

Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsadeva

**ŚRĪMAD BHĀGAVATAM**  
(Bhāgavata Purāṇa)

The Story of the Fortunate One



**Canto 6**

Translated by Anand Aadhar

Third revised edition 10-26-2025

## CANTO 6: Prescribed Duties for Mankind

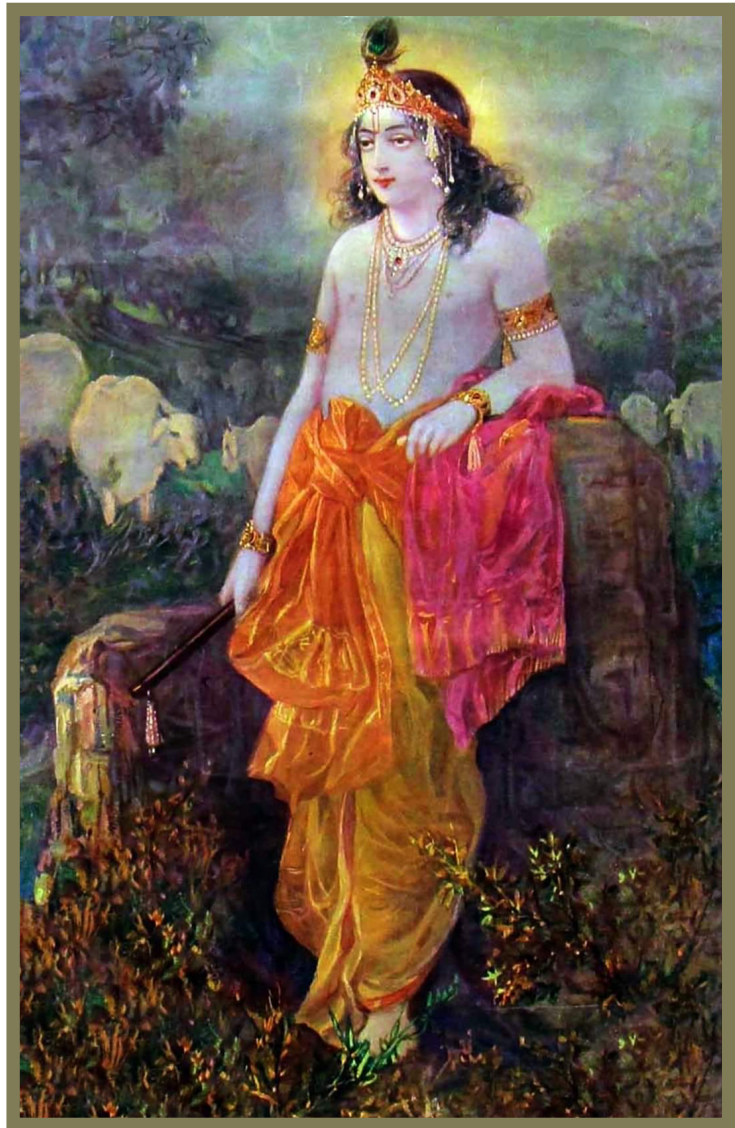
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philosophers and theologians, in order to help them to overcome the perils and loneliness of impersonalism and the philosophy of emptiness.

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 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

## 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 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



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 Cakravarti 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 available, 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

### Dharma and Adharma: the Life of Ajāmila

(1) Śrī Parīkṣit said: 'Oh great devotee, in the beginning [in the second canto] you described how, following the path of finding liberation by renunciation [*nivṛtti mārga*], one with the spirit of the Absolute ['with Brahmā'] in the process of yoga gradually puts an end to the cycle of rebirth. (2) With one's attention focussed on the three modes of nature, oh sage, one is time and again caught in the clutches of the material world where there is a constant renewal of forms. (3) The hells belonging to the different sorts of impiety were by you described [in the fifth canto] as also the period of the first Manu, the son of Brahmā, Svāyambhuva [in the fourth canto]. (4-5) You described the character and the dynasties of Priyavrata and Uttānapāda as also the different realms [*dvīpas*], regions [*varṣas*], oceans, mountains, rivers, gardens and trees of the earthly sphere and the characteristics and measurements of the luminaries and the lower worlds created by the Almighty Lord. (6) Please explain to me now, oh man of great fortune, what a human being must do in this world in order not to undergo all these sorts of terrible conditions of heavily suffering in hell.'

(7) Śrī Śuka said: 'When someone in this life does not take the necessary countermeasures, when one is not of proper atonement after having engaged wrongly in the mind, in one's expressions and with one's body [one's 'hands' or with one's marriage], such a person after having died, undoubtedly will end up in [one of] the different types of hell of terrible suffering I formerly described. (8) Before one has died and before one's body is too old and decrepit, one should therefore in this world as soon as possible endeavor to atone for one's sins with a proper estimate of their gravity, just like an experienced physician determines the cause in order to treat a disease.'

(9) The king said: 'What is the value of atonement when one cannot control oneself, despite hearing and seeing about it and knowing how harmful to oneself [and others] it is to act badly? (10) Sometimes ceasing with the sin, sometimes engaging in it again, I consider the process of atonement quite useless. It is like with an elephant covering itself with dust after coming out of the water.'

(11) The son of Vyāsa said: "By countering one [fruitful] deed with another deed [with compensations] there is indeed no end to that action when there is a lack of [self-]knowledge. Sins are only atoned for after [self-]searching, after investigation [also: discussions, confessions or psychotherapy; *vimarśana*]. (12) Those who eat the right food will not be plagued by all kinds of diseases, similarly the one who manages to discipline himself [in *niyama*], oh King, will more and more qualify for well-being and happiness. (13-14) By means of voluntary penance and chastity, by equal-mindedness and sense control, by sacrificing [charity] and truthfulness, by inner and outer cleanliness, by refraining from violence and abuse and by self-restraint [by means of mantra meditation e.g.], they who, endowed with faith and knowledge of dharma, are calm and steady in their actions, words and intelligence, put an end to all kinds of sin, however great and abominable, the way a fire consumes a bamboo forest. (15) Some who rely on nothing but unalloyed devotion [\*] unto Vāsudeva, manage to destroy all their badness completely, just like the sun dissipates fog. (16) A man full of sin, oh King, is certainly not as much purified by penance and such as the devotee is, who surrendered his life to Kṛṣṇa in dedicated service unto the person [the representative] of God [in particular the *ācārya*, see also 5.5: 10-13]. (17) In this world the most appropriate path is the safe path that free from fear is followed by the well-behaved and auspicious devotees who are of full surrender to Nārāyaṇa. (18) All the atonement well performed by someone who is not devoted to Nārāyaṇa, will not purify, oh King, the same way the water of all rivers cannot purify a liquor jar. (19) Once the mind is of full surrender to the two lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa, one is of the right atonement; one will, attached to His qualities, then never encounter in this world - or even in one's

dreams - Yamarāja and his servants carrying the noose [compare B.G. 18: 66]. (20) Concerning this the example is given of a very old story of a discussion between the servants of Viṣṇu and Yamarāja. Please let me tell you about it.

(21) Once in the city of Kānyakubja there was a brahmin named Ajāmīla who, as the husband of a maid-servant, had lost his way in association with her and therefrom no longer endeavored for the truth. (22) He had resorted to reprehensible activities as arresting and robbing people and cheating. Thus he maintained his family in a most sinful way and caused others a lot of trouble. (23) Caring for her sons this way managing his existence, oh King, the great lapse of time passed of eighty-eight years of his life. (24) He, as an old man, had ten sons and the youngest of them, held very dear by the father and mother, was addressed by the name of Nārāyaṇa. (25) The little boy was the apple of his eye and the old man enjoyed it very much to witness his prattling and playing. (26) As he ate, drank and chewed he, controlled by his affection, also fed the child and gave it something to drink, but, foolish as he was, he failed to notice that his life drew to a close. (27) When the time of his death arrived he, who had lived in ignorance, thus had a mind fixed on his little son who carried the name of Nārāyaṇa. (28-29) He saw how three characters approached him with fearful features, twisted faces and their hairs standing on end, who, with the noose in their hands, were ready to take him away. Terrified and with tears in his eyes he thus loudly called for his nearby playing child named Nārāyaṇa. (30) The moment Viṣṇu's servants heard the name of the Lord, their master, from the mouth of the dying man, oh King, they came immediately. (31) As the messengers of death were pulling Ajāmīla away from the heart of the maid-servant's husband, the Viṣṇudūtas forbade it with



resounding voices. (32) The messengers of Yamarāja thus being thwarted replied: 'Who do you all think you are to oppose the authority of the King of Dharma? (33) Whose servants are you, where are you from and why have you come here? Why do you stop us in this? Do you belong to the demigods, the lesser gods or to the perfected souls? (34-36) You all, with your lotuslike eyes, yellow garments, helmets, glittering earrings and lotus flower garlands; you all, looking so young and beautiful with your four arms, bow, quiver of arrows and the decoration of a sword, club, conch, disc and lotus flower, you dissipate in all directions the darkness with the effulgence of the light emanating from you. For what reason do you deny us, the servants of the Maintainer of Dharma?'

(37) Śuka said: 'Thus being addressed by the Yamadūtas they, who followed the word of Vāsudeva, replied with a smile, saying the following with voices resounding like rumbling clouds. (38) The Viṣṇudūtas said: 'If you really are all the servants of the King of Dharma, then just tell us what the principles of dharma and the characteristics of *adharma* are. (39) How and where should punishment be administered, and are all or only some human beings who take advantage of others punishable?'

(40) The Yamadūtas said: 'Dharma or religious principles is what is prescribed in the Vedas, *adharma* is the opposite. The Vedas are Nārāyaṇa Himself and originated from Him alone, so we have heard. (41) All that manifested with its specific qualities, names, activities and forms has by Him been created from His position in heaven, by means of [the interaction of] the basic material qualities of passion, goodness and slowness. (42) The sun, the fire, the sky, the air, the gods, the moon, the evening, the day and the night, the directions, the water and the land are all evidence of the personal dharma [the very nature] of the embodied living entity [see also B.G. 8: 4]. (43) *Adharma* [in the sense of going against nature] with all these [witnessing natural divinities], is recognized as the form of behavior qualifying for retribution, for the reaction deemed appropriate for all the actions of offenders that deserve punishment. (44) They who under the influence of the natural modes are engaged in actions motivated for results, can be of good, pious deeds as also of deeds directly opposite to that, oh pure souls, but no embodied soul can exist without engaging in action. (45) The extent to which someone in this life is of certain righteous or bad deeds, assures him in his next life of the enjoyment or suffering that is their result [compare B.G. 14: 18]. (46) The way one here in this life among the living beings, oh best of the demigods, experiences the different effects of the basic qualities of matter - in the form of their three attributes [viz. knowledge, movement and inertia] - one may expect to have a similar experience elsewhere [in another world]. (47) Just as the present time carries the characteristics of what was and what will become, someone's

present birth likewise is indicative of the dharma and *adharma* of what one did and will be doing. (48) The godhead [of Yamarāja] is a great Lord as good as Brahmā; he in his abode sees before his mind's eye the form one previously had and then understands what one's future will be. (49) Just like someone who, with what he projects in his sleep, has lost the awareness of what precedes or follows that dream, one is equally unaware of a life before or after this [present] birth. (50) With the five working senses, the five senses of perception and their five objects engaged in pursuing his goals, he with his mind as the sixteenth element is of awareness. But as the one [soul, as a person] he himself constitutes the seventeenth element in enjoying the threefold nature of reality [see also B.G. 3: 42-43]. (51) With that sixteen part subtle body [the *liṅga*] as a result of the three forces of our greater nature, the living entity is subjected to a [difficult to overcome] repeated series of births [transmigration or *samsṛti*] in which it experiences jubilation, lamentation, fear and misery. (52) The embodied soul, lacking in awareness for not being in control of his senses and mind, is against his will led to actions for the sake of his own material interests; thus being bewildered he, like a silkworm, weaves himself in[to the cocoon of] his own karma. (53) No one can exist but for a moment without doing something. One is by the three modes automatically forced to perform the fruitful actions belonging to one's nature. (54) On the basis of the imperceptible, unknown cause of that so very powerful personal nature, from the womb of the mother and the seed of the father, the gross and subtle body finds its existence to their likeness [see also B.G. 8: 6]. (55) Because of this association with material nature the position of the living entity has turned into an awkward one [of forgetfulness], but if one but for a short while manages to enjoy the association of the Lord, that problem is overcome.

(56-57) This man [Ajāmila] well versed in the Vedas, of a good character and good conduct, was [initially] a reservoir of good qualities. He conscientiously, mild, controlled and truthful kept to his vows and knew his mantras. He was neat and clean, of the greatest esteem in service of the guru, the fire god, his guests and members of the house-

hold and was free from false pride, friendly to all, faultless, non-envious and of the finest choice of words. (58-60) Some day this brahmin following the orders of his father, went into the forest to collect fruits there, flowers, *samit* and *kuśa* [types of grass]. On his way back he saw some *sūdra* very lusty engaged with a promiscuous maidservant who, drunken because of *maireya* nectar [a drink made from the soma flower], intoxicated rolled her eyes to and fro. Under the influence her dress had slackened and he, unashamed having fallen from proper conduct, stood close to her singing and laughing having a good time with her. (61) When Ajāmila saw her with the with turmeric decorated arm of the lusty *sūdra* around her, he all of a sudden with a heart full of lust fell victim to bewilderment. (62) From within trying to regain control, he reminded himself of what was taught, but agitated as he was by Cupid he failed to restrain his mind. (63) Provoked by the sight he, who in his bewilderment stood senseless, resembled a planet in eclipse. With his attention focussed on her he [that very moment] gave up his dharma completely. (64) He decided that he would please her as far as the money allowed he had from his father. To keep her satisfied he thus catered to every material desire that came to her mind. (65) His youthful wife, the brahmin daughter of a respectable family he had married, he in his sin abandoned directly after his mind was caught by the looks of the unchaste woman. (66) Doing whatever possible he in his weakness properly or else improperly procured the money needed to maintain the family consisting of her and her many children. (67) Because this man acted so irresponsibly and broke with all the rules of the *śāstra*, for a long time sinfully passing his time impiously with filthy practices, he was most condemned. (68) Not having atoned for his perpetual sinning, we will take him to the presence of the Lord of Punishment, where being chastised he will find purification.'

\*: In this regard Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī comments that bhakti may be divided into two divisions: (1) *santatā*, devotional service that continues incessantly with faith and love, and (2) *kādācitkī*, devotional service that does not continue incessantly but is sometimes awakened. Incessantly flowing devo-

tional service (*santatā*) may also be divided into two categories: (1) service performed with slight attachment and (2) spontaneous devotional service. Intermittent devotional service (*kādācitkī*) may be divided into three categories: (1) *rāgābhāsamayī*, devotional service in which one is almost attached (2) *rāgābhāsa-śūnya-svarūpa-bhūtā*, devotional service in which there is no spontaneous love but one likes the constitutional position of serving, and (3) *ābhāsa-rūpā*, a slight glimpse of devotional service.

## Chapter 2

### Ajāmila Delivered by the Viṣṇudūtas: the Motivation for the Holy Name

(1) The son of Vyāsadeva said: 'Oh King, after the servants of the Supreme Lord had heard what the Yamadūtas said, they replied as experts in the doctrine. (2) The Viṣṇudūtas said: 'Alas, how painful it is to see how irreligion affects the community of the knowers of dharma, to see how from those being allotted the task, sinless people unnecessarily have to undergo punishment. (3) To whom must the citizens turn for shelter if there is iniquity among those who as their protectors, endowed with all good qualities and equal to all, [want to] defend the law? (4) Whatever the better man does is copied by the rest of the population, whatever he does is by the general public accepted as the standard to follow [see also B.G. 3: 21]. (5-6) The common people, not knowing what exactly would be dharma or *adharmā*, lie their head on his lap to sleep in peace. How can a respectable person who kindly disposed towards everyone enjoys the trust of the living beings, cause pain to the ignorant mass that as a [herd of] animal[s] surrendered to him in good faith and friendship? (7) This person here has already atoned for the sins of millions of births because he, being helpless, chanted the holy name of the Lord. That is the way to find the fortune of the Lord. (8) When he said 'Oh Nārāyaṇa, please come', he, thus pronouncing the four syllables [*nā-rā-ya-ṇa*], realized the complete atonement for all the mischief he as a sinner perpetrated. (9-10) Irrespective the gravity of the sin one

might have committed as a thief, an alcoholic, as someone who betrays a friend, as a killer of a brahmin, as someone who lusted for his guru's wife or as a murderer of a woman, a king, cows or one's father, or as any other type of sinner, one will have the attention of Lord Viṣṇu because of one's concern with His name. He [Viṣṇu] considers the chanting of the holy name the perfection of atonement [\*]. (11) A sinner is not to the same degree purified by the atonement of keeping to the vows brahminically prescribed, as he is by uttering the syllables of the name of the Lord, for that repetition brings to mind the qualities of Uttamaśloka [the Lord Glorified in the Scriptures, compare 6.1: 16]. (12) Because the heart, despite one's penance, is not completely purified [when one does not chant His name], the mind will tire itself again on the path of temporary matters. They who are seriously interested in putting an end to their karma [see B.G. 4: 16], thus purify their existence by repeating the glories of the Lord [compare 1.2: 17]. (13) Therefore, do not try to take this man with you. Because he on his deathbed pronounced the name of the Supreme Lord, he has already put behind him all his sins [see also B.G. 7: 27 and 8: 5]. (14) Know that, whether one does it for other purposes, for fun, as entertainment or just casually, employing the name [of the Lord] of Vaiṣṇuṭha carries an unlimited capacity to neutralize sin. (15) A person who has fallen, slipped, broken his bones, has been bitten, was plagued by a disease or struck otherwise, does not deserve a hellish life when he thereto happened to pronounce [the name] of the Lord [see also B.G. 8: 6]. (16) Great sages well versed in the matter prescribe heavy and light penance for [respectively] heavy and light sins. (17) But to their word vanquishing all the sinfulness by austerity, charity and vows and such, does not dissolve the effects of *adharmā* in the heart [to have material desires or being conditioned]. That is attained [only] by serving the Lord's feet. (18) Consciously or involuntarily chanting the name of Uttamaśloka burns to ashes the sins of a person, just like fire does with dry grass. (19) A mantra uttered, just like a powerful medicine taken, manifests its potency even when it somehow or other is used the proper way by an ignorant person.'

(20) Śrī Śuka said: 'They [the Viṣṇudūtas], thus perfectly making sure what dharma is in terms of devotional service, oh King, released him from the noose of Yamarāja and rescued him from the clutches of death. (21) Oh subduer of the enemies, the Yamadūtas, thus put in their place, went to the abode of Yamarāja to inform him faithfully in detail about everything that had passed. (22) The brahmin released from the noose, now free from fear, regained his composure and, most pleased to see them, offered his respects bowing his head before the servants of Viṣṇu. (23) But the servants of the Supreme Personality understanding, oh sinless one, that he wanted to say something, suddenly disappeared from sight. (24-25) Ajāmila who, because of the talks of Viṣṇu's and Yamarāja's servants about Lord Hari, had learned more about what being pure of dharma in relation to the Lord [the Bhāgavatam] meant, how that is described in the three Vedas and how someone conditioned by the modes of nature in devotion unto the Supreme Lord immediately finds purification by listening to the glorification of His name, greatly regretted all the evil deeds he remembered: (26) 'Alas, because I lost the control over myself making babies with this low class woman, I destroyed all my brahminical qualities and ended up in utter misery. (27) Honest men will condemn him who has abandoned his chaste young wife to associate with an unchaste maid given to drinking. Doomed I am having fallen in sin and having defamed my family! (28) My helpless old father and mother with no other relative to look after them, were distressed when I, as ungrateful as a classless person, alas gave up on them. (29) Clearly I will fall into the most terrible hell where those, who full of lust broke with the dharma, have to undergo the retribution of Yamarāja. (30) Have I been dreaming or did I witness a miracle here? Where have all those gone now who were dragging me away with the noose in their hands? (31) And where have those four perfect personalities of extreme beauty gone to who released me when I, being captured in ropes, was carried away to hell? (32) Because of seeing these exalted devotees, matters for me had to take a positive turn, despite my misfortune. (33) How else would a man, impurely engaged with a lower class woman, on his deathbed be capable of having his tongue speak



the holy name of the Lord of Vaikuṅṭha? (34) Where am I, as a cheater, sinner personified and a shameless destroyer of his own culture, with this all-auspicious name of Lord Nārāyaṇa? (35) I, who was thus engaged, am decided to gain control over my senses, mind and breath, so that my soul not again will drown in the darkness of ignorance. (36-37) Freeing myself from this bondage to karmic actions because of ignorance and lust, I will be a self-realized, most kind, merciful and peaceful friend of all living entities and will disentangle my soul from the trap of being caught in *māyā* in the form of a woman, a woman who, in my fallen state, played with me like with a pet animal. (38) Thus giving up on the 'I' and 'mine' of the body and the matters related to it, I will, without the falsehood, in meditation on the purpose, devote my mind to the Supreme Lord by means of the purifying singing of His name and such.'

(39) **F**reed from all bondage by only a moment associating with the saintly devotees, he thus relinquished the idea of a material life and went to the place where the Ganges enters the plains [Hardvar as 'the doorway to Hari']. (40) Residing there in an abode for disciplining the spirit [an ashram or temple] he, engaging in yoga exercises, turned inwards away from his senses and fixed his mind on the true self. (41) Fully absorbed in that self he detached himself from the [direction of] the modes [from time], and devoted himself to the Absolute in the form of the Lord who is pure consciousness. (42) As soon as his mind and intelligence found their anchor, he saw in front of him the very same [four divine] personalities he formerly had seen, whereupon the brahmin reverentially bowed his head. (43) At that holy place at the Ganges seeing them, he immediately gave up

his vehicle of time, his body, to assume the original spiritual form [*svarūpa*] befitting an associate of the Lord. (44) The man of knowledge, together with the servants of the Lord, then boarded a celestial chariot [*vimāna*] made of gold and went to heaven where the husband of the Goddess of Fortune [*Viṣṇu*] resides. (45) He who had forsaken all dharma, who had married a low class maid, had fallen into abominable activities, had broken with all his vows and had landed in a hellish life, thus immediately found liberation the moment he relied on the name of the Supreme Lord. (46) In order not to get attached again to fruitful activities there is, for persons desiring to escape from material bondage, therefore no better means to cut with the karmic consequence than the repeated singing of the name of Him who is the refuge of all holy places. All other means lead to a mind contaminated by passion and ignorance. (47-48) Any person who with faith hears about or with great devotion recounts this confidential history, which frees one from all sins, will not be judged by the servants of Yamarāja and be led to hell, but will be welcomed in the spiritual world of *Viṣṇu*, whatever inauspicious thing [he did in his material life]. (49) When Ajāmila at the time of his death by holding on to the name of the Lord went to heaven, even though he meant his son, then what would that mean for the one who with love and faith holds on to the name?'

\*: It is this verse that *ācāryas* like Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura of the disciplic succession quote to give scriptural support to the argument that chanting the holy name will immediately cleanse oneself of all sins: it is how one calls for the Lord's protection. It is His dharma to do so and He will even incarnate for it if necessary as he explains in the *Gītā* (4: 7). He also came down in the form of Lord Caitanya, for this reason being prayed for by Śrī Advaita. He thus reinstated the necessity of this *Bhāgavatam* and the chanting of the holy name, for the sake of the religious reform of the people of our modern time.

