ruled the entire world strictly according to the Vedic principles.

(8) Oh son of Pāṇḍu, they who are versed in the truth of the Purāṇa sing for the eulogy of Gaya the following poetic verses: (9) 'Who else would be

capable of doing what King Gaya did? Who else but an integral part of the Lord can be so widely respected for his Vedic knowledge, for the performance of so many sacrifices, as a defender of righteousness with every kind of opulence, as the dean of the assembly of the truthful souls and as a servant of the devotees? (10) All chaste and devoted daughters of Dakṣa, whose blessings always come true, with great satisfaction sprinkled him with sanctified water [at his coronation]. And with mother earth, who is like a cow that spontaneously drips milk, he selflessly fulfilled all desires of the people on this planet. (11) [With all the rites] being of respect for every part of the Vedas, yielded him all that one could wish for, even though he was free from desires, and all the kings, satisfied about the opposition he offered on the battlefield, paid tribute to him, just as the brahmins did with one sixth of the benedictions of a next life when he respected them righteously. (12) King Indra got intoxicated drinking too much of the *soma* of the sacrifices [of Gaya] in favor of the Supreme Lord, the soul of all sacrifices, the result of which He [Viṣṇu] personally accepted because of the purity of his devotion and steadiness in devotional service. (13) When one satisfies the Lord in the

sacrificial arena one directly propitiates all the gods beginning with Lord Brahmā, including the complete of human society, the lower creatures and the plants and grasses. Despite being satisfaction personified, the Lord derived great satisfaction from Gaya!

(14-15) **F**rom his wife Gayantī three sons Citraratha, Sugati and Avarodhana were born. From Citraratha's wife Ūrṇā Samrāt was born and from him Marīci was born from Utkalā. Marīci's wife Bindumatī gave birth to a child named Bindu [or Bindumān] and from Bindu's wife Saraghā there was a child carrying the name Madhu. Thereafter a son came called Vīravrata who took birth from Madhu's wife Sumanā. From Vīravrata's wife Bhojā two sons were born named Manthu and Pramanthu and from Manthu's wife Satyā, Bhauvana was born. From his wife Dūṣṇā a son was born named Tvaṣṭā and from Tvaṣṭā's wife Virocanā there was a son named Viraja. From Viraja's wife Viṣūcī a hundred sons [and grandsons] and one daughter were born with Śatajit as the first one.

(16) **A**bout Viraja there is the following verse: 'King Viraja, who fathered a hundred sons, is by his reputation as great a jewel, to this dynasty stemming from Priyavrata [see 5.1], as Lord Viṣṇu is among the demigods.'

Chapter 16

How the Lord can be Comprehended as a Matter of Fact

(1) **T**he king [Parīkṣit] said: 'You spoke [in 5.1: 31-33] about the sphere of the earth [Bhūmaṇḍala] saying that it stretches as far as the heat of the sun reaches and as far as the moon and myriad of stars can be seen. (2) Because of Priyavrata's circumambulating in his chariot [in 5.1: 30-31] by the seven ditches [of the wheels] the oceans were created that separated the seven different *dvīpas*. This you all clearly described, oh great one. Concerning this subject of study I would like to know everything about the sizes and characteristics in question. (3) With before our eyes the ma-

terial qualities of the Supreme Lord who - despite the fact that He Himself is free from the modes - assumed the gross form [of the universe], the mind is ready to focus on His more subtle form as the light of the soul [that stands for] the supreme spiritual entity. Oh dear teacher, can you please tell us how He, whom one knows as the Great Lord Vāsudeva, can be comprehended as something demonstrable [*tat*]?'

(4) **T**he *ṛṣi* said: 'Oh great King, there are endless transformations of the material qualities [the *guṇas*] of the Supreme Lord. Even though not even a person living as long as Brahmā is capable of putting it into words or fully understand this, I nevertheless shall try to explain in terms of names, forms and proportions that what from the unmanifest has manifested [as Bhūloka, our terrestrial world]. (5) The width of this area all around the earth [our material 'island'], this space inside the whorl of the lotus flower [of the galaxy unfolding in the night] which is as round as a lotus leaf, measures a terrible number of *yojanas* [or light years as we say these days*]. (6) Therein nine subdivisions are found [one central area and eight peripheral 'areas separated by mountains'; so-called *varṣas*] of nine times thousand *yojanas* neatly separated by eight boundaries of rock ['mountain-ranges', 'spiral arms' or *giri*]. (7) Among these there is one area in the center named Ilāvṛta that is entirely golden and is known as the most renown of all mountains, Mount Meru. This area stretches up as far as it is wide and it is of this lotuslike [unfolded] universe the pericarp that, by earthly standards, measures a thirty two thousand *yojanas* at its base. It stretches sixteen thousand *yojanas* upwards to its top as also below [according to modern astronomy our galaxy is about seven thousand light years thick].

(8) **N**orth and further north of Ilāvṛta [projected on the globe of the earth] there are, one after the other stretching out, the three ranges of Nīla, Śveta and Śṛṅgavān, that each by one tenth are flatter in their marking the *varṣas* of Ramyaka, Hiraṇmaya and Kuru. Stretching out for two thousand *yojanas*, they reach to the Kṣāroda ocean in the east and west [the 'salty one']. (9) The same way there are to the south of Ilāvṛta the Niṣadha, Hemakuṭa and



Himālaya ranges that stretch out with a body of thousands of *yojanas* to the east dividing a same number of *varṣas* that are called Hari, Kimpuruṣa and Bhārata. (10) And likewise to the west of Ilāvṛta as also to the east are situated the two demarcations of the western Mālyavān and eastern Gandhamādana ranges that for two thousand *yojanas* stretch out to the mountains the Nīla and the Niṣadha. They constitute the borders of the *varṣas* called Ketumāla and Bhadrāśva. (11) The mountains named Mandara, Merumandara, Supārśva and Kumuda at four sides form a belt around Mount Meru that massively spreads out for countless *yojanas*. (12) On these four mountains, standing like flagstaffs, one finds, spread over as much as a thousand *yojanas*, four kinds of the very best trees: the mango, the rose apple, the kadamba and the banyan. With their branches they cover hundreds of *yojanas*. (13-14) There are four lakes of the purest water, milk, honey and sugarcane juice,

drinking from which the demigods [the Apsaras, Gandharvas, Cāraṇas, Kinnaras etc.] have a natural command of the powers of yoga, oh best of the Bharata dynasty. There are also four gardens called Nandana, Caitraratha, Vaibhrājaka and Sarvatobhadra. (15) The enchanted and enchanting wives of the powerful demigods, whose glories together with those of their partners are sung by the lesser gods, are there engaged in their pastimes. (16) On the slopes of the Mandara, at eleven-hundred *yojanas* from the top, from the mango tree named Devacūta, the fruits fall down that sweet as nectar are as big as mountain peaks. (17) From the broken mangoes the reddish juice streams in large quantities that is very sweet and fragrant, being mixed with other aromas. It flows down from the top of Mandara mountain in the east of Ilāvṛta-varṣa in a river called the Aruṇodā. (18) The wind in contact with the limbs of Bhavānī [the wife of Śiva], her maid servants and

the chaste wives of the Yakṣas [Śiva's followers] using this water, fragrant therefrom, can be smelled for ten *yojanas* around. (19) Similarly the juice of the elephant sized rose apple fruits, which with their tiny seeds are broken to pieces because of falling to the ground at ten-thousand *yojanas* from the top of Merumandara, flows down in a river named the Jambū-nadī through the entire southern region of Ilāvṛta. (20-21) The mud of both the banks that is completely saturated with that juice, delivers, having dried under the influence of the air and the sun, continually [a kind of gold named] Jāmbū-nada. It is used by the denizens of heaven and provides the ever youthful wives of the demigods with all kinds of ornaments in the form of belts, diadems, bangles and so on. (22) But from the big kadamba standing on the slope of the mountain Supārśva five streams of honey flow from its hollows tens of feet wide [five *vyāmas* of about five to six feet each] that from the top of that mountain flow down and penetrate the entire western region of Ilāvṛta with their fragrance. (23) These flows sweetly perfume, through the breath issuing from the mouths of those who drank from them, the air over a distance of hundred *yojanas*. (24) So too from the top of Kumuda mountain, on which the banyan tree grows that with its thick stems is called Śatavalśa ['a hundred trunks'], big rivers flow in the northern direction of Ilāvṛta. They bring happiness in fulfilling all desires by carrying in their wake an abundance of milk, yogurt, honey, clarified butter, molasses, food grains and so on, as also a certain wealth of clothing, bedding, sitting places, ornaments and more of such goods. (25) The citizens enjoying these benefits, never ever suffer wrinkles, grey hair, fatigue, bad smelling perspiration, old age, disease, premature death, cold or heat, a waning luster or whatever variety of troubles and miseries. For their entire life they enjoy nothing but an unlimited happiness.

(26) Like the filaments of the whorl of a lotus all around the base of Mount Meru twenty or more mountains are arranged carrying names such as the Kuraṅga, Kurara, Kusumbha, Vaikaṅka, Trikūṭa, Śīsira, Pataṅga, Rucaka, Niṣadha, Sinīvāsa, Kapila, Śaṅkha, Vaidūrya, Jārudhi, Haṁsa, Rṣabha, Nāga, Kālāñjara and the Nārada.

(27) Mount Meru, with its golden brilliance like fire, is surrounded by eight mountains of which the two in the east are called Jaṭhara and Devakūṭa, the two in the west Pavana and Pāriyātra, the two in the south Kailāsa and Karavīra and the two in the north Triśṅga and Makara. Each of them stretching out for two thousand *yojanas*, together cover eighteen thousand square *yojanas*. (28) On top of Mount Meru one finds in the middle the dwelling place, the city of the most powerful, self-born one [Lord Brahmā], stretching to all sides for many thousands of *yojanas*, about which the sages say that it is entirely golden [our galaxy does so for twenty-six-thousand light years to its pericarp and forty to sixty thousand light years in diameter, compare verse 7]. (29) Around that center in each direction the eight cities of the rulers over the planetary systems are found that, being four times as small, are of a likewise form (**).'

*: The *yojana* is a Vedic measure for a great distance which originally stood for the length in kilometers that is covered before one has to unyoke one's horse. Practically that amounts to a distance of 3 to 9 miles or ± 5 to 14.5 km. But used in a context of cosmic distances it sometimes amounts to a distance of a light year.

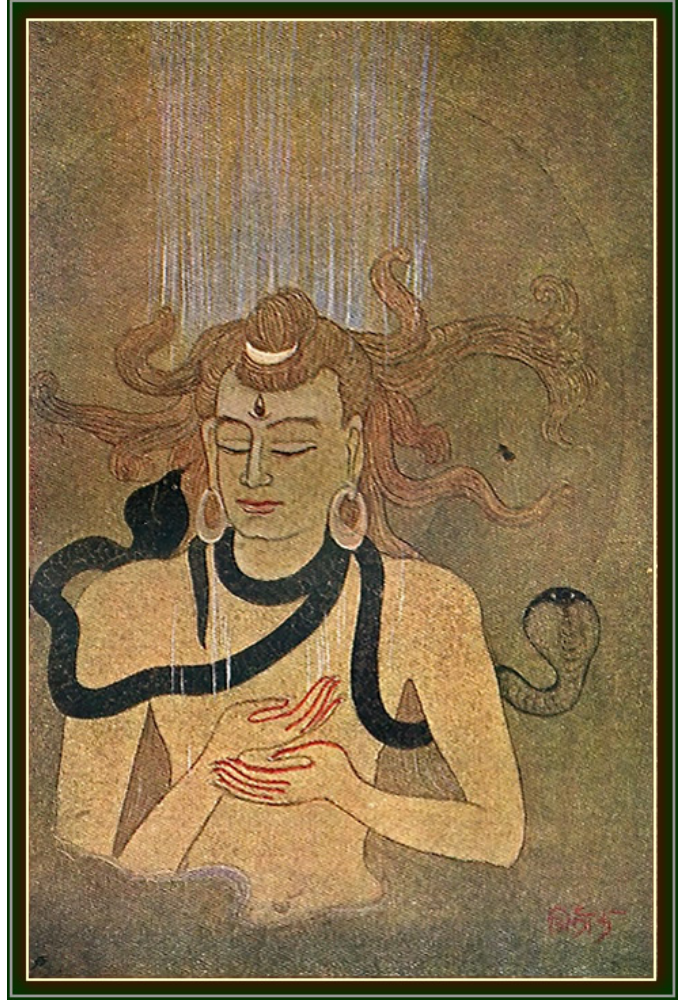
** : The place of Brahmā is called Manovatī, and those of his assistants such as Indra and Agni are known as Amarāvatī, Tejovatī, Saṁyamanī, Kṛṣṇāṅganā, Śraddhāvatī, Gandhavatī, Mahodayā and Yaśovatī.