### Chapter 3

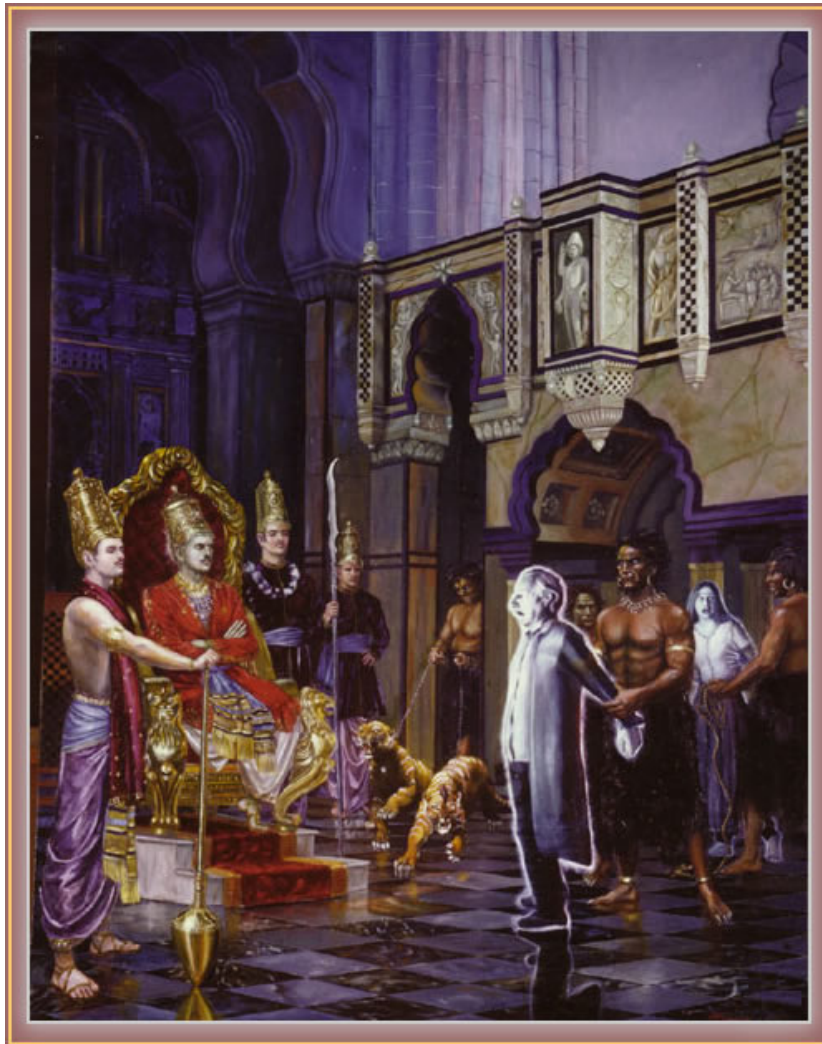
#### Yamarāja Instructs His Messengers

(1) **T**he king said: 'What was the reply of the god, the King of Dharma, Yamarāja, after he had heard what his servants had to say about the obstruction of his order when they were defeated by the servants of the Slayer of Mura [*Kṛṣṇa*], He who rules all people of the world? (2) Oh *ṛṣi*, this thwarting of the order of a god like Yamarāja was a thing unheard of. I am convinced that no one but you, oh sage, can remove the doubts of the people concerning this matter.'

(3) **Śrī** Śuka said: 'The servants of death, oh King, whose plans had been frustrated by the men of the Supreme Lord, informed their master Yamarāja, the ruler of the city of *Sāmyamaṇī* [as follows]. (4) The *Yamadūtas* said: 'How many controllers are there factually in this material world, oh master, who are the ones responsible for the consequences of performing the three kinds of activities [*karma*, *akarma* and *vikarma* or profit, non-profit and criminal, see B.G. 4: 17]? (5) Given the many authorities in this world to chastise the sinner or not, for whom would there be [the bitterness of] death [when one is brought before you] and for whom [the nectar of] immortality [of *Vaikuṅṭha*]? (6) Considering the diversity of rulers over the many *karmīs* [profit-minded persons] in this world, should there not be one central administrative rule, like one has with the different heads of state departments? (7) In that sense you would be the one supreme master and ruler over all beings, including the other controllers; you would be the master of punishment to tell right from wrong in human society. (8) But in this world none of that can be found, now your order, the punishment you ordained, has been contested by four of the most magnificent and perfect beings. (9) They forcibly cut the ropes and released this sinner who by us according to your order was taken to the places of requital. (10) About those who so quickly arrived and said 'Do not fear', when the word '*Nārāyaṇa*' was uttered, we would like to hear from you, please.'

(11) **T**he son of Vyāsadeva said: 'He, Lord Yamarāja, the controller of all living entities, thus being questioned replied his servants, pleased as he was to be reminded of the lotus feet of the Lord. (12) Yamarāja said: 'Superior to me there is another one, another Lord, who is as the warp and woof of cloth to all the mobile and immobile living beings. In Him the entire cosmos is found and of Him there are the partial aspects of the maintenance [Viṣṇu], creation [Brahmā] and destruction [Śiva] of this universe. The entire creation is controlled by Him like a bull is by a rope through its nose. (13) The way one ties oxen to a rope, He ties the people with different basic denominations and duties [of *varṇa* and *āśrama*] to His word [the Vedic knowledge], according to which they scrupulously carry their offerings to Him. (14-15) I myself, the Lord of death, Indra the king of heaven, Nirṛti of chaos, Varuṇa of water, Candra of the moon, Agni of fire, Śiva of destruction, Pavana of the air, Brahmā of creation, Sūrya of the sun, Viśvāsu of beauty [see 4.18: 17], the eight Vasus of goodness, the Sādhyas of cultivation, the Maruts of the wind, the Rudras of anger, the Siddhas of perfection and the other souls creating order in the universe, as also immortal rulers like Bṛhaspati and sages like Bhṛgu, have, despite being ruled by goodness and being free from [the lower qualities of] passion and ignorance, under the influence of His *māyā* no knowledge of His motives. And how much more would that not apply to others besides them? (16) He, the Supersoul present in the heart of all living beings, can factually not be seen or known through the senses, the mind, the breath or by means of ideation and words, just like the different parts of the body cannot see the eyes watching over them [compare B.G. 7: 26]. (17) The attractive servants of the independent, transcendental Lord ruling everything, the Master of *Māyā*, the Great Soul, generally move around in this world with His physical qualities and nature. (18) Viṣṇu's servants, the Viṣṇudūtas, who are worshiped by the enlightened souls, have forms rarely seen that are most wonderful to behold. They protect the mortals devoted to the Lord from enemies and from my men, so that they are protected from practically every side. (19) The great *ṛṣis*, the gods, the best of perfection and the demons, the humans, as also the souls founded in

knowledge [the Vidhyādhara] and the celestial singers [the Cāranas] and such, have no knowledge of the [full of] dharma that is enacted by the Supreme Lord in person. (20-21) Lord Brahmā, Nārada, Lord Śiva, the four Kumāras, Kapila, Manu, Prahlāda, Janaka, Bhīṣma, Bali, the son of Vyāsa [Śuka] and I myself [Yamarāja]; we, these twelve [*mahājanas*], have knowledge of the *bhāgavata-dharma* [the emancipation in surrender to the Supreme Lord] my dear servants, that is most confidential, transcendental and hard to grasp. He who understands it achieves eternal life [compare 3.32: 2 and B.G. 18: 66]. (22) We all recognize that for the people living in this material world the yoga of devotion unto the Supreme Lord, beginning with the singing of the holy name, constitutes the supreme dharma. (23) Just consider, my sons, how by pronouncing the holy name of the Lord, even Ajāmila was delivered from the noose of death. (24) Even this sinner Ajāmila attained liberation when he, at the moment of his death, innocently with 'Nārāyaṇa' called for his son. This much of the congregational singing of the qualities of His names and deeds is enough [as proof of goodwill] to remove the sins of man. (25) Great personalities practically always do not know this [truth, this lead], for their minds got bewildered by *māyā*, the illusory energy of the goddess, and because their intelligence to a great extent was dulled by the burden of the fruitful activities and the sweetness of the flowery language of sacrificing as prescribed [in the three Vedas, see also B.G. 2: 42-43]. (26) Knowing this, sharp-minded souls with all their heart take to the yoga of loving the Supreme and Unlimited Lord. Such persons therefore do not deserve my punishment. And if there would be any fall down of them, that also will be destroyed by the high praise they voice. (27) They, the devotees, who with an equal vision are of surrender to the Supreme Lord and whose sacred histories are proclaimed by the demigods and perfected souls, you should never approach, for they are fully protected by the mace of the Lord. It is not to us to punish them, just as it is not given to time itself [to tell right from wrong]. (28) Communities of transcendental swanlike souls, who free from material attachment are of self-realization, continuously relish the honey of the lotus feet. [But] they who enjoy a household life in de-



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sires of attachment, are on the path that leads to hell. Bring those before me who in their falsehood turned against Mukunda, the Lord of Liberation [compare 2.1: 4]. (29) They who run from the truth and fail in their duties unto Lord Viṣṇu, they whose tongues never express the names and qualities of the Supreme Lord, who do not carry Him in their heart or remember His lotus feet and not even once bowed their heads to Kṛṣṇa [in a temple e.g., see B.G. 4: 4-6], bring them all before me. (30) I pray that He, the Supreme Lord, the original and oldest person Lord Nārāyaṇa, will excuse me for the impudence of my servants. We, me and my men, acted in ignorance and therefore we with folded hands beg the most venerable, all-pervading Personality of Godhead for forgiveness.'

(31) [Śrī Śuka said:] 'Therefore, oh descendant of Kuru, understand that the glorification of Lord Viṣṇu [in particular singing His name in congregation; *sankīrtana*] is the ultimate form of atonement, the best that one can do in the world to deal with one's sins, however great they are. (32) The hearts of those who always listen to and sing about the heroism of the Lord that wipes away all sin, are by their devotional service, their bhakti, very easily purified, while such a thing is not as easily brought about when one is [merely] of vows and rituals. (33) He who holds on to the honey of Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet, will not again desire to enjoy the illusory quality of nature [*māyā*] that brings distress. Anyone else however, who enchanted by lust tries to do something to cleanse the passion out of his soul, will surely find the passion reappear.

(34) **T**he servants of Yamarāja by the words of their master being reminded of the greatness of the Lord, thus all stood perplexed. From then on, oh King, they

feared to see the person, the devotee, who is fearless because of taking shelter of the Infallible One. (35) When the most powerful sage, the son of Kumbha [Agastya Muni] resided in the Malaya mountains and worshiped the Lord, he told me this most confidential history.'

## Chapter 4

### The Haṁsa-guhya Prayers Offered to the Lord by Prajāpati Dakṣa

(1-2) **T**he king said: 'You briefly explained to me the generation of the gods, the demons and the human beings, the serpents, the beasts and the birds during the rule of Svāyambhuva Manu [see



canto 3]. I would like to hear from you a more detailed account of this matter, my lord, as also an account of the potency of the transcendental Supreme Lord, by which that secondary creation was generated.'

(3) Śrī Sūta said: "Oh best of the sages [assembled at Naimiṣāraṇya see canto 1.1], the son of Vyāsa, the great yogi thus hearing about the king's request, praised him and gave an answer. (4) Śrī Śuka said: 'When the Pracetās, the ten sons of King Prācīnabarhi, returned from [their prolonged meditation] near the ocean, they saw that the entire planet was overgrown by trees [see 4.24, 4.30, 4.31]. (5) Aggravated because of their austerities they got angry about the trees [and the agriculture that was neglected in their absence] and kindled, with the air from their mouths, a fire to burn down the forests. (6) Seeing how all the trees were burned by the blazing fire, oh son of Kuru, the king of the forest, the great [moon god] Soma, spoke as follows in order to pacify their anger.

(7) 'Do not burn the poor trees to ashes, oh fortunate souls! Since you are known as the protectors of the living beings, it is your duty to strive for the [welfare and] growth of all of them. (8) Do not forget that the Supreme Personality, the Lord, the original, unchanging Father and almighty protector, created all the trees, plants and herbs to serve as food. (9) The immobile living beings serve [with their fruits and flowers] as food for the winged ones and those without limbs [like the grasses] serve as food for the ones with legs without hands or paws. The four-legged in their turn are there for the animals with claws and the bipeds [to serve with respectively their flesh and milk]. (10) Your father and the God of Gods, oh sinless souls, ordered you to generate offspring. How then [for the love of God,] can you burn the trees to ashes [that sustain all living beings]? (11) Like your father, grandfather and great-grandfather did, just follow the path of the saints and subdue the anger that has risen in you! (12) The ruler protects his subjects, like parents who are friends to their children, like eyelids that protect the eyes, like a husband who protects his wife, like a householder who cares for the needy and like sages who are the

well-wishers of the ignorant. (13) The Supersoul residing within the bodies of all living entities is the Lord and Controller of all. Try to see those bodies as His residence [His temple] and may He thus be pleased with you. (14) Anyone who by inquiry into the nature of the self manages to subdue the powerful anger, which suddenly can awake like a bolt from the blue, transcends the modes of nature. (15) Enough of burning the poor trees, let there with you be the well-being of the remaining trees and please, accept as your wife the daughter [called Māriṣā, a girl born from the Apsara Pramlocā] who was raised by them.'

(16) **O**h King, after thus having addressed the sons, King Soma gave them the Apsara girl, who had very beautiful hips, and returned [to his abode]. They married her according to the dharma. (17) They begot in her Dakṣa, the son of the Pracētās, by whose procreative activity the three worlds thereafter were populated with offspring. (18) Please listen attentively to my story how Dakṣa, who was so fond of his daughters, by means of his semen and certainly also through his mind, generated all that life. (19) The *prajāpati* first with his mind created the lives of all those godly and godless living beings, including all the beings resorting under them that fly, roam the earth or swim. (20) But when he saw that this creation of beings did not increase, Dakṣa went to the foot of the Vindhya mountains where he performed the most difficult austerities. (21) There at the most suitable place to put an end to all sin, the holy place called Aghamarṣaṇa, he satisfied the Lord by austere and regularly performing rituals. (22) I shall now explain to you how he with the Haṁsa-guhya ['the secret of the swan'] prayers satisfied the Lord, how he pleased Him as the Supreme Personality of Godhead beyond the senses. (23) Dakṣa said: 'My obeisances unto Him from whom we learn the proper way to transcend the modes and the material energy to which all living beings are bound, unto Him, the self-born Controller beyond measure and calculation who in His abode cannot be perceived by a materially directed intelligence. (24) My reverential respect for the friend with whom one lives in this body and of whose friendship a person has no knowledge, just as the sense objects have no knowledge

of the sense organ that perceives them. (25) The living being has knowledge of this body with its types of breath, its internal and external senses, its elements and sense objects that [material as they are] do not know themselves, each other or anything outside of them. But the living being knowing about the natural modes and all these matters [in its turn] has no knowledge of Him who knows each and all. I praise Him, this unlimited Lord. (26) When the mind has come to a stop [in the absorption of yoga] and thus all names and projections of a material vision and remembrance have ceased, one will perceive Him in His unique spiritual completeness. Him, that swanlike [\*] personality who is realized in the purest state, I offer my respects. (27-28) The same way as they who are experts in sacrificing extract the fire, dormant in firewood, by singing the fifteen hymns [the Sāmidenī mantras], the devotees discover Him who with His spiritual powers hides in their hearts that are covered by the three modes of nature and the nine aspects of matter [of material nature and her sixteen elements - *prakṛti*, the individual soul - the *puruṣa*, the cosmic intelligence - the *mahat-tattva*, the false ego - *ahankāra*, and the five sense objects - the *tanmātras*, see e.g. 3.26: 11]. He who is realized in bliss when one sitting passively [in meditation] frees oneself from the complete of the illusory diversity, He of all names, He, the gigantic form of the universe, may He, that inconceivable reservoir of all qualities be merciful unto me. (29) Whatever one expresses in words, ascertains by contemplation, perceives with the senses or has in mind, everything that exists as an expression of the three modes, cannot be His essential nature. One knows Him in truth [only] as the cause of the creation and destruction of that what is characterized by the modes. (30) [Everything is situated] in Him, [everything originated] from Him and [everything is moved] by Him. [Everything belongs] to Him and [everything is there] for Him. Whether He acts or incites to act, He is the Supreme Cause of our material and spiritual existence known to all. He is Brahman, the Cause of All Causes, the incomparable One beyond whom no other cause can be found. (31) My obeisances unto that unlimited, all-pervading Lord of all transcendental attributes about whose many energies the speakers of the different philosophies, in dis-



pute and agreement concerning causes, in their creativity are continuously bewildered about the true self, the Supersoul. (32) The subject matter [e.g.] discussed in the philosophies of *sāṅkhya* [analysis, numbers] and yoga [unification of consciousness, devotion] leads, with professing knowledge of the one absolute truth - wherein one is of agreement about the beneficence of the transcendental, greater cause -, to a perception of differing, opposing characteristics of what would be [the absolute has form: *sākāra*] and would not be [the absolute is formless, *nirākāra*, compare 5.26: 39]. (33) In order to bestow His mercy upon the devotees at His lotus feet He, the eternal, Supreme Personality who is not bound to any name or form, manifests with the forms and holy names He takes birth with and engages in action. May He, the transcendence in person, be merciful unto me. (34) He who, by the material paths of knowledge, man-

ifests from within the core of the heart according to the desires of each living being, receives material qualities the way the wind does that blows over the earth [and thus assumes the forms of the demigods, see B.G. 7: 20-23]. May He, my Lord, fulfill my wish [to be allowed in His service].'

(35-39) Śrī Śuka said: 'Thus being praised with the prayers offered, the Supreme Lord, the caretaker of the devotees, appeared there in Aghamarṣaṇa, oh best of the Kurus. With His feet on Garuḍa's shoulders He with His long and mighty eight arms, held up the disc, the conch shell, the sword, the shield, the arrow, the bow, the rope and the club. His intense blackish blue form was clad in yellow garments, His face and glance were very cheerful and His body was adorned with a flower garland reaching to His feet. Decorated

with the shining Kaustubha jewel, the Śrīvatsa mark, a large full circle helmet, glittering shark earrings, a belt, finger rings, bracelets around His wrists and upper arms and with His ankle bells, His appearance captivated the three worlds. The Lord, the brilliance of the three worlds, was surrounded by eternal associates like Nārada, Nanda and the leaders of the demigods and was glorified with hymns by the perfected souls and the inhabitants and singers of heaven. (40) Seeing that greatly wonderful form, he was at first frightened, but then, with the hairs of his body standing on end, the *prajāpati* [joyously] threw himself flat on the ground to prove his respects. (41) Because of the great happiness that filled his senses like rivers flooded by mountain streams, he was unable to utter a word. (42) Seeing a great devotee like him prostrated, desirous of more life in the world, Janārdana, He who appeases all and knows each heart, addressed Dakṣa as follows. (43) The Supreme Lord said: 'Oh son of the Pracetās, you so greatly fortunate have in great faith perfected your good self by your austerities and attained, with Me as your object of desire, the highest state of love. (44) I am very pleased with you, oh ruler of man, because of your penance [of fundamental importance] to the flourishing of the living beings in this world. It is My wish that they abound. (45) Brahmā, Śiva, the founding fathers, the Manus and the ruling gods [like the divinities of the sun and the moon], are all expansions of My energy and constitute the cause of the welfare of all living beings. (46) Religious penance is My heart, oh brahmin, Vedic knowledge is My body, the spiritual activities are the form I assume, the rituals conducted by the book are My limbs and the God-fearing souls [promoting the unseen good fortune of devotional activities] are My mind, soul and life breath. (47) In the beginning, before the creation, I was the only one existing, nothing else could be found besides Me. The external world and all that is known had not manifested, like it is with being immersed in sleep. (48) When from the unlimited potency of Me, endowed with an endless number of qualities, the universe originated as a manifestation of the basic qualities [the *guṇas*], the first living being found therein his existence: Lord Brahmā, the one unborn. (49-50) The moment he, the Lord of all the demigods, invested with My poten-

cy, tried to bring about the creation, he considered himself incapable of doing so. I then inspired the god to perform the severest austerity. In the beginning the nine great personalities [the sages] of creation thus found their existence from him, they from whom all of you have originated [see 3.24: 21 and also 3.8]. (51) Oh Prajāpati, My dear son, please accept the daughter of Prajāpati Pañcajana named Asiknī as your wife. (52) Sexually united as man and woman in acceptance of the rules of the religion, you will, being married to this woman who is of a likewise respect of procreation, again [see 4.2] bring forth all the progeny [you desired. See also B.G. 7: 11]. (53) Under the influence of My material energy engaging in sexual intercourse, all the generations after you will also make offerings to Me.'

(54) Śrī Śuka said: 'Thus having spoken, the Supreme Lord, the creator of all the universe, vanished before his eyes as if He, the Supreme Personality, had been a dream image.'

\*: He is called a swan because He can separate the true from the untrue, just like a swan can sift milk from water.

## Chapter 5 Nārada Muni Cursed by Prajāpati Dakṣa

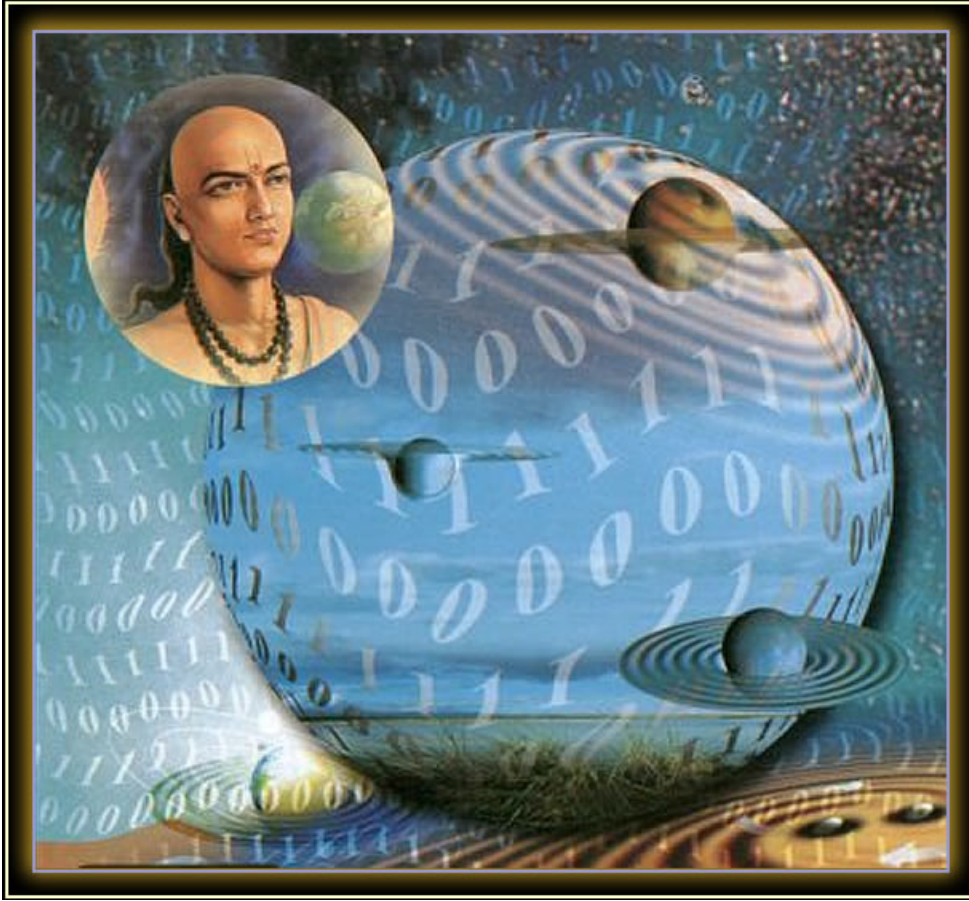
(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'Impelled by Lord Viṣṇu's external potency [*māyā*] he [Dakṣa] begot in his wife named Pāñcajanī [Asiknī] a countless number of most powerful sons who were named the Haryaśvas. (2) Alike in character and dharmic conduct, all the sons of Dakṣa, oh King, submitting to the order of their father to increase the population, went in the western direction. (3) At the place where the Sindhu [the present Indus] flows into the ocean there is a most important sacred lake called Nārāyaṇa-saras, that is frequented by sages and perfected souls. (4-5) Even though to be in touch with that water was enough to completely purify them from their impure thoughts, their minds were strongly attracted to the practices of

the elevated souls [there] and [so they] executed with conviction the severest penances. When they were ready to meet the purpose of increasing the population as their father had ordered, they were visited by the *devarṣi* [Nārada]. (6-8) He spoke to them as follows: 'Oh Haryaśvas, though you are the princes to rule, you alas lack in experience. How can you, if none of you has insight in the temporality, the finality of the worldly affair, beget offspring in service of the truth? Think of it as with a man whose kingdom consists of a hole in the ground from which there is no escape. At his side there is a promiscuous woman presenting her body in many different ways. There is a river flowing in both directions with a marvelous house built from twenty-five materials where a swan tells nice stories while something razor sharp is spinning fast. (9) How can you not knowing about this, you ignorant about the creation, follow the orders that your in every way so experienced father thought befitting for you?'

(10) Śrī Śuka said: 'After the Haryaśvas had heard those enigmatic words of the *devarṣi*, they pondered over them with the full of their intelligence so that their power of discrimination awakened. (11) The earth[ly affair, the body,] was the field of action, the eternal cause engrossing the individual soul that constitutes the basis of his bondage. What would the use of time-bound labor be when one fails to see the finality of it all? (12) Not understanding that there indeed is one controller, one Supreme Lord present who cannot be seen, who is not created [or born] and who, independent as His own shelter in the beyond, is the fourth dimension [of Time], what would the meaning of temporary fruitive activities be? (13) If a man indeed in ignorance has left for the lower regions [the hole] from which he does not return, just as he does not return from the spiritual abode in the beyond, of what use are then his temporary karmic activities in this world [compare B.G. 9: 4 and 8: 15]? (14) With the different things the living being tries with his intelligence, being possessed by passion and so on, he is like a free woman presenting herself in different ways. What is the use of working for results when one does not know the [transcendental] end to these changes of form in this world? (15)

When one thus is subjected to the material way, one loses one's status as an independent authority as a consequence of which the intelligence ignorantly moves like an unfaithful wife. What in this world is then the use of all one's time-bound actions? (16) The illusory of matter gives rise to creation and dissolution, which is a river [thus streaming in two directions] that for the foolish person flows [too] fast at its banks [to escape from it]. What is the use of working for a temporary advantage, without having knowledge of these matters? (17) When one in this existence does not know about the twenty-five ways [the twenty-five elements, see 3.26: 11-15] to look at the reality of the Original Person, that wondrous mirror to the individual personality, what benefit is found in exhausting oneself for the falsehood of material gain? (18) If one does not know how to discriminate [like a swan, spirit from matter] concerning the refuge to accept, when one concerning the Lord has given up on the literatures [the *śāstras*] that inform about the ways of bondage and liberation, of what use is it then to wrestle in attachment for temporary matters? (19) The so very sharp, revolving wheel of Time governs all the world according to its own rule and measure; of what use is it to endeavor in desire for results in this world when one does not know about this [this order of time]? (20) How can one, entangled in the modes of nature [see B.G. 18: 19-29], undertake anything [like begetting children], if one does not understand the instructions of the scriptures of the Father that tell one how to put an end to the material way of life?'

(21) Thus being convinced, oh King, the Haryaśvas were of the same opinion. Circumambulating him [Nārada] they left to tread the path of no return [see also B.G. 8: 16]. (22) The *muni* traveled all the worlds while keeping the Lord of the Senses in mind with spiritual sounds and thus he, innerly not being divided, engaged his consciousness at the lotus feet [see the bhajan Nārada Muni]. (23) When Dakṣa heard from Nārada about the loss of the sons, who were the best of the best in their conduct, he filled with lamentation had to suffer. It hurt him deeply to see what had become of his fine sons. (24) Pacified by the instigator [Lord Brahmā] he again begot in Pāñcajanī a great



number of sons who were named the Savalāśvas. (25) In their turn by their father being ordered to populate the universe, they took vows and went to the lake Nārāyaṇa-saras, the place for which their elder brothers previously had left for their perfection. (26) Bathing regularly there, doing *japa* and reciting mantras for the sake of the Supreme Reality, they performed great austerities that freed them from all impurity in their heart. (27-28) For months drinking water and eating air only, they used this mantra to worship the Master of all Mantras: 'Our obeisances unto Lord Nārāyaṇa, the Great Soul residing eternally in pure goodness, the great swanlike personality upon whom we meditate [*om̐ namo nārāyaṇāya puruṣāya mahātmane viśuddha-sattva-dhiṣṇyāya mahā-haṁsāya dhīmahī*].' (29) Oh King, in their meditations to populate the universe they were also approached by sage Nārada, who like before expressed himself in meaningful words: (30) 'Oh sons of Dakṣa, please listen attentively to my instruction. All of

you, follow the path of your brothers you care so much about. (31) A brother faithful to the path of an elder brother who knows the dharma [see 6.1], is a piously associated person who may enjoy with the Maruts [the wind gods of brotherhood].'

(32) **S**aying this much Nārada, with his all-auspicious vision, departed from there, and so it came to pass that they followed the path of the brothers who preceded them, oh worthy friend. (33) Properly having turned inwards thus taking to the transcendental path, they, just like the nights that leave in

the western direction, even to this day have not returned. (34) That very moment the Prajāpati observed many inauspicious signs as he heard how, like before, his sons because of Nārada had come to naught. (35) Overpowered by grief about his children, he almost fainted. He got very angry with Nārada and when he met him he addressed him in fury with trembling lips. (36) Śrī Dakṣa said: 'You false preacher dressed up like a saint! What a disgrace you have brought upon us. Poor boys lacking in experience you have shown the path of beggars! (37) With them not at all free from the three debts [to the saints, the gods and the father by celibacy, ceremony and progeny], you have, in disregard of their duties, ruined their path of good fortune on earth and in the hereafter you sinner! (38) Thus you have heartlessly spoiled the minds of those boys. While traveling as an associate of the Lord, you have shamelessly defamed Him! (39) You should know that the best ones of the Lord are ever anxious to bless the fall-

en souls. But not you, you have really broken the bond of friendship and sown dissension among people living in harmony [compare B.G. 18: 68-69]. (40) With your false doctrine [of only being directed at the Absolute Truth], you think renunciation is attained by cutting the bonds of affection, but this is not how renunciation works with people. (41) Someone cannot experience the painful consequences of sensual pleasures without knowing enjoyment. In the end one will naturally refrain [from sense gratification because of one's experience], not because one's mind would be changed by others. (42) Those with a wife and children who are honest, accept the load of the Vedic duties; the unbearable wrong you did to us I [for once] can forgive. (43) But you, breaking the line of descendants, may, because of the wrong you did to us for the second time, oh fool, nowhere in your wandering find a place to stay, have a fixed residence in the world.'

(44) Śrī Śuka said: 'Nārada Muni, who as appropriate for an accomplished saint [see also 3.25: 21-27 and B.G. 12: 13-20] tolerated it all, said only: 'Understood, so be it', even though he himself was the man in control.'

## Chapter 6

### The Progeny of the Daughters of Dakṣa

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'The son of the Prācetas, being pacified by Lord Brahmā, thereafter [after he had cursed Nārada] begot at his kind request [to procreate again] in his wife Asiknī sixty daughters who were all very fond of their father. (2) Ten of them he gave to king Dharma [Yamarāja], Kaśyapa he gave thirteen, twenty-seven were given to the moon god and Bhūta, Āngirā and Kṛśāśva he gave each two. The four remaining he also gave to Kaśyapa. (3) Please hear from me all the different names of these women who with their many children and descendants populated the three worlds and from whom you and I are stemming.

(4) The wives of Yamarāja were Bhānu, Lambā, Kakud, Yāmi, Viśvā, Sādhyā, Marutvatī, Vasu, Muhūrtā and Saṅkalpā. Now hear about their sons.

(5) From Bhānu Deva-ṛṣabha was born and from him was born Indrasena, oh King. Vidyota ['lightning'] appeared from Lambā and from him there appeared [the spirits presiding over the] clouds. (6) From Kakud Saṅkaṭa appeared and from him there was the son named Kīkaṭa who fathered many protectors of earthly strongholds. Yāmi gave birth to Svarga from whose loins Nandi was born. (7) The [ten] Viśvadevas were born from Viśvā, but it is said that from them there was no progeny. The Sādhyas, who were born from Sādhyā, had one son: Arthasiddhi. (8) Marutvān and Jayanta took birth from Marutvatī. Jayanta was an expansion of Vāsudeva and is also known as Upendra. (9) From Muhūrtā ['forty-eight minutes'] the Mauhūrtikas were born, a group of [thirty] gods who took birth to present the living beings the result of their personal time-bound actions. (10-11) From Saṅkalpā Saṅkalpa [the deity presiding over one's conviction] was born and from him Kāma [the god of love] appeared. Vasu gave birth to the eight Vasus. Now listen to their names: Droṇa, Prāṇa, Dhruva, Arka, Agni, Doṣa, Vāstu and Vibhāvasu. From Droṇa's wife Abhimati sons appeared like Harṣa, Śoka, Bhaya and more. (12) Ūrjasvatī the wife of Prāṇa gave birth to Saha, Āyus and Purojava. From Dhruva's wife Dharāṇi the various [gods ruling over the] cities and towns were born. (13) From the wife of Arka, Vāsanā, there were the sons named Tarṣa and so on and from Dhārā, the wife of the Vasu Agni, there were the sons known as Draviṇaka and so on. (14) Kṛtikā, another wife of Agni, gave birth to Skanda [Kārtikeya] whose sons were headed by Viśākha. From Doṣa's wife Śarvarī the son Śīsumāra was born. He was an expansion of the Lord of Time [see 5.23]. (15) From Vāstu's wife Āṅgirasī the son Viśvakarmā [the great architect] was born who became the husband of Ākrīti. From them was born the Manu named Cākṣuṣa whose sons were the Viśvadevas and Sādhyas [see verse 7]. (16) Ūṣā, the wife of Vibhāvasu, gave birth to Vyūṣṭa, Ro-ciṣa and Ātapa. Ātapa then fathered Pañcayāma ['the span of the day'] who awakens the living beings to engage in material activities. (17-18) Sarūpā, the wife of Bhūta, gave birth to the millions of Rudras headed by Raivata, Aja, Bhava, Bhīma, Vāma, Ugra, Vṛṣākapi, Ajaikapāt, Ahir-bradhna, Bahurūpa and Mahān. Their associates,



the ghastly ghosts and Vināyakas [a type of demons, hobgoblins], originated from his other wife. (19) Prajāpati Aṅgirā's wife Svadhā accepted the Pitās for her sons and [his other wife] Sañī accepted Atharvāṅgīrasa as her son who was the [fourth] Veda [the Atharva Veda] in person. (20) The wife of Kṛśāśva, Arcis gave birth to Dhūmaketu who in Dhiṣaṇā begot the sons Vedaśirā, Devala, Vayuna and Manu. (21-22) Kaśyapa [or Tārksya] had four wives: Vinatā [Suparṇā], Kadrū, Pataṅgī and Yāminī. From Pataṅgī the birds originated, from Yāminī the locusts came and Vinatā brought Garuḍa into existence - the one who is regarded the carrier of Yajña [Viṣṇu] - and Anūru [Aruṇa], the chariot driver of Sūrya, the god of the sun. From Kadrū there were different kinds of serpents. (23) The wives of the moon god [Soma] were the [goddesses ruling the twenty-seven] lunar mansions named Kṛttikā and so on, but, oh son of Bharata, because Dakṣa had cursed him [for pre-

ferring Rohiṇī], he was pestered by a degenerative disease [consumption] and had no children with any of them. (24-26) Again pacifying him, Soma, in respect of the division of time, managed to stop the decay [reducing it to the dark fortnight]. Now please take notice of all the names of the wives of Kaśyapa, the mothers from whom all the living beings of this entire universe were born: Aditi, Diti, Danu, Kāṣṭhā, Ariṣṭā, Surasā, Ilā, Muni, Krodhavaśā, Tāmṛā, Surabhi, Saramā and Timi. From Timi the aquatics appeared and the animals of prey were the children of Saramā. (27) From Surabhi the buffalo found its existence as also the cows and other animals with cloven hooves, oh King. From Tāmṛā the eagles, the vultures and so on came into being and from Muni there were the different angels. (28) The reptiles such as the *dandaśūka* snakes originated from Krodhavaśā, from Ilā all

the creepers and trees came and all the evil ones [like the demons and cannibals] were there from Surasā. (29-31) From Ariṣṭā there were only Gandharvas and from Kāṣṭhā there were the animals whose hooves are not split. From Danu there were sixty-one sons born; the ones important are: Dvimūrdhā, Śambara, Ariṣṭā, Hayagrīva, Vibhāvasu, Ayomukha, Śaṅkuśirā, Svarbhānu, Kapila, Aruṇa, Pulomā and Vṛṣaparvā as also Ekacakra, Anutāpana, Dhūmrakeśa, Virūpākṣa, Vipracitti and Durjaya. (32) Suprabhā, the daughter of Svarbhānu married Namuci, but Śarmiṣṭhā, born from Vṛṣaparvā, went to Yayāti, the powerful son of Nahuṣa. (33-36) There were four very beautiful daughters of Vaiśvānara: Upadānavī, Hayaśirā, Pulomā and Kālakā. Hiranyākṣa married Upadānavī and Kratu married Hayaśirā, oh King, but when on the plea of Lord Brahmā the two daughters Pulomā and Kālakā of Vaiśvānara married to the oh so mighty *prajāpati* Kaśyapa, the Pauloma

and Kālakeya demons were born from them who were very keen on fighting. When sixty thousand of them [headed by Nivātakavaca] constituted a disturbance to the sacrifices in the heavenly places, your grandfather [Arjuna] single-handedly killed them just to please Indra, oh King. (37) From Vipracitti's wife Simhikā one hundred and one sons were born who all obtained a planet of their own. Rāhu was the eldest and the hundred others were [called] the Ketus. (38-39) Now hear from me the chronological order of the dynasty that originated from Aditi, wherein Nārāyaṇa, the One Almighty Lord, manifested as a plenary expansion of Himself [called Vāmana]. Vivasvān, Aryamā, Pūṣā and Tvaṣṭā followed by Savitā, Bhaga, Dhātā, Vidhātā, Varuṇa, Mitra, Śatru and Urukrama [were her twelve sons month by month consecutively presiding over the sun. Urukrama is the dwarf-incarnation Vāmana]. (40) The most fortunate Samjñā gave as the wife of Vivasvān birth to the Manu called Śrāddhadeva as also to the twin, the demigod Yamarāja and his sister Yamī [the river Yamunā]. She appeared on earth in the form of a mare and gave birth to the Aśvinī-kumāras. (41) Chāyā [another wife of the sun god] got from him the sons Śanaīścara [Saturn] and Sāvārṇi Manu as also a daughter named Tapatī who selected Saṁvaraṇa for her husband. (42) Aryamā's wife Mātṛkā gave birth to many scholarly sons. It was from their [talents] that Lord Brahmā created humanity [as we know it]. (43) Pūṣā remained childless living on dough only. He had broken his teeth because he had shown them when he had to laugh about the anger of Dakṣa [when he insulted Lord Śiva, see 4.5: 21, 4.7: 4]. (44) From the marriage between Tvaṣṭā and the girl called Racanā, who was a Daitya daughter, the two sons Sanniveśa and the very powerful Viśvarūpa were born. (45) He [Viśvarūpa] was by the God-conscious souls, despite being the son of a daughter of their enemies, accepted as their priest, after they were abandoned by their spiritual master Bṛhaspati for having disrespected him.'

## Chapter 7

### Indra Offends His Spiritual Master, Bṛhaspati

(1) **T**he king [Parīkṣit] said: 'Please, oh great one, can you describe for what reason the God-conscious souls were rejected by their *ācārya* [the teacher of example Bṛhaspati]? What was the offense the disciples committed unto the spiritual master?'

(2-8) **T**he son of Vyāsadeva said: 'King Indra, enjoying the wealth of the three worlds, due to pride had strayed from the path of truth. Surrounded, oh King, by the Maruts [of the luster] the Vasus [of excellence], the Rudras [of anger], the Ādityas [of what's untrue], the Ṛbhus [of invention, see also 4.4: 33], the Viśvadevas [of royal riches], the Sādhyas [of refinement], the Aśvinī-kumāras [of helpfulness] and the Kumāras [of celibacy] and being served by the Siddhas [of perfection], the Cāraṇas [of the theater], the Gandharvas [of song], the Munis [of wisdom], the Brahmavādīs [of learning], the Vidyādharas [of science], the Apsaras [of heaven] and Kinnaras [of superpower], the Patagas [of the birds] and the Uragas [of the snakes], King Indra was served and glorified with sweet songs, oh son of Bharata [compare 2.3: 2-7]. In his assembly hall he [one day] was sitting on his throne enjoying the royal opulence of a white parasol as beautiful as the moon disc and other regalia and amenities such as yak-tails for fanning him. Shining with his wife Śacī who shared the throne with him, he thought he was the one supreme. But when his exalted teacher of example, the spiritual master of all the godly souls, appeared in the assembly, he was not welcomed by him. He did not stand up from his throne to offer him a seat or greet the great priest of the godly ones, the best one of the sages who was equally respected by the enlightened and the unenlightened souls. Even though Indra saw him enter, he failed to pay him any respect.

(9) **B**ṛhaspati the learned sage and master, thereupon left immediately to return home in silence, well-known as he was with the alienation of being puffed up about wealth. (10) Indra instantly realized that he had disrespected his guru and criticized himself publicly: (11) 'Alas, how disrespectful it was what I have done. I must be out of my



mind. Now I have, infatuated with my wealth, mistreated the preceptor in the midst of this assembly! (12) What man of knowledge would be in favor of opulence! Despite being the king above all, I, the leader of the demigods, now with this wealth have been carried away by a demoniac mentality. (13) He who says that to sit on the royal throne means that one should not stand up for someone else, has no idea of the higher [meaning] of dharma [compare 4.2]. (14) They who lead the way on a false path will land in darkness themselves and anyone who puts faith in their words, will go down also, sinking like a boat made of stone. (15) Therefore let me propitiate the spiritual leader, the immaculate brahmin [Bṛhaspati] whose

knowledge is unfathomable, and touch without duplicity his lotus feet with my head.'

(16) **W**hile Indra the mightiest god of all was ruminating thus, Bṛhaspati disappeared from his house, not being seen because of the power of his elevated state. (17) Vigorously searching all around not finding a trace of his guru, the mighty Indra, being helped by his associates and contemplating his wisdom, could not find any peace of mind. (18) When the mass of unenlightened souls who kept to the precepts of Śukrācārya heard about it, they took, not that smart, up their weapons and declared war against the godly ones. (19) With their trunks, arms and legs being pierced by the sharp arrows shot, the God-conscious souls together with Indra took refuge with Lord Brahmā and bowed their heads before him. (20) Seeing them weighed down by their worries the godhead Brahmā, the supreme unborn one, out of his causeless, infinite mercy spoke to them in order to comfort them. (21) Lord Brahmā said: 'Alas, what an unpleasant surprise, oh supreme enlightened souls. Because you [being too proud] with your opulence failed in your hospi-

tality, you have committed a serious offense against a faithful servant of the Absolute Truth, a brahmin of full control. (22) Because of your negligence with the wealth you enjoy, the others, your enemies, however weak they were [being defeated by you in the past], managed to defeat you [now], oh enlightened souls. (23) Indra Maghavan, oh Honor of Wealth, just see how your enemies, who formerly were so weak because of neglecting their preceptor, have regained their power now they, with great devotion, are of respect for their sage, the son of Bhṛgu [Śukrācārya]. (24) As disciples of Bhṛgu [viz. Śukrācārya] undivided in their resolve to follow the instructions, they are unconcerned about [the opposition of] those who dwell

in heaven [up to Lord Brahmā]. They who put first the brahmins, the cows and the Protector of the Cows [Govinda, Viṣṇu], will find nothing inauspicious on their way, whether they are human or divine. (25) Therefore devote yourselves forthwith to Viśvarūpa, the son of Tvaṣṭā. He is a self-possessed, incorruptible man of austerity and penance. Given your understanding for his workload [of supporting the Daityas] he that way being honored will take care of your interests.'

(26) Śrī Śuka said: 'Thus being advised by Lord Brahmā, oh King, they, relieved of their pain, went to the ṛṣi, the son of Tvaṣṭā. They embraced him and told him the following. (27) The godly said: 'We, arriving as guests at your abode, wish you all good fortune and would like to express the desire, oh dear son, to have, concerning the present situation of us, the elder ones of your [spiritual] family, some things straightened out. (28) The highest duty of sons is to serve their parents as good as they can despite having sons of their own, oh brahmin, and what to say about celibate sons? (29-30) The teacher of example [the *ācārya*] personifies the Vedic knowledge, the father stands for the Original Father [Brahmā], the brother is the representative of the king of the demigods [Indra] and the mother is the direct embodiment of the earth. The sister personifies the mercy, the guest is there as the true self of dharma, the one invited is there as the representative of the god of the sacrificial fire [Agni] and all living beings are there to the example of the Supreme one of the Soul [Viṣṇu]. (31) Therefore, by the power of the austerity that is in you, dear son, take away the grief of us, your troubled elders, who were defeated by our enemies. We recognize you as someone capable of performing this task. (32) We have chosen you as our preceptor concerning the Supreme Brahman, as our brahmin and spiritual master, so that, based upon your prowess, we can defeat our rivals with ease. (33) It is by no means forbidden to offer for one's self-interest one's obeisances at the feet of someone younger, like you. It is important to be of praise, oh brahmin, to be advanced in age does not really count in such matters [\*].'

(34) The honorable ṛṣi [Śuka] said: 'Thus on the request of the different enlightened souls accepting the priesthood as the great example of austerity, Viśvarūpa, pleased with their honest words addressed them. (35) Viśvarūpa said: 'Even though it [the acceptance of priesthood] is condemned by those faithful to religious principles as being detrimental to one's brahminical power, I, oh lords, oh controllers of all, as someone whose self-worth it is to be a disciple, so one says, cannot decline this request. (36) Persons withdrawing from the world may count on the wealth of grains left behind in the field or the marketplace [*śiloñchana*, to live 'on the dole']. That is how the *sādhus*, acting piously in this world, succeed. But how reproachable it is for me, oh rulers of the worlds, to be of the duty of the priesthood, a duty designed to give joy to the less intelligent! (37) Nevertheless, I cannot turn down the small request of you people as good as the guru. I will fulfill the desire of all of you and dedicate my whole life and well-being.'

(38) The son of Vyāsa said: 'Viśvarūpa, the master of penance, thus promising them to be their priest, performed as requested his duty with the greatest attention. (39) Even though the riches of the enemies of the God-conscious souls were protected by the science of Śukrācārya, the mighty sage managed, by means of a prayer unto Lord Viṣṇu [called Nārāyaṇa-kavaca], to collect the wealth and hand it over to the great Indra [compare B.G. 9: 31]. (40) The liberal-minded Viśvarūpa spoke that hymn to Mahendra ['the great Indra']. It protected the god with the thousand eyes and defeated the military power of the Asuras [the demons] that had become a great threat.'

\*: Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the propagator of this Bhāgavatam, approved of this when He expressed this opinion before Rāmānanda Rāya (Cc. Madhya 8.128): *kibā vipra, kibā nyāsī, śūdra kene naya yei kṛṣṇa-tattva-vettā, sei 'guru' haya*: 'It does not matter whether one is a *brāhmaṇa*, *śūdra*, *grhaṣṭa* or *sannyāsī*. These are all material designations. A spiritually advanced person has nothing to do with such designations. That is why someone, who is advanced in the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness,

can become a spiritual master, regardless of his position in human society.’

## Chapter 8

### The Armor of Mantras that Protected Indra

(1-2) **T**he king [Parīkṣit] said: 'What was the protection the thousand eyed king [Indra] enjoyed when he, sporting with the armed forces of the enemy and their carriers, conquered the three worlds and enjoyed the opulence, oh sage? Please explain to me in what way the armor of Lord Nārāyaṇa's mercy protected him when he in battle defeated those who tried to kill him.'