Chapter 17

The Descent of the River Ganges

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'At the time the incarnation of Lord Viṣṇu, who is directly the enjoyer of all sacrifices, took His second step [as Lord Vāmana, see 2.7: 17], He with the nail of the big toe of His left foot pierced the upper covering of the universe. The flow of water that from the outside entered the hole, having turned pink from washing away the red powder of His lotus feet, vanquishes the sins of all the world getting in touch with it. It fell, after a very long time ['a thousand millennia'], from the sky down on top of the highest planetary world

[Dhruvaloka], that one calls the refuge of Viṣṇu. Emanating directly from the Supreme Lord's feet it is described as completely pure and has for that reason been given that name [the Ganges as the Viṣṇupadī]. (2) There, in that place, our most exalted, firmly determined devotee, the famous son [Dhruva, see 4: 8] of Uttānapāda, bathes in the water of the lotus feet of the family deity. With his heart deeply immersed in an intense eagerness, his spontaneous devotional service to the Lord constantly increases and tears are showing in his two flowerlike, slightly opened eyes as a symptom of the ecstasy in his body. Even today he with great reverence accepts upon his head the emanated water that is free from impurities. (3) After him [the waters reach] the seven sages [Maṛīci, Vasiṣṭha, Atri and so on, see 3.12: 22]. They, well known with this blessing, even at the present moment carry it on their matted hair with great honor. They consider it the ultimate perfection of all austerities to be of such a great and continuous devotional service in bhakti-yoga unto the Supreme All-pervading Lord Vāsudeva. While other people seek and find a different form of [nirviśeṣa-vādi or impersonal] liberation, they reach their goal by neglecting all other means of attaining perfection [as by economic development, the regulation of sense gratification, or by religion]. (4) When the water, in its fall in the realm of the gods, has inundated the sphere of the moon that is so congested by the thousands and millions of their different *vimānas* [divine palaces, different points of view or heavenly vehicles], it next falls down upon the abode of Brahmā. (5) There it divides into four branches carrying the names of Sītā, Alakanandā, Cakṣu and Bhadrā, that flow away in the four directions towards the great reservoir, the ocean. (6) The Sītā originating from the city of Brahmā, flows downwards from the tops of the Kesarācala and of other great mountains. Fallen on the top of the Gandhamādana mountain within the province of Bhadrāśva going in the western direction it enters into the salty ocean. (7) The same way coming down from the top of the mountain Mālyavān, the water of the [branch of the Ganges called the] Cakṣu next flows uninterrupted in the direction of Ketumāla to enter the ocean in the



west. (8) The Bhadrā, coming down from Mount Meru, flows from one mountain peak to the other [the Kumuda and the Nīla] and falls down from Mount Śṛṅgavān to go in the northern direction through the entire area of Kuru and finally enters the ocean in the north. (9) Similarly the Alakanandā [branch of the Ganges], flowing down at the southern side of Brahmaपुरी [Mount Meru], passes many mountain tops to reach, more fiercely, with a greater force Hemakūṭa and Himakūṭa to cut [thereafter] through Bhārata-varṣa in the direction of the ocean in the south. For someone on his way to bathe in the water it is, with every step he makes, less difficult to obtain the result of great sacrifices like the Aśvamedha and the Rājasūya. (10) The many hundreds of other rivers and streams that run through each of the many tracts of land, all should be considered daughters of Mount Meru.

(11) **O**f all these [nine] *varṣas* the land known as Bhārata-varṣa [India] constitutes the field [*kṣetra*] of karma [of shaping one's destiny by actions]. The remaining other eight *varṣas* are the heavenly places here on earth where, so the scholars say, those who were promoted to heaven, may spend the remaining merit of their virtuous deeds. (12) For thousands of years they in these lands all enjoy their lives just like gods, with bodies like thunderbolts that are as strong as a thousand elephants. Youthful and excited about a great deal of sexual pleasure and other sensual delights in diverse relationships, they at the end of their term of [liberal] mating then conceive a single child. They know times of harmonious living there like one had during Tretā-yuga [the period mankind lived in piety]. (13) In each of those lands the godlike leaders because of their virtuous conduct never run short of respect and offerings. During all seasons they have lots of flowers as also fruits because of which the branches of the trees heavily bend down. The gardens to their many divine refuges are full of beautiful trees and creepers. There are many lakes of crystal clear water in the valleys of the mountain ranges that demarcate their lands. In those lakes one finds all kinds of fragrant fresh lilies with humming bumblebees, eager great swans, ducks, cranes and other aquatic birds. They enjoy all kinds of water sports there and lustily court the attractive godlike women who, smiling with their playful glances, entertain themselves freely with great joy, an eager look and an enchanted mind. (14) The Supreme Lord Nārāyaṇa, the great personality, certainly proves His mercy to His devotees in all these nine *varṣas* by personally promoting the reality of the soul [through his four appearances as Vāsudeva, Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha, see 4.24: 35-36]. Up to the present day He thus stays near His devotees to accept their service (*).

(15) **I**n Ilāvṛta-varṣa the Supreme Lord Śiva is the only man. Any man other than him who wants to enter that most excellent realm, will find out what leads to the curse of Bhavānī [his wife] and make him turn into a woman. I will dilate on that subject later on [see 9.1]. (16) In the company of Bhavānī there are ten billion women who always serve the

in four expanded Supreme Lord. The fourth expansion of the Supreme Personality, known as Saṅkarṣaṇa, constitutes the source of His form in the mode of ignorance. Lord Śiva, in trance meditating on Him, calls Him into his heart by reciting the following in worship. (17) The powerful Lordship says: 'My obeisances unto You, oh Supreme Lord, oh greatest Original Personality and reservoir of all transcendental qualities, oh You whom I revere as the one unlimited and unseen within this world. (18) Oh worshipable one whose feet ward off all danger, You, to whom we owe all the different opulences, are the very best, the ultimate shelter invaluable to the devotees to whose satisfaction You manifest Yourself in different forms. I sing Your glory because You put an end to the repetition of birth and death, oh You, Supreme Controller and source of this creation. (19) Who of us not in control of the force of his anger, would, aspiring to conquer his senses with the command of Your glance, not be of worship unto You? Your vision is never, not even to the slightest degree, clouded by the restless mind that one has because of the qualities of the deluding material world. (20) To a person with an impure vision You with Your bloodshot eyes appear as someone who under the influence of *māyā* is inebriated because of drinking too much honey sweet liquor. But [such a person is as impure as e.g.] the wives of that serpent demon [Kāliya, see 10.16] who could not worship You anymore because of their bashfulness about being sensually aroused from touching Your feet. (21) By You, so say all the sages, the world is maintained, created and annihilated, while You Yourself are free from these three [basic qualities]. To You as the Unlimited One, the universes situated on the hundreds and thousands of Your hoods, weigh not more than a mustard seed. (22-23) From You the first embodiment of the *guṇas* originated: the most powerful one who was never born [Lord Brahmā], the reservoir of all wisdom and cosmic intelligence of the total energy of the universe. From him I [Rudra] appeared in this world who, endowed with the three basic qualities, from my material [*ahankāra* ego] potency give shape to the demigods, the [five] material elements and the senses. Being controlled by You, we - the great personalities, I, the demigods, the five elements and the total energy - are bound to

You like birds on a string and all together form this material world by Your grace. (24) A person bewildered by the qualities of creation does not know how to escape from being caught in the deluding energy that ties him on every occasion to karmic activities. That Supreme Personality, You in whom everything has its beginning and its end, I offer my respectful obeisances.'

*: In some of the *sātvata-tantras*, one finds a description of the nine *varṣas* in terms of the predominating Godhead worshiped in each of them: (1) Vāsudeva, (2) Saṅkarṣaṇa, (3) Pradyumna, (4) Aniruddha, (5) Nārāyaṇa, (6) Nṛsimha, (7) Hayagrīva, (8) Mahāvarāha, and (9) Brahmā.

Chapter 18 Prayers to the Different Avatāras

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'The son of Dharmarāja known as Bhadrāśravā, along with the leading nobles and all the inhabitants of Bhadrāśva-varṣa, directly worships the same way [as Lord Śiva does] the Supreme Lord Vāsudeva in His dear most form as the director of the religion: His incarnation as Hayagrīva [or Hayaśīrṣa]. Approaching Him they, absorbed in transcendence, chant the following. (2) The ruler Bhadrāśravā and his subjects say: 'Our obeisances unto the Supreme Lord whom we worship for being the source of all religious principles and the One who purifies us from all material contamination. (3) Alas! How wondrous the ways of the Lord are. Sure to be faced with death someone nevertheless does not see this and thinks of material happiness. When he does the wrong things he tries to enjoy and when he cremates his father or his sons he wishes to live for ever! (4) The great sages traditionally insist that the universe is transitory and the philosophers and the scholars who see and know their real self also state that. Still they are overcome by illusion, oh Unborn One. We offer You, the One Unborn, our obeisances whose actions are most wonderful. (5) The Vedic literatures defend You as being distant from the activities of the creation, maintenance and annihilation of the entire universe. That You are not touched by them nevertheless does not

amaze us, for in You, the original cause of all causes, we find the essence [the primal substance] set apart in every respect. (6) At the end of the *yuga* the four Vedas were stolen by the personification of ignorance [the demon Madhu] and [retrieving them] from the lowest worlds they were by You, assuming the form of half a horse, half a man [Hayagrīva], returned to the supreme poet [Brahmā] upon his request. Him, You whose resolve never fails, we offer our obeisances.'

(7) Moreover in Hari-varṣa, there is the Supreme Personality of the Lord in a human form [as Nṛsimhadeva]. The reason why He assumed that form most satisfying to the great personality of all good qualities Prahlāda, I shall explain to you later [see seventh canto]. That topmost devotee, because of whose exalted character and qualities all the Daityas in his family were delivered, is, together with the people of that *varṣa*, of an uninterrupted, unflinching devotional service and they worship Him chanting this: (8) 'Oh Supreme Lord Nṛsimha, I bow for You, my obeisances to the power of all power that You are. Please manifest Yourself fully, oh You whose nails and teeth are like thunderbolts. Please take away the desire to enjoy the untrue, be so good to drive away, oh Lord, the ignorance in the material world. May, with my oblations, there be freedom from all fear. I beg You, oh Lord, source of my prayer, to appear before my mind's eye. (9) Let there be good fortune for the entire universe, may all mischief turn into virtue, let all living beings find consciousness in a reciprocating mindfulness and may the mind be calm. Give us the experience of You as the Lord in the beyond, let our intelligence be absorbed in this without another motive. (10) Let there no longer be the attachment to one's house, wife, children, a bank balance, friends and relatives, but rather the association with persons who cherish the Lord, with people satisfied with the bare necessities of life who - contrary to those who cherish the senses - quickly succeed in self-realization. (11) The unborn one who entered the core of the heart through the ears, with the force of a constant power vanquishes the impurities of the body and the mind of those who managed to associate regularly and be in touch with the holy places [temples, holy rivers, places of pilgrimage



etc.]. Who indeed would not be of service to Mukunda, the Lord of Liberation and [discuss] His glorious actions? (12) In those who, free from ulterior motives, are of service to the Fortunate One, all the demigods manifest themselves and all good qualities are found. But where are the good qualities of a person who is not devoted to the Lord and who with a busy mind constantly runs after the temporary matters of the outside world? (13) As desirable as water is to aquatics, the Supreme Lord is desirable as the true self, as the (Super)soul of all embodied beings. If one gives up on a personality as great as He is, one will get attached to a household life that for a couple having aged then constitutes the [entire] greatness [that was accomplished]. (14) Household life is the root cause of fear and depression, passion, attachment, disappointment, anger, the desire for prestige and the cycle of repeated birth and death. One should give it up [to be attached this way] and [instead] be of worship for the feet of Lord Nṛsiṃhadev who is the refuge of fearlessness.'

(15) The Supreme Lord resides in Ketumāla in the form of Kāmadeva [or also Pradyumna, see 4.24: 35], according to His wish to satisfy the Goddess of Fortune as also the sons [the days] and the daughters [the nights] of the founding father

[Sāmvatsara, the deity of the year], who rule the land and of whom there are as many as there are days and nights in a human lifetime. The fetuses of these daughters, whose minds are upset by the radiation of the mighty weapon [the *cakra*] of the Supreme Personality, are ruined and after one year expelled dead [from the womb] as miscarriages. (16) So very beautiful in His movements and manifested pastimes, He with His mild smiles, playful glances, slightly raised attractive eyebrows and charming lotuslike face is a pleasure to the Goddess of Fortune and all the senses. (17) To that highest form of the Supreme Lord so affectionate to all, the Goddess of Splendor [Lakṣmīdevī], in the absorption of yoga recites the following in her all year through - during the nights with the daughters of the Prajāpati, and during the days with the protectors [the sons, husbands] - being of worship for Him: (18) 'Oh Lord, *hrām hrīm hrūm* [a mystical mantra of propitiation], in respect of all Your qualities and properties I offer You, the Supreme Lord of the senses, my obeisances. You are the Soul of all and master of action, knowing, function and relation; the One known as the sixteenfold [of the working, the knowing senses, the elements and the mind]. You as the enjoyer of all rituals, the supplier of the food, He who awards eternal life, the All-pervading One of Power, the

strength of the body and the senses, the Supreme Husband fulfilling all desires, I offer my respects - may there always be Your good fortune! (19) Women ask in this world for [You as] another, self-sufficient husband by propitiating You, the Lord of the senses, by means of sacred vows, because the dependent husbands are not capable to protect the sweet children, wealth and life of these women. (20) That man would be a husband who is fearless and self-sufficient and fully capable of offering protection. You are that person [depending on no one else] for otherwise people would fear each other [in their dependence]. There is no attainment held higher in this world than the attainment of You. (21) A woman who, with that notion of You in mind, eagerly worships Your lotus feet, is by You, despite all the desires she is addicted to, rewarded for just that wish, but when she, wishing to worship You, does so for another purpose, oh Supreme Lord, she, having broken [with the original purpose], will feel pain. (22) In order to obtain me [the Goddess of Fortune], the unborn one [Brahmā], the mighty master [Īśa or Śiva], the other gods as also the unenlightened souls undergo severe penances, but because I have You always in my heart, no one contemplating the senses will obtain me, unless Your feet are his final aim, oh Unconquerable One. (23) I pray that You, oh Infallible one, also place on my head the worshipable lotus hand You placed on the heads of the devotees. You carry my mark on Your chest, oh worshipable one, but that is misleading [that does not guarantee Your mercy]. Who can ever fathom by reason and argument the motives of You, the Supreme Lord?'