(3) **T**he son of Vyāsadeva said: 'Now listen attentively to what the son of Tvaṣṭā, chosen as the priest, upon request told the great Indra as being the defense that is called Nārāyaṇa[-kavaca]. (4-6) Śrī Viśvarūpa said: 'One puts armor on oneself in case one feels afraid. [For His purpose arming oneself] one should first wash one's hands and feet and then sip water after saying the required mantra [doing *ācamana*, three times over]. Sitting down, facing the north, one next should ritually purify oneself [in *pavitra* 'touching *kuśa*'] by preparing oneself mentally in silence. Thus in dedication to the lordship of Nārāyaṇa being innerly cleansed, one should adopt the defense in which one, beginning with saying 'om', offers one's obeisances to Nārāyaṇa by designating two mantras to one's body [by *nyāsa*], that is to say, the [eight syllables of the] mantra 'om namo nārāyaṇāya' to each of the [eight] parts of the body, touching therewith [consecutively] one's lower legs, knees, thighs, abdomen, heart, chest, mouth and [top of the] head, or even repeat this in reverse order [beginning with *ya*, which is called respectively *utpattinyāsa* and *saṁhāra-nyāsa* \*]. (7) Next one should assign the [twelve] syllables of the mantra beginning with *om* and ending with *ya* [*om namo bhagavate vāsudevāya*] to the [twelve parts of the] fingers starting with the [tip of the] index finger and ending with the four joints of the two thumbs. (8-10) [Then chanting the mantra 'om viṣṇave

*namaḥ*', All glories to Lord Viṣṇu,] the heart should be assigned 'om', 'vi' next comes to the top of the head, 'ṣa' comes between the eyebrows, 'na' on the *śikhā* [the tuft of hair on the back of the head with Vaiṣṇava monks], 've' comes between the eyes, the syllable 'na' should be assigned to all the joints of the body and 'maḥ' should be thought of as a weapon in the form of a mantra, so that one becomes an intelligent [representative of it]. By [finally] saying the mantra beginning with a *visarga* [an aspirated 'ha'] and ending with 'phaṭ' ['*maḥ astrāya phaṭ*' or: 'thus I call for my weapon'], one should be fixed on the respect for Lord Viṣṇu in every possible way. (11) One should recite the following prayer representing the Supreme Self to meditate upon that [in the form of Bhagavān] is endowed with the six opulences of learning [or knowledge], power and austerity [as also wealth, beauty and fame]:

(12) **I** pray that the Lord of the eight qualities [see also 3.15: 45] whose feet rest upon the back of Garuḍa and who holds the conch shell, disc, shield, sword, club, arrows, bow and ropes in his eight hands, will protect me on all sides. (13) May Matsya [the fish incarnation of Lord Viṣṇu] protect me against the aquatic predators in the water who represent the noose of Varuṇa. May He as the dwarf incarnation Vāmana, who took the three steps [as Trivikrama, Lord Viṣṇu as the conqueror of the three worlds], protect me on land and may He as Viśvarūpa [Him in the form of the universe] protect me in the sky [the ether]. (14) May the Supreme Master Lord Nṛsimhadeva, whose fearful laughter resounding in all directions meant the fall of the enemy of the leader of the demons [Hiraṇyakaśipu] and the miscarriage of his babies, protect me in [my toiling in] the wilderness and on the front in battle. (15) May we in the streets be protected [against thugs] by Him whom one respects with the rituals, Lord Varāha who raised the planet earth on His tusks. May there for us on the mountain tops be the protection of Lord [Paraśu-]Rāma and may we in foreign countries be protected by [Lord Rāmacandra,] the elder brother of Bharata and His brother Lakṣmana. (16) May Lord Nārāyaṇa protect me against religious fanaticism and keep me from acting in madness, may Nara keep me from being arrogant, may Dat-



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tātreya, the master of [the integrity of] yoga, keep me from straying from the path of yoga and may Kapila, the Lord of [all good] qualities, keep me from attachment to the fruits of labor. (17) May Sanat-kumāra [the perfect celibate] protect me against Cupid [lust], may Hayagrīva [the horse incarnation] keep me from the path of disrespecting the divinity, may the best of all sages, the *devaṛṣi* Nārada, keep me from offenses during the service and may the Lord in the form of Kūrma [the tortoise incarnation] keep me out of the everlasting hell. (18) May Bhagavān Dhanvantari [the physician *avatāra*] protect me against things

harmful to one's health, may Rṣabhadeva, the one fully in control of the mind and the self [see 5.4: 6], keep me from duality and fear, may Yajña [Viṣṇu as the Lord of sacrifice] keep me from infamy and an awkward social position and may Lord Balarāma in the form of Ananta Śeṣa [the Lord of the ego, see 5.25] keep me away from the angry serpents. (19) May Bhagavān Dvaipāyana [Vyāsadeva] keep me from ignorance and may Lord Buddha protect me against the hosts of heretics and madness [as a consequence of negligence]. May Kalki, the Lord who in this darkest age of quarrel incarnates as the greatest one in defense of the dharma [also as the *channa-* or covert *avatāra*], protect me against the impurities of the time we are living in [viz. intoxication, promiscuity, gambling and meat-eating; see also 1.17: 24]. (20) May Keśava protect me with His club during the hours after sunrise, may Govinda holding His flute protect me early in the morning, may Nārāyaṇa, the Lord of all potencies, protect me late in the morning and may Lord Viṣṇu, the ruler with the disc in His hand, protect me during the hours at noon [see also 5.21: 10]. (21) May Lord Madhusūdana with the fearful bow Śārṅga protect me early in the afternoon. May Mādhava, the Lord of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva, protect me

in the late afternoon and may Lord Hṛṣīkeśa protect me during the hours at dusk. May Lord Padmanābha [the Lord from whose navel the universe sprang] be the one protector during the entire evening early and late. (22) May the Lord with the Śrīvatsa mark protect me during the hours after midnight, may Janārdana, the Lord with the sword in His hand, protect me late at night and may Lord Dāmodara [see also Dāmodarāṣṭaka] protect me during the hours before dawn [during which there is the *brāhmanuhūrta* \*\*]. May the Controller of the Universe, the Supreme Lord in the form of time, protect me [as the *kāla-mūrti*,

also the clock]. (23) Please let the sharp rimmed [Sudarśana] disc [His order of time, the cyclic of natural time] that, wielded by the Lord, destructively moves in all directions alike the fire at the end of time, burn to ashes the enemy forces, the same way a blazing fire with its friend the wind would burn dry grass in an instant. (24) May you [Kaumodakī], oh mace so dear to the Invincible Lord, whose impact sparks with fire like thunderbolts, pound to pieces, smash, destroy and pulverize my enemies the imps [Kuşmāṇḍas], the magicians [Vaināyakas], the evil spirits [Yakṣas], the demons [Rākṣasas], the ghosts [Bhūtas] and the maddeners [Grahas]. (25) Oh conch shell [oh Pāñcajanya], may you with your frightening sound make the hearts tremble of the enemy torturers [Pramathas], evil spirits [Pretas], she-devils [Mātās], madmen [Piśācas] and heretics [Vipragrahas] with their evil looks. (26) You, oh sharpest of all swords [oh Nandaka], may you in the hands of the Lord cut to pieces, chop up, the enemy soldiers. Oh shield marked with a hundred shining moons, blind the eyes of the evil-minded ones so full of anger and pluck out their sinful eyeballs. (27-28) May, by the glory of Your name, form and attributes, all the bad [influence of the] planets, falling stars, sinners, snakes, scorpions, predators and other living beings and fear arousing poisoners of our minds and bodies who obstruct our well-being, be completely destroyed. (29) May the majesty of Garuḍa, whom one praises in hymns, he who embodies the Vedic verses, may that master protect us with [his name and] all the names of Viṣvaksena [the Lord whose powers are found throughout the universe] against an endless suffering. (30) May His holy names, forms, strategies ['carriers'] and weapons, protect our intelligence, mind and life air from being caught in fear.

(31) **W**e pray that whatever is disturbing us [and our devotion], will find its end as a logical consequence of the fact that it is You, the Lord [of time] alone, who decides what the ultimate reality would be of that what is and that what is not [like happiness and grief coming and going, see B.G. 2: 14]. (32-33) Those bent on an absence of differences think of the oneness of the Soul [within the material diversity]. Following that course, He is in truth understood as the [One transcendental] omniscient

Supreme Lord [who defeats the illusion] by means of His expanding spiritual energy in the form of His decorations, weapons, characteristics and the opulence of His many potencies and different names. May He, the all-pervading One, with all His forms protect us always and everywhere. (34) May the Supreme Lord in every nook and corner, in all directions, above and below, on all sides, from within and from without, in the form of Nṛsiṃhadeva annihilate all worldly fears with His mighty roar [or song, see the Nṛsiṃha Pranāma]. May He with His effulgence overshadow all other influences.'

(35) [Śrī Viśvarūpa continued:] 'Oh King Indra, when you, the way I described it, under the protection of this [mystic] armor relate to Lord Nārāyaṇa, you will conquer very easily the leaders of the demoniac hordes. (36) Whoever keeps this [prayer] in mind will, whomever [or whatever] he came to face or stumbled upon, immediately be freed from all fright and fear. (37) He who employs this mystic prayer has nothing to fear, not from the government, not from rogues, not from maddeners and such, nor from any disease at any time. (38) This prayer was in the past used by a man called Kauśika, a brahmin who fixed in yoga gave up his body in the desert. (39) His remains were spotted by Citraratha, the king of the Gandarvas from above in his heavenly chariot, when he one day, surrounded by many a beautiful woman, had moved in the direction where the twice-born one had died. (40) All of a sudden he with his heavenly vehicle, his *vimāna*, inescapably tumbled out of the sky. Amazed about it he consulted with the Vālikhilyas [the sages of the sun god] who advised him to collect the bones, throw them in the eastward flowing Sarasvatī and then return home after taking a bath in that river.'

(41) Śrī Śuka said: 'Anyone who at the opportune moment hears about [this prayer] and carefully concentrates on it, will acquire the respect of all living beings and be delivered from all fear. (42) Indra who had performed a hundred sacrifices [see 4:9: 1], by means of this prayer that he received from Viśvarūpa, conquered in battle the Asuras and enjoyed the opulence of the three worlds [see also B.G. 4: 34].'

\*: This is an actual practice of Vaiṣṇava monks living in the temple. Each morning they apply *tilaka*, holy clay, on different body parts addressing Lord Nārāyaṇa with different mantras, thus allaying the fear and warding off the danger of facing the material world with all its opponents to the teaching. The formal *ācamana* mantra before sipping water goes as follows: 'om apavitraḥ pavitro vā sarvāvasthām gato 'pi vā/ yaḥ smaret puṇḍarikākṣam sa bahyābhyantaraḥ śuciḥ/ śrī-viṣṇu śrī-viṣṇu śrī-viṣṇu'.

\*\* : Generally, each day and each night is Vedically divided into six parts consisting of five *ghaṭikās* of 24 minutes each. To each portion of the day of two hours there is another name of the Lord or activity for God to be respected according to these verses. The periods concern the regular hours (to the position of the sun, considered from the equator) directly after sunrise 6-8 (before breakfast), early in the morning 8-10, late in the morning 10-12, at noon 12-2 (lunchtime), early in the afternoon 2-4, late in the afternoon 4-6 and the hours at dusk (after dinner) 6-8, early in the evening 8-10, late in the evening 10-12, early at night 12-2, late at night 2-4 and before dawn 4-6 (with the *brāh-mamuhūrta*, the meditation hour between the fourth and second *ghaṭikā* before sunrise).

## Chapter 9 Appearance of the Demon Vṛtrāsura

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'Viśvarūpa [see previous chapter], oh son of Bharata, had three heads. One for drinking *soma* [performing sacrifices], one for drinking wine [spiritual matters] and one for eating food [the material purpose], so I have heard. (2) He, oh ruler, offered the gods, who were there as his fathers, their proper share by publicly chanting the mantras aloud with sacrifices in the fire. (3) Even though he with his sacrifices offered the gods their share he, led by the affection for his mother [Racanā], behind their back [also] made offerings to the Asuras. (4) The king of the gods [Indra] seeing how he by that offense to the divini-

ty betrayed the dharma, afraid [that the demons would gain strength] angrily quickly cut off Viśvarūpa's heads. (5) The head he used for drinking *soma* became a *kapiñjala* [a francolin partridge], the head for drinking the wine turned into a *kalavinka* [a sparrow] and the one used for taking food turned into a *tittiri* [a common partridge]. (6) However powerful he was, because of the reaction for killing a brahmin, Indra with folded hands for the time of a year had to face the consequences. In order to be purified from the sin towards other living beings he then divided the burden over the four departments of the earth, the waters, the trees and the women. (7) With the benediction [by Indra] of having her hollows filled with water, the earth took one fourth of the burden of killing a brahmin by accepting on her surface the deserts as the visible sign [of the sin]. (8) With the blessing that their branches and twigs would grow back when trimmed, the trees accepted a quarter of the burden of killing the brahmin through the sap flowing from them as the visible consequence. (9) The [youthful] women being blessed with a constant sexual appetite accepted as their quarter of the burden of sin the monthly period as the visible reaction. (10) Water blessed with the ability to increase the volume of the material it soaks, accepted one fourth of the sin with the reaction of visible bubbling and foaming. One therefore has to throw [contaminated] water away [when it bubbles] upon collecting. (11) After having lost his son, Tvaṣṭā [see 5.15: 14-15] performed a sacrifice to create an enemy for Indra with the words: 'Oh enemy of Indra, increase in size so that you forthwith can kill your opponent.'

(12) Thereupon from the *anvāhārya* fire [the fire to the south] a most frightening character appeared who looked like the destroyer of all the worlds at the end of the *yuga*. (13-17) Day after day expanding to a distance of an arrow's reach, he resembled a burned mountain or clouds amassing in the evening with the sun shining from behind. Next to his hair, beard and mustache that were as red as molten copper, he had eyes blazing like the sun at noon. Dancing and shouting loudly he kicked up the dirt as he moved around with the firmament seemingly held high on his blazing trident. With his mouth deep as a cave swallowing the three

worlds, he drank the sky and licked up the stars. Over and over yawning with his massive, fierce teeth, the people who saw him fearfully fled in all the ten directions. (18) He, that most fearful personification of sin, was in truth the form that the son of Tvaṣṭā had assumed. Now, by [dint of the power of] his previous austerity, he covered all the worlds and was thus called Vṛtra ['the encloser']. (19) All the defenders of wisdom together attacked him with their soldiers to strike him with each his own divine weapon, but Vṛtra swallowed the different weapons all at once. (20) Faced with that fact they were all struck with wonder and gathered disheartened, having lost their courage, to pray to the Original Person.

(21) **T**he gods said: 'We, with Lord Brahmā first and [all the inhabitants of] the three worlds that are composed of air, fire, ether, water and earth, all trembling with fear, pay tribute to the destroyer [death, time]. But since he himself is afraid of Him [the eternal Original Personality], we should acknowledge the Lord as our refuge. (22) One is a fool when one wants to cross an ocean holding on to a dog's tail, one is a fool when one wants to approach anyone else but Him, He who is never astonished, whose desires are fully satisfied by His own potency, who is equipoised and of perfect peace. (23) Just like Manu [here: king Satyavrata] who for surviving the flood bound his boat, our world, to the sturdy horn of Matsya, the Lord in the form of a fish, we who seek our refuge, are sure to be delivered [by Him] from our abysmal fear for the son of Tvaṣṭā. (24) Formerly the Independent One [Svayambhū or Lord Brahmā], alone on the lotus, was very afraid and by His grace narrowly escaped from a fall in the so very high waves of the waters of the flood blown up by the roaring wind [see 3.8]. May that deliverance be there also for us. (25) He, the one controller who by His transcendental potency created us and by whose mercy we also may create a world of matter [a



culture], can, although He stands in front of us as the actor, not in His form be recognized by us, who consider themselves separate controllers. (26-27) When we are heavily tormented by our opponents, He who exists eternally comes to our rescue age after age with His material potency in different *avatāra* forms among the sages, the human beings and the animals, in order to protect each and everyone near and dear to Him. He, the Godhead and True Self of us all and of every other living being, is the transcendental, original cause, the primary principle of nature [*pradhāna*], the Supreme Enjoyer whose energy is known in de form of the universe, from which He Himself stands apart. He is the refuge we can all surrender to. He, that Great Soul, will bless us, His devotees, with all good fortune.'

(28) Śrī Śuka said: 'Because of that prayer of the enlightened souls, oh King, He, with them turning inward, became visible with His conch shell, disc and club. (29-30) He was surrounded by sixteen servants with eyes blooming like lotuses in autumn, who looked just like Him, except for the Kaustubha jewel and the Śrīvatsa mark. Seeing Him, oh King, they all threw themselves at His feet, overwhelmed with happiness because of seeing Him directly. Thereafter they slowly stood up and offered their prayers. (31) The godly souls said: 'You, oh Lord awarding the results of sacrifice, we offer our obeisances. You, using the *cakra* [the disc, the cyclic order of time] as a weapon, are the one to set the limits. All our respect for You who are known by so many transcendental names. (32) They who appeared after You in creation, after You, the controller of the three destinations [of going to hell, to heaven or the purgatory], cannot understand Your supreme abode [Vaikuṅṭha]. (33) Oh Lord, let there be our obeisances unto You, oh Bhagavān Nārāyaṇa, oh Vāsudeva, oh Original Person, oh Highest Personality, oh Supreme Giver of Insight, oh Most Auspicious One, oh Transcendental Benediction, oh Greatness of Mercy, oh Changeless Support of the Universe, Only Proprietor of all Worlds, Ruler over All and Husband of Lakṣmī Devī. The best of those completely detached [the *sannyāsīs*] wandering all around the world, fully purified by their transcendental absorption in devotional yoga [bhakti], by [the strength of] their dutiful respect of being *paramahंसas* ['swans of the Supreme'], push open the door of this illusory existence that gives access to a consciousness in the spiritual world that is free from contaminations. Thus personally experiencing the continuity of Your Lordship, one finds happiness. (34) It is rather difficult to understand how You, in pastimes relating to the unification of consciousness, without taking shelter of anyone or anything, without having a physical body, without awaiting our cooperation, without being transformed Yourself by the basic qualities of nature, in transcendence above those modes can be of creation, annihilation and maintenance. (35) Therefore we do not really know whether Your Lordship is there like an ordinary human being bound to actions in the material

world, like someone who under the influence of the modes thus depends on time, space, activities and nature - and thereby is forced to accept the good and bad results of his own actions, or whether You are there as a completely self-satisfied [*ātmārāma*] and self-controlled person who never fails in his spiritual potency and is always a neutral witness. (36) Those two positions certainly do not form a contradiction in You, the Fortunate One. For what would be impossible to You whose attributes are unlimited, You who are the Supreme Lord of unfathomable glories? You are by the present-day thinkers doubted with opinions and arguments laid down in scriptures containing judgments based upon halfhearted investigations and fallacious logic. But You are out of the range of the agitated minds of the obstinate theorists resorting to controversies. You withdrawn from all of them are hidden from view behind Your bewildering illusory energy, the incomparable and inscrutable potency [by which You make and break]. You after all, are not divided in two natures. (37) Perceiving a piece of rope, one does or does not see a snake. Similarly one concludes, [really] being intelligent, to following [the person of You and the *ācārya*] or else not. (38) You, on closer scrutiny, are the essence of authenticity, the controller of all and everything spiritual and material. You are there as the cause of all causes of the entire universe who with all qualities are present within all, up to the minutest atom. You are [with the temporality] of all manifestations the only one who remains. (39) For that reason these exalted devotees, who relating to You but once tasted a drop of the nectar of Your glories and with the continuous flow of bliss within their minds forgot about the vague and limited reflection of the sights and sounds of material happiness, have faith in You alone as the Supreme Personality, the only and dearest friend of all living entities. How can those devotees, whose minds are of a complete and continuous absorption, oh Killer of Madhu, or who, as said, are hands-on experts in having accepted You as the dear most lover and friend, then ever give it up to serve Your lotus feet that never again allow a return to this material ocean? (40) Oh loving Soul and shelter, oh power and opulence, oh maintainer and seer and most attractive beauty of the three worlds, because of Your expan-

sions in the material energy we are sure that, with Your manifestations in different forms as the Lord of the enlightened souls [Vāmana], of the human beings [Rāmacandra and Kṛṣṇa], of the animals [Varāha], of a mixture of them [Nṛsimhadeva] and of the aquatics [Matsya and Kūrma], all the sons of Diti and Danu and such for their conspiring are awarded the proper punishment depending the offense, oh Supreme Chastiser. May You, if You deem it necessary, likewise kill this [terrible] son of Tvaṣṭā. (41) In our full surrender totally relying on You, oh Father of Fathers, oh Lord Hari, our hearts are chained in love by the meditation on Your two feet that are like two blue lotuses. By the manifestation of Your own form, by Your compassionate smile that is pure, pacifying and pleasing, with the drops of nectar of the very sweet words that emanate from Your mouth, the worries melt away of the souls You accepted as Your own. You, oh Purest One, we consider the one eligible to take away our deep pain. (42) Therefore, oh Supreme Lord, what can we, as sparks of the original fire [the 'golden seed' that You are], tell You, You who personally are amused to be engaged in creation, destruction and maintenance with Your divine energy, You, who as the Supersoul and spirit of the absolute Brahman resides in the hearts of all the different living beings and externally are present according to time, place and the physical constitution, You, whom one realizes as the cause of that what constitutes the [existence and consciousness of the] living being, You, as the witness of all that is going on, as the witnessing itself and the embodiment of the eternal memory of the entire universe [the *ākāśa* record]? (43) Because You are our Supreme Lord and Master of Transcendence, please arrange for us a position in the shadow of the thousand-petaled lotus flowers that are Your feet, so that we may be relieved of the pain resulting from the dangers and desires of this conditioned existence that made us approach You. (44) Please, oh Controller, put an end now to this son of Tvaṣṭā who is devouring the three worlds and has exhausted, oh Kṛṣṇa, oh bliss of eternal existence [\*], see B.G. 4: 4-6], all our strength, arrows and other means of defense. (45) You, the swanlike Lord who has His abode in the kernel of the heart where You supervise the ac-

tions of the individual soul, You, that manifestation of Kṛṣṇa whose reputation as a redeemer is so bright, You, who are without a beginning and who are solely understood by the pure devotee, You, the path in this world, the friend and refuge, You, the ultimate goal of that elder brother to perform sacrifices for, we offer our obeisances.'

(46) Śrī Śuka said: 'After by the servants of the three worlds this way with due respect having been worshiped, oh King, the Lord, pleased to hear their praises, replied. (47) The Supreme Lord said: 'I am very happy with you, oh best of the demigods. By your knowledgeable prayers unto Me man can remember Me and be of devotion unto Me as the Original Self of the opulences. (48) When I am satisfied one can achieve anything that is difficult to realize. Still, oh best of the intelligent ones, he who knows the truth, having fixed his attention exclusively on Me, does not desire for anything else but Me. (49) A miserable person [*kṛpāna*] looking for the material quality of things has no knowledge of the ultimate end of the soul and he who awards what is desired by them is not a whit better. (50) Someone who knows the supreme goal of life will not tell an ignorant person to build up karma, just like an experienced physician would not give a patient the wrong food, not even when he would ask for it. (51) Oh patron of sacrifice [Maghavan; Indra], good fortune to all of you, go and without delay ask Dadhyañca [Dadhīci], the most exalted of all saints, for his body that is firm because of his knowledge, vows and austerity. (52) Dadhyañca is someone who has assimilated the spiritual knowledge of purity that is called 'the head of the horse' [Aśvaśira]. He delivered that knowledge to the Aśvins who then became receptive to immortality [they became *jīvan-mukhas*, liberated souls even in this life\*\*]. (53) Dadhyañca, the son of Atharvā, delivered his invincible armor [of mantras] controlled by Me to Tvaṣṭā who gave it to Viśvarūpa. He in his turn delivered this [Nārāyaṇa-kavaca protection in prayers] to you. (54) [Dadhyañca] the knower of dharma will for your sake give the Aśvins his limbs when they ask for them. With them Viśvakarmā will create the most powerful of all weapons [the thunderbolt] by means of which, because it is invested with My power, the head of

Vṛtrāsura can be severed. (55) When he is killed you will all regain your wealth, power, arrows and other means of defense. All good fortune will be yours, because you, My devotees, will not be hurt.'