(24) In Rāmyaka, where [Vaiśvata] Manu rules, in the past [at the end of the Cākṣuṣa-manvantara] the Supreme Personality appeared in the most loved form of Matsya, the fish incarnation. Even today Manu is in his devotional service of worship with the following prayer: (25) 'I offer my obeisances to Him, the Supreme Lord, who is pure goodness, the origin of life, the source of vitality, the origin of all mental power and bodily strength, having appeared in the form of the great fish. (26) Not seen by the leaders of the different worlds You, oh Supreme Controller, move about within and without, being known by the great [Vedic]

sounds [the mantras] by which man, addressed by his different [*varnāśrama*] names [for status and occupation], is brought under Your control like being a wooden doll. (27) The leaders of the world suffer in politics from the fever of envy. They, separately or combined, endeavoring apart from You, also try to offer protection, but they are not capable of realizing that, whatever two-legged, four-legged, crawling or non-moving creatures it might concern in this world. (28) Oh Lordship, when this earth, the storehouse of all kinds of medicinal herbs, was in the stormy waves of the waters of devastation at the end of the *yuga*, You with all Your power were very quickly there for [the rescue of] her and me, oh Unborn One. I offer You, the ultimate source of life of the entire universe, therefore my respectful obeisances [see also 8.24].'

(29) Residing in Hiraṇmaya the Supreme Lord manifests with the body of a tortoise [Kurma]. Aryamā, the leader of the forefathers, together with the people of that realm worships that dear most embodiment of Him, singing the following hymn. (30) 'My Lord, our respects for You, the Supreme Lord in the form of a tortoise. You are the embodiment of all good qualities, again and again we offer You our obeisances whose position cannot be discerned, You the greatest one, reaching everywhere, who are the shelter of all. (31) This form of You of the visible cosmic complete, which You manifested by Your creative potency and is known by so many appearances, is beyond any measure and we therefore cannot perceive it as it is - unto You, whose actual form cannot be expressed in words, our respects. (32) What is born from a womb, born from humidity, born from an egg, born from the earth; what moves or does not move around, a god, a sage or forefather; what exists as the material elements, the senses, the higher worlds, the sky, the earthly worlds, the hills and mountains, the rivers, the oceans, the islands, the stars and the planets, thus are all different notions of one and the same [form of You]. (33) From You, with Your countless different names, forms and features, the scholars derive their notion of numerical proportions, enumerations and compositions, the truth of which they verify by observation. Unto Him who thus discloses Himself in

analysis, You, I offer my obeisances [see also Kapila 3.28-33].'

(34) In the northern territory called Kuru there is the Supreme Lord, the Original Person of Sacrifice also, namely in His boar form [Varāha, see 3.13]. There He is over and over worshiped by the Goddess and this planet earth, together with the inhabitants of [Uttara-]Kuru who are unrelenting in their devotional service unto Him. In this worship the following Upaniṣad verses are repeated: (35) 'We offer the Supreme Lord our obeisances who is understood by means of the different mantras for the sacrifices, the rituals and all the great ceremonies that are part of His body. That great personality, the purifier of our karma who manifested Himself in all the three [previous] ages, we offer our respects. (36) To the great scholars full of wisdom material nature with her basic qualities constitutes Your form. Just like with fire that manifests itself in wood when one spins a stick, they, who in their spiritual investigations seek the cause, find You, the Soul manifesting Himself whom we offer our respects, but who remains hidden when one endeavors for material results. (37) Those whose intelligence stabilized, because of carefully considering all the different limbs of the yoga system, are thus completely freed from the *māyā* of Your external form, the illusion that is raised by the objects of the senses, the demigods [of the sun, the moon, the fire etc.] who rule the senses, the body, the Time that rules [the Ruler], the doer [the ego] and the modes of nature, whom one all perceives as matters of fact. Our repeated obeisances unto that Sublime Soul. (38) You who entertain no desires in maintaining, annihilating and creating the universe, You who in glancing over *guṇa* and *māyā* - [and thus makes the universe move] like iron being moved by a magnet - want to [take care of the souls] but do not desire [Your manifestation], You who are there as the witness to the actions and reactions, we offer our obeisances. (39) Before Him who in the original form of a boar, playful like an elephant, after killing the most formidable Daitya opponent in the fight, emerged from the water of the Garbhodaka ocean keeping our earth on top of His tusks [Hiraṇyākṣa see 3.19] - before that Almighty Lord, we bow down.'

Chapter 19

The Prayers of Hanumān and Nārada and the Glories of Bhārata-varṣa

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'In the land of Kimpuruṣa the supreme and greatest devotee Hanumān, together with the people living there, is always engaged in the service at the feet and the worship of the Supreme Lord Rāmacandra, the Original Personality who, as the elder brother of Lakṣmaṇa, is so pleasing to Sītā. (2) Together with Arṣiṣeṇa [the leader of Kimpuruṣa] attentively listening to the most auspicious stories about his master and Lordship, sung by a company of Gandharvas, he [Hanumān] himself prays this: (3) 'Oh my Lord, my obeisances unto You, the Sweet Lord discussed in the scriptures. All my respects for You who possess all the good qualities one also finds in the advanced devotees. My reverence for You as the One who is in control of His senses and is always remembered and worshiped by the people of all places. My salutations unto You as the touchstone of quality for any seeker of truth. I bow down before You, the great personality and godhead of the brahmins, the King of all Kings. (4) Let me worship Him, the absolutely pure, supreme truth, the one measure for understanding the world who, by His spiritual potency, vanquishes the influence of the modes of nature. He is the inner peace of wisdom one attains when one, beyond name and form, is free from ego. (5) Incarnated as a human being He was not only there as the Almighty One to kill the demon [Rāvaṇa], but also as the One instructing the mortals of this material world. What other reason would there have been for all the misery of Sītā's being separated from Him, the Supreme Lord, but to [offer opportunity to] serve the One satisfied within, the original spiritual soul? (6) In truth He, the Supreme Soul and best friend of the self-realized souls, is never attached to whatever within the three worlds. He is the Supreme Lord Vāsudeva who in fact never suffered from being separated from His wife Sītā nor ever could be disturbed by [what happened to] Lakṣmaṇa [His brother and eternal associate]. (7) It is not one's birth, one's fortune,



one's eloquence, one's wit or one's physique that creates the satisfaction of the greatest One, for the brother of Lakṣmaṇa even accepted as His friends us, the forest dwellers who miss all these qualities. (8) Therefore, whether one is enlightened or not, a beast or a human being, anyone who is of the soul should worship Rāma, the foremost one who is so easy to please, the Lord who appeared as a human being and thus led the inhabitants of Kosala [Ayodhyā, northern India] back to heaven.'

(9) The Supreme Lord, also present in the land of Bhārata, is till the end of the millennium [*] known there as Nara-Nārāyaṇa. He whose glories are inconceivable shows His causeless mercy there

to those who aspire self-realization and practice austerities that are conducive to the religion, the spiritual knowledge, the detachment, the yogic mastery, the control over the senses and the freedom from false ego. (10) The practice of analytic yoga, on how one should understand the Personality of God as formulated by the Lord [Kapila, see 3.28 & 29], was instructed to Sāvarni Manu by the fortunate Nārada, who together with the followers of the system of status orientations [the *varṇāśrama* system, see B.G. 4: 13] living in the land of Bhārata [India] with great ecstatic love serves the Lord with the eulogy: (11) 'My respectful obeisances unto You, oh Lord, oh master of the senses and freedom from attachment in person. My respects unto You who are the only asset of a person living in [voluntary] poverty. You Nara-Nārāyaṇa, are the most exalted one of all the sages, the supreme spiritual master of all the *paramahamsas* [the swanlike realized masters] and the original person of the self-realized souls; again and again I thus offer You my reverential homage.' (12) And he sings thereto: 'You are the doer overseeing this cosmic creation, the One who is not attached to being the master, nor do You, although You

appear as a human being, suffer from hunger, thirst and fatigue. Nor is the vision of You, who are the seer of everything, ever polluted by the basic material qualities. I offer You, the unattached and pure, unfathomable witness, my respects. (13) Having forsaken one's identification with the body, one must, at the end of one's time [of living], with a devotional attitude concentrate one's mind on You who are transcendental to the material qualities. This forsaking constitutes the perfection of the practice of yoga as explained by the almighty Lord Brahmā. (14) A person driven by desire thinks in fear about the present and future of his children, wife and wealth, but anyone who knows about the hopelessness of this defi-

cient vehicle of time, considers such endeavors only a waste of time because the body is lost in the end. (15) Therefore, our master, oh Lord in the beyond, I pray that we by dint of the [bhakti-]yoga unto You, very soon may forsake this fixed notion of 'I' and 'mine' about the banality of this vehicle of time, this illusory reality of Yours which is so difficult to overcome, so that we may realize our original nature.'

(16) In this land of Bhārata there are also many mountains and rivers. There are mountains like the Malaya, Maṅgala-prastha, Maināka, Trikūṭa, Rṣabha, Kūṭaka, Kollaka, Sahya, Devagiri, Rṣyamūka, Śrī-śaila, Venkāṭa, Mahendra, Vāridhāra, Vindhya, Śuktimān, Rkṣagiri, Pāriyātra, Droṇa, Citrakūṭa, Govardhana, Raivataka, Kakubha, Nīla, Gokāmukha, Indrakīla and Kāmagiri, as also hundreds and thousands of other peaks with innumerable big and small rivers streaming down their slopes. (17-18) The residents of Bhārata find purification of mind by touching [and bathing in] all these waters, or just by mentioning their name. The big rivers are the Candravasā, Tāmraparṇī, Avatodā, Kṛtamālā, Vaihāyasī, Kāverī, Veṇī, Payasvinī, Śarkarāvartā, Tuṅgabhadrā, Kṛṣṇā-veṇyā, Bhīmarathī, Godāvārī, Nirvindhya, Payoṣṇī, Tāpī, Revā, Surasā, Narmadā, Carmaṇvatī, Sindhu [the present Indus], the two main rivers the Andha and the Sona, the Mahānadī, Vedasmṛti, Rṣikulyā, Trisāmā, Kauśikī, Mandākinī, Yamunā, Sarasvatī, Dṛṣadvatī, Gomatī, Sarayū, Rodhasvatī, Saptavatī, Suṣomā, Śatadrū, Candrabhāgā, Marud-vṛdhā, Vitastā, Asiknī and the Viśvā. (19) In this tract of land the people, who took birth there out of goodness, passion ['redness'] or ignorance, lead a divine, human or hellish life according to the karma they acquired. Thus there are, as a consequence of what one did in the past, for each soul many goals demarcated in the sense of different [varnāśrama] societal destinations [or status orientation groups], that each may lead to the path of liberation. (20) By performing devotional service for the Fortunate One, the soul of all living beings - who is free from all attachment, cannot be expressed in words and who depends on no one -, by serving the Supersoul Vāsudeva free from ulterior motives and in bhakti-yoga doing that what belongs to all these different destinations, one can,

thus associating with the people [with devotees] of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, cut with the cause of the bond of ignorance.

(21) This is what the demigods chant: 'Oh, what kind of pious deeds have these people performed or what blessing has the Lord Himself pronounced being pleased with them, that they obtained a birth in the land of Bhārata-varṣa, a birth favorable for serving Lord Mukunda that is our aspiration? (22) What is the use of being engaged in difficult rituals, austerities, vows, charitable deeds or achieving the heavenly kingdom when one, due to an excessive sensuality, has lost the remembrance of the lotus feet of Lord Nārāyaṇa? (23) Of greater value than achieving a position in life that lasts endlessly and leads to repeated births, is to be born in the land of Bhārata for a life of only hundred years. That is so because they who, as a mortal for such a short time being engaged, know to fix their mind attentively [on His feet] in full detachment, [thus actually know to value life itself and then] achieve the Lord's abode where there is no fear [Vaikunṭha]. (24) Those places - even those inhabited by the gods - where there is not the sweet stream of talks about Vaikunṭha, nor the devotees are found who, always engaged in His service, take to His shelter, nor the performance takes place of those sacrifices for the Lord that are true festivals, are places not to be frequented. (25) Those souls who, having achieved a human birth, have all the knowledge, are capable of engaging in action and have all means at their disposition, but despite these attainments do not endeavor for the elevation of not taking birth again, will fall back into bondage, just like birds [that having escaped from man do not take care]. (26) By their faith they [the inhabitants of India] are divided in their performance of the rituals. [But] with the oblations offered to the ruling deity and the reciting of mantras according to the proper method, the One God who is addressed with different names, He, the bestower of all benedictions in person, complete in Himself, accepts that most happily [B.G. 7: 19-25]. (27) Even though He certainly grants what man prays for, He does not bestow benedictions one has to ask for time and again [B.G. 7: 3]. He out of His own, unasked, grants to those devoted to Him, the lotus flower of His feet that put

an end to all desires. (28) If there, after our happy stay in heaven, remains any merit from our perfect sacrifices, our conscientious formulations and our good deeds, then bless us with a birth in Ajanābhavarṣa [the earth under the rule of Bharata, see 5.7: 3], the land where we may remember Him, the Lord expanding the happiness of His devotees.'

(29-30) Śrī Śuka continued: 'To the continent known as Jambūdvīpa, oh King [the Eurasian continent, see 5.1: 32], there are also, as some learned sages describe it, eight smaller *dvīpas* [subsections or provinces] that were formed by the digging all around in the earth of the sons of Mahārāja Sagara [the Indian part or Bhārata-varṣa] when they tried to retrieve their lost horse of sacrifice [see 9.8]. They carry the following names: Svarṇaprastha, Candrasūkla, Āvartana, Ramaṇaka, Mandara-hariṇa, Pāñcajanya, Simhala and Laṅkā. (31) I have thus explained to you the divisions of the lands of Jambūdvīpa, oh best of the descendants of Bharata, the way they were explained to me.'

*: Millennium refers here not to a period of thousand years, but to a period of thousand *mahāyugas* of 4320 millions of years each, a period also called a *kalpa* representing the duration of one day of Brahmā's life that itself lasts a hundred years.

Chapter 20

The Structure of the Different Dvīpas and the Prayers by their Different People

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'Let me now describe the dimensions, characteristics and form of the divisions of Plakṣa and the other *dvīpas* that are called *varṣas* [or lands, see 5.1: 32]. (2) The way Mount Meru is surrounded by the *dvīpa* of Jambū, that *dvīpa* in its turn is [as seen from the inside] surrounded by a salty ocean that is just as wide. That ocean is surrounded, like a moat by a park, by the *dvīpa* of Plakṣa that stretches out twice as much. It was named after the plakṣa tree that is as tall as a jam-

bū but twice as wide. At the root of that tree, which rises magnificently splendidous, there is a fire that counts seven flames. The master of that *dvīpa* is the son of Priyavrata named Idhmajihva. When he retired for the yoga of self-realization he divided the *dvīpa* into seven *varṣas* that he named after his seven sons. (3-4) Śiva, Yavasa, Subhadra, Śānta, Kṣema, Amṛta and Abhaya, are thus the *varṣas*. They have seven rivers and mountains. The seven mountain ranges marking the *varṣas* are known as Maṇikūṭa, Vajrakūṭa, Indrasena, Jyotiṣmān, Suparṇa, Hiranyaṣṭhīva and Meghamāla. The main rivers are the Aruṇā, Nṛmṇā, Āṅgirasī, Sāvitrī, Suptabhātā, R̥tambharā and the Satyambharā. Touching their water washes away the passion and darkness of the four types of men whom one there [according to their vocations] calls the Hamsas, Pataṅgas, Ūrdhvāyanas and Satyāṅgas [the swanlike ones, the rulers, the ambitious ones and the faithful ones: the *varṇas*]. For a thousand years they live there like gods with the most beautiful bodies, having children and performing Vedic rituals at the gate to heaven. They worship the Supreme Lord, the Supersoul in the form of the sun god the way it is prescribed in the holy scriptures praying: (5) 'Let us take to the shelter of Sūrya, the god of the sun who is a manifestation of Lord Viṣṇu, the authentic Soul of the Absolute Truth, of righteousness, of Brahman and of eternal life and death.'

(6) In Plakṣa and the other four *dvīpas* the people are without exception born with the perfections of a long life, good sense, bodily and mental fortitude, physical power, intelligence and bravery. (7) Surrounded by an ocean of sugarcane juice equally wide, there is beyond Plakṣadvīpa another *dvīpa* called Śālmala that is twice as big and surrounded by an ocean of liquor [or wine; *surā**]. (8) That *dvīpa* received its name from a śālmali tree as big as the plakṣa tree and in that tree, so one says, Garuḍa, the carrier bird of Vedic prayers unto Lord Viṣṇu, has his residence. (9) The son of Priyavrata called Yajñabāhu is the master of that *dvīpa*. He divided it into seven *varṣas* according to the seven names of his sons: Surocana, Saumanasya, Ramaṇaka, Deva-varṣa, Pāribhadra, Āpyāyana and Avijñāta. (10) The seven mountains there are known by the names of Svarasa, Śataśrī-

ga, Vāmadeva, Kunda, Mukunda, Puṣpa-varṣa and the Sahasra-śruti. The seven rivers are the Anu-mati, Sinīvālī, Sarasvatī, Kuhū, Rajanī, Nandā and Rākā. (11) The people living in those *varṣas* are known as the Śrutadharas, Vīryadharas, Vasundharas and Iṣandharas [those who listen, are heroic, are wealthy and are obedient, another expression of the *varṇas*]. Fully conversant with the Vedic knowledge they worship the Supreme Lord in the form of Soma-ātmā ['the true self of the sacrificial beverage' or the moon god]: (12) 'With his effulgence he divides the time in the light and dark period of the month [*śukla* and *kṛṣṇa*]. May he, that divinity of the moon and the grain to be distributed to the forefathers and the demigods, may that king of all people, remain favorably disposed unto us.'



(13) Next there is outside of that ocean the *dvīpa* called Kuśa that, like the *dvīpa* mentioned before, is twice as big and surrounded by an ocean of ghee that is equally wide. The *kuśa* grass created by God gave that *dvīpa* its name because all directions are illumined by the effulgence of the young sprouting grass that glows like another kind of fire. (14) The son of Mahārāja Priyavrata called Hiraṇyaretā, oh King, divided as the master of that island, when he retired for his penance, his *dvīpa* among his seven sons with the names of Vasu, Vasudāna, Dṛdharuci, Nābhigupta, Stutyavrata, Vivikta and Vāmadeva. (15) The seven mountain ranges of these *varṣas* are called the Cakra, Catuḥśṛṅga, Kapila, Citrakūṭa, Devānīka, Ūrdhvaromā and Draviṇa mountains and the rivers are the Ramakulyā, Madhukulyā, Mitravindā, Srutavindā, Devagarbhā, Ghṛtacyutā and Mantramālā.

(16) At those waters the inhabitants of Kuśadvīpa who are named the Kuśalas, Kovidas, Abhiyuktas and Kulakas [or the grass sitters, the experienced ones, the competitors and the artisans], skilled in the rituals, worship the Supreme Lord in the form of the fire god called Jātaveda ['he who awards the wages']: (17) 'Of all the demigods of the Supreme Brahman who constitute the limbs of the Original Person, you, oh god of the fire, are the one who personally carries the offerings of ghee and grains [to the Lord]. [Please accept] therefore our sacrifice for the Supreme Personality of Godhead.'

(18) Just as Kuśadvīpa is surrounded by an ocean of ghee, Krauñcadvīpa outside of it and being twice as big, is surrounded by an ocean of milk [or plant juice] of the same size. The king of the mountains named Krauñca situated there gave that *dvīpa* its name. (19) Even though Guha [the son of Śiva, Kārttikeya] destroyed the vegetation there with his weapons, it [the mountain] stands unafraid because it constantly bathes in the ocean of

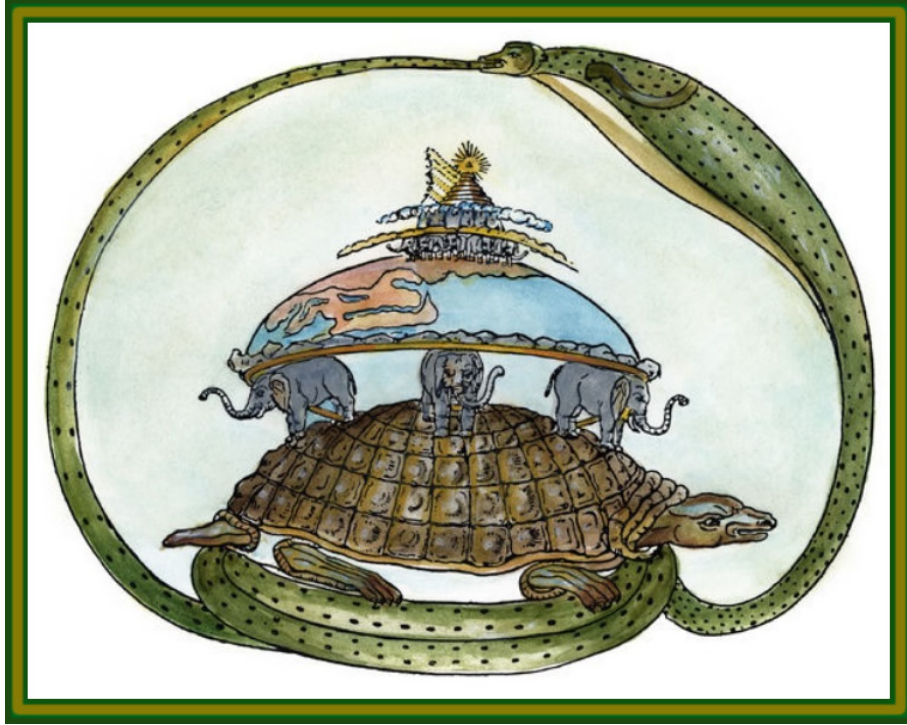
milk and enjoys the protection of the mighty Varuṇa [the demigod of the seas]. (20) Ghṛtapṛṣṭha, the son of Mahārāja Priyavrata, the ruler of that *dvīpa*, gave its seven sections, its *varṣas*, the names of his sons whom he, all just as powerful as he was, appointed as their rulers. He thereafter resorted to the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord Hari, the Soul of all souls whose glories are so auspicious. (21) Āma, Madhuruha, Meghapṛṣṭha, Sudhāmā, Bhrājīṣṭha, Lohitārṇa and Vanaspatī were the sons of Ghṛtapṛṣṭha and the seven mountain ranges were celebrated as the Śukla and Vardhamāna, Bhojana, Upabarhiṇa, Nanda, Nandana and Sarvatobhadra mountains. The seven rivers were the Abhayā, Amṛtaughā, Āryakā, Tīrthavatī, Rūpavatī, Pavitravatī and the Śuklā. (22) Sanctified by bathing in the pellucid waters of all those rivers the inhabitants of those *varṣas*, who are called the Puruṣas, the Rṣabas, the Draviṇas and the Devakas [or the authentic, the superior, the wealthy and the sporting ones], worship with folded hands filled with water [the Lord in the form of Varuṇa] the deity of water: (23) 'Oh water, oh might of the Original Personality, you sanctify the earth, its life, its paradise. May our touching this water, which because of its nature destroys the spirit of evil, purify our bodies.'

(24) Beyond the ocean of milk the *dvīpa* of Śāka is situated measuring a 3.2 million *yojanas* wide. It is surrounded by an ocean of whey of the same width and owes its name to a most fragrant fig tree that can be smelled all over the *dvīpa*. (25) Another son of Priyavrata named Medhātithi is the ruler there. He also divided his *dvīpa* in seven *varṣas* with the names of his seven sons Purojava, Manojava, Pavamāna, Dhūmrānīka, Citrarepha, Bahurūpa and Viśvadhāra, whom he appointed there as their rulers. He thereafter entered the forest for penance with his mind absorbed in the infinity of the Supreme Lord. (26) The seven mountains forming the borders of the *varṣas* are the Īśāna, Uruśṛṅga, Balabhadra, Śatakesara, Sahasra-srota, Devapāla and Mahānasa mountains and the seven rivers there are the Anaghā, Āyurdā, Ubhayasprṣṭi, Aparājītā, Pañcapadī, Sahasra-śruti and the Nijadhṛti. (27) The people of those *varṣas*, the Rṭavratas, the Satyavratas, the Dānavratas and the Anuvratas [the *varṇas* of the God-fearing souls,

those vowed to the truth, the providers, and the followers] cleanse themselves of their passion and ignorance with the practice of regulating their breath that is ruled by the demigod Vāyu. Absorbed in transcendence, they worship him as the representative of the Supreme Personality with: (28) 'You, entering all living beings, are the one Supersoul within, the direct controller who maintains by the functions of the inner airs. Please direct us, for you control the entire cosmos.'