\*: The anachronistic use of the name of Kṛṣṇa in this context is etymologically explained as the combination of the syllables *kṛṣ* and *ṇa*, implying respectively 'absolute existence' and 'beatitude' as the characteristics of the Supreme Reality.

\*\* : In this context the *ācāryas* tell the following story: 'The great saint Dadhīci had perfect knowledge of how to perform fruitive activities, and he had advanced spiritual knowledge as well. Knowing this, the Aśvinī-kumāras once approached him and begged him to instruct them in spiritual science (*brahma-vidyā*). Dadhīci Muni replied, "I am now engaged in arranging sacrifices for fruitive activities. Come back some time later." When the Aśvinī-kumāras left, Indra, the king of heaven, approached Dadhīci and said, "My dear *muni*, the Aśvinī-kumāras are only physicians. Please do not instruct them in spiritual science. If you impart the spiritual science to them despite my warning, I shall punish you by cutting off your head." After warning Dadhīci in this way, Indra returned to heaven. The Aśvinī-kumāras, who understood Indra's desires, returned and begged Dadhīci for *brahma-vidyā*. When the great saint Dadhīci informed them of Indra's threat, the Aśvinī-kumāras replied, "Let us first cut off your head and replace it with the head of a horse. You can instruct *brahma-vidyā* through the horse's head, and when Indra returns and cuts off that head, we shall reward you and restore your original head." Since Dadhīci had promised to impart *brahma-vidyā* to the Aśvinī-kumāras, he agreed to their proposal. Therefore, because Dadhīci imparted *brahma-vidyā* through the mouth of a horse, this *brahma-vidyā* is also known as Aśvaśira.'

## Chapter 10 The Battle Between the Demigods and Vṛtrāsura

(1) **T**he son of Vyāsa said: 'The Supreme Lord Hari, the Original Cause of the cosmic manifestation, after thus having instructed Indra, then disappeared from the sight of the devoted souls. (2) When the son of Atharvā [Dadhīci], the saint, as was told was beseeched by the godly souls, the great personality, slightly amused, with a smile said the following, oh son of Bharata. (3) 'Oh souls of God, do you not know that all embodied beings, when they die, have to suffer an unbearable, intense pain that takes away their consciousness? (4) All souls struggle to remain alive and the body they desired in this world is very dear to them. Who would be willing to give away his body, even if Lord Viṣṇu asked for it?'

(5) **T**he gods said: 'What would there be too difficult, oh brahmin, for persons as great as your holiness, you whose virtues are sung by all and who are of mercy towards all? (6) People running after their self-interest do not know what trouble they cause to other people. If they would know they would not make their demands. But if one [knows about the misery of others and] is capable of giving, one will not say no [but comply].'

(7) **T**he honorable saint said: 'I only reacted to hear from you what would be the dharma [in this matter]. I shall give up this dear body for you [though]. I sooner or later have to give it up anyway. (8) Anyone who with this impermanent body, oh Lords, not full of mercy for each and all endeavors for honorability and religious principles, is a person pitiable even to the immobile creatures [like the tolerant trees, see also the Śrī Śrī Shad-gosvāmī-aṣṭaka]! (9) By the meritorious souls of renown this much is recognized as the imperishable dharma: dharmic is the soul who laments over the distress of other living beings and feels happy upon their happiness. (10) Away with the misery, away with the difficulty! Because a physical body can perish any moment and be eaten by the jackals, it would not help [to hold on to it], it is not there for oneself - a mortal is there with his body



[in order to give his life] for that what is his own [for what he stands for] and for those he knows [his relatives and friends, see also S.B. 10.22: 35].'

(11) **T**he son of Vyāsa said: 'Thus decided on the right course of action, Dadhīci, the son of Atharvā, gave up his body in sacrifice for the Supreme, the supreme Brahman, the Supreme Personality [compare 1.13: 55]. (12) The seer of the truth, with his senses, life air, mind and intelligence under control, being absorbed in trance in the Supreme, was liberated from his bondage and left the world no longer taking notice of his material body [see also B.G. 8: 5]. (13-14) King Indra thereafter took up the thunderbolt that was created by Viśvakarmā, that was empowered by the great sage [Dadhīci] and was suffused with the spiritual strength of the Supreme Lord. Together riding out with all the other gods while the *munis* offered prayers, he gloriously sat on the back of Gajendra [his ele-

phant] to the apparent pleasure of all the three worlds. (15) Vṛtrāsura surrounded by the Asura chiefs and commanders was with great force attacked as the enemy, oh King, just like it happened when Rudra angrily attacked Antaka [Yamarāja]. (16) What followed was a great and most ferocious battle between the Sura, the divine hordes and the Asura, the demoniac hordes, that took place at the bank of the [celestial] Narmadā river at the onset of the first millennium [the Vaivasvata-manvantara] of Tretā-yuga. (17-18) Oh King, when the demons headed by Vṛtrāsura were confronted with the resplendent opulence of both Indra, the Heavenly King with the thunderbolt, and the Rudras, Vasus, Ādityas, Aśvins, Pitās, Vahnīs, Maruts, Ribhus, Sādhyas and Viśvadevas, they could not bear the sight. (19-22) Namuci, Śambara, Anarvā, Dvimūrdhā, Ṛṣabha, Asura, Hayagrīva, Śaṅkuśirā, Vipracitti, Ayomukha, Pulomā, Vṛṣaparvā, Praheti, Heti and Utkala and the hundreds and thousands of other Daityas, Danavas, Yakṣas, Rākṣasas

and others headed by Sumāli and Māli who were all dressed up with golden ornaments, drove back the front of Indra's army that even for death itself was difficult to approach. Fearlessly they, furiously roaring like lions, thereupon assailed their opponents with clubs, iron studded bludgeons, arrows, barbed missiles, mallets and lances. (23) The chiefs of the divine forces were from all sides covered by a shower of arrows, spears, axes, swords, *śataghnīs* and *bhuśundis* [different types of spiked weapons]. (24) Like stars in the sky covered by clouds, they could no longer be discerned, completely being covered by the downpour of projectiles that from all sides in waves fell upon them. (25) But the showers of arrows and other weapons did not reach the armies of the enlightened souls because the demigods quickly cut them midair into thousands of pieces. (26) Thereupon running out of arrows and weapons, the Sura forces were showered with a rain of mountain peaks, trees and

stones. They were fragmented like before. (27) When the troops led by Vṛtrāsura saw that their enemy fared quite well under the load of weapons and mantras and that none of them was harmed by the trees, the stones and the different mountain peaks, they became afraid of Indra's soldiers. (28) All the Daitya endeavors of time and again waging against the demigods who enjoyed the favor of Kṛṣṇa, were in vain, just as the rough words are of little men when they abuse great souls. (29) Upon seeing their endeavors fruitless, they who were not of devotion unto the Lord, defeated in their pride as fighters, left the battlefield and gave up the fight that had just begun. With their power nullified, they abandoned the commander [Vṛtrāsura] who had inspired them.

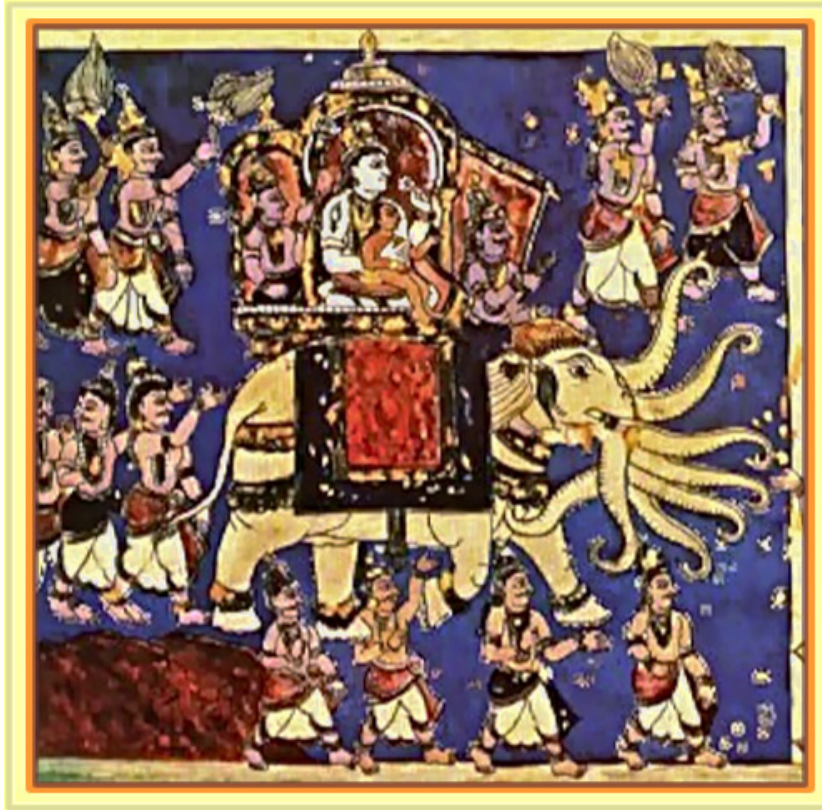
(30) Vṛtra, who saw his following of demons fleeing and his army broken by fear, spoke as a broad-minded hero with a big grin as follows. (31) Befitting the moment, the hero of heroes expressed himself in words that were even attractive to the greatest minds: 'Oh Vipracitti, Namuci and Pulomā! Oh Maya, Anarvā and Śambara! Please listen to me. (32) All who are born inevitably have to face death, wherever they might exist in the universe. There is no way to counter that in this world, a world offering someone the opportunity to reach a better world and be glorious. When it is impossible to escape death, who then would not accept a suitable way to die? (33) There are two approved ways to die with honor in this world, and both are very rare. One is to be allowed to leave the body when one, engaged in yoga controlling the mind and senses, concentrates on Brahman [Paramātmā and Bhagavān], and the other is to take the lead on the battlefield and never turn one's back [on the fight].'

\*: 10.22: 35 It is the duty of every living being to perform welfare activities for the benefit of others with his life, wealth, intelligence and words.

## Chapter 11 The Transcendental Qualities of Vṛtrāsura

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'Afraid and disturbed as they were in their intent to flee, oh King, they [the commanders of Vṛtrāsura] did not take heed of the words of their master who thus was stressing the dharma. (2-3) When the best of the Asuras saw that the Asura army, as if there was no one to protect them, was scattered and chased by the demigods, now the moment offered the opportunity, the enemy of Indra was in great pain. Not able to tolerate this, he angrily with great force stepped in the way of the demigods to rebuke them with the following words: (4) 'Of what interest are these shitty mummy's boys to you? There is certainly no glory to be found in attacking from behind and killing someone who flees in fear. Someone who thus thinks to be a hero, will not attain a better world. (5) If you believe in your battle, if you have patience in your hearts and if you are free from desiring worldly happiness, oh insignificant souls, then just keep standing in front of me for a moment.'

(6) This way with his extremely powerful, physical presence roaring, he full of anger threatened the demigods, his enemies, and scared everyone out of his wits. (7) Because of that outburst of Vṛtra, all the God-conscious souls fell unconscious to the ground, as if they were struck by lightning. (8) The entire Sura army, which in fear had closed its eyes, was trampled asunder. Arrogantly, like a mad elephant running through a forest of hollow bamboos, he, holding his trident high, stepped around that violently on the field that the earth shook beneath his feet. (9) Seeing him in such a rage, the carrier of the thunderbolt [Indra] indignantly ran towards his enemy and threw the mightiest of clubs at him. But the demon caught the difficult to withstand weapon in its flight very easily with his left hand. (10) That incensed Vṛtrāsura even more. Roaring loudly he thereupon with his club struck Indra's elephant, that was so famous for its strength, on the head. This feat commanded the respect of all the soldiers on the battlefield, oh ruler of man. (11) Airāvata, struck by the club in



Vṛtra's hand, shook like a mountain hit by a thunderbolt and was, in great pain and spitting blood with a broken jaw, together with Indra thrown back a fourteen yards.

(12) **T**he great soul [though] refrained from using the club again [when he saw how] Indra, innerly shaken about what had happened to his carrier that did not die, by the touch of his nectarean hand relieved the animal standing before him from all pains and injuries. (13) When he thus saw Indra who armed with a thunderbolt wanted to fight his enemy, oh King Parīkṣit, he again remembered that Indra in the past had killed his brother. Mad in his grief about that great and cruel sin, he sarcastically laughing addressed him. (14) Śrī Vṛtra said: 'What a fortune to encounter your lordship as my enemy, you the slayer of a brahmin who was your guru and my brother. How lucky I am today to be soon relieved from my debt to my brother by piercing my trident straight through your heart of stone, oh complete falsehood in person! (15) You, desiring heaven, mercilessly severed with your sword the three heads from the trunk of our innocent elder brother, like he was an animal. He was a

fully qualified and selfrealized brahmin. He was your spiritual teacher entrusted with the task of leading the sacrifices! (16) You, bereft of all shame, mercy, beauty and glory, are by your actions condemnable even to the creatures below the human level [like the Rākṣasas]. You will have to die in great pain after my trident has pierced your body, that as a corpse will not be burned but be eaten by the vultures.

(17) **Y**ou, who proved yourself so cruel, I shall, together with all the others who thoughtlessly following you attacked me with raised swords, with their severed heads on my pointy trident sacrifice to [Bhairava] the leader of the evil ghosts and his hordes. (18) But in case you, oh heroic lordship of mine, with your thunderbolt in this battle manage to cut off my head

and destroy my army, I, having fallen prey to the scavengers, by contrast shall be relieved of all debts and achieve the dust of the feet of the great sages. (19) Oh master of the God-conscious souls, why do you not hurl your thunderbolt at me, your enemy standing in front of you? Do not doubt its infallibility, the bolt may succeed, unlike the club that is just as useless as a request for money from a miser. (20) This thunderbolt of yours, oh Indra, that is empowered by the prowess of Viṣṇu and the penance of Dadhīci, for certain without fail will kill your enemy. Whatever that is established by Lord Viṣṇu will bring the Lord's victory and all His opulences and qualities. (21) By the force of your thunderbolt the rope of my material attachment will be cut. And when I give up this world I, with my mind fixed on the lotus feet of Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa, shall exactly as He said [see 5.25: 8] reach the destination of the *munis*. (22) Persons advanced in spiritual life He recognizes as His own. He will not bestow upon them the opulences found in the divine, earthly and hellish spheres because they lead to envy, anxiety, agitation, pride, quarrel, distress and belligerence. (23) Oh Indra,

the endeavors of a person to attain the three goals of life [of a settled religion, economy and sense gratification] are obstructed by our Lord. This is to be recognized as the special mercy of the Fortunate One [leading to stability, happiness and consciousness], which is easy to reach for unalloyed devotees, but so very difficult to attain by others [who always get entangled in the consequences of their actions]. (24) [And therefore I pray:] 'Oh my Lord, shall I be reborn as a servant of Your servant whose only shelter is Your lotus feet? May my mind remember the transcendental qualities of You, oh Lord of my life, may my words be of praise and my body be engaged in working for You! (25) I do not desire a place in heaven or the topmost position [of Brahṁā], not the rule over the world nor to dictate the lower worlds. I do not desire the perfections [the *siddhis*] of yoga nor to be freed from rebirth, oh source of all opportunity, all I want is not to be separated from You! (26) Like small birds that, unable to fly, are looking for their mother, like a calf that, distressed with hunger, looks for the udder, like a lover who is morose about the beloved who left, my mind, the same way, longs to see You, oh lotus-eyed One. (27) May there for me, who because of his karma wanders around in this world of birth and death, be the friendship with Your people [Your devotees], oh Lord praised in the scriptures, and not so much with those people whose minds by Your external manifestation are attached to their bodies, children, wife and home.'

## Chapter 12

### Vṛtrāsura's Glorious Death

(1) **T**he honorable *ṛṣi* said: 'He [Vṛtrāsura] who thus eager to give up his body, oh ruler of man, thought that dying in battle was better than a victory, took up his trident and attacked Indra, the king of the demigods, the way Kaiṭabha attacked the Supreme Personality when the world was inundated. (2) Like the fire at the end of the *yuga*, the king of the demons with great force hurled the sharp pointed trident twirling at the great Indra, while he in great anger loudly roared: 'Dead you are thou sinner!'

(3) **E**ven though the sight of the rotating trident flying towards him like a star falling from the sky was difficult to bear, it did not scare Indra. With his thunderbolt with a hundred hooks, he cut it, together with the arm of Vṛtra that resembled the body of the serpent king, in a hundred pieces. (4) With one arm missing he angrily took up his mace of iron against the thunderbolt and approaching Indra and his elephant struck him on the jaw with it so that the thunderbolt slipped from the hand of the generous one. (5) That grand and wonderful accomplishment of Vṛtra was praised by the gods and the demons, the heavenly singers and the association of the perfected souls, but seeing that Indra was in danger, they sincerely lamented 'Alas, oh alas!' (6) With Indra, his enemy, in front of him, not taking up his thunderbolt from being embarrassed that it had slipped from his hands, Vṛtrāsura said: 'Oh lord, take up your thunderbolt and kill your enemy, this is no time for regrets. (7) Except for the One of creation, annihilation and maintenance, the Lord who knows everything, the Original and Eternal Person, those, who in their dependence desiring to fight sometimes gather with their weapons, are not always assured of a victory. (8) Like birds caught in a net, all worlds and their rulers sigh powerlessly under the time factor that is the cause out here. (9) People not aware of that [time factor, Him, the Lord of Time, the] strength of our senses, mind, body, life force, death and immortality, consider their indifferent body the cause. (10) Oh sir [dear Indra], please understand that all things thus, oh generous one, just like a wooden doll [a 'woman made of wood'] or a cuddly animal [of 'straw and leaves'], depend on Īśa [the Power, the Lord and master of Time constituting their life and coherence]. (11) Without His mercy the person [the *puruṣa*], the material energy [*prakṛti*], the manifest reality [*mahat-tattva*], the self [or false ego, *ātmā* or *ahankāra*], the elements [*bhūtas*], the senses [of action and perception, the *indryas*] and what belongs to them [the mind - *manas*, intelligence - *buddhi* and consciousness - *cit*], are not capable of bringing about anything or do whatever [like maintenance and destruction]. (12) Not knowing [the Lord, the time factor] one considers oneself - despite being fully dependent - to be the one in control, but it is He



who creates beings by other living beings and it is He who devours them through others. (13) The blessings of longevity, opulence, fame and power arise when the time is ripe [His time], just as the opposite is found without having chosen for it. (14) Therefore one should be equal about fame and infamy, victory and defeat, misery and happiness and dying and living [see also B.G. 6: 7 & 12: 17]. (15) [The modes of] goodness, passion and ignorance are found in material nature, they are not the qualities of the spiritual soul. He who knows the soul as the one in the position of the witness, will be free from bondage [compare B.G.

18: 54]. (16) Look at me, defeated in battle with my weapon and arm cut off, oh enemy, I am still trying the best I can to take your life. (17) In the game of this battle our lives are the stakes, the arrows are the dice, our carriers are the game board and it is not known who will win and who will lose.'

(18) Śrī Śuka said: 'King Indra hearing the straightforward, reverent words of Vṛtra, took up the thunderbolt and addressed him with a smile without further wondering [about what he had said]. (19) Indra said: 'Oh Dānava, with this kind of consciousness you have attained perfection. You are a devotee perfectly focussed on the Supersoul who is the greatest friend and the ruler of the universe [see B.G. 6: 20-23]. (20) You managed to surmount the *māyā* of Lord Viṣṇu that deludes the common man. In your giving up the Asura mentality, you have obtained the position of an exalted devotee [see 2.4: 18]. (21) It is truly a great miracle to see how you, as someone driven by passion, have a strong consciousness, now that you are in Vāsudeva, the Supreme Lord of pure goodness! [see also Vṛtra's prayer 6.11: 25]. (22) Being devoted to the Supreme Lord Hari, the bestower of beatitude, you are swimming in an ocean of nectar. What would the use be then of small ditches of water [of small material happiness]?'

(23) Śrī Śuka said: 'Thus having discussed the ins and outs of dharma, oh King, the great commanders Indra and Vṛtra, who were well matched, fought [again]. (24) Whirling dangerously with his iron club Vṛtra, [who saw a chance] to subdue his enemy, with his left hand hurled it at Indra, oh best of kings. (25) But the demigod cut with the Śataparvaṇā [the 'hundred hooked'] thunderbolt simultaneously the club to pieces as also the hand that was as strong as an elephant's trunk. (26) Being struck by [Indra] the carrier of the bolt he, profusely bleeding with the wings of his arms cut off by the root [from his trunk], fell from the sky like a mountain. (27-29) Because of his great life force and uncommon prowess the demon [was able to] put his lower jaw on the ground and his upper jaw in the sky so that his mouth became a huge opening. With his

tongue and teeth he, like a fearful snake wishing to eat an elephant, seemed to devour, as if he were time itself, the three worlds with his preposterous body. Pounding and shaking the earth he then moved his feet as if they were the Himalayas, whereupon he, thus reaching Indra, swallowed him together with his thunderbolt and elephant. (30) Seeing him swallowed by Vṛtra all the demigods, together with the founding fathers and the great sages, in great grief lamented: 'Alas, what a misery!'

(31) Even though he was swallowed by the king of the demons he did not die in his belly, because he, arriving there, was protected by the Supreme Personality as also by his own power of yoga to master the illusion [see S.B. 6.8]. (32) The slayer of Bala, the mighty one, got out by piercing the abdomen with his thunderbolt, whereupon he with great force cut off the head of the enemy that was like a mountain peak. (33) But when the thunderbolt, in order to sever the head, in its entirety quickly revolved around the neck to cut it through, it took as many days as it takes the luminaries to move over both sides of the equator [a year] to reach the time that it fell. (34) At that moment in the sky the sound could be heard of the kettledrums of the denizens of heaven and the perfected souls. Together with the saints who had gathered, they celebrated the prowess of the victor [Indra] by joyously praising him with various mantras and a shower of flowers. (35) From Vṛtrāsura's body the light of his soul rose up, oh subduer of the enemies, that before the eyes of all the gods achieved the supreme abode.

### Chapter 13 King Indra Afflicted by Sinful Reaction

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'With Vṛtra killed the leaders and everyone else in the three worlds, oh charitable one, were immediately freed from their worries and depressions, except for the mighty Indra [Śakra] himself. (2) Without taking leave from Indra thereupon the demigods following Indra, Brahmā, Śiva and the other God-conscious peo-

ple, the saints, the forefathers, and the rest of the living beings and the demons, all returned to their places.'

(3) The king [Parīkṣit] asked: 'Oh my Lord, oh sage, I would like to know why Indra was so unhappy. Why was he so gloomy while all his demigods were happy?'

(4) Śrī Śuka said: 'All the godly souls and the sages were terrified by Vṛtrāsura's display of power, but Indra had declined their request to put an end to him because he was afraid to kill a brahmin. (5) Indra had said: 'The burden of the sin of killing Viśvarūpa was, as a favor to me, carried by the women, the earth, the trees and the water [see 6.9: 6-10], but how will I be purified from killing Vṛtra?'

(6) Śuka continued: 'When the sages heard that, they said the following to the great Indra: 'We wish you all good fortune, do not be afraid, we will perform an *aśvamedha* sacrifice, a horse sacrifice for you. (7) The *aśvamedha* sacrifice of worshiping the Original Person, the Supersoul, the Controller who is Nārāyaṇa our Lord, liberates one even from the sin of destroying the world! (8-9) Someone who killed a brahmin, his father, a cow, his mother or his spiritual master, such a sinner and even an outcast dog-eater may find purification by singing His holy name. If an *aśvamedha* sacrifice, the topmost of all sacrifices, by us conducted with faith, keeps you from being contaminated by the killing of all creatures of Brahmā including the brahmins, what then do you expect from killing a harassing demon?'