(29) Also beyond this ocean of whey there is another *dvīpa* named Puṣkara that is twice as big as the previous one and is surrounded by an ocean of sweet water of the same size. There a very big lotus flower is found with 100 million flower petals of pure gold that are like the flames of a blazing fire. This lotus is considered the sitting place of the all-powerful Lord of the Lotus [Brahmā]. (30) That *dvīpa* has one mountain [range] named Mānasottara that separates the *varṣas* on the inner and the outer side. Measuring a 10,000 *yojanas* high and wide, it harbors in its four directions the cities of the four demigods ruling there [Indra, Yama, Varuṇa and Soma]. The chariot of the sun god Sūrya, circumambulating mount Meru on its highest point, moves around in an orbit that, calculated in terms of the days and nights of the demigods [**], consists of one complete year. (31) The ruler of that *dvīpa*, also a son of Priyavrata with the name Vītihoṭra, named the two *varṣas* there after his two sons Ramaṇaka and Dhātaki and appointed them as their rulers when he, just as his other brothers did, restricted himself to virtuous activities to satisfy the Supreme Lord. (32) The people of those lands worship, for the fulfillment of their desires, with ritualistic activities the Supreme Lord in the form of Lord Brahmā and pray the following: (33) 'Someone firmly convinced of the One Supreme must, in the form of [favorable] actions [rituals, good deeds], be of worship for the appearance of Him [as Lord Brahmā] who, free from duplicity and peacefully, discloses the supreme Brahman. That almighty Lord we offer our obeisances.'

(34) Beyond that realm there is [outside of the ocean of sweet water] all around a formation named Lokāloka that is described as the boundary



between the world of light and the world without light. (35) The realm [called Loka-varṣa within that border] is as wide as the area between mount Meru and the Mānasottara range, [and changes outside into] another domain made of gold [called Aloka-varṣa, the dark region] that is as smooth as a mirror. Anything dropped there can impossibly be retrieved and therefore the place is avoided by all living entities. (36) The formation Lokāloka [that is the outer shell of the universe] is situated in between the lands that one speaks of as being inhabited and not inhabited. (37) For the rays of all the luminaries on this side - from the sun up to those of Dhruva's goal of liberation [the center of the universe, see 4.12: 12] -, it is not possible to reach beyond that outer limit of the three worlds, that was created all around by the Lord. (38) The scholars who investigated the positions, characteristics and situations of all the worlds [the planets and stars], calculated that the area between the centre and the outer Lokāloka limit of the universe covers as much as half a billion *yojanas*, one quarter [of the diameter] of the celestial globe.

(39) **B**y the source of the self who is the spiritual teacher of the entire universe [Brahmā] the four

gaja-patis ['the best of all elephants'] R̥ṣabha, Puṣkaracūda, Vāmana and Aparājit are established in the four directions on top of that [formation], in order to take care of the stability of the different planets in the universe. (40) He [Lord Viṣṇu] is of all His locally ruling, personal divinities [His 'elephants'] and all the types of heroes who are expansions of His potency, the Supreme Lord, the foremost and greatest personality, the great master of all powers, the Soul of all souls and the True Self of the purest goodness characterized by religion, spiritual knowledge, detachment, all opu-

lence and the eight great perfections [see 3.15: 45]. Decorated by the different weapons held up by His stout arms and surrounded by expansions like Viṣvaksena and other representatives and eminent associates, He, for the benefit of all worlds, manifests His form on all sides of that greatest of all mountains. (41) For the duration of a *kalpa* the Supreme Lord assumes that appearance just to maintain the life in the different worlds that He evolved on the basis of His outer potency. (42) About the area beyond the [uninhabitable, dark] realm [of Aloka-varṣa], which stretches outside of Lokāloka as far as the width of the area inside, one says that it is the destination for those who free from all contamination walk the path of the Lord of Yoga.

(43) **I**n the center of the universe the suns are found situated between heaven and earth. That sunny globe in the middle consists of a quarter of a billion stars. (44) Because of having entered the lifeless form of this globe at its time of creation, he [Brahmā] is known as Mārtaṇḍa ['the god of the suns']. The designation known as Hiranyagarbha ['the gold inside'] came about because he received his body from that [golden splendor]. (45) Be-

cause of the sun [of the sun god Sūrya] we are able to divide the directions, the ether, the planets above and the worlds below, as also all the heavenly abodes, the abodes for liberation and the hellish places such as Atala. (46) The sun god is the controller of all sorts of living beings, he is the life, soul and vision of the gods, the lower animals, the human beings, the plants, the trees and everything crawling and creeping.'

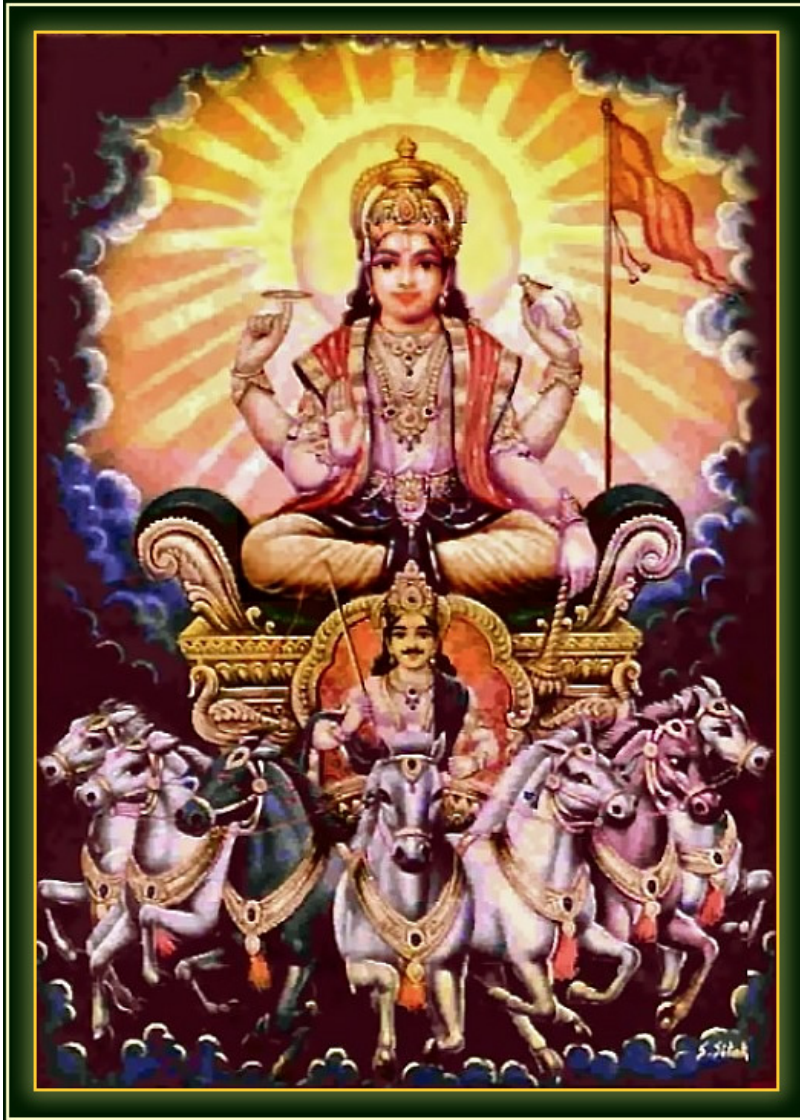
*: According to some modern interpretation these seas refer to the bodily fluids, with the *dvīpas* as sections in the *virāt-rūpa* universal body of the Lord: Lavana or salt sea (urine), cane juice sea (perspiration), Surā or sea of wine (senses), Sarpi or sea of ghee (semen), Dadhi or buttermilk sea [yoghurt, whey] (mucus), the sea of milk (saliva), and the sea of pure water (tears).

** : A day and a night of the demigods consists of a so-called Uttarāyaṇa course of the sun through the north and a Dakṣiṇāyana course through the south, one solar year thus. A year of the god consists of 360 of such days.

Chapter 21 The Reality of the Sun God Sūrya

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'This is what I could tell you about the size and characteristics of the general outline of the celestial sphere. (2) The experts in this matter are with this outline of instruction about the extent of the sky, which they describe as outer space, consisting of two divisions (above and below, that are) adjoined like the two halves of a grain of wheat. (3) In the middle the most powerful master of all the governing heavenly bodies is situated, the burning sun. With its fire it heats the three worlds and with its rays it lights them. That sun globe, passing through the north, through the south or crossing the equator, is known differently depending its slowness, swiftness or equality of movement. In its rising and setting or staying up in different positions, it is making long, short or equally long days, while it, as ordained, moves through the different signs of the [astrological] zodiac beginning with the sign of Makara [Capricorn]. (4) When the sun enters

Meṣa and Tulā [Aries and Libra, or at the equinoxes], the days and nights are of an equal length. When it moves through the next five signs headed by Vṛṣabha [Taurus] the days [first] increase, while the nights shorten [for Taurus and Gemini] and then decrease by half an hour every month [depending on the latitude]. (5) When it passes the five months beginning with Vṛścika [Scorpio] the lengthening and shortening of the days and nights works opposite. (6) Until the sun moves towards the south [before the summer solstice] the days grow longer and until it moves towards the north [before the winter solstice] the nights get longer. (7) Thus encircling with an orbit before the Mānasottara mountains [thereabout] of ninety-five million one hundred thousand *yojanas* long, so the scholars teach us, one, on the east of Meru, finds Devadhānī, the city of King Indra, south of it the city named Samyamanī of Yamarāja, in the west the city named Nimlocanī of Varuṇa and in the north the city of the moon named Vibhāvarī. At all the four sides of Meru [as the energetic pivot] thus creating sunrise, sunset, noontime and midnight, it brings about the particular times of the living beings to be active or to cease their activity [*]. (8-9) The souls living in those places are by the sun, in the position of the middle of the day, always heated. It moves, turning left around the mountain [Meru], from the point where it rises to the diametrically opposite point where it sets. When one locally no longer sees the sun in the sky because it has set, it causes the people to sleep, while diametrically opposite to that place the people are sure to have seen the sun rising that because of its heat makes them sweat. (10) When the sun in fifteen *ghaṭikās* [six hours] moves from the residence of Indra to that of Yamarāja, it covers a distance of 23.775.000 *yojanas* [a quarter of the circumference]. (11) Next it proceeds to the abode of Varuṇa, then to the realm of the moon, after which it returns to the place of Indra. Along with it also the other planets and stars headed by the moon are seen rising and setting in the celestial sky. (12) Thus the vehicle of the sun god, which represents the three Vedic principles [of uniting by karma-, *jñāna*- and bhakti-yoga], moves through the four realms covering 3.400.800 *yojanas* in a *muhūrta* [modern science: 39.163 million km/hr].



(13) This vehicle has only one wheel with twelve spokes [the months], six segments [the seasons] and three pieces to its hub [four month periods], that in its entirety is known as a solar year [*a samvatsara*]. Its axle is fixed on the top of Meru with Mānasottara at the other end. The wheel of the chariot of the sun being fixed there rotates to the mountain range of Mānasottara like a wheel of an oil press machine. (14) Fixed to the base of that axle there is a second one that, like with the axle of an oil press machine, measures a quarter of its length. Its upper portion is fixed to Dhruvaloka [the center of the stars].

earthly sphere with a speed of two thousand and a half *yojana* in about a *kṣana* [± 1.6 sec; see also verse 12].'

*: According to modern measurements the earth encircles the sun at an average distance of 92,960,000 miles or 149,591,000 km. The circumference of its orbit is about 940 million km. Considering that, this calculation of the apparent geocentric path of the sun to an earthly Mānasottara a range would result in a *yojana* of about 9.8 km in this context. With Meru as the energetic pivot is meant that everything in the galaxy spins around the center where the heap of stars is found of Brahmā's golden globe. Thus the Pole Star, where-

(15) The inside of the vehicle measures 3.6 million *yojanas* long and a quarter of that distance wide, it is pulled by seven horses named after the Vedic meters [Gāyatrī, Bṛhati, Uṣṇik, Jagatī, Triṣṭup, Anuṣṭup and Pañkti] that, in order to carry the god of the sun, by Aruṇadeva are harnessed to a yoke as wide as the vehicle [the actual diameter of the sun itself is 1.392 million kilometers]. (16) Even though Aruṇa, fulfilling his duties as the charioteer, sits in front of the sun god, he looks backward [not to be disrespectful]. (17) There, in front of the sun god, the sixty thousand thumb-sized sages named the Vālikhilyas are engaged in offering their prayers, that they express with eloquence [see also 4.1: 39]. (18) So too fourteen others, viz. the sages, the Gandharvas, Apsaras, Nāgas, Yakṣas, Rākṣasas and the demigods, worship with a variety of names and different ceremonies, in seven groups of two with for every month different representatives, the Supreme Lord in the form of the sun god Sūrya, he who is the life of the universe and who carries different names [**]. (19) The sun god thus traverses the 95.1 million *yojanas* of the circumference of the

about the stars in the night sky seem to turn, is also identified with that point and called Meru, while the actual pivot of the stars around us - and thus also our sun - astronomically is found elsewhere, viz. in Sagittarius A.

** : The Viṣṇu Purāṇa states: 'Worshiping the most powerful demigod Sūrya, the Gandharvas sing in front of him, the Apsaras dance before the chariot, the Niśācaras follow the chariot, the Pannagas decorate the chariot, the Yakṣas guard the chariot, and the saints called the Vālikhilyas surround the sun god and offer prayers. The seven groups of fourteen associates arrange the proper times for regular snow, heat and rain throughout the universe [see further 12.11: 32].'

Chapter 22

The Movement of the Planets and their Considered Effects

(1) **The** king said: 'Your lordship described how the most powerful god of the sun moves around Mount Meru and Dhruvaloka leaving them to his right side, and that he, with the different signs of the zodiac right in front of him, leaves them to his left. What should we think about that?'

(2) **To** that he [Śuka] clearly stated: 'Just as what one sees with the movements of small ants spinning around on a potter's wheel, which because of their changing positions experience a different orientation, such a difference can also be observed with the movement [of the sun and the planets] in relation to Meru and Dhruvaloka [the central heap of stars and the galaxy center]. With the stars moving around [that center], the two are located at their right side, but because of the individual movements of the planets led by the sun upon that rotating wheel of time, the sun and planets that are observed in different mansions and constellations are evidently of another progress.

(3) **He** [that solar lead of time], this supremely powerful Original Person who is Nārāyaṇa Himself, the Supersoul of the three Vedic principles who is there for the benefit and karmic purification

of all the worlds, is the cause sought by all saintly and Vedic knowing. He divides the year, as He thinks fit, in its twelve parts and arranges the six seasons beginning with spring with their different qualities. (4) The people here, who in respect of the threefold of Vedic knowledge follow the higher or more earthly standards of the status orientations [of *varṇa* and *āśrama*], attain without difficulty the ultimate benefit of life when they worship Him full of faith with ritual activities and grow in the science of uniting their consciousness [in yoga]. (5) He now, the Soul of all the worlds, who [in the form of the sun] has entered the wheel of time in a position between heaven and earth, passes through the twelve divisions of the year consisting of the months that are named after the signs of the zodiac. The scholars teach that they [according to the moon] are divided in bright and dark halves or [fifteen day] fortnights and that, following their instruction, the six portions of its orbit, called *ṛtu* or season, calculated to the stars, each cover two and a quarter constellations [thus one speaks of twelve or more constellations]. (6) They also say that the period of time the sun moves through [the visible] half of outer space is called an *ayana*. (7) The time that the passage of the sun takes moving through both the spheres above and below, speeding slow, fast or moderate, is in the descriptions of the scholars, discussed as a *saṁvatsara* [a solar year], a *parivatsara* [one twelfth of a revolution of Jupiter], an *iḍāvatsara* [a day of the gods consisting of 360 solar days] an *anuvatsara* [a lunar year comprising twelve lunations] and a *vatsara* [a year to the ecliptic in terms of the 27 lunar mansions or *nakṣatras*, see also 3.11: 14].

(8) **By** the sunlit moon that is situated a hundred thousand *yojanas* [astronomy: ± 385.000 km] above [the earth] and is moving much faster [than the sun], in the course of a month [two 'fifteen day periods'] a distance is covered that takes the sun a whole year, is in two and a quarter day a distance described that takes the sun a month and is in one day a part of the sky traversed that by the sun is covered in fourteen days. (9) The moon, changing its phases, waxes to the [full] part of the moon that is of the demigods and wanes to the [dark] part of the moon that is of the forefathers. In [about] thir-



ty *muhūrtas* [a full day] every time passing one of the lunar mansions [or *nakṣatras*], it with its waxing and waning constitutes the division of the days [of the gods] and the nights [of the forefathers] of all the different living entities. Thus it is considered the *jīva* or essence of their life. (10) This moon with all its sixteen parts [*ṣoḍaśakala*] is by the scholars described as the Supreme Person, the predominating deity of the mind, the power source of all food who represents all delight in life. He is considered the refreshing, all-pervading life breath [*prāṇa*] of all the demigods, ancestors, human beings and all other living entities like the mammals, the birds, the reptiles and the plants.

(11) [More than] two hundred thousand *yojanas* behind [the moon], there are [spinning] with Meru to the right, to the many stars that by the Supreme Controller were attached to the wheel of time, the twenty-eight lunar mansions including Abhijit.

(12) At a distance of two hundred thousand *yojanas* there about [about the star center or

the sun; astronomy: at a distance of 107 million km] there is Uśanā [Venus], the planet that can be seen going in front of, going behind and rotating along with the sun just as fast, slow or with a moderate speed. It is of all the planets the one considered to exert as good as always a favorable influence in the form of rainfall; it by its movements neutralizes the influence of planets that obstruct rainfall.

(13) Another two hundred thousand *yojanas* behind Venus [astronomy: 57.9 million km from the sun], so is explained, Budha [Mercury] is situated, the son of the moon. It is as good as always working auspiciously, but during the time it is not moving along with the sun, there is almost always an increase of fearful conditions like draughts, a closed sky and stormy conditions.

(14) At two hundred thousand *yojanas* outside of our orbit one also finds Angāraka [Mars, astronomy: at about 228 million km from the sun]. If it

does not make a [retrograde] curve, it passes by three fortnights each, one after another the twelve signs of the zodiac. It is as good as always an unfavorable planet causing trouble.

(15) **T**wo hundred thousand *yojanas* outside of Mars [astronomy: 778.3 million km from the sun] one finds the most powerful planet of Bṛhaspati [Jupiter] that, if it does not run a curve, takes a year [*a parivatsara*] to move through a single constellation. It almost always turns out to work in favor of the family of the brahmins.

(16) **T**wo hundred thousand *yojanas* behind it is situated Śanaīścara [Saturn, astronomy: 1.43 billion km from the sun], that takes a period of thirty months to travel through a single sign of the zodiac. Being that slow it takes an equal number of years [30 *anuvatsaras*] to cover all of them. It means almost always a lot of trouble to all.

(17) **A**t 1.1 million *yojanas* beyond that planet are situated the [seven] great sages [represented by the seven stars of the Great Bear, Ursa Major] who always consider the good fortune of the inhabitants of all the worlds. They clockwise circumambulate the transcendental abode of the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu [the center of the stars].'

Chapter 23

Description of the Stars of Śīsumāra, our Coiling Galaxy

(1) Śrī Śuka then said: '1.3 Million *yojanas* above them [the stars of the sages] one finds that supreme abode of Lord Viṣṇu where the great devotee Dhruva, the son of Uttānapāda, resides whose glory of obedient devotion I described already [see 4.9]. It is the source of life of all living entities from now until the end of the *kalpa*, about which Agni, the fire god, Indra the king of heaven, the founding father who is the Prajāpati, Kaśyapa as also Dharmarāja, in unison full of respect move clockwise. (2) For all the restless luminaries, the

planets, the stars and the rest, that place constitutes the incandescent radiating pivot that is established by the Lord. The inconceivable, all-powerful force of Time is considered the cause of their revolving. (3) The luminaries keep their positions, just like three bulls that for threshing rice are yoked to a central pole. Moving in their orbits they have a fixed position relative to the inner and outer rims of the wheel of time, the same way the planets keep their positions around the sun. Holding on to Dhruvaloka till the end of creation, they revolve in the sky as if they are driven by the wind, just like heavy clouds and big birds do, that controlled by the air, move their bodies around according to their respective positions. Thus the luminaries behave consequently, by the combined effort of material nature and the Original Person, the way they always have and never collide with the earth.

(4) **S**ome imagine this great army of luminaries to be a *śīsumāra* [a dolphin] and describe it, concentrated in yoga, as [that what can be seen of] the Supreme Lord Vāsudeva. (5) With its tail pointing at the end of the row of fixed stars in the sky [*dhruva*] and with its head bent downwards, it has its body coiled. The [planets of] Prajāpati, Agni, Indra and Dharma are found on the tail with [those of the demigods] Dhātā and Vidhātā at its base. The seven sages are situated on its hip. With its body coiling to the right there are, as its separate body parts, at its northern side the constellations of the fourteen stars [from Abhijit to Punarvasu] that mark the northern course [of the sun] and to the south there are the same number of them [from Puṣyā to Uttarāśādhā] marking the southern course. Together the both sides appear like the coiled body of a dolphin. On its back one sees the stars called Ajavīthī [*] and on the belly one sees the 'celestial Ganges' [the series of stars along the full body of the Śīsumāra we know as our Milky Way]. (6) Punarvasu and Puṣyā constitute the loins right and left. Ārdṛā and Aśleṣā also to the right and left, are his flippers. Abhijit and Uttarāśādhā are the left and right nostril with following next in due order Śravaṇā and Pūrvāśādhā for its eyes left and right. Dhaniṣṭhā and Mūlā are the right and left ear and the eight stars such as Maghā marking the southern course, are to be seen as the left ribs while the same number of stars like Mrgāśīrṣā that



mark the northern course, are there as the ribs positioned at the other side to the right. Śatabhiṣā and Jyeṣṭhā should be seen as the position of the right and left shoulder. (7) On its upper chin there is Agasti [Agastya] and on its lower one there is Yamarāja. As its mouth there is Mars, as its genitals there is Saturn, Jupiter is found at the back of the neck and the sun is found at the chest. In its heart Lord Nārāyaṇa is found while the moon serves as its mind. As the navel there is Venus, the two sides of the breast is where the Aśvins reside, Mercury is there as the in- and outward going breath, Rāhu is the neck and the comets are found all over its body with the numerous stars as its pores [**].

(8) This [form of Śiśumāra] certainly is the form of the Supreme Lord, of Lord Viṣṇu who consists of all the demigods. With that form before one's eyes one should each morning, noon and evening in all modesty meditate on the following words: 'Our obeisances unto this resting place of all the luminous worlds, unto the master of the demigods, the Supreme Personality in the form of Time upon whom we meditate' [*namo jyotir-lokāya kālāyanāyānimīṣām pataye mahā-puruṣāyābhīdhīmahīti*, see also 2.2: 24]. (9) Those who in respect of that leader of the demigods consisting of all the planets and stars, that destroyer of sin, practice the

mantra as mentioned above by three times a day offering their respects this way or by three times a day meditating as such [in silence], will by that respect [for our sweet Lord in the form of] time very soon find all their sins annihilated.'

N.B. See also the pages on galactic time at <http://www.theorderoftime.com/science/galactic.html> further explaining on this subject.

*: Ajavīthī refers to the stars of the heavenly course of the sun, the moon and the planets through Mūlā, Pūrvāṣāḍhā and Uttarāṣāḍhā.

** : The planets of course change their positions to the background of the stars. As such the fixed position in the body of Śiśumāra as mentioned refers to the dynamic nature of the dolphin, the galaxy, itself.

Chapter 24 The Nether Worlds

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'Some people defend that countless *yojanas* ['ten thousand'] below the sun [the demon] Rāhu is found who rotates in the sky just like the stars. Oh King, I shall expound later on the birth and activities of this lowest of the igno-

rant souls, [Rāhu] the son of Simhikā, who personally, by the grace of the Supreme Lord, achieved this status of immortality in occupying the position of a leading planet, while he never qualified for the position [see also 6.6: 37 and 8.9: 23-26]. (2) They declare that the sun has a width of ten thousand *yojanas*, that the moon is twenty thousand *yojanas* wide, that Rāhu is thirteen thousand *yojanas* large [compare 5.21: 15] and that it occasionally, with inimical intentions overruling the influence of the sun god and the moon god, obstructs the distribution of the rays of the moon and the sun. (3) The Supreme Lord who is there for the protection of both [these divinities] operates by the supreme presence of the wheel of Time [the Sudarśana Cakra]. This disc is deemed the most dear, most devoted and favorite weapon that by its power and unbearable heat makes Rāhu flee, with a mind full of fear and a bewildered heart, far away from that position wherein he resides for almost an hour and that by the people is called an eclipse.

(4) At an equal distance beneath it [compare 5.22: 8] there are the residential places of the perfected souls, the venerable souls of the Veda and the souls founded in knowledge [the Siddhas, Cāranas and Vidyādhars]. (5) Below of them there are the places of sense gratification of the mad, the possessed, the demoniac and more of such beings [the Yakṣas, Rākṣasas and Piśācas], that stretch out as far as the wind blows the clouds one sees in the sky. (6) Beneath the atmosphere that is a hundred *yojanas* thick and reaches as high as swans, vultures, eagles and other birds of size can fly, there is this earth [according to modern measurements the normal, increasingly thinner atmosphere reaches up to a 100 km above the earth].