(10) Śrī Śuka said: 'Indra thus being encouraged by the scholars killed his enemy Vṛtrāsura when he approached him. He, Vṛṣākapi, the mythical king of the gods, was thereupon tormented by the reaction following that act of killing a brahmin. (11) Even though he had done others a favor with his deed, Indra suffered [the deepest] misery. One's good qualities do not give happiness when one feels ashamed and guilty. (12-13) It pursued him in the form of an old, outcast woman trem-



bling all over her body, whose clothes were covered by blood from consumption. With her disheveled, gray hair she yelled at him: 'Wait, wait', and spread thereby with her breath a bad fishy smell that polluted the entire road. (14) The thousand eyed Indra sought his refuge in heaven and in all directions of the sky whereupon he hurried in the northeastern direction to enter there the Mānasa-sarovara lake, oh King. (15) Bereft of all the sustenance [normally supplied] by the servant of the sacrificial fire, he lived there for a thousand years hidden from view in the subtle network of the fibers of a lotus stem. All that time he in his heart pondered over the question how he could find liberation from [the sin of] having killed a brahmin. (16) For the time of his absence the

heavens were ruled by Nahuṣa who, equipped with education, austerity, yoga and strength, proud of his wealth and opulence lost his intelligence. Chasing Indra's wife [Śacīdevī] he fell victim to the fate of a snake [after being cursed by sage Agastya for having kicked him]. (17) He whose offense by the divinity of Rudra was nullified because he meditated on the Maintainer of Truth [Viṣṇu], was, after having recovered from [the karmic rebound], invited back by the brahmins. The sin had lost its grip on him now that he enjoyed the protection of the wife of Viṣṇu, the Goddess of Fortune. (18) The brahminical sages [upon his return], approached him to consecrate him, according to the rules, for the sake of an *aśvamedha* sacrifice in order to please the Supreme Lord Hari, oh son of Bharata. (19-20) By the *aśvamedha* sacrifice performed by the expert brahmins and Indra in worship of the Original Person, the Supersoul and Maintainer of all divinity, there came a [formal] end to the, so very serious, sin of having killed the son of Tvaṣṭā, the way the sun puts an end to fog, oh King. (21) After the *aśvamedha* sacrifice as prescribed had been performed by the priests headed by Marīci, and Indra had worshiped the

Lord of Sacrifice, the Supreme Personality, he, being purified from the sin, retrieved his greatness.

(22-23) **T**his great story describing the glorification of the Lord of the Holy Places, the growth in devotion and the victory and liberation of Indra, the King of Heaven, frees one from innumerable sins. This narration should therefore always be read and continuously be heard by those who cherish the intelligence and be reiterated on the occasion of great festivals. It sharpens one's senses, brings wealth and fame and releases from all misconduct; it brings victory over one's enemies and good fortune and longevity to all.'

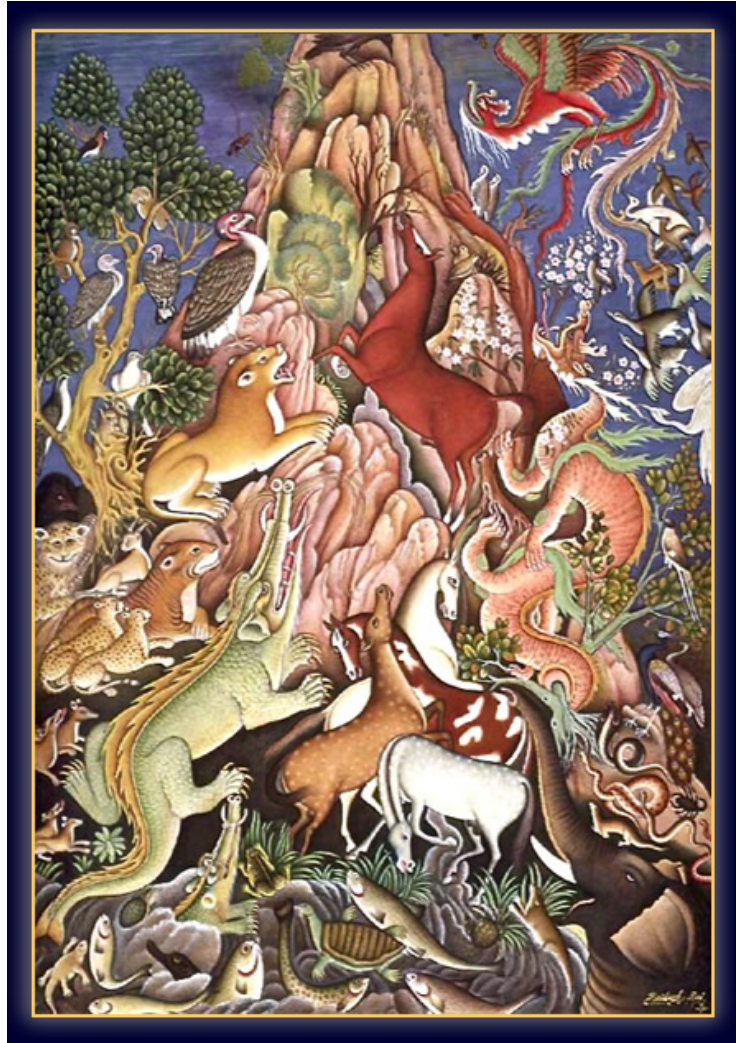
## Chapter 14

### King Citraketu's Lamentation

(1) Śrī Parīkṣit said: 'How could Vṛtrāsura with a nature of passion and ignorance and being that sinful minded, oh brahmin, have such a strong determination about Nārāyaṇa, the Supreme Person? (2) With [even] the gods, whose minds are of pure goodness, and the saints who have unblemished souls, only rarely is observed that they develop devotion for the lotus feet of Mukunda, the Lord of Liberation. (3) In this material world there are as many living entities as there are atoms, some of them are human or related to the human form and among them only a few act to do good. (4) Oh best of the twice-born, one always sees that among those who believe in liberation only a few desire liberation and that among the thousands of them only a few are really liberated, are really perfect. (5) And with the millions and trillions [of living beings] you, among those who found liberation and perfection, oh great sage, will very rarely find someone who both considers Nārāyaṇa the Supreme One and has a mind that is completely peaceful [compare B.G. 7: 3 & 7: 26]. (6) How, [with the truth of this,] could Vṛtra then, being so sinful and the cause of such suffering all over the world, in the full of his fire of giving battle have an intelligence that was fixed on Kṛṣṇa? (7) I am in great doubt about this and I would very much like to hear, oh master, how he managed to please the Thousand-eyed One in battle with his bravery and strength.' "

(8) Śrī Sūta said: "After the powerful son of Vyāsa had listened to the question of the devout Parīkṣit, he expressed his compliments and explained it to him. (9) Śrī Śuka said: 'Please listen carefully, oh King, to the story about this as heard from the mouths of Vyāsa, Nārada Muni and Devala Ṛṣi. (10) Once there was a king, an emperor over all the earth, who lived in

Śūrasena and was named Citraketu ['the light of excellence']. During his rule the earth delivered everything one could wish for, oh King. (11) He had thousands and thousands of wives, but from none of them the king got a single child, even though they were very well capable of giving birth. (12) With all his beauty, magnanimity, youth, good birth, education, opulence, welfare and all other good qualities he was endowed with, he was full of anxiety in his role of being the spouse to that many wives bearing no children. (13) Neither his great opulence, nor all his queens with their beautiful eyes, nor all the lands he ruled as the Emperor, could make him happy. (14) One day however, Aṅgirā, the very powerful sage who traveled around in his countries, unexpectedly arrived at the palace. (15) In order to pay his respects according to the customs, he stood up from



his throne and offered him worship. After thus having proven his hospitality, he offered him a comfortable seat and sat down next to him in proper self-restraint. (16) Then, oh Mahārāja, the great *ṛṣi* himself bowed down, complimenting him who in all humility sat beside him on the ground, and addressed him speaking as follows.

(17) **A**ṅgirā said: 'Is everything all right with your health and the material order of the state, the order of the king [in the form of his guru, ministers, allies - friends, army and police, subjects, territory, fortress and treasury] that is so much alike the seven material layers protecting the living being [consisting of the totality, the ego and the five objects of the senses; *mahat-tattva*, *ahankāra* and *tanmātras*]?' (18) The king, submitting himself to [the needs and demands] of these elements of his rule, can achieve welfare and prosperity, oh god of man, and so will each and all who, depending on him, contribute and serve. (19) Do your wives, citizens, secretaries, servants, merchants as also your ministers, intimates, governors, landholders and kin, all comply with your rule? (20) When the mind [of the king] is controlled, all the subjects will cooperate and everyone, including the governors, will support free from negligence. (21) The anxiety of your pale face tells me that something is bothering you, that you yourself for some or another reason are not quite happy.'

(22) **H**e [Citraketu] who desired offspring and this way by the *muni* was questioned despite his being well informed, oh King, bowed deeply before the sage in great humility and replied as follows. (23) King Citraketu said: 'Oh great soul, what of the external and internal affairs of the embodied souls would not be understood by yogis who are free from all sin by their austerity, spiritual knowledge and meditative absorption?' (24) Nevertheless, even though you know everything, you ask me about my worries, oh brahmin. Let me, with your permission, then dilate on what you asked me. (25) Having a great empire even desirable to the demigods, all the wealth and upkeep does not give me any pleasure because I have no son. To me it is all like trying to satisfy one's hunger and thirst with everything else but food and drink. (26) Save therefore me and my forefathers from getting lost

in the darkness, oh great sage. Make it so that we get a son and thus may defeat that [threat] which is so difficult to overcome.'

(27) **Ś**rī Śuka said: 'Thus being beseeched, the most powerful and merciful son of Brahmā made him cook a preparation of sweet rice for Tvaṣṭā [the demigod father of Viśvarūpa, see 6.8], which he then offered in worship of him. (28) The sage next offered the remnants of the sacrifice to the first and most perfect queen of all the king's queens who was called Kṛtadyuti, oh best of the Bhāratas. (29) Thereafter he said to the king: 'Oh King, there will be one son who will be the cause of jubilation as also lamentation for you', whereupon the son of Brahmā left. (30) After having eaten the food of the offering Kṛtadyuti proved to be impregnated by Citraketu, the way the goddess Kṛttikā received a son [named Skanda] from Agni. (31) Her fetus gradually developed little by little from the semen of the king of Śūrasena, just like the moon does during the bright fortnight of the month. (32) And thus in due course of time a son was born who created the greatest delight among the inhabitants of Śūrasena when they heard about it. (33) The king, very happy with his newly born son, bathed and decorated himself with ornaments and then arranged for the brahmins to perform the birth ceremony with many benedictory words. (34) He donated to the brahmins gold, silver, garments, ornaments as also villages, horses, elephants and sixty *crores* of cows. (35) In order to increase the opulence, the reputation and longevity of his newly born son, he with great attention like a raincloud showered all one could wish for. (36) Just like a poor man who has an increasing affection for the riches he gained with great difficulty, the pious king, as a father, day after day felt more love for the son he with so much difficulty had received. (37) Also the mother developed ignorantly an excessive affection for the son and that led, with all the co-wives of Kṛtadyuti, to a feverish desire also to have sons. (38) The way he all day cared about the son, king Citraketu was also extraordinarily attracted to the wife who gave him the son and not so much to the other wives. (39) Because they had no sons and were unhappy from being neglected by the king, they lamented and condemned themselves out of envy. (40) A woman

who has no son is, at home by her husband and the co-wives who do have sons, disrespected and burdened with the load of sin. She is then despised like a maid-servant. (41) What would a maid-servant have to lament when she derives her honor from faithfully serving her husband? But if she is there like a maid-servant to the maid-servants, she is most unfortunate. (42) The queens, who burned [in lamentation and envy] because their king enjoyed the wealth of a son from their rival Kṛtadyuti, having fallen out of grace thus developed a very strong hatred. (43) Out of their minds because of their enmity, the women, unable to accept the king's conduct, became extremely hard-hearted and administered poison to the boy. (44) Kṛtadyuti walking around the house was not aware of the sin committed by the co-wives and thought, looking at her son, that he was fast asleep. (45) When the boy had lain down a long time she, as a sensible woman, therefore gave the nurse the order: 'Please, oh friend, bring me my son.' (46) Looking after him, the nurse saw him lying down with his eyes turned upwards and his life force, mind and senses gone. She then falling to the ground cried: 'I am doomed!' (47) As soon as the queen heard that she, with an agitated voice in loud words of regret, was striking her breast with both her hands, she also hurried in and saw, upon approaching her son, that her child unexpectedly had deceased. (48) Overcome by grief she fell unconscious to the ground with her hair and dress in disarray. (49) Next, oh ruler of man, all the inhabitants of the palace and all the people, men and women who had heard the loud crying nearby, came and all lamented greatly, being equally aggrieved, just as did pretentiously those who had committed the crime. (50-51) Hearing that his son had died for reasons unknown, the king could not see properly anymore. Followed by his entourage of ministers and brahmins he on his way constantly fell and slipped. Because of his affection his lamentation grew [like fire] so that he fell unconscious down at the feet of the dead boy. Heavily breathing with his hair and dress disheveled, he [coming to] was not capable of uttering a single word anymore, because of his choked up voice and the tears he cried. (52) The queen, seeing her husband crying heavily in his grief over the deceased child, the only son of the family, cried along in every possi-

ble way and thus added to the anguish of all the people, including the officers and ministers, who had gathered there. (53) The flowers in her scattered hair slipped down while her two with *kumkum* powdered breasts got wet from the teardrops that, mixed with her make-up, fell from her eyes. She lamented about her son with a sound that reminded one of the sweet cries of a kurari bird.

(54) 'Alas, oh Creator of my fate, how much You fail in Your wisdom! With the father alive while his offspring is dead You prove to be someone who acts against His own creation. Such a contradiction makes You an opponent. (55) If there is no regular order in this world to the death and birth of embodied souls, it may be so that things happen as a result of one's karma. [But with] this [taking away of my son] You are cutting away the bond of love that You created Yourself for the growth of Your creation! (56) And you, my dear son, should not give up on me. I am so miserable without you as my protector. Look what grief you gave your father. With you we can easily overcome the darkness that is so difficult to defeat without a son. Please do not abandon us any longer, do not depart with the merciless Lord of Death. (57) Get up my sweet son, all the children, all your playmates, are calling you to play with them, oh prince of mine. You have slept so long and must be really hungry by now. Please take my breast to drink and drive away the grief of your relatives. (58) How unfortunate not to see the charming smiles any longer of you who were born from my flesh. Have you, now that you have closed the eyes of your lotus face, really left for the other world, the place of no return? Have you been taken away by the cruel Lord of Death? I cannot hear your sweet prattle anymore...'

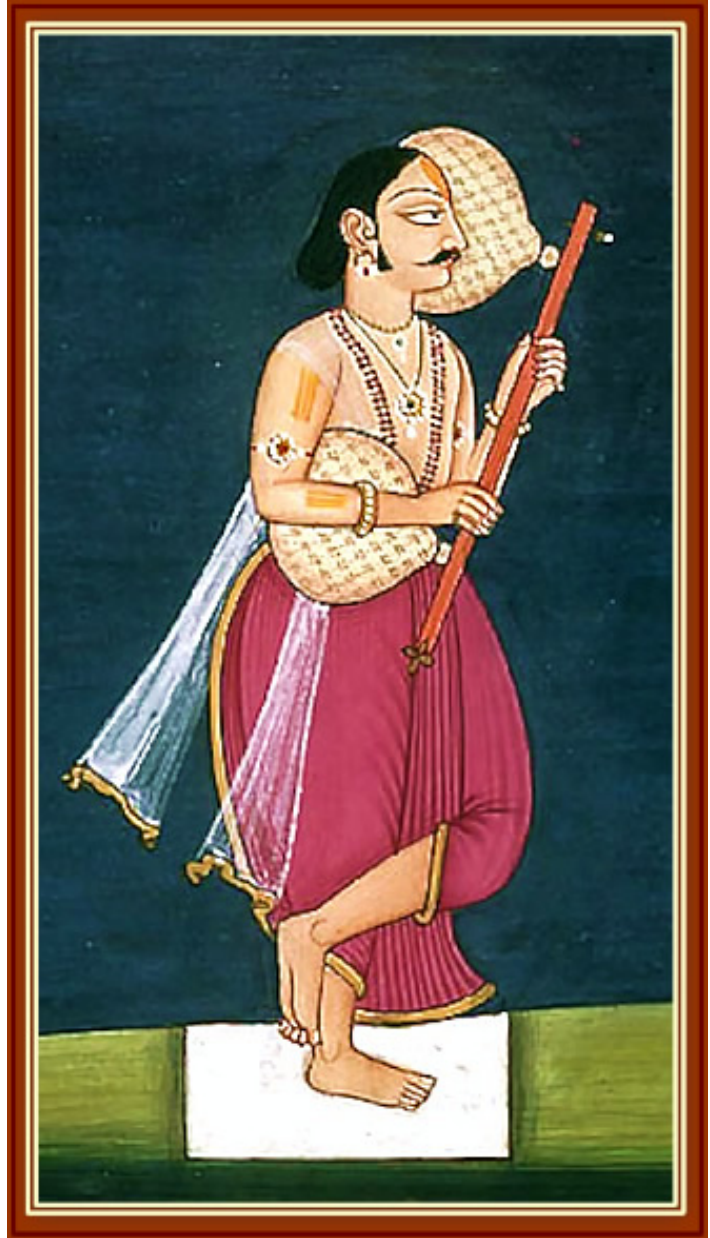
(59) Śrī Śuka said: 'Together with the woman who thus bewailed her dead son in several lamentations, Citraketu most aggrieved cried loudly. (60) As the king and his wife were thus lamenting, all their subjects also cried and so were all the men and women of the kingdom crazed with grief. (61) Sage Aṅgirā, who knew that they, because of the grief they came to, had lost their senses and were

helpless, thereupon visited them together with Nārada Muni.'

## Chapter 15

### The Sages Nārada and Aṅgirā Instruct King Citraketu

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'Informing him with words of wisdom they [the sages Nārada and Aṅgirā] spoke to the king who, like a dead man fallen at the side of the corpse, was so very much aggrieved. (2) 'Oh best of kings, the person you are lamenting about, who is that actually, oh lord, who was he in his previous birth, who is he now and who will he be hereafter? (3) The way grains of sand wash ashore and drift apart by the force of the waves, the embodied souls are brought together and separated by time [compare B.G. 2: 13]. (4) Just as sometimes grains grow from seeds and sometimes not, the living entities, impelled by the material potency of the Supreme Lord, sometimes produce other living beings and sometimes not. (5) We, you and also the other creatures this moment moving and not moving around here, oh King, were not together before this birth, nor will they be together after they died, despite sharing the same present. (6) The Ruler of All, as indifferent as a [playing] boy, creates, maintains and destroys living beings through other living beings; they who were created by Him do not exist independent of Him [compare B.G. 3: 27]. (7) From the body of the embodied soul, through another body, a new body is manifested, just as indeed from one seed [in the soil] another seed is generated. The [this way temporally] embodied [individual soul] is eternal, just as the constituent elements of matter are [see B.G. 8: 17-22]. (8) To consider this body as existing independent of its indweller [the Lord] is, just like considering the individual person independent of his group, since time immemorial part of the ignorance of the human being; such a separation is, just like the independent existence of souls - of the essence -, an imaginary one.'



(9) Śrī Śuka said: 'King Citraketu, consoled by what the twice-born souls thus told him, wiped his shriveled face with his hand and spoke. (10) The honorable king said: 'The two of you, who arrived here in the dress of renunciates, are accomplished in spiritual knowledge and are the greatest of the great. (11) You, as brahmins dear to the Lord [as Vaiṣṇavas], dressed up like madmen, wander the surface of the earth as you like in order to enlighten those who, like me, are of a worldly intelli-

gence. (12-15) Sanat-kumāra, Nārada, Ṛbhu, Aṅgirā, Devala, Asita, Apāntaratamā [an early name of Vyāsadeva], Mārkaṇḍeya and Gautama; Vasiṣṭha, Bhagavān Paraśurāma, Kapila, Śukadeva, Durvāsā, Yājñavalkya and Jātukarṇa as also Aruṇi, Romaśa, Cyavana, Dattātreya, Āsuri, Patañjali, the sage Dhaumya head of the Vedas and the sages Pañcaśikha, Hiranyanābha, Kauśalya, Śrutadeva and Ṛtadhvaja; all these and other masters of perfection, are the wandering spiritual educators. (16) Therefore, let me be enlightened by your torchlight of spiritual knowledge, oh masters, for I am but a foolish village dog bereft of vision in the darkness [\*].'

(17) Śrī Aṅgirā said: 'I am [the same] Aṅgirā who granted you the son you wanted, oh King, and this son of Brahmā here is the great sage Nārada in person. (18-19) This because of your grief about your son being merged in a difficult to overcome darkness, does not befit you. You are supposed to remember the Supreme Personality. The two of us have arrived here visibly before your eyes in order to support you, oh King. You, as someone anchored in Brahman and devoted to the Lord, we have to say that you do not deserve it to come down like this. (20) The first time I came to your home, I could have given you the spiritual knowledge of transcendence, but, since you were absorbed in other matters, I could only give you a son. (21-23) And now you undergo the tribulation of someone with children, a nice wife, a home, riches and various assets and luxuries. The objects of the senses of concern to you, like a kingdom, opulence, land and royalty, power and a treasury with servants, ministers and allies, are all temporary. All of this, oh Ruler of Śūrasena, constitutes a lamentable illusion giving rise to fears and distress, to figments concocted by the mind, to castles in the air in the form of preoccupations. (24) That what you are so concerned about is without any substance, that what you meditate upon are fabrications born from profit-minded actions. All these sorts of karmic engagements originate from the mind. (25) This body of the living entity consists of material elements and senses of action and perception. These are declared to be the cause of the various sufferings and pains of the living entity [see also B.G 15: 7-11]. (26) Therefore be careful

with the things of the mind and consider your real position, give up your belief in the duality as being something permanent; take to the peaceful condition.'

(27) Śrī Nārada said: 'Listen good and accept from me this mantra containing the secret of Vedic philosophy [see 8.16: 18-25] that, if you concentrate on it for seven nights, will give you the vision of Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa ['the One with the plough' who joins everything; see 5.25]. (28) All others [all the other men of God], giving up on this illusion of duality and finding shelter at His lotus feet, oh King, in the past immediately attained His unequalled and unsurpassed majesty. You will likewise soon attain that supreme position.'

\*: Before lecturing Vaiṣṇavas pray the following prayer in which they describe the role of the guru:

*'om ajñāna-timirāndhasya  
jñānāñjana-śalākayā  
cakṣur unmlitam yena  
tasmai śrī-gurave namaḥ'*

"I was born in the darkest ignorance, and my spiritual master opened my eyes with the torch of knowledge. I offer my respectful obeisances unto him."