(7) Formerly I discussed the planet earth and the division of its different realms [see 2.1: 26-27]. Below the earth are situated seven other planets of the same width and length named Atala, Vitala, Sutala, Talātala, Mahātala, Rasātala and Pātāla [the nether worlds], that one behind the other are positioned [up to the edge of the universe] with intervals of ten thousand *yojanas*. (8) In these worldly places ambitious for heaven, there is a greater lust experience and enrapture about



wealth than in the higher worlds. Equipped with all thinkable luxuries the houses and gardens offer to the demons, ghosts and snakes living there, a better opportunity for sense gratification. Always overjoyed in the attachment to their wives, children, family, friends and followers, the masters of the households, who live in an illusory heaven, are even better capable of an unimpeded fulfillment of their desires than the godly souls who are of self-control. (9) Maya [the architect of the Daityas] my dear King, has there, with faithless trickery and a plethora of rich ornamentation, built cities surrounded by walls with gates full of excellently constructed, wonderful houses, offices, halls, schools and public facilities. The leaders and

landowners of those artificial worlds shining brightly with their decorations, occupy the best houses there that are crowded by snakelike, godless couples and pigeons, parrots and mynas [eastern starlings]. (10) The gardens and parks that are most appealing to the mind and senses, pleasure with their masses of flowers and fruits hanging from the branches of the trees that, embraced by creepers, nicely bend low being pulled by gravity. The sensual enjoyment is invoked by a magnificence surpassing the beauty of the residential places of the godly: the variety of birds that in pairs frequent the ponds filled with sparkling clear water restless with jumping fish, the lotus flowers in those waters, the lilies, the kuvalaya and kahlāra flowers, the blue and red lotuses, giant lotuses with thousands of petals and the uninterrupted joyous sound of all kinds of sweetly vibrating birds that built their nests in the forests. (11) There one assuredly is of no concern about divisions of time relative to the changes of day and night [as observed with sundials and lunar phases]. (12) All darkness there is driven away by the best of gems situated on the hoods of the great serpents living there. (13) Nor are the residents, who eat, drink and bathe there with miraculous [curative] herbs, juices and elixirs, concerned with diseases, mental troubles, attaining old age, having wrinkles, gray hair, etc., or with the miseries of losing strength with a fading luster, bad smelling perspiration, fatigue or a lack of energy. (14) No other cause of death than the almighty wheel of Time in the form of His disc weapon is capable of influencing them in any way. (15) It is practically always out of fear for the Lord's cakra order [the compelling natural order of time] that the wives of the godless souls lose their fetuses in miscarriages.

(16) **N**ow then, in the world of Atala, Bala the godless son of Maya resides who propagated ninety-six types of trickery, some of which even today are used by expert cheaters. From his yawning mouth the *svairiṇī* [class exclusive], *kāmiṇī* [class indifferent] and *pum̐scalī* [promiscuous] types of women sprouted who, desirous with glances, smiles, talks, embraces and the juice of an intoxicating herb called *hāṭaka* [*cannabis indica*], for their sexual pleasure warm up any man who entered the nether worlds. One says that a man under

the influence of this herb full of pride and conceit thinks of himself as 'I am the ruler' and 'I am as strong as a thousand elephants'.

(17) **O**ne world lower, in Vitala, Lord Śiva, surrounded by his ghostly associates, resides as Hātakeśvara, the master of gold, in sexual union with his wife Bhavānī in order to increase the population of Brahmā's creation. From the fluids of their union the great river named the Hātakī flows, drinking of which the fire god, by the wind being brightly inflamed with great strength, hissing spits out the gold called Hāṭaka of use for the ornaments worn by the men and women populating the homes of the great Asuras.

(18) **B**eneath that world on Sutala one finds the greatly celebrated, most pious and spiritually advanced son of Virocana, Bali Mahārāja. To please king Indra, the Supreme Lord, taking birth from Aditi, assumed the body of a *vāmana*, a dwarf. It was by the causeless mercy of the Supreme Lord who wrested away from him the three worlds, that even today he in his devotional service remains fearless unto Him, the most venerable Supreme Personality. He was blessed with the good fortune of regaining an opulence not even known to the gods of Indra's heaven. (19) This was certainly not the immediate result of donating with faith, great respect and an attentive mind, his lands. Approaching the topmost one, the Supreme Lord who is the most worthy recipient and best place of pilgrimage, who is the life, heart and Supersoul of the countless living beings, Lord Vāsudeva, offered him a direct access to the liberation that resulted in the opulence of that nether imitation of heaven. (20) The person who helplessly, starved, fallen down or stumbling, utters His name but once, will be completely freed from the bond of fruitive labor, the karma that in all other cases constitutes an inevitable stumbling block for anyone who tries to find liberation. (21) He, the Supreme Soul, the Paramātmā within, thus gives Himself to, is of love for, all devotees of self-realization. (22) It is therefore not because of the material opulence, which certainly extends from Him, that the Supreme Personality especially again showed His favor to such a person [like Bali]. He was as graceful because of [countering] the forms

of *māyā*, the material bewilderment that steals away the remembrance of the Soul. (23) To the occasion of what was done by the, difficult by other means to perceive, Supreme Lord - namely His seizing the three worlds by means of the trick of begging [three steps of land] so that Bali was left with nothing but his body, was being bound with the ropes of Varuṇa and was detained in a mountain cave - Bali then said: (24) 'How regrettable it is indeed that this very learned Indra of heaven is not that wise in his self-interest, for, having chosen Br̥haspati for his prime minister and one preceptor, he ignored that sage when he begged me personally, by means of the Lord in the form of Upendra [Lord Vāmana], for my blessings [in the form of three steps of land]. With neglect for the certainty of the actual blessings of serving the everlasting reality of Him, he desired for himself the three worlds, the value of which is lost in a *manvantara* [an age of Manu]! (25) When his father was killed by the Supreme Lord [Nṛsiṃhadev], our grandfather [Prahāda] asked for nothing but the permission to serve Him and not for the inheritance offered to him of the position of his father who feared no one [the kingdom of Hiraṇyakaśipu]. (26) What materially contaminated person like us, can, deprived of the Supreme Lord's mercy, hope to follow the path of that great believer? (27) [Śuka said:] Later on, in the story about Bali [in Canto eight], I shall explain how the Supreme Lord as the master of the three worlds, as Nārāyaṇa in person, with an always graceful heart towards His devotees, stands [as a guard] at the gate with the club in His hand, He who, with the big toe of His foot, kicked the ten headed demon [known as Rāvaṇa] a hundred million *yojanas* away when he wanted to conquer the world.

(28) **Below** Sutala in the world of Talātala the *dānava* [demon] king rules named Maya. His cities were burned by the almighty Tripurāri [Śiva], the lord of the three cities, who desired the welfare of the three worlds. But he, Maya, the master and teacher of all sorcery, regained his kingdom by his grace. Being protected by Mahādeva [the great god who is Śiva] he thinks he has nothing to fear from the Sudarśana Cakra [the presence of the Lord in the form of Time] that [in all worlds] is worshiped [with clocks and calendars].

(29) **Beneath** that world there is the world of Mahātala that belongs to the descendants of Kadrū who have a reputation as a bunch of ever angry, many hooded, cruel snake types, as there are the notorious Kuhaka, Takṣaka, Kālya and Suṣeṇa. Addicted to sensual pleasures, they are constantly afraid of the king of all birds [Garuḍa], the carrier of the Original Personality, who sometimes infuriates them when they are sporting together with their wives, children, friends and relatives.

(30) **Situated** below that world again there is Rasātala, the world of the Daityas and Dānavas [the evil minded sons of Diti and Danu] named the Paṇis [who are divided in] the Nivāta-kavacas, the Kāleyas and the Hiraṇya-puravāsīs. They are the very cruel and greatly powerful natural enemies of the demigods and are, despite their strength and pride, inevitably defeated by the might of [the disc weapon of] the Supreme Lord Hari so full of mercy for all the worlds. Living like the snakes, they are afraid of the [threatening] Vedic mantras uttered by [the female dog] Saramayā that once was sent there by the King of Heaven Indra.

(31) **Below** that world there is Pātāla, the world of the master snakes. Led by Vāsuki there are Śaṅkha, Kulika, Mahāśaṅkha, Śveta, Dhanañjaya, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Śaṅkhacūḍa, Kambala, Aśvatara, Devadatta and so on. Most addicted to material happiness they all live with the shortest temper. They have five, seven, ten, a hundred or a thousand hoods, with on their crests fixed the most valuable gems the effulgence of which disperses the vast darkness of the caves of Pātāla.'

Chapter 25

The Glories of Lord Ananta

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'At a distance of thirty-eight thousand *yojanas* beneath the base of Pātāla [*] is situated He who, as a part of the Supreme Lord, relates to the darkness and is called Ananta [the eternal one]. Scholarly Vaiṣṇavas describe Him as Saṅkarṣaṇa, the ruler of the ego or I that is characterized by self-awareness [pride, identification], because He unites - 'draws together' - the seer and



the seen, the subject and the object [see also 3.26: 25 and 4.24: 35]. (2) The celestial sky around the earth, this universe, sustained on only one of the thousands of hoods of the Supreme Lord in the form of Anantadeva, is seen as a [tiny] white mustard seed [like a single galaxy among many, many others in deep space]. (3) Because of His desire to destroy in the course of time this world, a Rudra [an incarnation of Lord Śiva] named Sāṅkarṣaṇa ['He born from Sāṅkarṣaṇa'] arises from between His angrily contracted, beautiful eyebrows. He manifests in the form of eleven three-eyed expansions holding up pointed tridents. (4) With the effulgence of the glittering earrings that decorate their cheeks, the leaders of the snakelike souls, who, together with the best devotees in unalloyed devotion offer Him their prayers, see in the round surfaces of the brilliant pink gemlike toenails of His lotus feet their faces beautifully reflected. It is a sight that enraptures their minds. (5) The mar-

riageable princesses of the serpent kings, hoping for His blessings, smear, with an ointment of saffron, aloe and sandalwood paste, the gleaming roundings of His auspicious, beautiful, spotless, fair arms resembling columns of silver. With their hearts in the contact beating faster with the ecstasy of Cupid, they, with attractive delicate, beautiful smiles, bashfully look at His, in love delighted, rolling, reddish eyes and kindly glancing lotuslike face. (6) He, Ananta, is the Supreme Lord, the reservoir of all transcendental qualities and the original Godhead who, in restraint of the force of His intolerance and wrath [belonging to his mission of destruction], resides [in His abode] for the welfare of all [the living beings of all] worlds. (7) Being constantly meditated upon by scores of enlightened and unenlightened souls, the semi-divine snakelike souls, the souls of perfection, the heavenly singers, the souls founded in knowledge and the sages, He, in rapture under the influence, rolls His eyes to and fro. With the nectar of a fine choice of words and sweet song, His associates, the leaders of the different groups of demigods, please Him whose luster never fades, He who is ever fresh with the fragrance of the *tulsi* flowers that with their honey madden the

bees about His, thus even more beautiful, Vaijayantī flower garland. Clad in blue, with only a single earring and the beauty of His auspicious hands placed on the handle of His plow, He, wearing a golden belt and as invincible as the elephant of the first one among the gods, Indra, is engaged in His transcendental pastimes as the Supreme Lord in person. (8) They who seek liberation and, by the tradition [the *paramparā*], hear about the glories of this one Lord, will very soon cut with the age-old knot of *māyā* consisting of passion, goodness and ignorance that, as a consequence of the propensity for karmic actions, was tied firmly in the core of their hearts.

The greatly powerful son of Brahmā, Nārada accompanied by [his instrument or the Gandharva] Tumburu, describes Him in the brahmin assembly with a selection of verses: (9) 'How can one with certainty understand the path of Him who is one of

Soul and diverse in His manifestation, of Him of an unlimited form that has no beginning, of Him by whose glance the basic qualities of material nature - headed by goodness - were enabled to function as the primary causes of creation, maintenance and destruction? (10) Out of His mercy for us He, completely transcendental to this manifestation, exhibited His existence in different forms, He who, reclaiming the minds of His devotees, in His pastimes shines as the most liberal and powerful master of all beings, capturing them by His spotless example. (11) Any person in distress who accidentally heard about Him or any fallen soul who, just to participate, repeated or chanted His name, shall instantly see the endless sinfulness vanquished that characterizes human society. Of whom else but Lord Ananta Śeṣa should any seeker of salvation take shelter? (12) Whoever, however many tongues he would have, can count the Supreme Lord's potencies? There is no end to His unmeasurable powers. This universe with its mountains, trees, oceans and beings, is nothing but an atom fixed on one hood of Ananta, He who has thousands of hoods. (13) Such is the majesty of the Supreme Lord Ananta: relying on His own power He, at the basis of the entire universe, with His incomparable prowess constitutes the greatness of all qualities and glory who, with the earth engaged in pastimes, sustains her for the sake of her maintenance.'

(14) **I** thus have described, the way it has been instructed to me, the truth of the destinations that, depending the karma, can be reached by - and were created in respect of the wishes of - those who desire material pleasures. (15) As you requested, oh King, I have shown you what the different types of higher and lower destinations are that inevitably result from the inclinations and sense of duty of the people. What should I tell you more?'

*: The mentioning of distance in relation to the transcendental reality of Ananta suggests a physical correlate in the universe that compares to the darkness of intergalactic space which, as an organic existence of eternity, purity and divinity or void of self, envelops all the galaxies in the cosmos, giving each his own 'snake' foundation in the darkness of an

awareness of 'I'. The actual shortest distance between the center of our stellar system and the outer space of darkness below is about 3500 lightyears.

Chapter 26 The Hellish Worlds or the Karmic Rebound

(1) **The king** said: 'Oh great saint, how came this variegation of life in the different worlds about?'

(2) **The sage** said: 'Because of the different convictions, by which the acting person relates to the three basic qualities of nature, there is the variegation of all the destinations, that more or less can be attained by everyone. (3) From the godlessness of what we know as forbidden actions, there will, depending the particular conviction of the one thus engaged, be a different consequence in the form of a karmic rebound. Let me now in detail explain what kinds of thousands of hellish conditions since time immemorial are the logical consequence of lust motivated souls who in countless ways ignorantly desired their advantage.'

(4) **The king** said: 'What one calls hell, my lord, is that a particular place on earth, is it found outside the worlds we know or is it a place found somewhere in between of them?'

(5) **The ṛṣi** said: 'Hell is found in between the three worlds, in the south below the earth and a little above the causal waters [below Pātālaloka], in the direction where those forefathers who neglected the sacrificial fire reside [the Agniṣvāttas], and who, fully absorbed in the truth, desire the blessings for their families. (6) The son of the sun god [Yamarāja] has his kingdom there together with his followers. The deceased, who are brought there by his people, are, according to the gravity of their karmic faults, subjected there to punishments carefully executed not to be in offense with the Supreme Lord. (7) Some [scholars] mention a number of twenty-one hells, oh King, and some count twenty-eight. Their names, forms and characteristics I shall, one after the other, relate to you. The [28] names of the hells or differ-



ent places of requital are: Tāmisra, Andhatāmisra, Raurava, Mahāraurava, Kumbhīpāka, Kālasūtra, Asipatavana, Sūkaramukha, Andhakūpa, Kṛmibhojana, Sandamśa, Taptasūrmi, Vajrakaṇṭaka-śālmālī, Vaitaraṇī, Pūyoda, Prāṇarodha, Viśasana, Lālābhakṣa, Sārameyādana, Avīci, Ayaḥpāna and also Kṣāarakardama, Rakṣogaṇa-bhojana, Śūlaprota, Dandaśūka, Avaṭa-nirodhana, Paryāvartana and Sūcīmukha.

(8) Someone who takes away the money, the wife or children of someone else is sure to be bound with the fetters of time by the most frightening men of Yamarāja and by force to be thrown into the hell of Tāmisra ['the darkness']. Having landed in that darkest of all conditions being deprived of food and water, beaten with sticks and scolded, he sometimes, in his desperation, loses his consciousness because of the severe punishments received. (9) He who by cheating enjoys the wife, possessions etc. of someone else, is the same way by force thrown into the hell that is called And-

hatāmisra ['blind darkness'] because the embodied soul, as a consequence of the constant agony there, apart from his mind also loses his sight and thus becomes as blind as a tree cut by the roots. (10) He who in his life on earth, taking his body for his self and property, harmed other living beings while day after day laboring to support his own family only, will, upon leaving this world, because of that sin end up in Raurava. (11) With Yamarāja presenting the consequences for this offense, the living beings that were hurt by him in this life will in his afterlife turn into savage creatures [called *rurus*] who then hurt him to the same extent. Because of these wild beasts that are more vicious than snakes, the scholars speak of Raurava ['the hell of the monsters']. (12) Similarly there is Mahāraurava [the 'great monster'] wherein someone is killed and eaten by the *ruru* beasts named *kravyāda*, just as he himself did solely for the maintenance of his body. (13) But a person who in this life was very cruel towards [land and sea] animals or birds and cooked them alive, is condemned by even the most cruel-hearted man eaters.

After his death the servants of Yamarāja will throw him in Kumbhīpāka ['the hell of the cooking pot'] to be cooked in boiling oil himself. (14) And anyone who in this life kills a brahmin, ends up in a hell named Kālasūtra ['the long course of time'] that has a surface of copper with a circumference of ten thousand *yojanas* and is heated by the sun from above and by a fire from below. With his body internally plagued by hunger and thirst and externally being scorched, he at times lies down and then rolls about, then he jumps to his feet again and next runs hither and thither - and that for the duration of as many thousands of years as there are hairs on the body of an animal. (15) He who in this life unnecessarily deviated from his path of self-realization and yielded to hypocrisy [or heresy], is forced into a hell known as Asipatavana ['the razor-sharp forest'] where he is beaten with a whip so that he, fleeing away left and right, cuts his body on the two-edged razor sharp palm leaves. He, in denial of his own nature [or neglect of his civil duty], will thus have to face the

result of following the wrong path and then, with a lot of pain, stumbling at every step, stupefied thinks: 'Oh, what have I done to myself?' (16) Or that head of state or state official who in this life punishes someone innocent or inflicted corporeal punishment on a brahmin, will in his next life land in the hell of Sūkaramukha ['hog's mouth']. There the different parts of his body will be crushed by the strong assistants [of Yamarāja] as if it concerned sugarcane. Just like someone who innocently was arrested to be punished, he will then, pitifully crying out loud, be overwhelmed by desperation and faint. (17) Some creatures are by the Creator designed to live as parasites unaware of the harm they do to others, but he who in his will to survive himself causes pain very well knowing what he is doing to other creatures of God, lands in his afterlife in Andhakūpa ['the overgrown well']. With the harm he did to the beings in question, he will experience that evil himself. Just like the creatures with an inferior body - the game, the birds, snakes, mosquitos, lice, worms, flies and whatever - [himself having such an inferior body,] he in his turn everywhere in the darkness will be persecuted, hurt and disturbed by them and then wander around without being able to find a place to rest. (18) He who in his life eats whatever he obtained by the grace of God but does not share it with others and thus neglects the five forms of sacrifice [to the gods, the sages, the ancestors, the needy and the animals], is just like a crow. Such a person will in his afterlife fall in the most abominable hell of Kṛmibhojana ['to feed on worms'] where, having landed in a hundred thousand *yojanas* wide lake full of worms, he as a worm himself may feed on and in his turn be eaten by the other worms, for as many years as that lake measures in *yojanas*. Such is the pain that he causes himself who - without atoning for his sins - eats food that he did not share and sacrifice. (19) When one for no apparent reason in this life by means of theft or violence, takes away gold, gems and so on from a brahmin or from others, oh King, one will in his afterlife by the men of Yamarāja be forced to hold red-hot iron balls and then get his skin torn off by tongs [because of which that hell is called Sandamśa, 'tongs hell']. (20) Any person, man or woman, who in this life approached someone of the same or the opposite sex for illicit [by law

prohibited] sexual intercourse, will in his afterlife be beaten by whips and forced to embrace a very hot iron image in the form of a man when one is a woman or in the form of a woman when one is a man [: Taptasūrmi, the hell of 'the red hot iron statue']. (21) Anyone who in this life indulges in indiscriminate sexual intercourse [also with animals e.g.], will in his afterlife land in the hell of Vajrakaṇṭaka-śālmālī ['the thunderbolt-thorn cotton tree'] where he, being hung [on thorns], will be pulled down. (22) They who in this life belonging to the royalty or the government despite their high birth transgressed the boundaries of dharma, will after their death land in Vaitaranī ['the river of impetuous passion']. Having broken with the code of conduct for the ruling class they suffer in the moat around that hell being eaten by ferocious animals in the stream here and there. Unable to relinquish the body because of the strenght of the vitality of their sin, they are then reminded of their bad deeds as they are pained in the river of stool, urine, pus, blood, hair, nails, bones, marrow, flesh and fat. (23) Those men who in this life as husbands of lower class women lost their cleanliness, good behavior and regulated life, and shamelessly behaved themselves like animals, will, when they have died, land in an ocean full of pus, excrement, urine, mucus and saliva, and only be able to subsist on everything that is extremely revolting [: the Pūyoda hell of 'fetid waters']. (24) The leaders belonging to the higher classes - including the brahmins - who in this life keeping dogs or asses take pleasure in hunting with them, will, killing animals other than prescribed, after their death themselves become the target of Yamarāja's men who will pierce them with arrows [: the hell of Prāṇarodha, 'smothering the breath']. (25) People who, in this life being most proud of their wealth and position, kill animals for their prestige in sacrificing, will in the next world fall into the hell of Viśasana ['the sleeplessness'], where the helpers of Yamarāja make them suffer and cut them to pieces. (26) But he who in this life as someone of the higher classes [*dvija*], bewildered by his lusts causes his wife of the same caste to drink his semen, will because of that sin in his next life be thrown into a river of semen and be forced to drink it himself [this is the hell of Lālābhakṣa, 'to have semen for food']. (27) Or those kings and their servants who

in this world as thieves, arsonists and poisoners ransack villages and plunder caravans, will, after they died, be devoured by the voracious seven hundred twenty dogs with mighty teeth of the Yamadūtas [: the hell of Sārameyādana 'the dogs' meal']. (28) Also the one who in this life speaks a lie or bears false witness in business transactions, in gifts of charity or in other affairs, will, after his death, head first free fall be thrown from the top of a hundred *yojanas* high mountain in the hell of Avīcimat ['having no water']. There the arid land consisting of stones waves like a sea where he, with his body broken everywhere, does not die, but instead is dragged to the top to be thrown down again. (29) When a brahmin or his wife drinks *soma-rasa* [a sacred intoxicating beverage], or when a ruler or a trader in this life in a state of illusion drinks liquor, while they have taken a vow [not to], they will all be brought to the hell where, with a foot on their chest, red-hot molten iron will be poured into their mouths [: the hell of Ayahpāna, 'drinking iron'].

(30) **N**ext to that one must consider anyone a living corpse who, being low-born or degraded, in this life falsely proud failed to be respectful towards a more honorable person of a higher birth, austerity, knowledge, good behavior and faithfulness to the principles. After his death, he will, head first, be thrown in the hell of Kṣārakardama [the 'pool of acrid mud'] to suffer there the severest agony. (31) Men who in this life sacrificed other people in worship [of Kālī] and the women who ate those people, those kind of murderers will be slain like animals in the abode of Yamarāja by groups of punishing Rākṣasas who, just like those man-eaters did themselves, will cut them with swords to pieces, drink their blood and dance and sing thereto in delight [: the hell called Rakṣogaṇa-bhojana, 'to be the food of the devil']. (32) But persons who in this world lured innocent creatures, seeking shelter in the forest or the village, by making them feel safe, but instead caused them pain by playing games with them, piercing their bodies or putting them on a leash, those people after their death can be sure that their own bodies will be fixed likewise and that they, starved and thirsty and such, will be tortured from all sides by sharp beaked birds like herons and vultures so that

they may remember the sins they committed [the hell of Śūlaprota, 'pierced by the pike']. (33) Also those men who, like snakes with an angry nature, in this life caused pain to others without any necessity, will, after their death, fall down in a hell called Dandaśūka ['the cudgel in return'] where, oh King, five- and seven-hooded serpents raise before them in order to eat them just like mice. (34) Or they who in this life confine living beings either in blind wells, in granaries or in caves, will likewise in their next life be forced to enter the same places, to be locked up there with poisonous fumes, fire and smoke [: the hell called Avāṭanīrodhana, 'to be thrown in the dark']. (35) Someone who in this life, as a householder, every time he received guests or visitors, gave them a sinful look of anger as if he wanted to burn them with his eyes, for sure will land in the hell meant for those with a sinful vision, where his eyes will be plucked out by the powerful beaks of herons, vultures and crows [the hell of Paryāvartana, 'the eyes plucked']. (36) Also those egoists who with a look of disapproval regard all with suspicion, whose heart and face dry up by the thought of expenditure and loss, and who like evil spirits protecting their wealth are never happy, will after their death because of their sinful deeds to protect those riches and increase their incomes, fall down in a hell called Sūcīmukha ['the pin first'], where the commanders of Yamarāja like expert weavers with thread and needle will stitch the limbs of the bodies of those money grabbing ghosts and sinners.

(37) **F**or all those who act against the dharma as I mentioned and also for those I did not mention, there are, according to the degree of sinfulness, all sorts of hells to fall into. There are many hundreds and thousands of them in the realm of Yamarāja, oh King. For those souls of principle and piety however, who reached the end of their virtue or vice, there are elsewhere in this world [or in this universe] new lives to enter [compare B.G. 4: 9 and 3.30: 29]. (38) In the beginning I described to you the path of liberation [in cantos two and three]. There I showed you how the Supreme Lord Nārāyaṇa in the stories of the Purāṇa could be as much as the universe that is like an egg divided in fourteen parts. I described His gross form, consisting of His energy and qualities, as being directly

the Gigantic Person [the *virāṭ-rūpa*]. He who with veneration hears, reads or explains that song of the Supreme Personality of the Supersoul shall, however difficult it is to understand, because of his faith and devotion find his intelligence purified and arrive at comprehension. (39) Hearing about both the gross and the subtle form of the Supreme Lord, the devotee should lead his mind, which is captivated by the gross form, step by step in contemplation to the subtle, spiritual form. (40) Of this planet earth I have described to you the different realms and regions, the rivers, the mountains, the sky, the oceans and the direction and positions of the lower worlds, the hellish worlds and the higher worlds above them, oh King. How wonderful is this gross body of the Supreme Controller wherein the aggregate of all living beings has its place!"

Thus the fifth Canto of the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam ends named: The Creative Impetus.

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