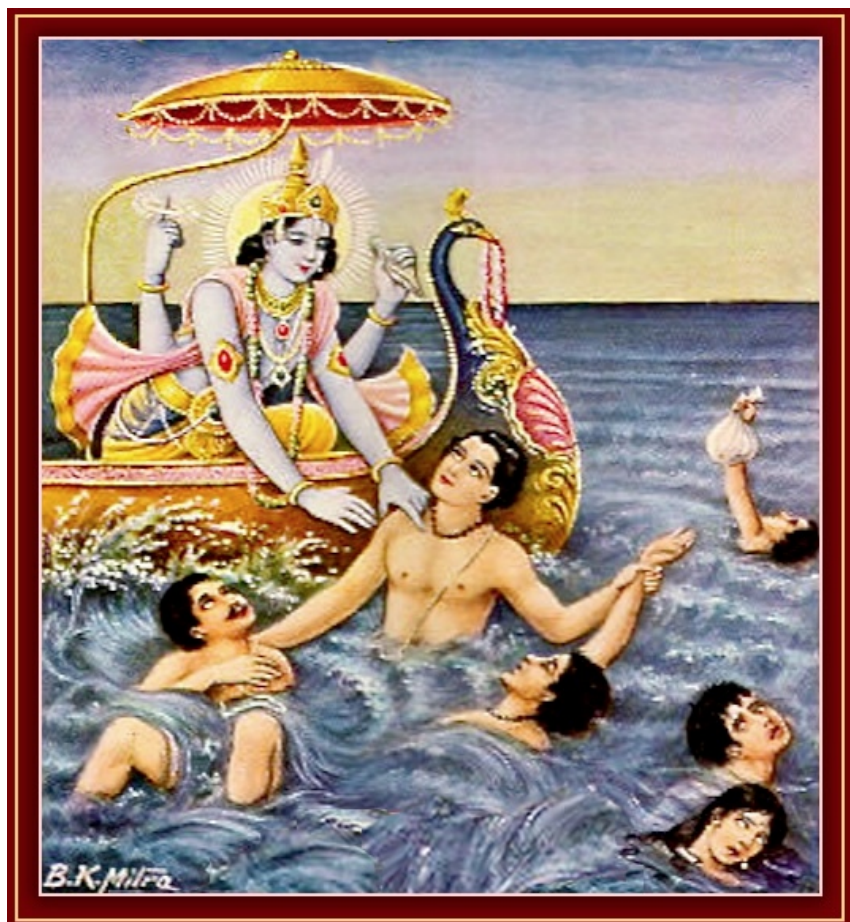
## Chapter 16 King Citraketu Meets the Supreme Lord

(1) The son of Vyāsa said: 'The *devarṣi*, oh King, thereupon brought the deceased son of the king [who was called Harṣaśoka, or 'jubilation and lamentation'] before the mind's eye of the lamenting relatives and addressed him. (2) Śrī Nārada said: 'Oh living soul, all good fortune to you, behold your mother, father, friends and relatives who, lamenting over you, are greatly distressed. (3) To complete your life you may return to your body and enjoy your life in the midst of your kin, while accepting the royal throne your father gave to you.'

(4) **T**he individual soul said: 'In which of all those births, wherein I because of my karma have been wandering among the gods, the animals and the human beings, were these people here my father and mother? (5) In the course of time eventually all people become each other's friends, family members, enemies, neutrals, well-wishers, indifferent or envious ones [compare B.G. 3: 27]. (6) Just as means of exchange like gold, pass from one person to the other, the same way the individual soul passes through different species of life by different fathers [see also B.G. 2: 22]. (7) One always sees that the ties one has in human society with matters [like money or the other sex] are temporary; one claims ownership for as long as one relates to it. (8) So too the eternal, individual soul identifies itself in a certain birth with a body for as long as that soul is situated in it, even though the soul actually has no specific material identity. (9) This living entity is [factually] eternal, imperishable and most subtle, it constitutes the self-effulgence of all the different embodiments, the master who manifests himself as this material world by means of the *guṇas* [see also 4.29: 29]. (10) It is not of like and dislike or of mine and thine. It is the one witness to the different sorts of intelligence and performers of good and bad deeds [see also B.G. 9: 29]. (11) The [original] soul is not of the happiness and harm resulting from fruitful actions; perfectly neutral residing in the heart he is the Lord overseeing cause and effect [B.G. 2: 47].'

(12) **T**he son of Vyāsa continued: 'Thus having spoken that living soul went away. His relatives, astonished [about what he had said], then cut the bond of their affection for him and gave up their lamentation.

(13) The difficult to forsake affection that leads to lamentation, illusion, fear and distress, was by the family of the son given up when they, with the performance of the proper rites, removed the body. (14) Oh King Parīkṣit, those who had killed the child were, bereft of their bodily luster, very ashamed of having murdered the boy. Remembering what the brahmin [Aṅgirā] had stated, they performed, according to the directions of the priests, at the river the Yamunā the atonement for having killed the baby. (15) Citraketu, spiritually awakened by the words of the two brahmin souls, thus emerged liberated from the dark well of his familial attachment, the way an elephant emerges from a mud pool. (16) After taking a bath in the Yamunā as was prescribed and after piously performing oblations of water while controlling his mind and senses with gravity, he offered the two sons of Brahmā his obeisances.

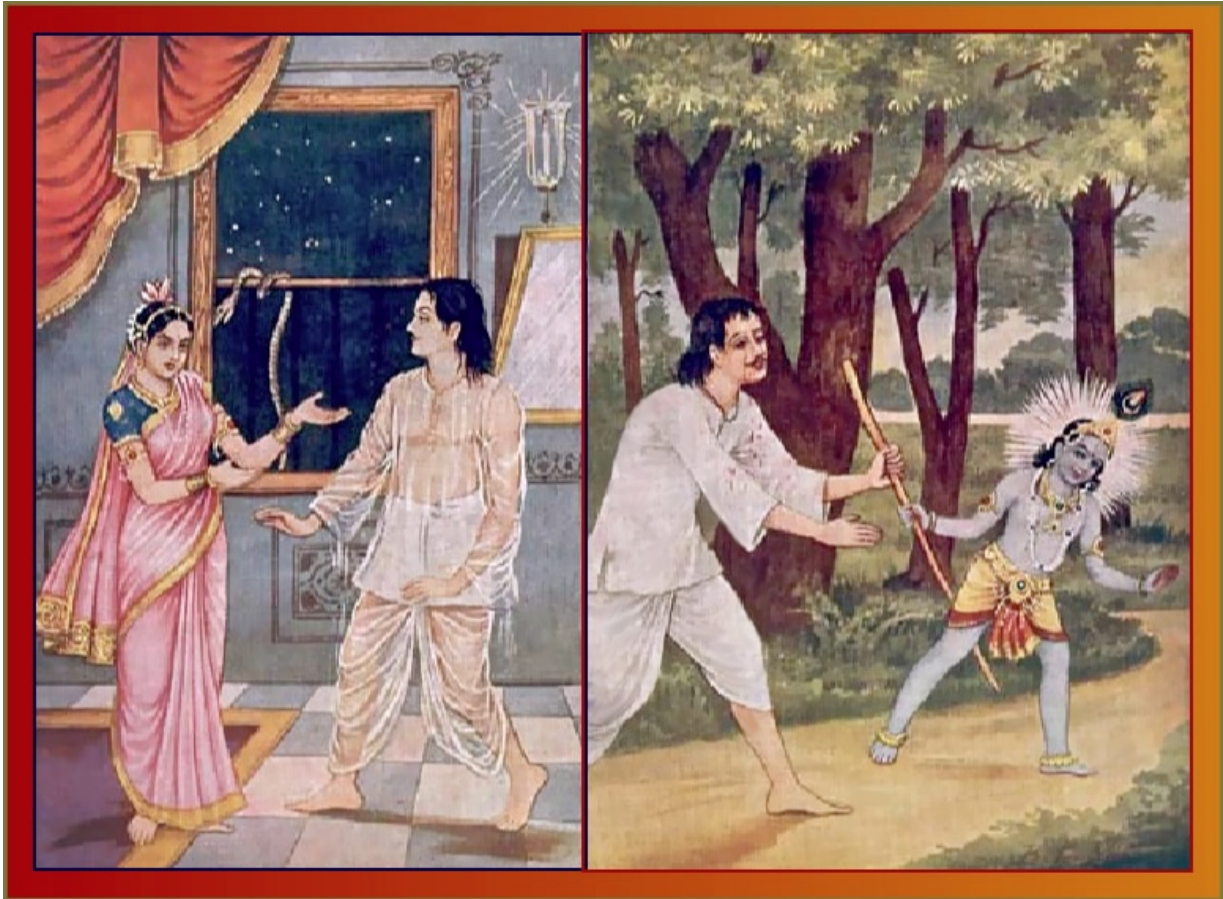


(17) **B**hagavān Nārada who was very pleased with him being such a surrendered devotee in control of himself, next, as he had promised, disclosed the following knowledge [of the Lord in the form of a prayer]. (18-19) 'Oh my Lord, my obeisances unto You, the Supreme Lord Vāsudeva. Let me meditate on Pradyumna [the Lord of intelligence], Aniruddha [the Lord of the mind] and Saṅkarṣaṇa [the Lord of the ego, see also 4.24: 35-37]. All my respects for the full manifestation of wisdom, the embodiment of supreme bliss, the Self of delight and peace, because of whom one turns one's vision away from the dual world. (20) The waves of the material ocean calm down by the realization of Your personal bliss. My reverence for the Supreme Controller of the Senses; my respects for You whose expansions are unlimited. (21) May He, the One without a second who, being completely spiritual, cannot be expressed in words, be caught in a form or be comprehended by the mind, may He who is transcendental to cause and effect, protect us. (22) The way all pottery is created from earth, consists of earth and returns to earth, everything is born from Him, exists by Him and vanishes in Him. Him, the Supreme Brahman [the Absolute Truth], I offer my obeisances. (23) I bow before Him who, as vast as the sky, has expanded outside and inside and who by the mind, the intelligence, the senses and the life airs cannot be touched or known. (24) The body, the senses, the life air, the mind and intelligence are all parts that are penetrated [by the supporting, connecting and ruling principle of Brahman]. These parts, just like iron that [cannot be forged if it] is not heated, cannot engage in activities without that support and acquire [with that support] the status of a[n independent] seer. (25) My obeisances unto You, my Lord, oh Supreme Personality, most perfect Supersoul and master of all mystic powers whose feet are embraced and caressed by the multitude of lotus bud hands of the topmost devotees. All my respects for You who are situated in the highest position.'

(26) **Ś**rī Śuka said: 'After Nārada had imparted the knowledge to this fully surrendered devotee, he together with Aṅgirā left for the abode of Brahmā, oh King. (27) Citraketu then chanted with great concentration and drinking water only,

for one week the prayer that was communicated by Nārada. (28) Strictly keeping to the instructions he, after these seven days and nights, by holding on to that prayer achieved the mastery of the Vidyādhara [the ones founded on knowledge], oh ruler of man. (29) By that spiritual exercise for his mind having found the enlightened course, he in a few days only thereupon reached the shelter of the lotus feet of the God of all gods, Lord Śeṣa [Anantadeva or Saṅkarṣaṇa, see 5.25]. (30) He saw his Master and Controller, with His smiling lotus face, reddish eyes and skin as fair as a white lotus. Clad in blue silk and with a glittering helmet, armlets, a belt and bangles, He was situated in the midst of His most perfect devotees. (31) The sight of Him wiped out all his sins so that he, contented and pure at heart, could approach Him like a full-blown *bhakta*. Moved from within by love he, with tears in his eyes and his hairs standing on end, offered the Original Personality of God his obeisances. (32) At the lotus feet of the Lord of the Verses he wetted that resting place with his tear drops over and over and was, because his voice was choked by his love, for a long time unable to utter a single letter of the alphabet and offer prayers. (33) By intelligently controlling his mind and senses led by the external world, this king thereupon recovered his speech and addressed the personification of devotional service and the scriptures, the teacher of all.

(34) **C**itraketu said: 'Oh Unconquerable One, You are conquered by those who are of self-control. You give Yourself in utter compassion to those devotees who, as surrendered souls conquered by You, always sing Your glories with minds free from desire. (35) With a false notion of independence the creators of this universe, who are [only] a part of a part of You, in vain compete with each other for Your dominion that consists of the creation, maintenance and dissolution of this cosmic manifestation, oh Supreme Lord. (36) Without Yourself having a beginning, an in between or an end, You have Your existence, from the smallest material unit to the complete of the universal manifestation, in the beginning, in the end and in between; that what is constant in the beginning and in the end is there also in the middle of the existence of all. (37) This egg shaped universe,



consisting of the seven layers of the earth element and the rest - each of which measures the tenfold of the preceding one [see 3.26: 52], is but insignificant compared to the billions of similar universes that exist in the cosmos. Therefore You are [called] unlimited. (38) Eager to enjoy like animals, oh Lord, man worships only parts of You [the demigods] and not the Supreme of You. The benedictions they bring are finished at the end of their turn, just as it is with politicians [B.G. 7: 20-23, S.B. 2.3: 10]. (39) A mind ruled by lust [the lesser god], just like fried seed, does not lead to growth and healing in You, oh Supreme One. But in the full knowledge of Your Supreme Self a person is not affected by the networks of duality of the material qualities [compare B.G. 4: 9]. (40) They who on the path of liberation are of worship, were conquered by You, oh Unconquerable One, when You [as their teacher] spoke about the process of devotional service. They are the faultless souls who do not crave for material happiness, they are the great sages satisfied from within [see

also 1.2: 6]. (41) Engaged a different way [as in demigod worship] one lacks in consciousness and arrives in human society thus at the 'I' and 'mine' and the 'me' and 'you' [of the false ego]. In approaches other than Yours one is, as a result of the deviating vision, impure in one's conduct, time bound and full of *adharmā* [compare B.G. 18: 66]. (42) In what sense is it beneficial for oneself, for others, or for whatever purpose, to be turned against oneself [one's own body] or against others in one's religiosity? Such a practice of human self-betrayal raises Your anger, torments one's fellow man and contravenes the dharma [see B.G. 16: 17, 17: 19 and S.B. 1.2: 8]. (43) Your view defining the process of devotional service is free from inconsistencies. When one following that course is equal towards all living beings, whether they move or not move, one is certainly a civilized person [an Āryan]. (44) This absence [of internal conflict] in You, oh my Lord, puts an end to the sins of anyone who sees You [Your devotees and Your book] before his eyes. But once hearing Your

name, forthwith delivers even the lowest among man from the misery of material existence. (45) Seeing You now here before us, oh Supreme Lord, has removed the contaminations from our mind. And why would it be different from what the great ṛṣi of enlightenment [Nārada], Your devotee, has said? (46) Oh Unlimited one, You as the Supersoul of all the world, know everything done by each living entity out here. What we know compares to the light of fireflies relative to the sun of You as our teacher of transcendence. (47) All obeisances unto You, oh Lord of the continued existence, the ending and creation of the universe. The position of You as the transcendental swan, the ascetic of the highest order, is beyond the ken of those who unify in a false notion, a material notion, of independence. (48) The senses gathering knowledge perceive in pursuance of Your perception, and they who endeavor to rule the universe do so to the example of Your endeavoring. Let there be my obeisances unto You, the Supreme Lord with the thousands of hoods, by whom the gigantic universe You carry on a single hood, appears [as insignificant as] a mustard seed.'

(49) Śrī Śukadeva said: 'Oh best of the Kurus, the Supreme Lord Ananta Deva thus being worshiped, most pleased about Citraketu, the king of the Vidyādhara, thereupon replied. (50) The Supreme Lord said: 'From directly seeing Me and from the worship with the prayer disclosed to you by Nārada and Aṅgirā, you now have attained perfection, oh King. (51) I, the cause and soul of all beings, [having expanded as] all beings, exist in My two continuous forms of the spiritual sound vibrations and the Supreme Brahman [compare B.G. 7: 4-5]. (52) The living entity expanded into the world and the world expanded within the living entity. These two [the world and the living entity] are created and pervaded by Me [compare B.G. 9: 4]. (53-54) A person asleep sees in his dream the entire world within himself, but upon awaking he finds himself lying down somewhere. The different states of consciousness and conditions of life of the living entities one must likewise consider as manifestations of the *māyā* or 'dreaming' potency of the Original Self, knowing which one should always remember their Supreme Creator and Witness [see bhajan Radha Kṛṣṇa Bol]. (55) Know Me as that

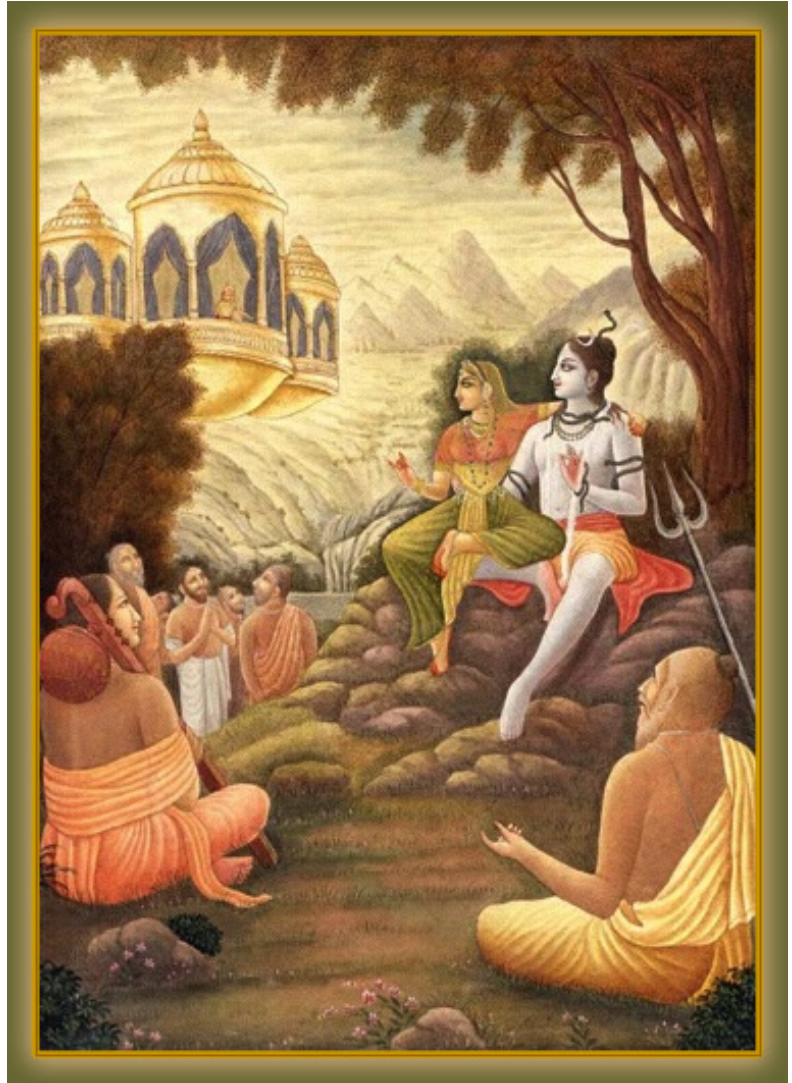
[all-pervading] Soul, the Supreme Spirit free from the modes of matter, by dint of whom the sleeping [bewildered] person then may acquire insight in what belongs to the dream and what to his happiness. (56) When the person manages to remember himself [his spirit soul, his *jīva*], as the connectedness of both the states of consciousness of being asleep and being awake, he may, beyond that spiritual knowledge, reach the Supreme Brahman [the knowing principle] that is transcendental. (57) The living entity, having forgotten about this spiritual nature of My position, leads because of that a materially conditioned life in separation from the Supersoul, as a consequence of which it wanders from one body to the next, from one death to another. (58) Achieving in this world a human birth, offers one the chance to arrive at self-realization with the [support of this] spiritual knowledge and wisdom, but they who fail to acquire that knowledge will never find peace and happiness. (59) Thinking of the trouble of toiling in this world and then achieving the opposite of what was intended - and then remembering how one is free from fear being disinclined, one should, thus knowing better, desist from such [karmic] desire. (60) Husband and wife [being materially motivated] perform activities for the sake of their happiness and to be free from misery, but they neither end their distress nor achieve happiness [see also B.G. 2: 14, 4: 20, 9: 31]. (61-62) Those who consider themselves very smart but this way attain the opposite of what they wanted, find it extremely difficult to understand what it means to be of progress with the soul and what it means to exist [in *turya*, in the meditative state] apart from the three states [of sleep, of waking and unconsciousness]. Someone who by his own experience and power of understanding or by the process of listening to others is freed from the [allurement of the] material world, may, fully satisfied by that knowledge and wisdom, then become My devotee. (63) The realization of the insight of [this qualitative notion of] the oneness of the [individual] soul and the transcendence [of the quantitative Lord], constitutes - all things considered - the ultimate goal of life for capable and intelligent human beings who unite in [bhakti] yoga. (64) If you with faith, not concluding differently, accept these words of Mine, oh King, you will soon find your perfection in full

[awareness] of the spiritual knowledge and its wisdom [its practical application].'

(65) Śrī Śuka said: 'After the Supreme Lord, the Teacher of the Universe, thus had encouraged Citraketu, He, Lord Hari, the Soul of All, disappeared from sight.'

## Chapter 17 Mother Pārvatī Curses Citraketu

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'After making his obeisances in the direction in which Lord Ananta had disappeared, Citraketu, the King of the Vidyādharas, began traveling, moving about in the atmosphere. (2-3) On his way not diminished in his power and sense control he visited hundreds of thousands of people in thousands of places and was by the sages, the perfected souls and the monks praised for being a great yogi. Pleased to stay in the valleys around Kulācalendra [Mount Sumeru] where one exercises for the different forms of perfection, he took great delight in persuading the wives of the Vidyādharas to praise the Supreme Personality, Lord Hari. (4-5) One day roaming in the brightly shining, heavenly vehicle that he had received from Lord Viṣṇu, he saw Lord Śiva surrounded by the perfected souls and the singers of heaven. He had his arm around the goddess who sat on his lap. Citraketu laughed loudly about it in the presence of the sages, and then addressed the mother hearing him. (6) Citraketu said: 'This spiritual master of all the world, who is the direct representative of dharma for all embodied souls, sits here as head of an assembly while embracing his wife! (7) With his hair matted, supremely repentant, following the Vedic principles and presiding a gathering, he is sitting there unashamed hugging a woman like an ordi-



nary materially motivated person. (8) Normally even conditioned souls embrace their women in private... But this one master of vow and austerity enjoys his woman in an assembly!'

(9) Śrī Śuka said: 'When the great Lord of fathomless intelligence heard that, oh King, he only smiled and remained silent, and so did everyone in the assembly following his example. (10) With him, unaware of the might [of Śiva], thus speaking against all etiquette, the *devī* angrily addressed the impudent soul who thought he was so well restrained. (11) Śrī Pārvatī said: 'And now this soul here would all of a sudden be the Supreme Controller, the master of restraint and the one to chastise persons like us as being criminal and shame-

less? (12) It must be so that now the one born on the lotus has no notion of dharma. And that neither Brahmā's sons, Bhṛgu or Nārada, the four Kumāras, Lord Kapila or Manu himself have a clue, otherwise they would have stopped our Śiva from breaking the rules! (13) This one here is the lowest of all *kṣatriyas*. He who by him, positioning himself above the gods, so impudently was chastised, is the one teacher of all the world! He is the most auspicious one of the auspicious, upon whose lotus feet one meditates. This man therefore deserves it to be punished. (14) This impudent, haughty fellow does not deserve it to approach the shelter of the lotus feet of Vaikuṅṭha that are worshiped by all the saints [compare: Śrī Śrī Śik-ṣāṣṭaka]. (15) Therefore, oh greatest of all sinners, leave this place to be born among the demons, oh fool, so that this world again belongs to the great ones and you, my son, no longer will commit any offense.'

(16) Śrī Śuka said: 'Thus being cursed Cit-raketu came down from his heavenly chariot to propitiate Pārvaṭī by bowing his head deeply before her, oh son of Bharata. (17) Cit-raketu said: 'Folding my hands before you, oh mother, I accept your curse. That which the gods impose upon a mortal is entirely determined by his deeds in the past. (18) Deluded in its ignorance the living entity is caught wandering around in the vicious circle, the cycle of rebirth in this material life, wherein it constantly is subjected to happiness and distress. (19) Neither the individual soul, nor anyone else, can really be the one who calls down the happiness and sorrow [the illusion and disillusion]. A person lacking in awareness nevertheless considers himself or someone else the cause in this

matter. (20) What in this maelstrom, this constantly changing flow of the basic qualities of matter, would actually be a curse or a favor, what would be [the meaning of] a promotion to heaven or a fall down in hell, or [the eternal value of] happiness and distress? (21) He, the One Supreme Lord, by His potencies gives shape to the conditioned existence of all living beings as also to their liberation [in devotional service]. He constitutes the reason for their happiness and distress as also for the position of being elevated [with Him] above time. (22) He considers no one His favorite or enemy, a kinsman or friend, an insider or outsider.

He is equal to all, omnipresent and unaffected by the world. In His happiness being free from attachments, one finds no anger in Him. (23) Still there is, in a repetition of being born and dying again, for embodied souls the [karmic] answer of an existence, ruled by happiness and grief, gain and loss, bondage and liberation, that generated from the energy of the Lord [as a secondary creation]. (24) Therefore I do not ask for your mercy to be released from your curse, oh angry one. All I want is that you accept my excuses for everything that I have said and in your eyes, oh chaste one, was unbecoming.'

(25) Śrī Śuka said: 'After thus having propitiated these elevated personalities, oh persistent conqueror of the enemies, Citraketu left in his heavenly vehicle, while the two were watching and smiling at him. (26) With Nārada, the Daityas, the Siddhas and his personal associates all listening, the great Lord then spoke to his wife the following words. (27) Śrī Rudra said: 'Have you seen, my



beauty, how magnanimous the servants of the servants are, the great souls who have forsaken their sense gratification in relating to the Supreme Personality whose actions are so wonderful? (28) None of the pure devotees of Nārāyaṇa are ever afraid. To be in heaven, on the path of liberation or to have a place in hell makes no difference to them [in their service]. (29) With the game played by the Lord, embodied souls are bound to the dualities of happiness and distress, dying and being born and being cursed or favored, because they identify themselves with their bodies. (30) The way one may take a flower garland for something else or speaks of qualities or faults in a [dream] image of oneself, also the appraisals of a person that are based upon a lack of insight are deceptive. (31) They who incite to bhakti, or devotional service in love for the Supreme Lord Vāsudeva, possess the strength of spiritual knowledge and detachment and take no interest in any other shelter [see also 1.2: 7]. (32) Neither I, nor Lord Brahmā, the Aśvinī-kumāras or Nārada, the sons of Brahmā, the saints or all the great demigods, know the true nature of Him of whom we, who like to think of ourselves as independent rulers, are all but parts of a partial aspect. (33) No one in particular is loved or disliked by Him, He calls no one His own nor does He exclude anyone. The Lord as the Soul of the soul of all living beings is the One dearest to all. (34-35) This greatly fortunate King Citraketu is His obedient servant loved by everyone. He, peaceful and equal to all, is the love of the Infallible One just as I am. Do not be surprised to find the devotees of the Supreme Personality, among the people to be the great souls who bring peace and equality.'

(36) Śrī Śuka said: After thus having heard what the great Lord Śiva had to tell her, the goddess Pārvatī was freed from her doubt and found back her peace of mind, oh King. (37) He, who as a great devotee was fully capable of pronouncing a counter-curse against the goddess, in resignation accepted his condemnation and that characterized him as a true saint. (38) Following Tvaṣṭā's \* *dakṣiṇāgni* sacrifice, he thereafter [because of the curse] was born, complete with all his knowledge and wisdom, in the demoniac species of life and became known as Vṛtrāsura [after first having ap-

peared as Viśvarūpa and by Indra having been killed, see 6.9 and compare with 1.5: 19]. (39) This [my dear Parīkṣit] was all I had to tell you concerning your question about Vṛtrāsura, he who with an exalted intelligence appeared in the world as a demon. (40) Hearing this sacred history about the great soul Citraketu, which reflects the greatness of the devotees of Viṣṇu, one is freed from bondage. (41) Anyone who, remembering the Lord, rises early in the morning to control with faith his voice by reciting this story, will reach the supreme destination.'

\*: Tvaṣṭā is a name derived from the roots *taṣṭa* and *tvakṣ*, which means paired, fashioned, formed in mind, produced or to create or produce. There are different Tvaṣṭā's mentioned in the Bhāgavatam. One is a name of Viśvakarmā, the architect demigod as mentioned in 4.15: 17. In 3.6: 15 the name is used for the sun, the director of light as the part of the Universal form of the Lord ruling eyesight. One is mentioned in verse 5.15: 14-15. This one fathered a son called Viraja. The Tvaṣṭā mentioned in the context of this story wherein he fathered Viśvarūpa who turned into the demon Vṛtrāsura, is possibly the same god [of the sun] as the one who is mentioned among the *devas* ruling the months, in his case, the month of Iṣa [September-October] as is mentioned in 12.11: 43.

## Chapter 18

### Diti Vows to Kill King Indra

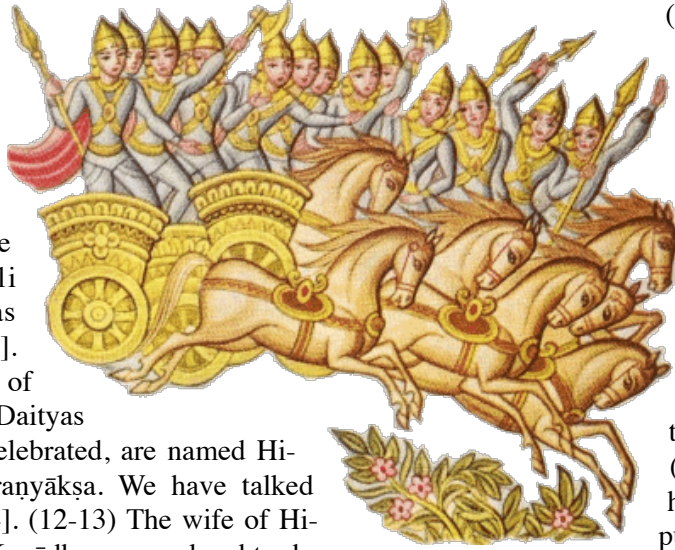
(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'From Pṛṣṇi, the wife of Savitā [the fifth of the twelve sons of Aditi], were born [the three daughters] Sāvitrī, Vyāhṛti and Trayī and [the sons] Agnihotra, Paśu, Soma, Cāturmāsya and the five Mahāyajñas. (2) Siddhi, the wife of Bhaga [the sixth son of the twelve sons of Aditi], my dear King, bore [the sons] Mahimā, Vibhu and Prabhu and a very beautiful and virtuous daughter named Āśī. (3-4) From the wives of Dhātā [the seventh son of Aditi] named Kuhū, Sinīvālī, Rākā and Anumati [respectively the sons] Sāyam, Darśa, Prātaḥ and Pūrṇamāsa were born. The fire gods

called the Purīṣyas were by the next son [of Aditi: Vidhātā] begotten in Kriyā and Carṣanī [the wife of] of Varuṇa [the ninth son of Aditi] was the mother from whom Bhṛgu took his birth again. (5) Vālmīki, the great yogi, was [by the semen of Varuṇa] born from an ant-hill [hence his name]. From Mitra [the tenth son] and Varuṇa there were the two sages Agastya and Vasiṣṭha. (6) They [Mitra and Varuṇa] in the presence of Urvaṣī discharged semen in an earthen pot [and from that semen the sages were born as their two sons]. Mitra begot in Revatī [the three sons] Utsarga, Ariṣṭa and Pippala. (7) Lord Indra [the eleventh son] begot in Paulomī [or Śacīdevī] so we heard, three sons, my best, called Jayanta, Ṛṣabha and Mīḍhuṣa. (8) Lord Urukrama [or Vāmana, the twelfth son] by His inner potency appeared in the form of a dwarf. From His wife Kīrti the son Bṛhatśloka was born and he fathered many other sons with Saubhaga as the first one. (9) The activities, qualities and power of this great soul and how He [the twelfth] factually descended from Aditi as the son of Kaśyapa, I shall describe later on.

(10) Now I shall tell you how,

from the seed of Kaśyapa, the [demoniac] sons of Diti were born [see 3.14] and the [later members of the family, the] great and glorious devotee Prahlāda and Bali Mahārāja [who was defeated by Vāmana].

(11) The two sons of Diti, who by the Daityas and Dānavas were celebrated, are named Hiraṇyakaśipu and Hiraṇyākṣa. We have talked about them [see 3.14]. (12-13) The wife of Hiraṇyakaśipu named Kayādhu, was a daughter born from Jambha and a descendant of Danu. She gave birth to four sons with Saṁhlāda as the first, after whom Anuhlāda, Hlāda and Prahlāda were born as also a sister called Simhikā. She got from Vipracit the son Rāhu. (14) His [Rāhu's] head was severed by the Lord's disc when he drank from the nectar [of the demigods]. Saṁhlāda's wife Kṛti gave birth



to [the son] Pañcajana. (15) Dhamani, the wife of Hlāda, gave birth to [the sons] Vātāpi and Ilvala. When Agastya once visited Ilvala, he cooked and served his brother Vātāpi [in the form of a ram]. (16) From Anuhlāda's wife Sūryā there were [born the two sons] Bāṣkala and Mahiṣa. Virocana was the son of Prahlāda and from his wife the son Bali was born. (17) He begot in Aśanā a hundred sons and Bāṇa was the eldest one. I shall describe his praiseworthy character later. (18) Bāṇa was a worshiper of Lord Śiva and was by him promoted to the level of his chief associates. For that reason the great Lord is the protector of his capital until the present day. (19) The forty-nine Maruts, also sons of Diti, had no sons themselves and were by Indra all elevated to the position of demigods.'

(20) The king said: 'Why, oh guru, did they give up the atheistic mentality they were born with? Why were they by Indra turned into demigods? Was it because of their saintly activities? (21) Oh brahmin, these sages together here with me, are all eager to hear about this from you, oh great one. Please explain it therefore to us.' "

(22) Śrī Sūta said: "Hearing those respectful, brief and meaningful words of the servant of Viṣṇu, the omniscient son of Vyāsa praised him and calmly and focussed gave a reply, oh Śaunaka. (23) Śrī Śuka said: 'Diti, whose sons were killed by Lord Viṣṇu in support of Indra, burned with anger and thought, clouded by grief: (24) 'I will only rest and be happy when an end has been put to the life of [Indra,] this pleasure seeking, hard-hearted, cruel and sinful murderer of the brothers! (25) Does someone know his self-interest when he, designated as a king, with his body which is doomed to end with the worms, as stool or as ashes, nevertheless hurts others in the pursuit of his own happiness? Does such a soul not await the

punishment of hell? (26) He who thinks that this [material covering] lasts for ever, is out of his mind. Can I count on a son who can fight this madness of Indra?' (27-28) Filled with that intention, she as a consequence was constantly of service unto her husband [Kaśyapa] with all kinds of pleasing activities, loving and humble, self-restrained and with great devotion, oh King. Knowing him very well, she with charming sweet words, smiles and sidelong glances managed to bring him under her control. (29) Although being a highly expert, learned scholar he was thus enchanted by the woman. Being under her control he therefore acceded to her wishes; a thing [for a man] not at all that surprising in relating to a woman. (30) Seeing the living beings unattached in the beginning of creation, God the Father [Brahmā] created the woman as the other half of his body and by her the mind of men is carried away. (31) Thus being served by the woman, oh my best one, the mighty Kaśyapa was very pleased and addressed Diti with an approving smile.

(32) **Kaśyapa** said: 'Ask for any benediction you like, oh my beauty, for I, oh irreproachable lady, am very pleased with you. What would there for a woman with desires in this world [and a next one] be difficult to obtain when her husband is well pleased? (33-34) The husband is considered the worshipable deity of the woman. Vāsudeva who, situated in the heart of all as the husband of the Goddess of Fortune, is worshiped as the Supreme Lord by men through the forms and names of the different divinities, is there also for women in the form of the husband [see also B.G. 9: 23]. (35) Women who, with respect for the will of their husbands, desire a happy life, oh slender-waisted lady, therefore worship with devotion their spouse as [being a representative of] the Lord who is the Supersoul. (36) I as such a person shall, being worshiped by you so devotedly my love, fulfill this desire that cannot be realized by deceitful [unchaste] wives.'

(37) **Diti** said: 'If you are for me the one to give benedictions, oh brahmin, I in that case, with my two sons dead, ask you for an immortal son capa-

ble of killing Indra responsible for the death of the two.'

(38) **A**fter hearing her words the brahmin, agrieved, lamented [within himself]: 'Alas what great impiety has befallen me today [with the notion of having to arrange for the death of Indra]! (39) Regrettably I have grown too attached to sensual pleasure in the form of the woman present before me. Ruled by *māyā* I will, with my mind corrupted, surely land in hell. (40) How can one object against women following their nature in this world? But not knowing what is good for me anymore, I am doomed alas, with me [being addicted to her] unable to control my senses. (41) Who knows their ways? Her face is like a blossoming lotus flower in autumn and her words are pleasing to the ear, but the heart of a woman is [as sharp] as a razor blade. (42) A woman holds nobody dear just like that, she, easily wishing for nobody but herself, is willing to kill or get killed even her own dearest husband, father, son or brother. (43) I have to keep my promise, I have to be true to what I said, but killing Indra cannot be the proper course of action. I know something better.'

(44) **T**he powerful Muni thinking thus, oh descendant of Kuru, got slightly angry. He condemned himself for it and then spoke. (45) **Śrī Kaśyapa** said: 'Your son will, as a friend of the godless ones, get even with Indra, oh gentle one, on the condition that you for that purpose for the time of a year strictly keep to a vow.'

(46) **Diti** said: 'I accept such a vow my dear brahmin. Please tell me what I have to do and what is forbidden, as also what must be done not to break the vow.'

(47) **Śrī Kaśyapa** said: 'Harm no living being, do not curse or speak a lie, do not cut your nails and hair nor touch impure things. (48) Do not enter water for a bath, do not get angry nor speak with wicked people. Do not wear dirty clothes or ever wear a flower garland that has been worn. (49) Do not eat leftovers nor food containing flesh that was offered to Kālī. You must not eat food that a *śūdra*



eats or food provided by a woman in her menses and do not drink water by cupping your hands. (50) Do not go out in the evening, nor after having eaten, without having washed yourself or with your hair loose, without ornaments, without being grave and without being covered. (51) Do not lie down without having washed your feet, without being purified, with your feet wet and with your head northward or westward, nor go to bed naked, in the company of others or during sunrise or sunset. (52) In clean clothes, always being washed and adorned with all auspicious things [like turmeric and sandelwood paste] you should worship the cows, the brahmins, the Goddess of Fortune and the Infallible One before breakfast. (53) With presentations of garlands, sandelwood pulp and ornaments you should worship women who have a [living] husband and a son and you must worship your own husband with offering prayers. You should also meditate on his presence in your

womb [in the form of a child during a pregnancy or his vital energy]. (54) Free from violations keeping to this vow of *puṁsavana* [for 'producing a male child'] for a year, there will be a son for you to kill Indra.'

(55) **A**ssenting to it Diti thus joyously received the semen from Kāśyapa, oh King, and lived strictly to the vow. (56) Oh dear King of respect for all, Indra understanding what his aunt had in mind, then cleverly approached Diti to serve her during the time she stayed in an *āśrama*. (57) Every day he brought her flowers, fruits, roots and wood from the forest for the sacrificial fire as also leaves, *kuśa* grass, sprouts, earth and water when she needed it. (58) Oh ruler of man, serving her as deceitful as a hunter pretending to be a deer, Indra tried to find a fault in her dutiful observance of the vow. (59) But he could not discover a single failure in her practice and thus, oh master of the world, he in his desire wondered anxiously: 'How can I find my well-being in this world?' (60) Once though she, weakened because of the vow, did not touch water after she had eaten, did not wash her feet and went, confused about

the rules, to sleep at dusk. (61) Upon noticing her mistake Indra, as a master of yoga, by the power of his mystical ability entered the womb of Diti, who unconscious lay asleep. (62) With his thunderbolt he cut the embryo, that had a golden appearance, in seven pieces and cut each crying piece into seven more, telling them not to cry. (63) They all in pain with folded hands said to him: 'Oh ruler, why do you want to kill us? Oh Indra, we are your brothers, the Maruts!'

(64) **T**o this group of faithful souls, the Maruts, he then said: 'You are my brothers, do not fear.'

(65) **J**ust as you [my dear Parīkṣit] did not die from the weapon of Aśvatthāmā by the mercy of Śrīnivāsa [Viṣṇu as the refuge of Lakṣmī, [see 1.8], Diti's embryo, being cut in many pieces by

the thunderbolt, did not die. (66-67) When a person worships the Original Person he immediately gets a grip on his life [as for time and measure]. And so it happened with Diti who for almost a year had worshiped the Lord [see 5.18: 12]. In order to compensate for the faults made by the mother the Lord changed the forty-nine parts that Indra had created, the Maruts, into [the fifty] demigods [together with Indra] who became soma-drinkers [priests]. (68) Waking up Diti saw the children, along with Indra, shining as bright as fire. It was a view the goddess, being purified [after her penance], was very pleased about. (69) She thereupon said to Indra: 'Desiring a son who would be the fear [and end] of the [twelve] Ādityas [see 6.6: 38-39], I executed this vow that is so difficult to fulfill. (70) I prayed for one son only but now there are forty-nine of them. How could that happen? If you know that, my dear son, then speak to me and do not tell me lies.'

(71) **I**ndra said: 'Oh mother, having understood what your vow was, I approached you and found a fault. In my self-interest having lost sight of the dharma, I thereupon cut the embryo to pieces. (72) The embryo was cut in seven parts by me and they became seven babies. And even though I cut each of them also in seven parts, none of them died. (73) Witnessing that great miracle, I thereupon decided that it had to be some side-effect of your worship of the Supreme Personality. (74) Those who take interest in worshipping the Supreme Lord without fostering desires, are even indifferent about [the liberation of attaining] the transcendental position. One may consider them experts in [enlightened] self-interest [compare 2.3: 10 and B.G. 9: 22]. (75) Would an intelligent person still covet any form of material satisfaction even to be found in hell, when he has been of the worship by which He, the Lord of the Universe and the most intimate Godhead, has given Himself to him [see also the Śrī Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka]? (76) Oh best of women, please excuse me for being such a fool with this evil deed of mine. Oh mother, by your good fortune the child in you that I killed, came back to life.'

(77) **Śrī Śuka** said: 'Taking permission of her, satisfied about his good manners, Indra offered his

respects and left together with the Maruts for the heavenly worlds. (78) I have thus told you everything you asked me about the auspicious birth of the Maruts. What should I tell you further?'

## Chapter 19

### Performing the Puṁsavana Ritualistic Ceremony

(1) **T**he king said: 'Oh brahmin, I would like to hear about the *puṁsavana* vow you mentioned and by which Lord Viṣṇu is pleased.'

(2-3) **Śrī Śuka** said: 'On the first day of the bright fortnight of Agrahāyana [November-December], a woman should, with the permission of her husband, start with this vow that fulfills all desires. After having bathed, having brushed her teeth, put on ornaments and garments, she must hear about the birth of the Maruts. Then, before taking breakfast, she, according to the instructions of the brahmins, has to worship the Supreme Lord and the goddess of fortune as follows: (4) 'Let there be my obeisances unto You, oh Independent Lord [and fulfillment] of all desire. My respects for the husband of Lakṣmī Devī, the Master of all Perfection. (5) Since You are the Lord endowed with mercy, opulence, prowess, glory and strength, You are the One Supreme Master of all divine qualities. (6) Oh Śrī Lakṣmī, espoused to Lord Viṣṇu, you are His energy and have all the qualities of the Supreme Personality. I beg you to be pleased with me, oh Goddess of Fortune, oh Mother of the World. May there be my reverential homage unto you. (7) My obeisances unto the Supreme Lord and Personality of all Power who is the husband of that glory of all wealth. Him and His associates I offer my presentations.'

**W**ith the invocation of Lord Viṣṇu by means of this mantra, she every day has to offer attentively presentations of gifts, lamps, incense, flowers, scents, ornaments, garments, a sacred thread, bathing water and water for the hands, feet and mouth. (8) Next, the remnants of the sacrifice should be offered in the fire with twelve oblations,

saying *svāhā* [hail!] with the mantra: 'Oh my Lord, all my respects for You as the One Supreme, Greatest Person who is the husband of the glory of all wealth, the goddess of fortune [*om namo bhagavate mahā-puruṣāya mahāvibhūti-pataye svāhā*].'

(9) Lord Viṣṇu and the goddess are the bestowers of all benedictions and together they constitute the source of all blessings. If one desires all opulences, one should daily be devoted with this worship. (10) In one's devotion stretched out straight on the ground [*'daṇḍavat'*], one should, in a humble state of mind, offer one's obeisances uttering this mantra ten times and then pronounce the following prayer: (11) 'You two are the proprietors of the universe, the Supreme Cause. The external energy of the material world is hard to fathom, it is the deluding power that is difficult to overcome. (12) You, the Supreme Personality, the Lord of All Sacrifices, are her direct Master. She is the [original appearance of the] performance of this worship, while You are the enjoyer of the fruits. (13) This *devī* is the reservoir of all the qualities, while You manifest and enjoy these qualities. The goddess of fortune is the body, the senses and the mind, while You are the Supersoul of all the embodied beings. Lakṣmī is the name and form, while You are the support and certainty. (14) May my great ambitions be fulfilled, oh Uttamaśloka, oh Lord Praised in the Verses, for the two of You are the supreme rulers, the bestowers of benedictions of the three worlds.'

(15) This is the way one should pray to Lakṣmī and Śrīnivāsa, her abode and the bestower of benedictions. After this offering

one must put away the articles of worship and ritually wash one's hands and mouth. (16) With devotion and a humble mind, one should then offer prayers, smell the remnants of the sacrifice and again worship Lord Viṣṇu. (17) With these offerings the wife in utter devotion should accept her husband as the Supreme Person. The husband in his turn also should [thereto] lovingly support all the menial and elevated activities of his wife. (18) When the wife is unable, the husband should execute it attentively, because when only one of them does so, still both wife and husband [will benefit]. (19-20) One should not deviate for any reason from the [prescribed] practice of this vow to Lord Viṣṇu. One should daily, in a regulated manner, grant the brahmins and the women together with their husbands and children, that what remains of the offerings to the Godhead that consist of garlands, sandalwood, food and ornaments. When one in respect of the regulative principles has placed the offerings before Him and has put the



Godhead to rest, one should share the remnants of the sacrificed food with others and eat them. That is how one will find one's soul purified and all one's desires fulfilled. (21) With this regulated *puja* the virtuous wife must, after the time of twelve months or a year, then fast on the last day [the full moon] of Kārttika [October-November]. (22) The next morning touching water and as before worshiping Lord Kṛṣṇa, the husband must, according to the injunctions [as stated in the Gṛhya-sūtras], offer, with twelve oblations in the fire, sweet rice that with ghee was boiled in milk. (23) After having pleased the brahmins by devotedly expressing his obeisances bowing down, he, having accepted their blessings on his head, then with their permission should eat. (24) Controlling the voice, he should first of all with friends and relatives properly receive the teacher of example, the *ācārya*, and then give the wife the remnants of the offering. That will ensure good progeny and fortune. (25) Performing this vow according to the instructions, a man in this life will achieve that what he wanted from the Almighty Lord. A woman performing this may then achieve all fortune, opulence, progeny, a long living husband, a good reputation and a home. (26-28) When she is not married, she can [with this *vrata*] get a husband with all good qualities. Being without a husband or son, she may reach the state of perfection, the supreme destination. With a deceased child, she may have a child that stays alive and [thus] prosper. Being unfortunate, she will find fortune and being unattractive, she will have a beautiful body. A diseased man will [with this vow] be freed from his disease and regain his full ability. When one, following this course, performs successfully, the forefathers and the gods will be enormously pleased. Lord Viṣṇu, the Enjoyer of all Sacrifices [and His goddess] will, upon the completion of this ceremony, bestow all that one desires. Oh King, I thus extensively explained to you how Diti took the vow and gave birth to the pious Maruts.'

**Thus the sixth Canto of the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam ends named: Prescribed Duties For Mankind.**

**Translation:** Anand Aadhar Prabhu, <http://bhagavata.org/c/8/AnandAadhar.html>

**Production:** the Filognostic Association of The Order of Time, with special thanks to Sakhya Devī Dāsī for proofreading and correcting the manuscript. <http://theorderoftime.com/info/guests-friends.html>

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**Reference:** For this original translation next to the Monier Williams Sanskrit dictionary and the ISKCON site [vedabase.net](http://vedabase.net), the Sāstrī C.L. Goswami version of the Gita Press has been used. The source texts, audio read files and music to this translation one can find following the links from: <http://bhagavata.org/>

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